



HOU

“Postgraduate Dissertation”

Postgraduate Dissertation

The Benefits of Motivation within Organizations: Case

Study of AB Vasilopoulos

Maria Rentzeperi

Supervisor: Anastasia Konstantelou

Patras, Greece, June 2026

Theses / Dissertations remain the intellectual property of students (“authors/creators”), but in the context of open access policy they grant to the HOU a non-exclusive license to use the right of reproduction, customisation, public lending, presentation to an audience and digital dissemination thereof internationally, in electronic form and by any means for teaching and research purposes, for no fee and throughout the duration of intellectual property rights. Free access to the full text for studying and reading does not in any way mean that the author/creator shall allocate his/her intellectual property rights, nor shall he/she allow the reproduction, republication, copy, storage, sale, commercial use, transmission, distribution, publication, execution, downloading, uploading, translating, modifying in any way, of any part or summary of the dissertation, without the explicit prior written consent of the author/creator. Creators retain all their moral and property rights.



“Benefits of Motivation within Organizations: Case Study of AB Vasilopoulos”

Maria Rentzeperi

Supervising Committee

Supervisor:

Anastasia

Konstantelou HOU

EAP

Co-Supervisor:

Sofia Chatzi HOU

EAP

Patras, Greece, 30th June 2026

*“ I thank myself for standing firm in my
goal and completing it, despite the
challenges and the obstacles ”*

Abstract

Work motivation is one of the most significant determinants of employee performance, organizational commitment and company efficiency. In an increasingly competitive retail business, it is important to understand the elements that drive employee motivation in order to retain a productive and engaged staff. The goal of this research was to study the elements that impact employee motivation at AB Vassilopoulos.

A qualitative research technique was used to fulfill the study goal and semi-structured interviews were chosen. The investigation included eleven workers from various departments and levels of the company's management. The data were evaluated using the thematic analysis approach in order to identify the main concerns connected to work motivation.

The results identified eight major thematic categories; recognition and reward, supervisor's leadership and support, learning and professional development, team climate and interpersonal relationships, customer importance and work meaning, financial and non-financial incentives, sense of belonging and corporate culture, and suggestions for improvement. In particular, participants stressed the significance of recognition, supportive leadership, growth opportunities, good working relationships and affinity with the company's values. Although financial benefits were regarded essential, they did not emerge as the single or main motivating element. Work motivation at AB Vassilopoulos is a multifaceted phenomena that is affected by the interplay of organizational, social and human elements in the work place. The study shows the necessity of providing a supportive work environment that fosters recognition, growth, involvement and organizational commitment, which in turn helps the company to achieve long-term success.

Keywords: work motivation, retail, organizational culture, leadership, organizational commitment, qualitative research, AB Vassilopoulos.

Τα Οφέλη της Εργασιακής Παρακίνησης στους Οργανισμούς: Μελέτη Περίπτωσης της AB Βασιλόπουλος

Μαρία Ρεντζεπέρη

Περίληψη

Η εργασιακή παρακίνηση αποτελεί έναν από τους σημαντικότερους παράγοντες που επηρεάζουν την απόδοση των εργαζομένων, την οργανωσιακή δέσμευση και τη συνολική αποτελεσματικότητα των επιχειρήσεων. Στον ιδιαίτερα ανταγωνιστικό κλάδο του λιανικού εμπορίου, η κατανόηση των παραγόντων που επηρεάζουν την παρακίνηση των εργαζομένων είναι κρίσιμη για τη διατήρηση ενός παραγωγικού και αφοσιωμένου ανθρώπινου δυναμικού. Σκοπός της παρούσας έρευνας ήταν η διερεύνηση των παραγόντων που επηρεάζουν την εργασιακή παρακίνηση των εργαζομένων στην AB Βασιλόπουλος.

Για την επίτευξη του σκοπού της έρευνας υιοθετήθηκε ποιοτική ερευνητική προσέγγιση, με τη χρήση ημιδομημένων συνεντεύξεων. Στην έρευνα συμμετείχαν έντεκα εργαζόμενοι από διαφορετικά τμήματα και επίπεδα ιεραρχίας της εταιρείας. Τα δεδομένα αναλύθηκαν με τη μέθοδο της θεματικής ανάλυσης, η οποία επέτρεψε την ανάδειξη των βασικών θεμάτων που σχετίζονται με την εργασιακή παρακίνηση. Τα αποτελέσματα ανέδειξαν οκτώ κύριες θεματικές κατηγορίες: την αναγνώριση και επιβράβευση, την ηγεσία και την υποστήριξη από τον προϊστάμενο, τη μάθηση και την επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη, το ομαδικό κλίμα και τις διαπροσωπικές σχέσεις, τη σημασία του πελάτη και τη νοηματοδότηση της εργασίας, τα οικονομικά και μη οικονομικά κίνητρα, το αίσθημα του ανήκειν και την εταιρική κουλτούρα, καθώς και τις προτάσεις βελτίωσης. Οι συμμετέχοντες τόνισαν ιδιαίτερα τη σημασία της αναγνώρισης, της υποστηρικτικής ηγεσίας, των ευκαιριών εξέλιξης, των θετικών εργασιακών σχέσεων και της ταύτισης με τις αξίες της εταιρείας. Παρότι οι οικονομικές απολαβές θεωρήθηκαν σημαντικές, δεν αναδείχθηκαν ως ο μοναδικός ή κυρίαρχος παράγοντας παρακίνησης.

Συμπερασματικά, η εργασιακή παρακίνηση στην AB Βασιλόπουλος αποτελεί ένα πολυδιάστατο φαινόμενο που επηρεάζεται από την αλληλεπίδραση οργανωσιακών, κοινωνικών και ατομικών παραγόντων. Η έρευνα υπογραμμίζει τη σημασία της δημιουργίας ενός υποστηρικτικού εργασιακού περιβάλλοντος που προάγει την αναγνώριση, την ανάπτυξη, τη συμμετοχή και την οργανωσιακή δέσμευση, συμβάλλοντας στη μακροπρόθεσμη επιτυχία του οργανισμού.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: εργασιακή παρακίνηση, λιανικό εμπόριο, οργανωσιακή κουλτούρα, ηγεσία, οργανωσιακή δέσμευση, ποιοτική έρευνα, AB Βασιλόπουλος.

Table of Contents

Abstract	5
Περίληψη.....	6
Table of Contents.....	7
List of Tables	8
1. Introduction	9
1.1 Background and Context.....	9
1.2 Research Purpose and Research Questions.....	10
1.3 Structure of the Dissertation	11
2. Literature Review / Theoretical Framework.....	13
2.1 Concept of Motivation in Organizations.....	13
2.2 Classic and Contemporary Motivation Theories	14
2.2.1 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.....	14
2.2.2 Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory.....	15
2.2.3 The motivation-hygiene theory and two-factor theory (Herzberg).....	16
2.2.4 The hypothesis of McClelland need	16
2.2.5 Mc Gregor's Theory X and Theory Y	17
2.2.6 Motivational Process Theories.....	18
2.3 Impact of Motivation on Organizational Outcomes	24
2.4 Motivation in Retail Organizations.....	26
2.5 Strategies for Fostering Motivation	26
3. Methodology	29
3.1 Research design	29
3.2 Participants.....	29
3.3 Research Instrument.....	30
3.4 Ethical Considerations	31
3.5 Data Analysis	32
4. The Retail Sector and the Case of AB Vasilopoulos	33
4.1 AB Vassilopoulos	34
5. Results.....	38
5.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants	38
5.2 Thematic Analysis as stemmed from Interviews	39
5.2.1 Recognition and Rewards for Work	40
5.2.2 Leadership and support by the supervisor	41
5.2.3 Learning and professional growth	43
5.2.4 Team Climate and Inter-Personal Relations	45
5.2.5 The significance of the customer and the significance of the work.....	46
5.2.6 Financial and Non-financial Incentives	48
5.2.7 Corporate Culture and Sense of Belongingness.....	50
5.2.8 Recommendations for Future Improvement and Expectations.....	52
6. Discussion	54
6.1 Theoretical Implications	56
7. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research	59
7.1 Conclusions.....	59
7.2 Limitations.....	59
7.3 Recommendations for Future Research	60
References	62
Appendix A: “Information and consent form for participation in a research”	72
Appendix B: “Informal information provided for the conduct of interviews”	74
Appendix C: “Interview guide”	76

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic and professional characteristics of the participants	38
Table 2: Thematic categories and subthemes identified in the thematic analysis	39

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Motivation is one of the most important parts of human resources management. Basically, motivation is a process of inspiring others for achieving their goals (Chaudhary and Sharma, 2012). Motivating your employees is a tiny, but critical part of managing people well.” The supervisor should be able to see the objectives of subordinates and lead them to the achievement of these goals. Recognition and feedback are viewed as primary motivators and more money does not necessarily mean greater motivation and productivity (Fuhrmann, 2006).

Every employee has objectives and knows exactly what he has to perform at work. Employees are motivated to work hard and consistently at these objectives (Styblo, 1992). As Provazník and Komárková (1996) mention, work motivation is a complex attitude of an employee towards work as such, towards the unique circumstances and conditions of his or her engagement and employability and towards specific tasks allocated to him or her.

The question is if people feel good about themselves after working all day . If they are content with the job they have done . If they feel they have achieved anything , helped someone , learned information or made a contribution . Employees are asking more and more about why they work. The solution has to be more than just money. Of course, individuals need money to satisfy their basic needs, but motivation and participation cannot be bought with money (Guinn, 2013). From research that has been conducted for years it has been shown the importance of motivation at workplace. It has an impact on the way employees act, the level of efficiency pertaining performance, and the degree of competitive advantage it will gain in the future (Robbins, 2000; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Deci et al., 2017). Motivation has an impact on how hard people work, how focused they are, and how long they stick with a job (Robbins, 2000; Gagné et al., 2015). People that are driven are more productive, devoted, and eager to do more than what is expected of them in work (Saks, 2022; Deci et al., 2017). Motivation is a personal characteristic and strategic resource of the firm that may enhance performance in numerous aspects (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Research has shown that motivation has a bearing on important psychological states that impact pleasure at work, engagement and well-being. Intrinsic motivation via personal growth, autonomy and meaningful work increases creative thinking, problem solving and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Though extrinsic motivation is important, its outcomes are mixed depending on the incentives and work environment. Researchers found that the existing incentives may suppress intrinsic motivation while recognition and promotion may increase it

(Pittman & Heller, 1987). There has to be a balance between external incentives and procedures that motivate individuals to work hard at companies.

Research has shown that parameters like leaders' behavior and workplace conditions may exert influence on the way employees are motivated (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Deci et al., 2017; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Consistent support from leaders, open communication, and fair treatment always promotes a notion of excitement to the employees both regarding their attitudes and the quality of their work (Shoemaker, 2003; Alshaabani et al., 2021). Social exchange theory (Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) has set that employees who see their employer as concerned for their welfare and contributions are more likely to align with and dedicate themselves to the organization. However, when certain aspects of the work such as responsibilities that are unclear, treatment that is held to be unfair, or overload of work might cause people to be abstinent from engagement, feel stress, and express a willingness to resign (Arnold et al., 2009; Saks, 2022).

Strategic management connects motivation to the optimal level of competitive advantage of the company. Workers that are motivated are more likely to take the initiative, be open to new ideas, and be flexible (Staw & Ross, 1985). In retail, these practices directly make customers happier, improve operational effectiveness, and strengthen the company's reputation (Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2022). Researchers assert that psychological capital, comprising hope, optimism, effectiveness, and resilience, drives employee motivation and enhances organizational performance (Friend et al., 2016). Companies that put money into mental health services frequently have fewer absences, better teamwork, and more long-term success. Finally, motivation is quite important for keeping employees, which is growing more important in today's job market.

1.2 Research Purpose and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore, analyze and critically assess work motivation in the retail sector with specific attention on variables affecting employee behavior, commitment and performance. The research aims to explore the role of human resource management techniques in producing a favorable work environment and job motivation. For this purpose, AB Vasilopoulos is utilized as a case study, through which the phenomena of work motivation in the context of Greek retail is explored.

These objectives direct the study's research questions, which delineate the theoretical investigation and underpin the empirical analysis:

1. How does employee motivation influence organizational performance, employee behavior, and workplace outcomes?

2. What are the best ways to motivate and organize retail workers, especially when they have a lot of work to do and customers to deal with?
3. What factors influence employee motivation within AB Vasilopoulos, and how are these factors perceived by employees?

To address the aforementioned research issues, a qualitative research technique in the form of a case study was employed. Data were acquired via semi-structured interviews with personnel of various departments and levels of hierarchy of AB Vassilopoulos and processed by the theme analysis approach.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The current dissertation is organized in eight chapters, logically moving from the theoretical basis of work motivation to the empirical study and interpretation of research results.

Chapter 1 starts the research subject by analyzing the concept of work motivation, its importance in contemporary organizations and its relevance in the retail sector. The chapter also presents the purpose of the study, the aims and the research questions.

Chapter 2 provides the literature overview and theoretical basis of the inquiry. It explains the concept of motivation in organisations and critically analyses major classical and contemporary motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Locke's Goal-Setting Theory, and Skinner's Reinforcement Theory. Chapter 5 also talks about the relationship between motivation and organizational outcomes, motivation in retail businesses, and methods to boost employee motivation.

Chapter 3 is on the retail sector and the case of AB Vassilopoulos. This chapter discusses the characteristics of the retail industry, the position of AB Vassilopoulos in the Greek market and the organizational context in which the issue of employee motivation is examined.

In chapter 4, the research strategy of this study is presented. It explains the research design, the selection of participants, the research instrument, ethical considerations and the data processing technique utilized to answer the research questions.

The qualitative study results are presented in Chapter 5. The chapter opens with the demographic information of the participants followed by the presentation of the findings of theme analysis. The findings are classified into themes related to employee motivation, such as recognition and rewards, leadership support, learning and professional development, team climate, customer orientation, financial and non-financial incentives, organizational culture, and suggestions for improvement.

The results are discussed in Chapter 6 in connection to the current research on employee motivation. The chapter discusses the findings, compares the results with prior research and underlines the relevance of the study to the understanding of motivation in the retail industry. Chapter 7 discusses the theoretical and practical consequences of the results. Special focus is paid to the study's contribution to motivation theory and to practical suggestions that may be utilized by AB Vassilopoulos and other retail firms that want to enhance employee motivation and engagement. The last chapter of the study and includes results of the study, limits of the study, and future research suggestions on employee motivation and human resource management in the retail firm.

2. Literature Review / Theoretical Framework

2.1 Concept of Motivation in Organizations

Motivation, which is the result of both biological and psychological processes involves so much internal desires and external incentives that exert influence on a variety of human processes such as thought, behavior, and efforts put to achieve accomplishments. The study of motivation has evolved from ancient philosophical explorations to contemporary scientific research and a range of parameters have been demonstrated including emotions, society, cognition, and physical characteristics. Fundamentally, motivation drives and sustains all goal-oriented behavior by establishing a link between people's desires and actions.

According to research, motivated employees contribute to higher output and greater performance, workforce stability, a favorable workplace culture, enhanced cooperation, and harmony in the workplace (Robbins, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2022). While a lack of motivation may result in depression, increased turnover, and burnout, motivated workers contribute to improved levels of productivity, job satisfaction, and retention (Badubi, 2017; Deci et al., 2017; Saks, 2022).

To encourage good employee attitudes, organizations must place a high priority on creating supportive work environments (Badubi, 2017). To develop successful motivating tactics, managers need have a thorough awareness of the requirements, goals, and ambitions of their staff (Dhaliwal, 2016). Motivation is a continuous process which benefits both individuals and organizations by helping workers to achieve their personal goals, empowering the team and leading to the overall success of the company,” said Dhaliwal (2016). In a competitive global market, organizations need to understand and boost employee motivation to attract and retain talent and enhance productivity and drive innovation. While there is a rich body of study on motivation theories, implementing practical ways to improve employee motivation in various working conditions is still challenging. Therefore, a review is essential to gather the latest research, to find gaps and provide practical insights to support managers and HR professionals in building strategies that might effectively enhance employee engagement. The incentive approaches that are established by the organizations will enable them to boost staff productivity and efficiency, which will ultimately allow them to reach their business goals (Achim, et al., 2013).

2.2 Classic and Contemporary Motivation Theories

Maslow's hierarchy of requirements, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, McClelland's needs theory, and Theory X & Theory Y (Mc Gregor) are some of the main content theories of motivation.

2.2.1 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Human motivation has long been a topic of study, with several theories seeking to explain what motivates people to take action and pursue fulfillment. One of the most well-known of them is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which provides a methodical view of human motivation. Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of five needs levels (Maslow, 1943) according to the sequence in which people prioritize their requirements: physiological needs, safety and security needs, social or affiliation or belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization (Sumrow, 2003). After fundamental, first-order requirements are met, people think about their higher, second-order demands, order requirements (Bishop, 2016). First-order physiological demands, which are necessary for life, are connected to working circumstances and pay at job. Safety and security, including benefits and work stability, are second-order requirements. Third-order wants are about feeling like you belong in a group, which affects how well you work with others and how well you connect with them. Fourth-order needs include a good self-image, self-esteem, and the need for recognition. Lastly, self-actualization, the ultimate level of desire is to fulfill one's full potential via possibilities for development and success (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's model is a well recognized social science theory of motivation. Its verification is difficult because it lacks empirical support (Bishop, 2016).

Looking at Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs makes it simpler to understand what motivates individuals. It is a hierarchy of needs and humans progress from fundamental needs to self-actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps us understand the drivers of individuals and how to address the demands of workers in enterprises. This approach helps organizations establish a positive and satisfying atmosphere for their staff. This involves fair salary, job stability, working together, being acknowledged, and personal progress. The idea has been disputed since it is hierarchical and has no proof. But given that it is so simple to comprehend it is a terrific device for coming up with fresh ideas. Maslow's theory has contributed significantly to our knowledge of human motivation, but the present literature has developed more complex and empirically based methodologies. Our understanding of how various factors affect work behavior and performance has been augmented by theories like Ryan and Deci's

Self-Determination Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. Today Maslow's theory is viewed more as a fundamental theoretical starting point than a complete explanatory model of job motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci et al., 2017).

2.2.2 Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory

Alderfer's (1972) Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) thesis was an expansion and modification of Maslow's hierarchy of requirements theory. ERG theory suggests that human needs fall into three main categories: existence requirements, relatedness needs and development needs. Existence requirements are the fundamental material and physiological demands of the person, economic security, circumstances of labor, bodily well-being. Relatedness demands include the establishment and maintenance of healthy interpersonal connections, social acceptability and feeling of belonging. Finally, growth requirements relate to personal development, creativity, taking on difficulties and realizing the individual's potential (Alderfer, 1972).

Maslow thought that needs are turned on in a sequential and hierarchical way whereas Alderfer thought that many sorts of needs may function at the same time. He also introduced the frustration-regression process. This method shows that if a person cannot satisfy a higher need level, he may regress to a lower need level. It is considered as more flexible than Maslow's model, since it admits that human behaviour does not necessarily follow a straight linear path of need fulfilment (Alderfer, 1972; Lunenburg, 2011).

The ERG theory is valuable but has been criticised for the difficulty of empirically verifying key important assumptions, notably the frustration-regression process and the linkages between the three types of needs (Miner, 2005). However, this theory is a useful tool in the study of job motivation since it provides a more flexible model for understanding human desires than previous need theories (Lunenburg, 2011).

ERG theory is of special significance for the current study since it is possible to analyze the numerous aspects that impact the motivation of workers in the retail business. For example, the requirements for existence are tied to concerns such as pay, benefits and job stability, the needs for relationships are related to collaboration and support in the workplace and the needs for growth are associated with possibilities for training, development and taking initiatives. Thus, the theory provides a sufficient theoretical background for the explanation of the elements that impact the work motivation of the workers at AB Vassilopoulos.

2.2.3 The motivation-hygiene theory and two-factor theory (Herzberg)

For a long time, organizational and psychological research has focused on figuring out what makes employees happy and motivated. Motivation-Hygiene Theory comprises two kinds of factors that affect satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 2003; Alshmemri et al., 2017). Motivators like as achievement and recognition enhance both motivation and satisfaction, while hygiene variables like salary and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction without generating satisfaction (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). Research has largely substantiated the concept, which has been widely used in fields such as education and nursing (Alshmemri et al., 2017; Chu & Kuo, 2015). Modern positive psychology research backs up Herzberg's beliefs, showing that they may be used to make employees happy (Sachau, 2007). However, some studies have shown exceptions, such as the limited effect of monetary incentives on workplace involvement (Chu & Kuo, 2015). Moreover, the theory's applicability across many cultures and occupations has been analyzed (Chu & Kuo, 2015; Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011).

2.2.4 The hypothesis of McClelland need

The concept of "need" is fundamental to human motivation, serving as the foundation for understanding what drives individuals to act, exert effort, and achieve success. According to McClelland's hypothesis (McClelland, 1965), prior experiences, societal norms, and self-concept all contribute to the amplification or suppression of demands. Needs may thus be "learned." According to this idea, three of the main wants are the need for power, which is the need to influence others and control one's surroundings (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982). The strong desire for power leads to competitive behavior. According to McClelland (1965), the need for connection is the need for amicable and pleasant social relationships and a feeling of closeness. The strong urge for connection leads to collaborative conduct. According to McClelland and Boyatzis (1982), the need for accomplishment is the drive to succeed, to meet standards, and to pursue and accomplish objectives, strong ambition to succeed. Individuals who have a high desire for accomplishment prefer to use their own efforts to reach moderately difficult objectives. They like projects that provide quick and accurate feedback on how well a goal is being achieved, as well as those with a modest level of risk. The strong desire for success leads to both collaborative and competitive conduct. The idea proposes that social experiences and personal contexts impact the individual wants and motivations. As a result, there are variations in the aspects that serve as motivations for every employee (Baptista et al., 2021). Despite the fact that the idea is seen to be advantageous for many multinational corporations, leadership often falls short in meeting the varied demands of their teams. Organizations might

improve employee motivation and job satisfaction by comprehending and using McClelland's theory (Baptista et al., 2021).

2.2.5 Mc Gregor's Theory X and Theory Y

According to Theory X, workers need control and oversight, but Theory Y contends that they are self-driven and assume accountability for their job (Prottas et al., 2018) (McGregor, 1960). Theory X is an example of an autocratic management style where the boss concentrates authority and takes choices without seeking input from subordinates. This strategy conveys an impression of self-assurance and efficient corporate administration, reflecting the manager's personality (McGregor, 1960). However, Theory Y emphasizes that people are capable of self-control and self-direction to fulfill their commitment to company aims and objectives. Supervisors who sign up for Theory Y adopts a decentralized, participatory management style and has a friendly attitude toward their workers (McGregor, 1960). These theories should be seen as separate constructs rather than a single continuum, according to recent research, with Theory Y showing higher positive relationships with organizational citizenship, psychological safety, and service quality (Prottas et al., 2018). The ideas are important for comprehending workplace behavior even if there is little empirical evidence for them (Galani & Galanakis, 2022). According to Galani and Galanakis (2022), researchers have attempted to develop reliable measures for evaluating attitudes toward theories and their impact on work performance. In practice, combining elements of both theories may be beneficial, especially in recessionary times, as each provides insights into management tactics and employee motivation (Touma, 2021). Theory Z by William Ouchi, first presented in his 1981 book, which addresses issues that American companies encounter, blends American and Japanese management techniques (Barney, 2004). Long-term employment, cooperative decision-making, and a comprehensive concern for workers are all highlighted by the approach (Richard, 2004). It suggests HR procedures that boost group-based incentive programs, employee loyalty, and decision-making involvement (Barney, 2004). Emile Durkheim's theory serves as the foundation for Theory Z, which sees big businesses as community alternatives in industrial society (J., 1983). Ouchi's claims on Japan's use of Theory Z, according to detractors, are not well supported by research (J., 1983). Studies examining the theory's application in different situations, such Taiwanese police administration, show that its effect goes beyond private organizations (A & Hsaioa, 2000). Although elements of Theory Z were found to be useful in this context, authorities did not generally acknowledge them, indicating possible cultural variations in their application (A & Hsaioa, 2000).

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are useful frameworks for creating management tactics that meet the various motivating demands of workers and ultimately support the success of the company. Organizations may guarantee efficiency and control, especially in task-oriented workplaces, by using Theory X in situations that call for formal monitoring and responsibility. Theory Y, on the other hand, promotes creativity, engagement, and a collaborative workplace culture by focusing on trust, autonomy, and empowerment. Leaders may use what they know from both theories to find a middle ground and change their strategies to match the needs of different teams and the goals of the business. This flexibility not only makes workers happier and more productive, but it also puts businesses in a good position to do well in a business world that is always evolving.

2.2.6 Motivational Process Theories

Conscious human decision-making processes are the main focus of process (or cognitive) theories of motivation. Determining how individual conduct is motivated, guided, and sustained in the uniquely willed and self-directed human cognitive processes is the focus of process theories. Early cognitive theories, which assert that conscious decision-making processes determine action, are the foundation of process theories of motivation.

2.2.6.1 Victor Vroom's valency instrumentality expectancy theory (VIE theory)

Expectancy is the degree to which a person feels that his or her work will result in effective performance. The more an employee feels they have the information, skills and resources to attain their objectives, the more effort they are likely to put out. Instrumentality is the notion that great performance will lead to certain rewards or desirable consequences. Lastly, outcome valence is the value that the person assigns to the benefits they anticipate receiving. Where incentives are seen to be essential and desired then motivation is greatly improved (Vroom, 1964).

Motivation is strong when workers feel that their effort will lead to excellent performance, that good performance will be rewarded, and that these benefits are important to them, the idea says. On the other hand, if any of the three is low, motivation overall is low. The idea has thus been extensively applied in human resource management and in performance rating systems (Lawler & Suttle, 1973).

Expectancy theory has been used in several organizational sectors such as the public domain, healthcare and service enterprises as it gives a valuable perspective on the relationship between

employee effort and anticipated results (Blackman et al., 2019). It allows firms to build better incentive, development and assessment systems increasing employee commitment and performance.

This theory is of special significance for the current study, as it permits the interpretation of how workers in the retail business see the link between effort, performance and acknowledgment and professional growth. It is also important for determining how much workers feel that their job effort is appreciated and leads to considerable benefits, which directly influences the levels of work motivation.

2.2.6.2 Stacy Adams' equity hypothesis

People typically compare their work and incentives to those of others, thus to understand what motivates employees, you need to grasp how important fairness and balance are in the workplace. Employees may perceive that they are being ill-treated in effort, recognition or remuneration and get stressed, dissatisfied and modify their behavior such as reduce effort or interest. Gender, age and education all affect responses to impressions. This shows the complexity of the workplace. Fairness is vital for motivation and retention, but more research is required to understand inequality and its impact on employee behaviour. However, this helps organizations establish equitable workplaces that support long-term success, motivation, and enjoyment. Adams' Equity Theory suggests that people evaluate their input/outcome ratio to that of their peers and then change their behavior appropriately (Coldwell & Perumal, 2007; Pritchard, 1969).

The consequences of overpayment are less clear-cut, but the idea is strongly supported in situations of underpayment (Pritchard, 1969). Employees may cut down on their contributions, look for better results, or abandon the company in reaction to perceived unfairness (Aidla, 2012). Depending on variables including gender, age, and level of education, responses to injustice might vary (Aidla, 2012). Even while equity theory originally had a significant impact on the explanation of organizational behavior, it still needs further development and investigation (Pritchard, 1969; Miles et al., 1994), especially with respect to the reasons for inequality, the discontent it creates, and the reactions of people (Pritchard, 1969). However, the idea provides insightful information about workplace behavior and employee motivation. An individual's subjective assessment of how fair their reward is in relation to their contributions and other people's rewards has an impact on motivation. The ratio of individual job input (talent

Postgraduate Dissertation

& effort) to work reward (compensation & advancement) is known as equity. (Outcome by a person / Input by a person) = (Outcome by another person / Input by another person)

According to Adams' Equity Theory, workers assess their contributions and results in comparison to others, modifying their attitudes and actions according to perceived fairness (Shore & Strauss, 2012). The ramifications of equity theory are significant for methods of inspiring others. The three most important ones are avoiding underpayment, avoiding overpayment, and being transparent and honest with employees. Research shows that, especially when comparing internally, disparities in outcomes, like pay, have a bigger impact on work attitudes than disparities in inputs, like productivity (Shore & Strauss, 2012).

The theory's relevance may change based on task certainty, with maximizing being more important in high-uncertainty circumstances and equity being more important in low-uncertainty ones (Neumann, 1980). By successfully communicating, outlining the importance of scientific management concepts, and addressing issues pertaining to perceived injustices, managers may equity (Bell & Martin, 2012). Workers often modify their behavior in reaction to perceived unfairness, and their reactions vary depending on age, gender, and level of education (Aidla, 2012). Managers may improve employee happiness and lessen unfavorable behaviors by using dynamics. Adams' Equity Theory offers a crucial foundation for comprehending how employee motivation, conduct, and general workplace dynamics are influenced by perceptions of justice. This method highlights the need for balance between inputs and outputs and provides organizations with important tools for improving equity. These strategies include elimination of underpayment, control of overpayment, and encouragement of transparency among employees about their compensation. Good communication and dealing with fairness-related concerns may help reduce poor conduct and increase happiness in circumstances with minimal uncertainty when perceptions of fairness are most important. Managers may also personalize their reactions to injustice by considering the effect of personal traits such as gender, age and education. Companies may create fair and motivating workplaces by putting these concepts into action. This will lead to more engaged employees, less turnover, and more success for the company.

2.2.6.3 EDWIN Locke's idea of goal-setting

A key component of human motivation is the desire to accomplish worthwhile goals. By using organized goal-setting techniques, companies may maximize this potential. Clear, difficult, and well-defined objectives greatly improve performance by concentrating attention, mobilizing

effort, inspiring perseverance, and stimulating strategic thinking, as research repeatedly shows. Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory states that with regards to employee performance, the objectives should be clear, explicit and difficult yet at the same time feasible. Clear objectives drive attention and effort toward defined results. Challenging goals increase perseverance and performance. In contrast, ambiguous or absent objectives tend to lower motivation and have a detrimental effect on performance (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to Locke et al. (1981), goal-setting is most successful when the objectives are explicit and difficult, people have the necessary skills, feedback is given, incentives are available, and the objectives are accepted. Over the course of 35 years, the theory has been extensively studied, demonstrating its applicability and external validity in organizational settings (Locke & Latham, 2002). While individual variations have not been a significant influence in the majority of studies, characteristics such as self-esteem and the urge for accomplishment may be useful for future study (Locke et al., 1981). Locke's Goal Setting theory, which emphasizes the need of precise, difficult objectives in improving performance, has significant management ramifications (Chitranshi & Lawande, 2020; Mitchell & Wood, 1994). It has been shown that important components of the theory, including goal specificity, commitment, feedback, motivation, and self-efficacy, improve worker performance (Chitranshi & Lawande, 2020). Supervisors are able to incorporate this approach into departmental target-setting, Management by Objectives, and Key Result Areas (Chitranshi & Lawande, 2020). However, target indicators and standards must be carefully considered due to the complexity of managing duties (Mitchell & Wood, 1994). Goal commitment, job complexity, goal framing, team objectives, and feedback are all important for the successful use of goal setting in performance management (Heslin et al., 2008). The usefulness of goal-setting has been shown by field research, which has shown significant performance gains and possible cost savings for businesses (Latham & Baldes, 1975). The theory suggests that the intrinsic human drive to generate and pursue goals only works if individuals understand and accept a specific goal. To be effective, goals need to be clear, measurable and have incentives, dedication and feedback behind them. It suggests that individuals are better motivated by setting clear, hard objectives and receiving feedback on how they are performing. To be meaningful, objectives should be clear, achievable and quantifiable. But it is vital to carefully consider factors like the difficulty of the work, how the purpose is defined and the person's attributes for effective execution. Businesses may use these ideas to areas such as team goal-setting and performance management systems to create an atmosphere where individual efforts are tied to larger goals. It's a great method to boost productivity, creativity and long-term success, and it taps into people's inherent need to succeed.

2.2.6.4 Charles and B. F. Skinner's Reinforcement Theory

It is necessary to understand the effect of consequences on behavior to manage and motivate in several areas of life, such as education and corporate management. This technique emphasizes the impact of previous behaviors, whether good or bad, and how they shape future actions. Good outcomes motivate individuals to repeat their actions, negative ones discourage them. B.F. Skinner was the first to suggest the notion of reinforcement. Skinner stresses the role of rewards and punishments on motivation and behavior, a basic notion in behaviorist psychology and learning theory (Gordan, 2014; Omomia & Omomia, 2014; Ying-kuan, 2003). The approach has four basic techniques; positive extinction, punishment, reinforcement and negative reinforcement (Villere & Hartman, 1991). It says that behavior is changed by its consequences. It shows how the effects of past acts impact future behaviors in a cycle of learning . Positive activities tend to last longer, but negative behaviors do not last as long.

A series of stimuli, reactions, outcomes, and more reactions are all part of this circular process. The critiques that the theory is mechanical and does not sufficiently emphasize internal psychological processes have not prevented the continued use of Reinforcement Theory in human resource management. In particular, the ideas of positive reinforcement have been used in shaping reward, recognition, and performance assessment systems to promote acceptable work behaviors and increase employee productivity (Omomia & Omomia, 2014) growth (Ying-kuan, 2003). However, reinforcement theory is still useful for managing and evaluating schools, and positive reinforcement is especially useful for improving students' academic performance (Omomia & Omomia, 2014). Its actual implementation requires careful evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of each tactic as well as suitable timing (Villere & Hartman, 1991).

By emphasizing that behavior is affected by its consequences via four crucial techniques, Skinner's work offers insightful information for management approaches extinction, punishment, reinforcement, and negative reinforcement (Villere & Hartman, 1991). According to this viewpoint, organizations challenge conventional pay-for-performance models by rewarding behaviors rather than just compensating for them (Luthans et al., 1999). Even if they support the current management reinforcement theory has been neglected in management literature despite its tenets and empirical backing (Nord, 1969). It is still applicable in contemporary businesses with McClelland's acquired need theory, influencing psychological empowerment and employee motivation (Abiola et al., 2023). Managers may be able to use the

notions of reinforcement to cope with difficulties of organizational structure, remuneration, job design and employee development that may lead to large gains in performance (Luthans et al., 1999; Nord, 1969). Stimulus, response and consequence is a good cycle to modify behavior and attain the desired outcomes. A number of academics have criticized Reinforcement Theory for its mechanistic view of human behaviour and for ignoring the cognitive and affective aspects influencing motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Despite these criticisms the theory continues to be popular in human resource management and performance management since it underlines the importance of consequences and rewards in shaping work behavior.

Reinforcement theory is a strong tool for changing worker behavior and improving organizational performance because it highlights the importance of consequences in motivating individuals. Managers may use strategies such as extinction, punishment, negative reinforcement and positive reinforcement to modify the behavior of individuals at work and to ensure that their behavior is consistent with the aims of the organization. Some individuals don't appreciate the mechanical method and narrowed emphasis on internal psychological variables of the theory although it is highly beneficial in areas like staff development, job design and remuneration. When used properly, concepts of reinforcement may lead to large gains in performance that can increase worker motivation and feeling of empowerment. The use of these approaches in their management practices would generate a disciplined and inspiring atmosphere that facilitates long-term performance and ensures that individual efforts are aligned with bigger business goals. Although these strategies are not without flaws, they may nevertheless be of assistance to improve the performance and learning outcomes if used carefully and with the correct context and timing.

Psychology has a few approaches to look at motivation. These include surveys and questionnaires, observations and interviews, and projective tests and assessments. Each method has its own merits and may be adapted to the demands of a specific examination. Surveys and surveys often ask respondents to self-report levels of motivation, objectives and ambitions. They are widely used to assess motivation. The results might show patterns. Interviews and observations allow professionals to communicate directly to people. This may provide additional information about motivation by asking open-ended questions and observing at how people act. Professionals could use projective tests where they use events or visuals to get individuals to respond to questions that reveal their underlying motives for doing things.

2.3 Impact of Motivation on Organizational Outcomes

A key factor in determining a company's success and long-term viability is its organizational performance. Financial outcomes, productivity, customer happiness, and staff engagement are just a few of its many facets. To make wise choices and adjust to changing business conditions, executives must evaluate and comprehend the performance of their company. However, it is crucial to distinguish between productivity and performance since, in addition to productivity metrics, performance encompasses a variety of elements, including competence, dependability, effectiveness, and preparedness (Mbah, 2019). It is essential to recognize and understand the elements that affect organizational performance in order to improve it. Role descriptions, company culture, management styles, work environments, and personnel management laws are only a few of the important factors that affect organizational success, according to a landmark 2004 study (Kielbasa, 2021).

Performance may be measured in a variety of ways that capture the "what" and "how" of achievement. While economic viability and growth are routinely employed throughout nations, different firms emphasize different performance measures. Key performance indicators (KPIs), which are typically connected to financial results like efficiency or profit margins, are widely used to evaluate the "what" component of performance. However, assessing the "how" component, which is related to organizational competence or performance, presents more difficulties and mostly depends on subjective assessments inside the particular organizational setting (Nworgu, 2006).

Businesses aiming for excellence must comprehend the elements influencing organizational performance in today's competitive environment. Considering the aforementioned, academics studying organizational behavior and human resource management have long focused on the connection between motivation and organizational success. Organizations looking to improve their overall performance must comprehend how employee motivation affects performance. In order to clarify the main ideas and processes behind this connection, this part offers a thorough theoretical overview that draws from the body of current research and hypotheses. As a basic psychological notion, motivation encourages people to start, maintain, and focus their behavior on reaching certain objectives. Employee motivation is crucial in determining how well employees work in corporate settings, which in turn affects organizational results. To explain the complex processes by which motivation affects organizational performance, a wide range of ideas have been put forward. Making a distinction between content and process theories is a common method of classifying theories of motivation. While process theories explore "how" motivation arises and shows up

in people's behavior at work, content theories mostly concentrate on determining "what" motivates workers, which is often linked to meeting their needs (Karić, 2014). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a well-known content theory that holds that people have a hierarchy of wants that need to be met in order.

Employees move toward higher-order goals like self-actualization, esteem, and social belongingness as they satisfy their fundamental physiological demands. Employee motivation and performance may be favorably impacted by organizations that provide workers the chance to meet these demands (Nnabuo, Okorie, Nweededuh, & Uche, 2006). Herzberg's two-factor theory is another well-known content theory. It separates factors into hygiene factors and motivators. Examples of motivators that directly boost intrinsic motivation and employee satisfaction include chances for growth, hard effort, and praise. Pay, job security, and the work environment are all important for making people happy, but they don't always keep them motivated. To improve employee engagement and the overall performance of the organization, companies need to know how to deal with both hygiene concerns and motivators (Basset-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Adams' equity thesis speaks about how important it is to feel like things are fair at work. According to this hypothesis, people compare their own skills and work to those of others. People may not be as motivated or do their best if they think the ratio of inputs to outcomes is unfair. For incentive systems to succeed, people have to think they are fair and reasonable (Webb, Perry, & Fennelly, 2015). This is important for keeping people engaged and helping them do better job. Locke and Latham's goal-setting hypothesis says that individuals may work more and do better if they set clear, hard goals. When workers have clear goals, they feel focused and on track, which keeps them motivated and helps them accomplish their tasks better. To use motivational power, you need to set clear goals and obtain regular help and feedback (Serhan, Al Achy, & Nicolas, 2018). These examples only show a tiny part of the various ideas that have been put up to explain the complicated link between motivation and success in an organization. Theoretical frameworks from several disciplines, including organizational behavior, sociology, and psychology, provide a comprehensive understanding of this relationship. The next sections will examine the empirical evidence that supports this link, considering the complexities and challenges that arise in practical organizational contexts.

2.4 Motivation in Retail Organizations

Like in other service industries, management in the retail industry is always looking for ways to inspire their staff to perform more productively. Compensation plans, work supervision, and other wellness initiatives are often used to do this, albeit the outcomes are not always consistent (Locke, 1976; Staw & Ross, 1985). One significant problem is that workers are seldom persuaded directly by outside pressures (Furnham, Eracleous, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009). Therefore, intrinsic incentives like internalization, identification, or personalization do not result from extrinsic motivation. One of the main obstacles for sales research, both conceptually and practically, is the formation of intrinsic motivation (Miao et al, 2000). Using the research of Miao et al. (2007), Pullins (2001), Ryan and Deci (2000), and Tyagi (1982, 1990), this empirical study investigates motivation in a sales-oriented shop, namely a hypermarket. Managers in the retail industry are under a lot of pressure to boost sales and improve workers' skills (Arnold et al, 2009). Retail managers now have to train and motivate employees in addition to overseeing and managing their job (Arnold et al, 2009; Bridges, 1994; Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990; Shoemaker, 2003). The external sources of incentive (sales objectives and efficiency) are clearly and objectively visible to all workers at the workplace due to the extremely extrinsically driven settings of supermarket chains. We thus got a great chance to examine whether extrinsic incentive changes into intrinsic motivation using a hypermarket. The influence of extrinsic and intrinsic variables on intrinsic motivation has been the subject of several research. For example, Pullins (2001) and Mallin and Pullins (2009) have shown a persistent reliance on motivating factors. Climate (Pullins, 2001; Tyagi 1982, 1990), culture (Adler, 1983; Koh et al, 2011), cultural practices (Ryan & Deci, 2000), external reward or compensation (Pittman & Heller, 1987), general reward and feedback mechanisms (Pullins, 2001), and relationships between individual and organizational goals (Miao et al., 2007) have all been studied in relation to intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Pullins (2001) demonstrated the connection between intrinsic motivation and work features and sales strategy flexibility. Different motivational mechanisms result in intrinsic pleasure, according to Miao et al. (2007) and Ryan and Deci (2000). It has been shown that employee satisfaction increases contentment and output (Friend et al, 2016; Peterson et al, 2008). However, we discover that little study has been done on the interdependencies between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

2.5 Strategies for Fostering Motivation

Research has shown several ways to boost intrinsic motivation. Performance-based rewards may improve both performance and intrinsic motivation by giving workers more control over

their job and giving them useful feedback.

Lopez (1981). In educational settings, tactics that foster students' autonomy, competence, feeling of belonging, and self-esteem are essential. Research indicates that enjoyment enhances intrinsic motivation (Raffini, 1995). To boost intrinsic motivation and academic achievement, teachers need to pay attention to their students' psychological needs for independence, competence, and connection (Amin, 2020). External stimuli, including self-directed learning environments and role models, may augment cognitive processes during medical training, the residents' private drive. Positive feedback and patient appreciation enhance feelings of competence, but autonomy, responsibility, and independence are crucial (Tokumasu et al., 2022). There are several ways to enhance intrinsic motivation:

(i) People need to be given hard tasks or goals to boost their inner drive. These challenges have to hold personal significance for the individual and include a certain level of uncertainty, where success is not guaranteed, but remains attainable. Feedback based on performance is important since it lets individuals see how well they are doing with the job. Giving hard tasks may boost intrinsic motivation in both work and school settings.

(ii) Autonomy is necessary for intrinsic motivation. People are more likely to be motivated from inside when they are given control over activities or goals. Allowing individuals to work on their own gives them a sense of control over their work and their environment, which helps them understand that what they do has important effects.

(iii) Intrinsic motivation may come from anything in the environment that makes people curious. External stimuli, such as sounds or objects, may generate curiosity and a desire to acquire knowledge or improve understanding. Models or exhibits in the classroom that look good may spark students' curiosity and make them want to learn more.

(iv) Working together may help boost intrinsic motivation. Working with others may make individuals feel fulfilled, which can boost their motivation and make them want to be more involved in activities.

(v) Like working together, competition may increase intrinsic motivation. It lets individuals see how well they are doing compared to others, which can make them work harder and try to improve themselves.

(vi) When individuals think that their work is helping to make the world a better place. When individuals have a good or higher purpose, their natural drive grows. This sense of purpose makes them more likely to reach their full potential and work hard to do so. Extrinsic motivators, such as rewards, may enhance engagement in activities and support those lacking the essential skills necessary to complete certain tasks, even when related to performance.

In organizations, extrinsic motivation, which is influenced by external incentives or outcomes, may be effectively cultivated. Using different strategies managers may boost their employees' intrinsic motivation by giving them verbal praise and positive feedback (Haywood et al., 2008; Hensen & ten Cate, 2017). However, caution is necessary when using physical incentives, since anticipated tangible benefits may diminish intrinsic drive, whereas unforeseen or unrelated rewards may not have a negative impact (Hensen & ten Cate, 2017). Haywood et al. (2008) say that cooperative learning groups and intriguing lessons may also make people more motivated. It is essential to recognize that extrinsic incentives do not inherently improve organizational performance as previously assumed, notwithstanding their potential use as motivational tools (Gerhart & Ledford, 2013).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study used a qualitative research technique in the form of a case study, in order to analyze in detail the elements that impact the work motivation of workers at AB Vassilopoulos. The qualitative methodology option was considered adequate since the objective of the research was not to measure variables or statistically generalize the results, but to understand the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of the employees regarding the motivations that influence their behavior and commitment in the workplace (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative research permits the study of complex social and organizational phenomena in their natural setting, with an emphasis on the meaning that participants themselves attach to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Work motivation is a multifaceted phenomena, conditioned by human, societal and organizational elements. The qualitative technique is especially suited for the analysis of work motivation within the framework of this study.

The case study technique was selected as it provides an opportunity for extensive analysis of a modern phenomena inside its genuine organizational environment (Yin, 2018). AB Vassilopoulos, one of the biggest retail enterprises in Greece with a huge staff, was selected as a case study, which established human resource management methods and a substantial position in the Greek market. The choice of the corporation enabled to investigate work motivation in a context where workers had to adapt to challenging working circumstances, high customer service expectations and ongoing organizational changes.

At the same time, this particular approach helped to answer the research questions of the study, since it allowed to understand in depth the factors that influence the motivation of employees, the practices that the organization implements and the way in which employees perceive the relevant initiatives. Qualitative research facilitated the collection of rich descriptive data that could not be sufficiently captured using purely quantitative approaches.

3.2 Participants

The research was conducted on eleven workers of AB Vassilopoulos from various departments and levels of the business. The engagement of workers from different functional areas was regarded especially crucial, as it allowed for the collecting of diverse experiences and opinions on work motivation and the practices of human resources management in the firm.

Participants held specialized administrative responsibilities in the areas of retail operations, personnel resources, marketing, financial services, supply chain, commerce, technology and corporate communication. This variety was helpful in a more thorough understanding of the

phenomena of work motivation. The participants had diverse professional experiences, responsibilities and everyday obstacles.

Participants were selected by purposive sampling, a common method in qualitative research where the aim is to pick persons with relevant experience to give meaningful information about the topic under inquiry (Patton, 2015). In order to guarantee the gathering of rich and significant data, individuals with varied responsibilities within the organization and firsthand knowledge of the company's working environment were chosen.

The participants included men and women of various age groups, who had worked in the firm from two to thirty-five years. This variety was regarded especially crucial as it permitted the recording of varied opinions about the elements influencing motivation, professional growth, recognition, leadership and organizational culture.

As stated in the literature, in qualitative research, the sample size is not as relevant as the adequacy of the subjects and the richness of the information they can provide, since the purpose of qualitative research is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and not to statistically generalize the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the quantity and makeup of the participants were considered adequate to accomplish the aims of this study.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data for this research were collected using semi-structured interviews. The selection of this research instrument was as a result of the nature of the research issue and the aims of the study which necessitated an in-depth assessment of the employees' experiences, perceptions and views on work motivation.

One of the most often used data collecting strategies in qualitative research is the semi-structured interview, which allows researchers to investigate complex social and organizational phenomena via the personal experiences of the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Unlike completely prepared interviews or questionnaires, semi-structured interviews provide more flexibility and enable the researcher to ask further questions and investigate topics that emerge in the course of the conversation (Bryman, 2016).

The use of semi-structured interviews was regarded especially suited for the current research since job motivation is a complex phenomena impacted by personal, societal and organizational elements. The open conversation enabled participants to speak openly about their experiences, to refer to things they believe significant for their motivation and to point out difficulties that could not be well represented by offered replies.

An interview guide was designed to conduct the interviews, which consisted of theme parts on

work motivation, recognition and reward, leadership, professional development possibilities, the work environment, organizational culture and ideas for improvement. The guide offered a similar structure for conversation for all participants, but the freedom was retained to examine other problems that emerged in each interview.

Finally, semi-structured interviews were deemed more suitable than other data collection methods like questionnaires or focus groups, as they permitted an in-depth exploration of individual experiences and the generation of personal opinions in an environment conducive to the participants' honesty and freedom of expression (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

It is important that be noted that the theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter 2, directly impacted the construction of the interview guide. The topic part of the interview was not meant to generate questions, but to correspond to the important principles from the literature on employee motivation. More precisely, questions on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were based on Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci) and questions about recognition and incentives were based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Questions about leadership were based on transformational leadership and social exchange views. Questions relating to career development were based on theories stressing competence and professional progress. Other parts examined organizational atmosphere, emotional labour, role clarity, equality of incentive systems and organizational strategies that foster employee motivation. The theory-driven method enhanced the content validity of the interview guide by carefully connecting the interview questions to the study goals and the theoretical ideas investigated in the literature review.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study was performed in compliance with the fundamental principles of research ethics to protect the rights, dignity and privacy of the participants. The ethical norms are the core necessity in qualitative research, since the researchers are expected to deal with the personal experiences, views and opinions of the participants in a responsible and respectful way (Orb et al., 2001).

At the beginning of the research all the participants were told in full on the goal of the study, its objectives, the procedure of data collecting and the manner in which the information they would submit would be utilized. At the same time, it was explained that their involvement was optional and that they may resign from the study at any moment and without negative repercussions or having to defend their choice.

The participants were asked for informed permission for participating in the study. In this way,

participants were fully informed of the study's goal and conditions before they agreed to participate. Informed consent is a key element of research ethics that safeguards participants' autonomy and freedom to self-determination (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Special attention was paid to the anonymity and confidentiality of the data. No data that may lead to the direct identity of any of the participants were gathered and all information received from the interviews was utilized only for the purposes of this academic study. To completely safeguard the identity of the participants and to guarantee their privacy, the findings were presented by codes or broad references.

Moreover, data were maintained in a secure environment with restricted access by researcher only. The data were managed and stored according to the principles of personal data privacy and the relevant rules applicable to academic research. The data will be stored for the term required by the academic standards once the thesis assessment has been completed and then deleted securely.

Finally, care was taken to prevent any kind of pressure or influence on the subjects throughout the study procedure. The interviews were held in an environment of respect and trust where the participants felt comfortable to discuss their ideas and experiences openly. The quality of obtained data and the research conformity with the standards of scientific and research ethics were guaranteed.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data from the semi-structure interviews were examined using theme analysis. One of the most used qualitative research approaches is thematic analysis, which allows researchers to find, organize and evaluate patterns and themes in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The main aim of the present study was to assess workers' perceptions and experiences on factors influencing their motivation at work, hence the present approach was judged appropriate.

The research followed the six phases set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase was the familiarisation with the data which included reading the transcribed interviews multiple times. The method facilitated an initial understanding of the material and the identification of likely patterns relevant to the research question.

In the second stage the data were coded for the first time. Specifically, phrases, statements and pieces important to work motivation, recognition, leadership, development possibilities, interpersonal relationships, corporate culture and other traits mentioned by the participants were picked and stressed. These codes provided the basis for the next phase of the investigation.

The individual codes were then organized into broader theme clusters, based on the conceptual

commonality they supplied. As a result, themes formed that systematically described the experiences and viewpoints of the participants. The themes were then examined and polished to ensure they were indicative of the interview content and distinct from one another.

The penultimate step was the definition, naming and interpretation of the topic categories. This process generated eight major thematic units: recognition and reward; leadership and support from the supervisor; learning and professional development; team climate and interpersonal relationships; the importance of the customer and the meaning of work; financial and non-financial incentives; the sense of belonging and corporate culture; and suggestions for improvement. The results obtained in these themes are shown and discussed in the next chapter. Thematic analysis was selected because it gives flexibility in the treatment of qualitative data and the opportunity to develop a deep knowledge of complex organizational processes. Simultaneously, it allows to correlate the empirical data with the theoretical framework of the study and helps in identifying the most essential aspects that impact employee motivation (Nowell et al., 2017). This particular technique enabled a systematic analysis of the interviews and the drawing of findings that reply to the research objectives of the study.

4. The Retail Sector and the Case of AB Vasilopoulos

Retail, according to Gilbert, is "any firm that devotes its marketing efforts toward pleasing the end customer based on the organization of selling products and services as a means of distribution." Gilbert (2003) Retailing has traditionally been tightly linked to consumer lifestyles and more general historical developments. Because people have always employed various forms of consuming to satisfy a range of needs, including survival and self-esteem, humans have always been consumers. Retailing is the collection of commercial operations that improve products and services offered to customers for their own or their families' use. According to Levy, Weitz, and Grewal (2014), retailing includes the sale of services such as overnight hotel stays, doctor's appointments, haircuts, and pizza delivery services in addition to the selling of items in physical stores. Retailing is a relatively modern activity in the consumer process. Even while people were initially reliant on their own local groups for the goods they consumed, retailing emerged with improved communication and transportation networks, which helped to unite communities on a broader scale via commerce (Goworek & McGoldrick, 2015). A mostly localized system of selling products and services, where customers often had direct contact with the artisan producing the items, gave rise to retailing. Markets have existed for

thousands of years, and when they became more common throughout the Middle Ages, manufacturers were able to move their wares across longer distances, even continents, in the case of certain items like spices.

Traditional marketplaces continue to have a big influence on the culture and economics in many parts of the world. The Industrial Revolution began in the 18th century with the development of mass-production methods. Over the years, many improvements in retailing have been made, some of which have gone on to become leaders in their respective industries. In the 1940s, for example, the supermarket was a new retail concept that was expected to progressively displace small specialized businesses in the West (Goworek&McGoldrick,2015).

The retail industry is one of the most significant areas of the European economy. Retail represents roughly 5% of the overall value added of European economies and has a significant role in consumption, employment and economic development in the Member States of the European Union (Eurostat, 2024). In recent years, digitization, the expansion of e-commerce, changes in consumer behavior and the economic effect of the COVID-19 epidemic have had a major influence on the European retail industry . Notwithstanding these obstacles, the sector has showed indications of recovery, with the average annual volume of retail sales in the European Union having climbed by 2.3% in 2025 compared to the previous year (Eurostat, 2026).

The retail trade is also one of the fundamental pillars of economic activity in Greece, contributing considerably to employment and domestic consumption. The industry has been gradually recovering after the economic crisis and the consequences of the pandemic, backed by the strengthening of consumer spending and the rising use of digital sales channels. The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) confirmed the ongoing rise in turnover of retail firms in 2024, with an additional increase (ELSTAT, 2025). At the same time, e-commerce growth and enhancement of large retail chains have majorly changed the competitive environment of the Greek market.

These trends make retail trade a particularly fascinating topic of research of work motivation. Businesses in the sector are challenged to meet high customer service expectations, organizational changes, digital transformation and greater competitiveness. Therefore, the efficient management of human resources and the maintenance of a high level of motivation of employees are important variables for the success of the firm.

4.1 AB Vassilopoulos

One of the biggest companies in the Greek market and a prominent retailer is Alfa Beta Vassilopoulos. It belongs to the international food retailer Ahold Delhaize Group, which has its

main office in Zaandam, the Netherlands. In addition to Indonesia, it operates in the United States, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Central and South Eastern Europe. AB Vassilopoulos is one of the leading food retail chains in Greece and is part of the worldwide conglomerate Ahold Delhaize. The firm works across Greece with a wide network of shops of diverse forms (hypermarkets, local supermarkets), franchisee stores and electronic sales services. According to the latest corporate statistics available, AB Vassilopoulos has more than 14,000 workers and a network of more than 550 places of sale in Greece, ranking among the most significant employers and organizations in the Greek retail trade (AB Vassilopoulos, 2024).

The first Psychiko shop, one of the most advanced supermarkets in Europe, opened its doors in 1970 as well. From 1990 to 1991 opening of a MEGA shop in the Hellinikon area that has won awards. Additionally, the company was listed on the Athens Stock Exchange until 2010. 1992 The well-known Belgian retail company DELHAIZE, a member since July 1992, works with AB as part of its expansion program. The first grocery store chain to use scanning technology in lieu of conventional cash registers was AB in 1994–1995. However, some private label products are created, and a sizable storage and distribution facility spanning 89,000 square meters is set up in Mandra, Attica.

By acquiring TROFO and ENA Cash & Carry in 2000, AB became the second-largest retailer in Greece.

Over the period of three years, from 2001 to 2003, TROFO underwent redevelopment and consolidation, rebuilding its stores and simultaneously changing their marketing signal. As part of the company's organic growth, the system has been in place since 2002 via franchising with the AB franchise network, and it is now growing quickly across Greece. In the same year, AB City, a new kind of small business, was created with the goal of promptly and conveniently meeting the fundamental everyday requirements of customers. In one of the biggest domestic retail deals in 2008, Alpha Beta buys the discount chain PLUS HELLAS, which has 29 stores and a cutting-edge warehouse in Sindos. Consequently, it increases its visibility, especially in Northern Greece. In 2009, AB continued its expansionist approach by purchasing the KORIFI SA chain, which has operations in the Evros and Rodopi Prefectures. This increases Thrace's ten-store network and strengthens its position on the outskirts, also establishes a brand-new, cutting-edge fresh and perishable goods warehouse in Inofyta, Boeotia. A new era of growth and energy savings for other AB shops Vasilopoulos begins in November 2010 with the opening of the first ecological store in Stamata.

2016 saw AB Vassilopoulos join the Delhaize Ahold Group. At the same time, he keeps growing its network by adding 19 new sites and 16 repairs. In 2020 New cultural and economic expectations, as well as new buying criteria, have been brought forth by the pandemic. At AB, e-commerce has "flourished" Vasilopoulos grew AB Eshop, the company's internet store. In addition to a new online order distribution center for Attica, the AB Home Shop Facility is an investment of more over ten million euros with new services and solutions that fulfill daily orders. With plans to build 50 more shops in 2022 and achieve 250 during the following three years, AB Vassilopoulos is commemorating the completion of the 100 AB Shop Go sites in 2021.

Some economic measures show the growth that AB Vasilopoulos has. During 2024, There were some signs of improvement as the domestic subsidiary of the Ahold Delhaize group managed to limit losses, improve adjusted operating profits despite the fact that turnover recorded a decline of 2% in a market that grew at a rate of +3.6% (Naftemporiki, 2025).

As AB Vassilopoulos Brand President Nikos Lavidas said yesterday: "For about three years now, we have started and developed a plan to rationalize our network. We have started and are making several changes to our stores. We have converted a significant number into franchises, we have closed stores, we have renovated stores. What I can say is that we are exactly as we had calculated when we started this path. All this is done with one main purpose. To be able to create capital so that we can reinvest in prices, so that our consumers can find products cheaper. Because, unfortunately, this is the first requirement. Everyone is concerned with accuracy, it is the number one issue in the news" (Naftemporiki, 2025).

Last year, AB Vassilopoulos' turnover fell by 1.98% to 1.94 billion euros, a development that is mainly attributed to changes in the network. As Mr. Lavidas explained, "When we turn a store from a corporate store to a franchise, part of the turnover is lost, because sales to the consumer are no longer counted, but sales to the franchisee. So we are automatically talking about a difference of over 25% and this creates a loss in turnover. Also, in 2024 we closed eight stores that were loss-making, a development that naturally affected turnover" (Naftemporiki, 2025).

He noted that last year AB "essentially moved at lower levels than the market and this did not help us to increase turnover. I can tell you that right now, in recent weeks, we have been following the market pace and maintaining a stable share" (Naftemporiki, 2025).

Referring to the gross profit margin, he said that it stood at 25.3%, showing a decline of 0.5% compared to 2023. "0.5% means 10 million euros. Every year we show less margin and this is proof that we are in compliance with the legislation, but it ultimately causes us the biggest issue

regarding our net profitability,” he noted (Naftemporiki, 2025).

AB’s pre-tax profits maintained their negative sign last year, however, limiting losses to 14.9 million euros compared to losses of 21.3 million euros in 2023. Respectively, net losses stood at 15.7 million euros compared to losses of 19.2 million euros. However, operating profits show a doubling to 13.8 million euros, a development attributed to fewer asset write-offs. “For me, the important number is the adjusted operating profits. What does this mean, if we take everything out of the average asset write-offs, what is the real profitability. We are close to 1.4%, that is, 26.7 million euros, as we were in 2023, which is essentially the rate at which the entire sector is moving.” Mr. Lavidas estimated that profitability will show a positive sign in 2026 (Naftemporiki, 2025).

As for the image of the network, in 2024 it numbered 624 points of which 331 franchise and 279 corporate and 14 wholesale. This year, so far, the total network has increased to 652 points: 254 corporate, 384 franchise and 14 wholesale. By the end of 2025, the network is expected to reach 670 stores, with all new additions being franchises, while the target by 2028 is 900 stores, with 50 new stores per year, some of which will result from acquisitions, and with an estimated market growth of +3-4% per year. Last year, investments of 41.5 million euros were made, with the majority of the funds directed to the network (Naftemporiki, 2025).

5. Results

5.1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

In the present study, they took part eleven (11) employees of AB Vassilopoulos in various positions from a wide range of functional departments of the company. Specifically, the participants worked in the areas of Operations, Human Resources (HR), Marketing, Commerce, Legal and Corporate Communications, Finance, Franchise, Digital Technology (DigiTech) and Logistics – Supply Chain. Of the total number of participants, six (6) were women and five (5) were men. Their age ranged from 27 to 56 years, which ensured the representation of different age groups and levels of professional maturity. At the same time, their experience in the company ranged from 2.5 to 35 years, offering the possibility of recording the experiences of both younger and highly experienced employees.

The participants held positions at different levels of hierarchy, including managers, team leaders, specialized executives and consultants, which allowed the collection of multidimensional opinions on the factors that influence work motivation at AB Vassilopoulos. The heterogeneity of the sample is considered particularly important for this qualitative study, as it contributed to the emergence of experiences and perceptions from different departments and functions of the organization.

Table 1 presents in detail the demographic and professional characteristics of the participants who took part in the survey.

Table 1: Demographic and professional characteristics of the participants

Job Role-Current position in the company	Division	Gender	Years working at AB Vasilopoulos	Age
Area Sales Manager	Operations	Male	9,5	41
Area Sales Manager	Operations	Female	17	35
In store communication & branding marketing manager	Marketing	Female	7	46
Senior Category Manager	Commerce	Male	8	32
Sustainability Specialist- Coorporate communication	Legal	Female	6,5	45
PMO Coordinator	HR	Male	2,5	27
HRBP	HR	Female	4	46
Store Audit Team Lead	Finance	Male	10	36

Franchise Strategy Manager	Franchise	Female	12	40
DigiTech Budget & Controls Manager	Digitech	Female	35	50-56
Warehouse Shift Supervisor	Logistics - Supply Chain	Male	18	47

5.2 Thematic Analysis as stemmed from Interviews

The interview data were examined using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step theme analysis. First, all interview transcripts were reviewed many times to get comfortable with the material and to obtain a general grasp of the participants' experiences. At this point basic observations and recurring concepts were noted.

In the second step, systematic coding of relevant text fragments was conducted. Similar codes were then analyzed and grouped together based on shared patterns and underlying meanings. By a process of iteration, including examination, refinement and comparison of the coded information, wider thematic categories were progressively formed. The first themes were then compared against the actual interview transcripts to ascertain that they represented properly the participants' stories and fulfilled the research aims of the study.

Through the analysis stemmed from eight broad themes that describe the benefits for employees' work motivation at AB Vassilopoulos. Each subject is given individually for analytical reasons, however there was substantial overlap between them, demonstrating that workers see work motivation as a multidimensional phenomena that is influenced by both organizational practices and individual experiences. The following sections provide the topics and illustrate them with sample excerpts from the interviews. Table 2 outlines the themes and subthemes that arose from the analysis of the interviews.

Table 2: Thematic categories and subthemes identified in the thematic analysis

Theme	Subthemes
Recognition and Reward	Promotions, verbal appreciation, trust, delegation of responsibilities
Leadership and Managerial Support	Inspirational leadership, open communication, feedback, managerial support

Theme	Subthemes
Learning and Professional Development	Training opportunities, internal mobility, skills development, career progression
Team Climate and Interpersonal Relationships	Collaboration, mutual support, trust, sense of teamwork
Customer Impact and Meaningful Work	Customer influence, social value of work, sense of pride
Financial and Non-Financial Motivators	Salary, benefits, bonuses, personal fulfilment, recognition
Sense of Belonging and Organisational Culture	Organisational values, social contribution, volunteering, organisational identification
Areas for Improvement	Career progression opportunities, professional development, enhancement of leadership practices

5.2.1 Recognition and Rewards for Work

The recognition of employee efforts was one of the most significant work incentive drivers. Most of the participants said that the sense of recognition of their work by the firm and their supervisors causes more dedication, contentment and the want to continue to work at a high level.

Recognition came in several kinds. For some staff it meant promotions and possibilities for professional growth. For example, a participant who had worked for eight years said that he had received three successive promotions from the firm for his efforts, and this made him feel that his contribution was much appreciated. In this regard, several participants shared that the distribution of significant projects and more responsibilities is a tangible manifestation of the company's trust.

Verbal appreciation was also paid considerable attention to, as were formal ways of compensation. Some workers pointed out that the positive feedback from superiors and senior executives is a reinforcement of their drive without the presence of tangible benefits. A key source of internal happiness appears to be confirmation that their job has worth and helps to the fulfillment of corporate objectives.

Some participants also related recognition with the supply of initiatives and autonomy. The opportunity to participate in key initiatives, to assume new positions and to participate in

strategic choices were viewed as types of organizational trust that boost the feeling of personal worth and professional self-confidence.

In sum, the data indicate that recognition is a complex phenomena and not restricted to cash incentives or promotions. On the contrary, it is a matter of daily feedback, trust, transfer of duties and the potential of a meaningful involvement in the achievement of the company's objectives. These characteristics appear to be quite important for increasing job motivation and also for keeping a high degree of employee engagement to the firm.

Representative quotations

"I have started from the store and within these twelve years I have changed four positions. My development has been continuous and this is how I understand that the company appreciates my work." (Participant 1)

"I started as a part-time employee and today I am an Area Manager. The opportunities the company gave me to develop professionally are, for me, the greatest form of recognition." (Participant 2)

"The word that motivates me the most is trust. My manager allows me to make decisions and take initiatives, and that shows me that my work is valued." (Participant 3)

"Recognition is not only about salary. Sometimes a simple 'well done' or positive feedback from your manager gives you the motivation to continue giving your best." (Participant 6)

"Whenever I am given greater responsibilities or asked to participate in an important project, I feel that the company recognizes my abilities and believes in me." (Participant 8)

"Promotions are important, but what really motivates me is knowing that my contribution is appreciated and that people trust me to take on more responsibility." (Participant 10)

5.2.2 Leadership and support by the supervisor

Leadership was considered one of the most essential aspects affecting the participants' job motivation. Almost all workers emphasized the critical importance of the immediate supervisor in molding the daily work experience, saying that leadership behaviours may either greatly increase or much decrease the incentive to perform and professional dedication.

One of the most fundamental traits given to successful leaders was the power to inspire. Participants said managers who convey a clear vision, promote initiative and serve as role models make a big contribution to establishing an atmosphere where people desire to offer more. Leaders who convey energy, optimism and a commitment for continual development tend to have a good impact on performance and overall work satisfaction.

At the same time attention was paid to open communication between management and workers. Many respondents reported an atmosphere where regular talks, exchange of opinions and feedback on requirements, issues and growth opportunities took place. One of the key factors stated in strengthening the sense of trust and psychological safety was the opportunity to openly communicate concerns without fear of unwanted repercussions.

Another feature that came through clearly was the support that workers get from their bosses when taking on new positions or challenging initiatives. Several participants pointed out that when assistance is available and supervisors are there and ready to help handle issues, tension may be reduced and self-confidence can be built. It seems that the existence of a supportive boss is an empowering mechanism, enabling people to acquire new abilities and pursue initiatives with more confidence.

Interestingly, a few of individuals also provided examples of less successful leadership. In particular, they described experiences of working with supervisors who did not promote new ideas, did not give enough support or showed limited desire to adapt and innovate. The employees' stories revealed that such activities resulted in irritation, diminished desire to take initiatives, and adversely influenced the degree of motivation. This research indicates that the effect of leadership on work behavior is not neutral but may be both an enabling and limiting factor. Furthermore, several participants highlighted the importance of staff recognition and development for effective leadership. Learning opportunities, involvement in high-value initiatives and encouragement of professional growth were seen as indicators of a real interest in employee improvement. On the other hand, the lack of direction or the inability to use the potential of the workers were identified as reasons that may restrict commitment and desire to stay in the firm.

The outcomes of this study show that, in general, one of the most important determinants of work motivation at AB Vassilopoulos is leadership. Employees seem to value especially the presence of leaders who inspire, encourage, communicate well and create circumstances of trust and collaboration. At the same time, negative leadership behaviors are regarded as a major barrier to the creation of projects and the preservation of high levels of dedication to work, emphasizing the strategic relevance of effective leadership for the maintenance of a motivated human resource.

Representative quotations

"My manager has always trusted me and encouraged me to take initiatives. Knowing that someone believes in your abilities motivates you to perform even better." (Participant 2)

"Communication with my supervisor is open and honest. Whenever I face a difficulty, I know

"I can discuss it without feeling judged." (Participant 4)

"A good leader is someone who inspires you, supports you and helps you develop. That is what keeps me motivated every day." (Participant 7)

"When I was given a new role, my manager was always available to guide me and answer my questions. This support made me feel much more confident." (Participant 9)

"Unfortunately, I have also worked with managers who were not open to new ideas. That discouraged me from taking initiatives because I felt my opinion did not matter." (Participant 5)

"The best supervisors are those who recognise your potential, encourage your development and make you feel that you are an important part of the team." (Participant 11)

5.2.3 Learning and professional growth

Learning and professional growth was one of the most common topics that arose from the interviews. The participants evaluated AB Vassilopoulos as an organization that gives great chances for training, the acquisition of new skills and professional growth, which considerably increases their work motivation. For many workers, the opportunity for ongoing growth is not just a perk but one of the key reasons they choose to stay with the firm.

One of the most significant findings relates to the view of the participants that the organization is a constant learning environment. Several workers regarded AB as a "big school" where they learn new information and experiences every day. Factors that extend professional perspectives and improve skill development included participation in training programs, communication with other departments and collaboration with expert executives. Executives working at the headquarters, in particular, emphasized that the complexity and extent of the company's operations continuously provide fresh learning opportunities.

At the same time, participants stressed the significance of experience learning in daily work. Their stories tell us that a big portion of professional growth happens via involvement in challenging initiatives, taking on new responsibilities and addressing complicated obstacles. Exposure to varied scenarios and the necessity to solve issues build technical and management abilities and at the same time increase the self-confidence of workers. Another essential factor is the potential of internal mobility and professional growth that has evolved. Many participants mentioned that they had transferred to various jobs or have been promoted over their tenure in the organization. The presence of internal recruiting procedures and the emphasis on the use of current human resources tend to strengthen the perception that the firm is investing in its workers. For many workers, the chance of a promotion is a great incentive, since it makes them

believe that their hard work and results might open up new career prospects.

Special mention was also made of training, mentorship and talent development programmes. A number of activities were mentioned by participants that were designed to improve their knowledge and abilities, including training seminars, development programs, involvement in key projects and working with experienced executives. Access to such chances seems to provide the sensation that the organization is interested in the long-term career path of workers and not merely in their short-term success.

Overall, the image was quite favorable, with several participants commenting that there is scope for additional progress in the planning of professional growth. Specifically, some workers noted the need for defined career routes and explicit criteria for professional advancement. In the interviews, there was a persistent want for more openness on the circumstances for growth, even if it was recognised that substantial efforts had been achieved in this area in recent years.

In addition, several participants said that ongoing learning is closely tied to their own identity and career objectives. Stagnation was characterized as a condition which diminishes the interest and work satisfaction while the introduction of new challenges, information and experiences is a significant motivating element. The requirement for continual growth appears to be especially relevant for younger workers, but not just for this group. All in all, the results suggest that learning and professional growth are fundamental foundations of work motivation at AB Vassilopoulos. Employees see the business as an environment that gives learning opportunities, and growth of skills and careers, while also understanding the value of having clear and visible career routes. The prospect of continual growth tends to increase commitment, work satisfaction and desire to remain with the firm, emphasizing the strategic relevance of human resource development in sustaining high levels of motivation.

Representative quotations

"I always feel that I can continue learning. What motivates me most is not staying in the same place but constantly developing my skills and becoming better at what I do." (Participant 10)

"AB has given me the opportunity to grow throughout my career. I started in one position and gradually progressed through several different roles. That makes me believe that the company really invests in its people." (Participant 11)

"For me, AB is like a big school. Every day you learn something new, either through training programmes, new projects or simply by working with different people." (Participant 6)

"The possibility of moving to another position or taking on greater responsibilities is a strong source of motivation because it makes you feel that your effort can lead to new career opportunities." (Participant 2)

"I never felt that I had reached a dead end. Even after many years in the company, I still feel that I am learning and developing every single day." (Participant 6)

"Perhaps what could be improved is having even clearer career paths and greater transparency regarding the criteria for professional advancement." (Participant 10)

5.2.4 Team Climate and Inter-Personal Relations

One of the most significant and repeated themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews was the significance of team atmosphere and interpersonal ties in the work place. Participants consistently reported that the quality of connections with colleagues and the presence of a supportive environment had a direct impact on their work satisfaction and their level of motivation. This result was found independently of the department, position or years of experience of the workers, showing the diachronic and horizontal relevance of this element in the company.

Several participants highlighted to the importance of cooperation as a fundamental factor in the day-to-day running of the organization. The chance to work in teams, to help each other, to exchange information and to contribute jointly to attaining objectives, was mentioned as one of the most significant sources of professional satisfaction. Employees said success is not considered an individual triumph, but a communal endeavor, which adds to a feeling of involvement and dedication.

Special attention was paid to the presence of trust ties amongst the members of the team. Participants reported places in which they may communicate thoughts, problems, and challenges without fear of judgment or negative repercussions. Mutual trust tends to establish circumstances of psychological safety, allowing workers to take initiatives, present new ideas and actively engage in decision-making.

Also, a number of individuals characterized their teams as communities of people that cross limited professional boundaries. Reported relationships are defined by interest in the colleague, sharing of personal experiences and readiness to support one other in times of trouble. Most participants refrained from using the word "family" in a literal sense but many spoke of an environment of closeness and solidarity that is close to related traits. The presence of such ties seems to be of great importance in the development of good attitudes towards work and the organization as a whole.

Another key finding involves the importance of help in transitioning to new roles or activities. A number of participants said they had gotten considerable support from colleagues and senior managers in terms of moves, promotions or taking on additional tasks. The presence of

guidance, mentorship and voluntary information transfer was noted as a significant component that simplifies the transition to the new jobs and boosts the sense of self-confidence.

Also, participants underlined the positive atmosphere as a device to absorb the strain generated by the nature of work in retail. Increased expectations, deadlines and heavy workload were characterized as more doable if accompanied by cooperative and mutually helpful partnerships. There are various tales that suggest that it is the human interactions that frequently change a difficult professional daily life into a good and creative experience.

It is also noteworthy to note that numerous workers associated the team atmosphere with the organizational culture of AB Vassilopoulos. In their view, collaboration, mutual respect and support are not only features of specific groups, but qualities that are ingrained in the company's ideals and everyday routines. This view reinforces the feeling of unity and helps to establish a shared frame of reference among personnel.

The results indicate that team atmosphere and interpersonal interactions are important determinants in job motivation. Cooperation, trust, mutual support and good human interactions seem to contribute to work happiness, to make it easier to cope with professional problems and to deepen the employee's connection with the business. As a consequence the social environment of work seems to be one of the most essential aspects that help to sustain high levels of motivation and organizational commitment.

Representative quotations

"What motivates me most is the atmosphere within the team. We all work towards the same goal, support each other and celebrate success together." (Participant 10)

"The cooperation within our team helps us cope even during periods of intense pressure. We trust each other, we communicate openly and we even keep our sense of humour when things become difficult." (Participant 10)

"When everyone around you shares the same passion and commitment to achieving common goals, your own motivation becomes even stronger." (Participant 11)

"There is no competition between us. We work as one team and solve problems together. Many of our achievements would never have been possible without teamwork." (Participant 9)

"I have always felt that my colleagues and managers are willing to help whenever I take on a new role or face a difficult situation. That support gives me confidence." (Participant 6)

"The positive relationships we have with each other make even demanding days easier. A supportive team changes the whole work experience." (Participant 4)

5.2.5 The significance of the customer and the significance of the work

Another relevant issue that emerged in the study of the interviews is the significance given by the workers to the customer and how their job has a greater meaning when it contributes to helping society. Participants did not see their employment as just a source of income or professional growth, but as an activity that has a direct impact on the everyday lives of thousands of customers and helps to address the fundamental necessities of society. This view seems to be a powerful source of internal drive and professional pride.

Several workers said that the high level of devotion and effort they exhibit is mostly because they know the effect of their job on clients. In particular, executives who work at headquarters spoke of the fact that although they don't have daily touch with customers, they know that their decision-making and actions impact millions of individuals who visit the company's shops. This provides a feeling of ownership and personal reward, knowing that their decisions have an effect on the client experience.

At the same time, many participants took pleasure in their role in the functioning of an organization that serves a huge number of customers each day. They say that the quality of goods, the low costs and the ability to meet consumer requests are aspects that offer major substance to their job. This pride is enhanced by the fact that workers consider their function as part of a wider value chain, which has a beneficial impact on people's daily lives.

Interestingly, a number of interviewees attributed their drive to work to a feeling of social participation. According to their narratives, their labor is tied to the prospect of making a constructive social impact, not just to achieve financial objectives. They referred to sources of personal fulfillment and significance such as customer service, engagement in corporate social responsibility initiatives and the contribution to improve the quality of life of customers.

Purpose also came up again and again in the interviews. Several workers said that they are more motivated when they know why they are working and when they can link their everyday actions to a larger organizational or societal cause. An important driver of their job engagement seems to be the idea that their work helps to the improvement of customers' lives and the creation of great experiences.

Moreover, some participants pointed out that the specific advantage of the retail sector over other industries is the possibility to establish a direct or indirect link with the final recipient of services and products. Seeing the outcomes of their activities in reality, in turn, provides them with a feeling of success and affirms their perception that their labor is of intrinsic importance. The constant factor was the contact with the client, notwithstanding the diverse professional roles and responsibilities of the participants. Be they staff working in shops or executives in

administrative responsibilities, everyone knew that the end game of their job was to produce a great experience for the customer. This shared perspective tends to provide a common frame of reference which promotes the cohesiveness and commitment of workers to the firm.

The results overall suggest that the perception of purpose in work via the contact with the customer and social contribution is a key antecedent of job motivation. Pride in contributing to the company, a feeling of societal significance, and the conviction that work has a major influence on people's lives tend to boost intrinsic motivation and high levels of job commitment. The latter suggests that the presence of a clear and meaningful goal, seems to be a significant aspect of the work experience at AB Vassilopoulos.

Representative quotations

"What motivates me every day is knowing that, through my work, I contribute to improving the shopping experience of millions of customers." (Participant 11)

"Even though I work at headquarters and do not meet customers every day, I know that every decision we make eventually reaches the customer. That gives real meaning to my work." (Participant 2)

"I feel proud because our work is not only about selling products. We help people cover their daily needs, and this gives me a strong sense of purpose." (Participant 6)

"The customer is always at the centre of what we do. Knowing that our work has a positive impact on people's everyday lives motivates me to give my best." (Participant 9)

"One of the reasons I enjoy working here is that I can see the results of our efforts reflected in customer satisfaction. It makes me feel that my work really matters." (Participant 10)

"Beyond business results, I value the company's social contribution. Participating in initiatives that support society makes me feel even more connected with the organisation." (Participant 4)

5.2.6 Financial and Non-financial Incentives

The study of the interviews has shown that the motivation of work of workers is influenced by the mix of financial and non-financial reasons. While all participants acknowledged the significance of financial incentives as a fundamental requirement for work satisfaction and covering of personal and family needs, most said that motivation is not primarily dependent on compensation or financial perks. Rather, the whole work experience is strongly affected by elements linked to recognition, growth, interpersonal connections and corporate culture.

Financial incentives were indicated as a basic element to retain job commitment. Several participants pointed to the importance of competitive pay, bonuses, gift certificates, insurance programs and other perks as significant aspects that reinforce the sense of security and fairness.

In particular, workers with many years of tenure in the firm have realized that AB Vassilopoulos has spent in recent years in upgrading the total benefits package for employees, which contributes favorably to the retention of human resources.

Most of the participants believed that financial incentives are important, but money alone is not enough to sustain high level of motivation over time. Many of the workers said that after achieving the fundamental financial necessities, the value of variables connected to personal growth, professional recognition and quality of the work environment increases. In their stories, the chance to grow, to be involved in exciting initiatives, and to be appreciated for their input serves as a bigger incentive than just money. One of the most typical findings is the significance of acknowledgment as a non-monetary incentive. According to employees, positive feedback, confidence of superiors, assignment of key duties and the ability to participate in strategic initiatives are kinds of incentive that significantly increase work happiness. This acknowledgment seems to provide a feeling of personal value and professional accomplishment that monetary incentives cannot entirely replace.

Also, several respondents pointed out the importance of autonomy and room for innovations. Being able to voice ideas, to have a say in decisions and to play an active role in molding the outcomes was highlighted as a significant motivating aspect. This skill is connected to a feeling of professional trust and reinforces employees' organizational commitment. It seems that perks connected to the well-being and quality of life of workers, at the same time, play a vital role. Also, several participants noted health programs, wellness actions, sports activities and other measures that boost the sense of caring from the organization. These advantages are not only seen as extra rewards but also as signs that the business cares about the person behind the employee. Another intriguing observation is the diversity of incentives according to the professional profile of the individuals. Some workers put more emphasis on financial stability and material benefits while others focused more on learning, challenges, growth or the chance to contribute to initiatives of strategic relevance. This research implies that motivation is a multi-dimensional process driven by personal needs, values and professional aspirations. The findings indicate that the basis of job motivation at AB Vassilopoulos is a combination of financial and non-financial incentives. While financial rewards are a necessary condition for employee satisfaction, factors related to recognition, development, autonomy, participation and the quality of working relationships appear to play an equally important, and in many cases more important, role in maintaining high levels of motivation. These results emphasize the need of using a holistic

approach to human resources management that would take into consideration the material and psychological demands of workers.

Representative quotations

"Salary is important because it provides security, but after a certain point what keeps you motivated is recognition, development and feeling appreciated for your work." (Participant 11)

"The company has invested a lot in employee benefits over the years. Health insurance, bonuses and other benefits make you feel that the organisation cares about its people." (Participant 6)

"For me, motivation is not only about money. I am much more motivated when I am trusted with important projects and given opportunities to grow professionally." (Participant 2)

"Being able to express my ideas, participate in decisions and have autonomy in my work is one of the strongest incentives I have." (Participant 3)

"The wellbeing initiatives, sports activities and the general care shown towards employees make you feel that you are valued as a person and not only as an employee." (Participant 9)

"Different people are motivated by different things. Some value financial stability, while others are driven by learning, new challenges and opportunities for development." (Participant 10)

5.2.7 Corporate Culture and Sense of Belongingness

One of the most fascinating topics to emerge from the interviews had to do with a feeling of belonging and the function of company culture in encouraging people. Participants often spoke about their relationship with the firm not just in terms of their professional standing, but also in terms of a deeper identification with the values, aims and philosophy of the company. The sense of belonging to something bigger seems to be a key role in the increasing of their commitment and job drive.

A number of participants spoke to the pride they feel in working for an enterprise that is well established in the Greek market and has a reputation as an employer. The sense of belonging to a firm that invests in its people, characterized by its human resource management methods and looking for a constant improvement of working circumstances, promotes their identification with the organization. Many workers are proud and personally and professionally satisfied to recognize the firm as an organization that stresses individuals.

Shared values were also stressed by participants as important in creating good attitudes about work. The values that guide the company's everyday operation were constantly cited as collaboration, respect, honesty, initiatives and continual progress. Many workers said that they feel more motivated when they believe that their personal beliefs are in harmony with the ideals

Postgraduate Dissertation 50

of the firm, which reinforces the feeling of identity and organizational commitment. Another noteworthy finding is related to engagement in acts that transcend beyond the tight bounds of everyday employment. Some participants indicated efforts for corporate social responsibility, volunteer activities, blood donation, social gatherings and programs for community service. These efforts seem to increase the sense of pride and the notion that their job is linked to an organization that wants to have a good social imprint. The prospect of participation in such efforts was highlighted as a component that gives extra value to work experience.

Special note was also made of measures to enhance the engagement and active involvement of workers in the life of the company. Participants highlighted a range of acts, meetings, events and feedback systems that deepen their relationship to the company. These techniques make the workers feel that their opinion matters and that they are active members of a larger community and not just executors of certain responsibilities.

At the same time several of the participants pointed out that the long-term connection with the firm that they have created, increases the sense of belonging. In particular, personnel with many years of experience indicated a deep emotional attachment to the firm, built through experiences of development, teamwork and personal progress. This connection appears to transcend beyond the traditional employer-employee one and turn into a kind of organizational identification that positively impacts the desire to contribute and remain in the business.

The results indicate that the feeling of belonging and company culture in general are major sources of job motivation. Identification with the principles of the business, engagement in social and voluntary activities, pride in the organization and the sense that the employee is part of a larger community reinforce commitment and attachment to the enterprise. Therefore, the organizational culture is not only a framework for directing actions but also the main mechanism for improving work motivation and organizational loyalty.

Representative quotations

"I feel proud to work for AB Vassilopoulos because it is a company that genuinely invests in its people and creates opportunities for everyone to develop." (Participant 11)

"The company's values are very close to my own values. Respect, teamwork and continuous improvement are things that I try to apply in my everyday work as well." (Participant 6)

"Taking part in volunteering activities and social responsibility initiatives makes me feel that I belong to an organisation that contributes something meaningful to society." (Participant 4)

"After so many years in the company, AB feels like more than just my workplace. It has become an important part of my professional and personal journey." (Participant 10)

"The meetings, events and the fact that our opinions are heard make us feel that we are active

members of the organisation and not simply employees carrying out daily tasks." (Participant 2)

"What keeps me here is not only the job itself, but the feeling that I belong to a company whose culture and values I truly identify with." (Participant 9)

5.2.8 Recommendations for Future Improvement and Expectations

The fourth subject that emerged from the thematic analysis relates to the ideas for improvement made by the participants, and their expectations for the future growth of the organization as a working environment. While the general image emerging from the interviews was especially good, and most workers reported a high degree of satisfaction with their job, there were certain areas highlighted where they felt there is potential for additional development and growth.

The participants most often cite the need for more clarity and transparency in professional development routes. AB Vassilopoulos was recognized as a company with great potential for growth and internal mobility, although numerous workers said it has not always been obvious what procedures to follow in order to move into a new function or for career progression. Participants wanted to know more specifically what abilities were needed, what goals were set, and what criteria would be used to evaluate their career growth. At the same time, some respondents noted that recent improvements in assessment and development systems are heading in the correct direction and are likely to lead to better openness of procedures.

The second problem that came up was that of ongoing growth and training of staff. Although participants rated the current training programs highly, several said that greater learning opportunities would contribute more to their motivation and professional growth. Desire for additional training programs, development initiatives and specialized learning opportunities arose among different groups of workers, irrespective of their years of service or degree of responsibility.

Some participants also highlighted the need to continue to enhance leadership techniques at all levels of management. Most respondents are favorable in their attitude towards their immediate supervisors, however there are perspectives that successful people management is not necessarily associated with great professional performance. Employees' impression suggests that continual leadership skills development, increased empathy and the establishment of good communication practices may also help to create an even more friendly work environment.

Furthermore, in certain situations, recommendations were made to improve financial advantages and other incentives. Most of the respondents evaluated the present compensation and benefits package as competitive, while some workers said that the enhancement of various

financial incentives may have a good impact in improving job satisfaction and retaining high levels of commitment.

It is interesting to note that most ideas for improvement did not concentrate just on financial difficulties, but mostly addressed issues of growth, recognition, transparency and support for workers. This finding is in line with the previous themes that appeared in the survey and demonstrates that workers pay special significance to variables connected to their personal and professional growth.

Although there were individual ideas for improvement, it is worth noting that numerous participants said they had difficulties recognizing large deficiencies or significant issues in the company's work environment. On the contrary, many said that their fundamental requirements were being met well and that the organization is continuously trying to enhance its human resource management methods. This result means that workers regard the company as a listening environment where their needs are heard, and where the business tries to adapt to the new requirements of working life. Overall, the results of this topic suggest that workers largely want increased openness in development processes, continuing investment in training and development and further strengthening of leadership techniques. These proposals do not mean unhappiness with the organization, but the desire of the personnel to continue and improve the growth course that they currently see in AB Vassilopoulos. Thus, it seems that the future aspirations of the participants are more associated with ongoing development than with the solution of major organizational issues.

Representative quotations

"I believe the company is moving in the right direction, but I would appreciate even greater transparency regarding career development and the criteria for promotion." (Participant 10)

"I would like to see even more training opportunities because continuous learning is one of the things that motivates me the most." (Participant 6)

"The work environment is already very positive, but investing even more in leadership development would make the experience even better for employees." (Participant 11)

"The company already offers a competitive package of benefits, although additional financial incentives would certainly be appreciated and could further strengthen employee motivation." (Participant 4)

"Honestly, it is difficult to identify major weaknesses. Most of my expectations are already met, and I can see that the company is constantly trying to improve." (Participant 2)

"What I hope for in the future is not a complete change, but the continuation of the company's investment in people, development opportunities and employee support." (Participant 9)

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the elements that impact the work motivation of workers at AB Vassilopoulos, via the analysis of eleven semi-structured interviews with employees from various departments and hierarchical levels. Results showed that motivation is influenced by a complex of elements that encompass both material and psychological aspects of the job experience. The key topics were about job recognition, leadership, growth prospects, team atmosphere, customer connection, financial and non-financial incentives, and the feeling of belonging and company culture.

Recognition for job motivation had a vital influence, according to one of the most important results of the study. Participants cited verbal prizes, critical duties, trust and promotions as key motivators that increase commitment and the desire for excellent performance. This conclusion is consistent with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which suggests that recognition, goal accomplishment and personal improvement are important motivators that improve work satisfaction and performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). Moreover, it has been shown that recognition has a favorable relationship with work dedication, organizational loyalty, and employee retention (Gagné et al., 2015; Deci et al., 2017). In addition to concerns about the usefulness of cash awards, participants stressed the need to feel that their efforts are recognised and valued by the organisation, confirming the continuing relevance of non-financial forms of reward.

Leadership was also one of the most critical aspects that affected employee's behavior and attitude towards their job. They spoke about leaders that inspire, support and promote innovation, while fostering an atmosphere of open communication and trust. This result is consistent with the notion of transformational leadership, which postulates that leaders who are role models, convey vision, and empower people lead to higher organizational commitment and employee engagement (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Moreover, recent research has shown that good leadership is connected with greater levels of employee work satisfaction, engagement, and psychological empowerment (Alshaabani et al., 2021). The negative experiences described with supervisors who did not promote creativity or initiative demonstrate that leadership may both facilitate and inhibit employee motivation.

Another conclusion of great importance relates to learning and professional growth. The majority of the respondents saw AB Vassilopoulos as an organization that provides many options for growth, training, and internal mobility. This discovery is strongly connected to the

Self-Determination Theory, which holds that the development of skills is one of the core psychological requirements of the person (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deci et al. (2017) report that employees who believe they are acquiring new abilities and advancing professionally are more intrinsically motivated and more committed to the firm. The results are also consistent with the current study in the retail industry, which states that development opportunities are one of the most significant factors in recruiting and keeping personnel (Khan, 2023).

The participants' experience of work also focused on the team atmosphere and the interactions between people. There was a sense of working together, of helping each other and trusting each other, which created favorable attitudes towards work, employees remarked. This result is connected to the relatedness component of Self-Determination Theory, which says that individuals have a desire to feel that they belong to a group and have meaningful social ties in the work environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Studies have demonstrated that good interpersonal interactions correlate with improved well-being, occupational engagement, and psychological resilience (Gagné et al., 2015). It seems that strong interpersonal links are a protective factor against the stresses and expectations of work, particularly in a demanding field such as retail.

The relation between motivation and purpose of work and contribution to customers is very interesting. Participants felt a sense of pride in knowing that their job touches the lives of millions of people every day. This is congruent with modern study on meaningful work that shows that the sense of work having purpose and social worth greatly increases intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Steger et al., 2012; Stefurak et al., 2020). Employees tend to find pleasure not just in the outcomes of their job, but also in the awareness that they have made a significant contribution to other people.

From a theoretical point of view, the data on financial and non-financial incentives are very interesting. All participants agreed on the necessity of financial incentives; however, the majority said that money is not enough to keep motivation strong. The results confirm Herzberg's notion (Herzberg et al., 1959) that financial incentives largely work as hygiene elements, preventing unhappiness but not enough to produce real job pleasure. In fact, more recent research in the area of human resources management (Deci et al., 2017; Saks, 2022) suggests that recognition, development, autonomy and interpersonal interactions appear to have a more vital role in establishing long-term motivation.

Finally, the feeling of belonging and corporate culture were extremely essential. Employees were highly committed to the company's principles and actively engaged in social contribution, volunteering and corporate responsibility programs. These data imply that AB Vassilopoulos' corporate culture is a key method to increase employees' commitment and motivation. The

presence of shared values and shared objectives seems to generate strong psychological links between the individual and the company, thereby helping to sustain a high degree of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Schein & Schein, 2021). This result is consistent with the current research that identifies corporate culture as a critical aspect in improving employee engagement and long-term retention (Saks, 2022).

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study lead to a better understanding of work motivation in the retail industry and show that motivation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which cannot be defined just via financial incentives. The poll found that workers notably value recognition, leadership, professional advancement, interpersonal contacts, a sense of belonging and a meaningful purpose in their employment among the items. These findings are consistent with the current literature viewpoint that work motivation is a mix of internal and extrinsic drive and not just reliant on monetary incentives (Deci et al., 2017; Gagné et al., 2015).

The result significantly confirms Herzberg's two factor concept. The participants acknowledged the importance of remuneration and benefits as basic conditions for job satisfaction. However, the majority of them pointed out that the factors that mainly influence the willingness to perform relate to recognition, professional growth, taking on responsibilities, and the opportunity for personal development. The difference between hygienic components and motivational variables seems to be proven to a large extent in the surroundings of AB Vassilopoulos, illustrating the timeless value of Herzberg's theory in the study of work motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959). The findings also provide support for the main assumptions of the Self-Determination Theory of Ryan and Deci. The tales of the participants are especially good to reflect the three main psychological needs of the theory: autonomy, competence and connectedness. Key features of the job experience indicated were desire for engagement in decision making, developing new skills and solid relationships with colleagues and superiors. The findings of this study demonstrate that provision of an environment that satisfies the basic psychological needs of the workers may significantly enhance the levels of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci et al., 2017).

The study also gives some interesting insights on Vroom's expectation theory. In general, participants are more motivated when they have encountered a clear and equitable link between effort, performance and development opportunities. The desire for more transparent career routes and criteria for promotion points to the fact that employees' impression of fair and predictable organizational procedures has a direct impact on their willingness to engage in their

professional growth, as argued by expectation theory (Vroom, 1964).

Moreover, the findings align with existing studies on the concept of meaningful work. Intrinsic motivation arose from the relationship between ordinary labor and customer service, a sense of social engagement, and pleasure in contributing to the firm. This is a quality that is especially relevant in the context of the retail because workers often relate their professional actions with the satisfaction of real social demands. Research shows that meaningful work is associated with higher levels of commitment, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being (Steger et al., 2012; Stefurak et al., 2020). Finally, the research contributes to the literature on human resource management in the retail industry by confirming that the retention of high levels of motivation requires a holistic approach that incorporates financial rewards, development opportunities, effective leadership, a supportive work environment and a strong organisational culture. The results suggest that organizations that concentrate only on financial incentives may be overlooking critical psychological and social aspects of human behaviour that are vital for work engagement and success (Schein & Schein, 2021; Saks, 2022).

6.2 Implications for Practice at AB Vasilopoulos

The findings of the current study are useful practical advice for AB Vassilopoulos management and in particular for the development of human resource strategies for the retention of high levels of motivation, commitment and organizational commitment. Generally, the participants' opinions of the work environment of the organization were positive, but the research suggested that the reinforcement of existing practices in certain areas might contribute to the improvement of the employee experience (Saks, 2022; Deci et al., 2017).

First of all, the findings underline the need to recognize the work of personnel on a regular basis. Others received strong feedback from their supervisors and acknowledgment of their work, but more structured incentive systems might increase their feeling of gratitude and professional relevance. There are various ways to recognize that do not include financial reward. It may also entail public recognition, placement on high-visibility projects, inclusion in strategic initiatives and opportunities to represent the business at internal or external functions. Research indicates that recognition is one of the most important factors for increasing employee engagement and performance (Herzberg et al., 1959; Gagné et al., 2015).

Second, the results highlight leadership as an important motivator. Thus the firm may continue with systematic investment in the development of leaders' characteristics at all management levels. Training programmes that enhance skills in communication, empathy, feedback, team management and people development might also help create a more supportive work environment. The selection and development of managers with not just technical know how but

also good people management skills seems to be of particular importance. This approach is in accordance with the concepts of transformational leadership, which has been linked to higher work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Alshaabani et al., 2021).

Third, research shows that workers value the opportunity to learn and improve professionally. Therefore, continuous improvement of development programs, internal mobility and talent management activities may be a key lever for motivation. At the same time, more defined career paths and specific development criteria shared with workers may boost views of openness and fairness inside the organization. Individual development plans for workers may also help to enhance the quality of their professional experience and maintain their commitment at a high level. The literature offers a major feature to attract, inspire and retain human resources, namely the possibilities of growth and development (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Khan, 2023).

Another important practical aspect is to maintain and to improve the current outstanding team spirit that characterizes the organization. Participants typically highlighted job pleasure in terms of cooperative and trusting relationships. Thus, the company may continue investing in activities that help strengthen the cooperation between departments, the sharing of information and the creation of strong professional networks inside the business. Such exercises may enhance motivation and overall organizational performance. Interpersonal relationships and a sense of proximity improve employee engagement and psychological well-being to a significant extent (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Gagné et al., 2015).

The results, however, demonstrate that what workers value most is a sense of belonging and their association with the goals of the business. Voluntary initiatives and programmes for increasing employees' participation may go on with corporate social responsibility activities, and may further contribute to business identity and create commitment. The culture that encourages respect, cooperation and engagement looks to be a key competitive advantage of the organization as an employer. The impact of business culture on positive work attitudes and behaviors has been thoroughly proven in the literature (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Schein & Schein, 2021).

In conclusion, financial incentives are not the primary motivator, but they are an important aspect of the whole employment experience. Regularly reviewing the competitiveness of remuneration and benefits and policies that promote internal fairness may help to sustain high levels of satisfaction and help to attract and retain qualified leaders. This is in line with Herzberg's two factor theory and theories of organizational justice that views of fair incentives have a significant influence on employee attitudes and behavior (Herzberg et al., 1959; Adams,

1965). The results of the study suggest that in general AB Vassilopoulos has a decent base to motivate its people. On the other hand, more investment in recognition, leadership, human resource development, transparency of development processes, and the preservation of excellent organizational culture may even further boost employee engagement and contribute to long-term organizational success (Saks, 2022; Schein & Schein, 2021).

7. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

7.1 Conclusions

The present study studied the determinants that impact work motivation of workers at AB Vassilopoulos, employing qualitative research methodology and semi-structured interviews with eleven individuals from various departments and hierarchy levels of the business. Based on the theme analysis of the data, 8 key thematic categories were identified, providing a holistic picture of the elements that contribute to the establishment of work motivation in this particular organizational environment.

The results suggest that employee motivation does not rely just on economic reasons, but on a combination of other organizational, social and psychological characteristics. Particularly significant sources of motivation were: recognition of contributions; supportive leadership; chances for learning and professional growth; a good team atmosphere; and the opportunity to create meaningful interpersonal connections.

At the same time, the study showed that the presence of purpose in work and connection with the end consumer is a significant aspect of intrinsic motivation. Participants showed great joy to be part of the functioning of a business that influences the everyday lives of a huge number of customers, while at the same time acknowledging the value of social contribution and corporate responsibility initiatives .

Moreover, it was shown that the organizational culture and feeling of belonging to AB Vassilopoulos are essential factors for the enhancement of organizational commitment. The employees seem to share the ideals of the firm and have strong relationships to the organization and to one other.

The research concluded that motivating employees effectively needs a comprehensive strategy that includes financial incentives, chances for growth, supportive management, a good work environment, and a strong organizational culture. The story of AB Vassilopoulos shows that the long-term motivation maintenance is mostly accomplished via the satisfying of the deeper psychological and social requirements of workers and not merely through cash incentives.

7.2 Limitations

The present study contributes to the knowledge of work motivation in the retail sector, however

there are several limitations to consider when interpreting the findings.

The research was based on a rather small sample of eleven participants, while this was enough for the purposes of a qualitative study, it does not enable the application of the findings to all workers of AB Vassilopoulos or the broader retail industry. The results are indicative of the experiences and views of the particular participants and should be taken as such.

Secondly, all participants were from one organization. This decision, although allowing a better knowledge of the individual business environment, restricts the possibilities of comparison with other firms in the industry that may have distinct culture, human resources policies and motivating systems.

Third, data collection was based only on participants' self-reports by means of interviews. Therefore, the likelihood of socially desired replies or the effect of personal experiences and perspectives that may have affected the way their opinions were framed cannot be ruled out.

Fourth, the poll was completed at one moment in time and represents employees' opinions at that point in time. The organizational circumstances, operational goals and employee demands are ever evolving, which implies that the motivation levels, and the elements that impact them, may vary in the future.

Finally, this research only examined the employee viewpoint. Incorporating the perspectives of senior management or using other data sources would offer a more complete picture of the motivating strategies adopted in the firm.

7.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research might broaden the study of work motivation in retail business with bigger and more varied employee samples. Including workers from various geographical locations, levels of hierarchy and shop kinds may provide a more holistic view of the variables influencing motivation.

Furthermore, conducting comparative studies among various retail businesses would be particularly valuable, in order to investigate the influence of organizational culture and human resource management practices on work motivation. Such comparisons may also reveal excellent practice and provide important guidance to practitioners.

Another intriguing area is the use of mixed research procedures (mixed methods), which will blend qualitative and quantitative data. The use of questionnaires in larger samples could confirm the present findings and allow for the statistical investigation of the relationships of the different motivational factors.

Future research could also explore the effect of contemporary problems such as hybrid work, digital transformation, artificial intelligence in human resource management and changing

expectations of younger generations of employees. These elements will have a big effect on how firms will motivate and retain their human resources in the next several years .

Finally, the relationship between organizational culture, work motivation and organizational commitment could be further explored, as the findings of the present research indicate that these three concepts are closely linked to each other and play a decisive role in the overall experience of employees in the work environment.

References

- Achim, M. I., Dragolea, L., & Balan, G. (2013). The importance of employee motivation to increase organizational performance. *Annales Universitatis Apulensis Series Oeconomica*, 15(2), 685–691. doi:10.29302/oeconomica.2013.15.2.32
- Adams, J.S. (1965) Inequity in Social Exchange. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 2, 267-299. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60108-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60108-2)
- Adler, N. J. (1983). Cross-cultural management: Issues to be faced. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 13(1–2), 7–45. doi:10.1080/00208825.1983.11656357
- Alderfer, C. P. (1972). *Existence, relatedness, and growth: Human needs in organizational settings*. Free Press.
- Alshaabani, A., Hamza, K. A., & Rudnák, I. (2021). Impact of Diversity Management on Employees' Engagement: The Role of Organizational Trust and Job Insecurity. *Sustainability*, 14, Article No. 420. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010420>
- Alshmemri, M., Shahwan-Akl, L., & Maude, P. (2017). Herzberg's two-factor theory. *Life Science Journal*, 14(5), 12–16.
- Armstrong, M. and Taylor, S. (2023) *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of People Management*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Arnold, T. J., Flaherty, K. E., Voss, K. E., & Mowen, J. C. (2009). Role stressors and retail performance: The role of perceived competitive climate. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(2), 194–205. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2009.02.002
- Arnold, T. J., Palmatier, R. W., Grewal, D. D., & Sharma, A. (2009). Understanding retail managers' role in the sales of products and services. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(2), 129–144. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2008.09.006
- Badubi, R. M. (2017). Theories of motivation and their application in organizations: A risk analysis. *International Journal of Innovation and Economic Development*, 3(3), 44–51. doi:10.18775/ijied.1849-7551-7020.2015.33.2004
- Baptista, J. A. D. A., Formigoni, A., Silva, S. A., Stettiner, C. F., & Novais, R. A. B. (2021). Analysis of the theory of acquired needs from McClelland as a means of work satisfaction. *Timor Leste Journal of Business and Management*, 3(2), 54–59. doi:10.51703/bm.v3i2.48
- Barney, J. B. (2004). Introduction: William Ouchi's Theory Z: How American business can

meet the Japanese challenge. *Academy of Management Executive*, 18(4), 106–107.
doi:10.5465/AME.2004.15268703

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (Eds.) (1994). Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations. Free Press; Collier Macmillan.

Basset-Jones, N., & Lloyd, G. C. (2005). Does Herzberg's motivation theory have staying power? *Journal of Management Development*, 24(10), 929–943.
doi:10.1108/02621710510627064

Bell, R. L., & Martin, J. S. (2012). The relevance of scientific management and equity theory in everyday managerial communication situations. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, 13(3), 106–115.

Bickman, L. (2009). *The Sage Handbook of applied social research methods* (Vol. 2, pp. 254–282). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.10.4135/9781483348858

Bishop, J. (2016). An analysis of the implications of Maslow's hierarchy of needs for networked learning design and delivery. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Information and Knowledge Engineering* (pp. 49–54).

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp.77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bridges, W. (1994). *Job shift how to prosper in a workplace without jobs*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publications.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burr, V. (2002). *The person in social psychology*. Hove: Psychology Press.

Casey, R., & Robbins, J. (2008). Benefits of high internal work motivation comparing retail sector to manufacturing. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 3(3), 13–18.

Chu, H.-C., & Kuo, T. (2015). Testing Herzberg's two-factor theory in educational settings in Taiwan.

Coldwell, D. A. L., & Perumal, S. (2007). Perceptions of the measurability, importance and effects of work equity on job satisfaction and work motivation: An exploratory study. *Alternation*, 14(1), 197–217.

Cooke, E. F. (1999). Control and motivation in sales management through the compensation plan. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 7(1), 80–

83.10.1080/10696679.1999.11501822

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review. *Journal of Management*, 31, 874-900.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>

Czarniawska, B. (1998). *A narrative approach to organization studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.10.4135/9781412983235

Dartey-Baah, K., & Amoako, G. K. (2011). Application of Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory in assessing and understanding employee motivation at work: A Ghanaian perspective. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 3(9), 1–8.

Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The State of a Science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 19-43.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113108>

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2018). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dhaliwal, A. (2016). Motivation and its impact on organization. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 4(6), 4270–4278. doi:10.18535/ijstrm/v4i6.09

Dwivedula, R., & Bredillet, C. N. (2010). Profiling work motivation of project workers. *International Journal of Project Management*, 28(2), 158–165.10.1016/j.ijproman.2009.09.001

Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 25–32.10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888

Elliott, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage.10.4135/9780857020246

Flick, U. (2007). *Designing qualitative research*. London: Sage.10.4135/9781849208826

Friend, S. B., Johnson, J. S., Luthans, F., & Sohi, R. S. (2016). Positive psychology in sales: Integrating psychological capital. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 24(3), 306–327.10.1080/10696679.2016.1170525

Furnham, A., Eracleous, A., & Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2009). Personality, motivation and job satisfaction: Hertzberg meets the Big Five. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24(8), 765–779.10.1108/02683940910996789

Gagné, M., Forest, J., Vansteenkiste, M., Crevier-Braud, L., Van den Broeck, A., Aspel, A. K.,

- Bellerose, J., Benabou, C., Chemolli, E., Güntert, S. T., Halvari, H., Indiyastuti, D. L., Johnson, P. A., Molstad, M. H., Naudin, M., Ndao, A., Olafsen, A. H., Roussel, P., Wang, Z., & Westbye, C. (2015). The multidimensional work motivation scale: Validation evidence in seven languages and nine countries. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 24(2), 178–196. doi:10.1080/1359432X.2013.877892
- Galani, A., & Galanakis, M. (2022). Organizational psychology on the rise—McGregor’s X and Y theory: A systematic literature review. *Psychology*, 13(5), 782–789. doi:10.4236/psych.2022.135051
- Garcia, P., & Hardy, C. (2007). Positioning, similarity and difference: Narratives of individual and organizational identities in an Australian university. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23(4), 363–383. doi:10.1016/j.scaman.2007.09.002
- Gordan, M. (2014). A review of B. F. Skinner’s reinforcement theory of motivation. *International Journal of Research in Education Methodology*, 5(1), 680–688.
- Graebner, M. E. (2009). Caveat venditor: Trust asymmetries in acquisitions of entrepreneurial firms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(3), 435–472. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2009.41330413
- Harter, J.K., Schmidt, F.L. and Hayes, T.L. (2002) Business-Unit-Level Relationship between Employee Satisfaction, Employee Engagement, and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 268-279. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.268>
- Herzberg, F. (1968). One more time: How do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review*, 46(1), 53–62.
- Herzberg, F. (2003). One more time: How do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review*, 81(1), 86–96.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Heslin, P. A., Carson, J. B., & VandeWalle, D. (2008). Practical applications of goal setting theory to performance management. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 22(1), 48–55.
- Huber, G. P., & Power, D. J. (1985). Retrospective reports of strategic-level managers: Guidelines for increasing their accuracy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 6(2), 171–180. doi:10.1002/(ISSN)1097-0266
- Israel, M., & Hay, I. (2006). *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*. SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209779>

- Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: Minuets, improvisations, and crystallization. In D. Norman & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 379–399). Sage, CA: Thousand Oaks.
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), 602–611.10.2307/2392366
- Khan, N. U. S. (2023). Career development and job satisfaction affect employee retention in the banking sector. *Journal for Business Education and Management*, 3(1), 41–57. doi:10.58860/jbem.v3i1.81
- Koh, A. C., Gammoh, B. S., & Okoroafo, S. C. (2011). The antecedents of sales force motivation: An empirical investigation in the insurance industry in Singapore. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 3(3), 3–8.
- Kumar, N., Stern, L. W., & Anderson, J. C. (1993). Conducting interorganizational research using key informants. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1633–1651.10.2307/256824
- Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Latham, G. P., & Baldes, J. J. (1975). The practical significance of Locke's theory of goal setting. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60(1), 122–124. doi:10.1037/h0076354
- Latham, G. P., & Pinder, C. C. (2005). Work motivation theory and research at the dawn of the twenty-first century. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56, 485–516. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.142105
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging influences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163–188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lindenberg, S. (2001). Intrinsic motivation in a new light. *Kyklos*, 54(1–2), 317–342.10.1111/1467-6435.00156
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In J. E. McGrath & D. Marvin (Eds.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (pp. 1297–1350). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705–717. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705–717.

doi:10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705

Locke, E. A., Shaw, K. N., Saari, L. M., & Latham, G. P. (1981). Goal setting and task performance: 1969–1980. *Psychological Bulletin*, 90(1), 125–152. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.90.1.125

Lunenburg, F.C. (2011) Expectancy Theory of Motivation: Motivating by Altering Expectations. *International Journal of Management Business, and Administration*, 15, 1-9.

Lusch, R. F., & Serpkenci, R. R. (1990). Personal differences, job tension, job outcomes and store performance: A study of retail store managers. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 85–101. doi:10.2307/1252175

Luthans, F., & Stajkovic, A. D. (1999). Reinforce for performance: The need to go beyond pay and even rewards. *Academy of Management Executive*, 13(2), 49–57. doi:10.5465/AME.1999.1899548

Makkonen, H., Aarikka-Stenroos, L., & Olkkonen, R. (2012). Narrative approach in business network process research—Implications for theory and methodology. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(2), 287–299. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2012.01.012

Mallin, M. L., & Pullins, EB. (2009). The moderating effect of control systems on the relationship between commission and salesperson intrinsic motivation in a customer oriented environment. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 38(7), 769–777. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.03.004

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. doi:10.1037/h0054346

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. doi:10.1037/h0054346

McClelland, D. C. (1965). Toward a theory of motive acquisition. *American Psychologist*, 20(5), 321–333. doi:10.1037/h0022225

McClelland, D. C., & Boyatzis, R. E. (1982). Leadership motive pattern and long-term success in management. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67(6), 737–743. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.67.6.737

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. McGraw-Hill.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resources Management Review*, 1, 61-89. doi:10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z

- Miao, C. F., Evans, K. R., & Shaoming, Z. (2007). The role of salesperson motivation in sales control systems—Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation revisited. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(5), 417–425. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2006.12.005
- Miles, E. W., Hatfield, J. D., & Huseman, R. C. (1994). Equity sensitivity and outcome importance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(7), 585–596. doi:10.1002/job.4030150704
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Sage Publications.
- Miner, J. B. (2005). *Organizational Behavior One. Essential Theories of Motivation and Leadership*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Mitchell, T. R., & Wood, R. E. (1994). Managerial goal setting. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 1(2), 3–12. doi:10.1177/107179199400100203
- Morrill, C. (2008). Culture and organization theory. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 619(1), 15–40. doi:10.1177/0002716208320241
- Naftemporiki (2025) *AB Vassilopoulos: Restructuring, expansion and a return to profitability*. Available at: <https://www.naftemporiki.gr/business/2012844/av-vasilopoylos-exorthologismos-epektasi-kai-comeback-stin-kerdoforia/>
- Neumann, Y. (1980). A contingency approach for understanding equity theory and its predictions. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 8(2), 153–159. doi:10.2224/sbp.1980.8.2.153
- Nord, W. R. (1969). Beyond the teaching machine: The neglected area of operant conditioning in the theory and practice of management. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 4(4), 375–401. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(69)90017-8
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. and Moules, N.J. (2017) Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Omomia, O. A., & Omomia, T. A. (2014). Relevance of Skinner’s theory of reinforcement on effective school evaluation and management. *European Journal of Psychological Studies*, 4(4), 174–180. doi:10.13187/ejps.2014.4.174
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of nursing scholarship : an official publication of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing*, 33(1), 93–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00093.x>
- Patton, M. (2015) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. 4th Edition, Sage

Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Peterson, S. J., Balthazard, P. A., Waldman, D. D., & Thatcher, R. W. (2008). Neuroscientific implications of psychological capital: Are the brains of optimistic, hopeful, confident, and resilient leaders different? *Organizational Dynamics*, 37(4), 342–353.10.1016/j.orgdyn.2008.07.007

Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Welch, C. (2010). ‘Good’ case research in industrial marketing: Insights from research practice. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(1), 109–117.10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.04.017

Pittman, T. S., & Heller, J. F. (1987). Social motivation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 38(1), 461–490.10.1146/annurev.ps.38.020187.002333

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5–23.10.1080/0951839950080103

Pritchard, R. D. (1969). Equity theory: A review and critique. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 4(2), 176–211. doi:10.1016/0030-5073(69)90005-1

Prottas, D. J., Nummelin, M., & Rogers, M. A. (2018). Theory X/Y in the health care setting: Employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. *The Health Care Manager*, 37(2), 109–117. doi:10.1097/HCM.0000000000000210

Pullins, E. B. (2001). An exploratory investigation of the relationship of sales force compensation and intrinsic motivation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 30(5), 403–413.10.1016/S0019-8501(99)00095-4

Quigley, Jr., C. J., & Bingham, Jr., F. G. (1995). Salesforce control techniques: A comparison of sales managers and salespeople perceptions. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 3(3), 46–59.10.1080/10696679.1995.11501695

Riessman Catherine, K. (2002). Analysis of personal narratives. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 695–710). London: Sage.

Robbins, S. P. (2000). *Organizational behavior*. San Diego, CA: Prentice Hall International.

Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2022). *Organizational behavior* (19th ed.). Pearson.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination*

theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61, 101860. doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860

Saks, A. M. (2022). Caring Human Resources Management and Employee Engagement. *Human Resource Management Review, 32*, Article ID: 100835. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100835>

Schein, E.H. and Schein, P.A. (2017) *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 5th Edition, Wiley & Sons, San Francisco.

Seidler, J. (1974). On using informants: A technique for collecting quantitative data and controlling measurement error in organizational analysis. *American Sociological Review, 39*(6), 816–831.10.2307/2094155

Shoemaker, M. E. (2003). Leadership behaviors in sales managers: A level analysis. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 11*(2), 17–29.10.1080/10696679.2003.11658493

Staw, B. M., & Ross, J. (1985). Stability in the midst of change: A dispositional approach to job attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 70*(3), 469–480.10.1037/0021-9010.70.3.469

Stefurak, T., Morgan, R. and Johnson, R.B. (2020) The Relationship of Public Service Motivation to Job Satisfaction and Job Performance of Emergency Medical Services Professionals. *Public Personnel Management, 49*, 590-616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026020917695>

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment, 20*, 322-337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072711436160>

Sumrow, A. (2003). Motivation: A new look at an age-old topic. *Radiology Management, 25*(5), 44–47.

Touma, J. (2021). Theories X and Y in combination for effective change during economic crisis. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies, 9*(1), 20–29. doi:10.4236/jhrss.2021.91002

Tyagi, P. K. (1982). Perceived organizational climate and the process of salesperson motivation. *Journal of Marketing Research, 19*(2), 240–254.10.2307/3151624

Tyagi, P. K. (1990). Inequities in organizations, salesperson motivation and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 7*(2–3), 135–148.10.1016/0167-8116(90)90017-H

Verbeke, W., Belchak, F., & Bagozzi, R. B. (2004). The adaptive consequences of pride in personal selling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 32*(4), 386–

402.10.1177/0092070304267105

Villere, M. F., & Hartman, S. S. (1991). Reinforcement theory: A practical tool. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 12(2), 27–31.

Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley.

Yin, R.K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix A: “Information and consent form for participation in a research”

ΕΝΤΥΠΟ ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΓΚΑΤΑΘΕΣΗΣ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΟΧΗΣ ΣΕ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ
(Σύμφωνα με τις αρχές ερευνητικής δεοντολογίας, το πλαίσιο του Ελληνικού Ανοιχτού Πανεπιστημίου και GDPR)

1. Στοιχεία Έρευνας

Τίτλος Διπλωματικής Εργασίας:

Τα οφέλη της παρακίνησης στους οργανισμούς: Μελέτη περίπτωσης της AB Βασιλόπουλος.

The Benefits of Motivation within Organizations: Case Study of AB Vasilopoulos.

Στοιχεία Ερευνήτριας: Ρεντζεπέρη Μαρία

Μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα MBA -ΕΑΠ

Ίδρυμα: Ελληνικό Ανοιχτό Πανεπιστήμιο Πάτρας.

Ακαδημαϊκό Έτος: 2025–2026

Επιβλέπουσα Καθηγήτρια:

Dr. Anastasia Konstantelou

Ελληνικό Ανοιχτό Πανεπιστήμιο

2. Σκοπός της Έρευνας

Η παρούσα έρευνα εκπονείται στο πλαίσιο διπλωματικής εργασίας στο Ελληνικό Ανοιχτό Πανεπιστήμιο και έχει ως σκοπό τη διερεύνηση των παραγόντων που επηρεάζουν την παρακίνηση (motivation) των εργαζομένων, μέσω ποιοτικής ανάλυσης ημι-δομημένων συνεντεύξεων και τη σύνδεση των ευρημάτων με την ακαδημαϊκή θεωρία.

3. Φύση και Διαδικασία Συμμετοχής

Η συμμετοχή σας περιλαμβάνει τη διεξαγωγή μίας ημι-δομημένης συνέντευξης διάρκειας περίπου 45 λεπτών, η οποία θα πραγματοποιηθεί εξ αποστάσεως μέσω της πλατφόρμας **Microsoft Teams**, σε χρόνο που θα συμφωνηθεί από κοινού. Για λόγους ακρίβειας και εγκυρότητας της ανάλυσης, στην συνάντηση θα χρησιμοποιηθεί το εργαλείο transcription του teams, με αποκλειστικό σκοπό την απομαγνητοφώνηση και την ανάλυση των δεδομένων. Με τη συγκατάθεσή σας, η συνέντευξη θα καταγραφεί σε μορφή ήχου, αποκλειστικά και μόνο για λόγους απομαγνητοφώνησης και ποιοτικής ανάλυσης, στο πλαίσιο της παρούσας ακαδημαϊκής έρευνας.

4. Εθελοντική Συμμετοχή & Δικαίωμα Απόσυρσης

Η συμμετοχή σας είναι **απολύτως εθελοντική**.

Έχετε το δικαίωμα να αποχωρήσετε από την έρευνα οποιαδήποτε στιγμή, χωρίς καμία αιτιολόγηση και χωρίς καμία αρνητική συνέπεια. Σε περίπτωση απόσυρσης, τα δεδομένα σας δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν.

5. Ανωνυμία & Εμπιστευτικότητα

- Δεν θα συλλεχθούν ούτε θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ονόματα ή άλλα αναγνωρίσιμα προσωπικά στοιχεία.
- Τα δεδομένα θα κωδικοποιηθούν και θα παρουσιαστούν **αποκλειστικά σε ανώνυμη μορφή**.
- Τα αποτελέσματα θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο για **ακαδημαϊκούς σκοπούς** (διπλωματική εργασία του ΕΑΠ).

6. Προστασία Προσωπικών Δεδομένων (GDPR)

Η επεξεργασία των δεδομένων πραγματοποιείται σύμφωνα με τον **Γενικό Κανονισμό Προστασίας Δεδομένων (ΕΕ 2016/679)**.

- Τα δεδομένα θα αποθηκευτούν σε ασφαλές ψηφιακό περιβάλλον με περιορισμένη πρόσβαση.
- Θα διατηρηθούν μόνο για όσο χρονικό διάστημα απαιτείται για την ολοκλήρωση και αξιολόγηση της διπλωματικής εργασίας.
- Μετά την ολοκλήρωση της έρευνας, τα δεδομένα θα διαγραφούν με ασφαλή τρόπο.

7. Πιθανοί Κίνδυνοι ή Οφέλη

Η συμμετοχή στην έρευνα δεν ενέχει προβλέψιμους κινδύνους.

Δεν προβλέπεται άμεσο προσωπικό όφελος, ωστόσο η συμμετοχή σας συμβάλλει στη διεύρυνση της επιστημονικής γνώσης στον τομέα της οργανωσιακής συμπεριφοράς και της εργασιακής παρακίνησης.

8. Δήλωση Συγκατάθεσης

Δηλώνω ότι:

- Έχω διαβάσει και κατανοήσει τις πληροφορίες που μου παρασχέθηκαν.
- Είχα τη δυνατότητα να υποβάλω ερωτήσεις και έλαβα ικανοποιητικές απαντήσεις.
- Συμμετέχω **εθελοντικά** στην παρούσα έρευνα.
- Συμφωνώ με την **καταγραφή** της συνέντευξης.
- Συμφωνώ με την **ανώνυμη χρήση** των δεδομένων μου αποκλειστικά για ακαδημαϊκούς σκοπούς.

☐ **ΣΥΜΦΩΝΩ ΝΑ ΣΥΜΜΕΤΑΣΧΩ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΑ**

9. Στοιχεία Συμμετέχοντα/ουσας

Ονοματεπώνυμο:

.....

Υπογραφή:

.....

Ημερομηνία:

.....

Appendix B: “Informal information provided for the conduct of interviews”

Αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι καλησπέρα και καλή εβδομάδα,
Στο πλαίσιο της εκπόνησης της διπλωματικής μου εργασίας με τίτλο «Τα οφέλη της παρακίνησης στους οργανισμούς: Μελέτη περίπτωσης της AB Βασιλόπουλος.» στο μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα MBA του Ελληνικού Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου που παρακολουθώ, θα ήθελα να σας προσκαλέσω να συμμετάσχετε σε ημι-δομημένη συνέντευξη.
Σκοπός της έρευνας είναι η διερεύνηση παραγόντων που σχετίζονται με την παρακίνηση (motivation) των εργαζομένων, καθώς και η σύνδεση των εμπειρικών δεδομένων με την υφιστάμενη ακαδημαϊκή θεωρία.
Η Διεύθυνση Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού της εταιρείας αγκάλιασε και στήριξε την παρούσα πρωτοβουλία, αναγνωρίζοντας τη σημασία της ακαδημαϊκής έρευνας σε θέματα παρακίνησης και διοίκησης ανθρώπινου δυναμικού. Η υποστήριξη αυτή εντάσσεται στο πλαίσιο της ενθάρρυνσης της επιστημονικής γνώσης και της συνεχούς επαγγελματικής και ακαδημαϊκής εξέλιξης των εργαζομένων.
Η συμμετοχή σας κρίνεται ιδιαίτερα σημαντική, καθώς θα συμβάλει ουσιαστικά στην επιστημονική τεκμηρίωση της μελέτης.
Η συνέντευξη θα πραγματοποιηθεί εξ αποστάσεως μέσω της εφαρμογής Microsoft Teams, σε χρόνο που θα συμφωνηθεί από κοινού. Για λόγους ακρίβειας και εγκυρότητας της ανάλυσης, στην συνάντηση θα χρησιμοποιηθεί το εργαλείο transcription του teams, με αποκλειστικό σκοπό την απομαγνητοφώνηση και την ανάλυση των δεδομένων.
Θα ήθελα να σας διαβεβαιώσω ότι:

- ☐ Η συμμετοχή σας είναι εθελοντική.
- ☐ Δεν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ονόματα ή οποιοδήποτε αναγνωρίσιμο προσωπικό στοιχείο.
- ☐ Όλα τα δεδομένα θα τηρηθούν με απόλυτο σεβασμό στα προσωπικά δεδομένα και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν αποκλειστικά για ακαδημαϊκούς σκοπούς.
- ☐ Επισυνάπτεται έντυπο ενημέρωσης και συγκατάθεσης.

Παρακάτω παρατίθενται οι ερωτήσεις της συνέντευξης, ώστε να έχετε τη δυνατότητα προετοιμασίας πριν από τη συνάντησή μας:

1. Τι σε οδηγεί να δίνεις τον καλύτερό σου εαυτό κάθε μέρα στην AB;
2. Πόσο πιστεύεις ότι η AB δείχνει ότι εκτιμά τη δουλειά σου; Μπορείς, παρακαλώ, να δώσεις ένα παράδειγμα;

3. Πώς αισθάνεσαι σχετικά με την ηγεσία στο κατάστημά σου ή στο τμήμα σου; Πώς επηρεάζει ο προϊστάμενός σου το πόσο παρακινημένος / παρακινημένη είσαι;
4. Νομίζεις ότι μπορείς να μάθεις, να αναπτυχθείς ή να προχωρήσεις στην καριέρα σου στην AB; Πώς επηρεάζει αυτό το κίνητρό σου;
5. Τι θα έλεγες για το κλίμα εργασίας και τις αλληλεπιδράσεις μεταξύ των μελών της ομάδας σου; Συμβάλλουν στο να παραμένεις παρακινημένος / παρακινημένη;
6. Η εργασία στο λιανικό εμπόριο περιλαμβάνει συναισθηματική αλληλεπίδραση με καταναλωτές. Πώς επηρεάζει αυτή η διάσταση την ενέργεια ή το κίνητρό σου;

7. Κατανοείς και μπορείς να ανταπεξέλθεις στις αρμοδιότητες της θέσης σου;
Πώς επηρεάζουν ο φόρτος εργασίας και οι προσδοκίες το κίνητρό σου;

8. Ποιοι τύποι κινήτρων (οικονομικά ή μη) θεωρείς πιο σημαντικούς ή
παρακινητικούς στην ΑΒ;

9. Τι πιστεύεις ότι κάνει η ΑΒ ιδιαίτερα καλά για να διατηρεί τους
εργαζομένους με κίνητρο;

10. Τι θα μπορούσε η ΑΒ να βελτιώσει ώστε να σε κάνει πιο παρακινημένο/η
και ικανοποιημένο/η από την εργασία σου;

Θα σας ήμουν ιδιαίτερα ευγνώμων αν μπορούσατε να με ενημερώσετε έως
αύριο το πρωί σχετικά με τη διαθεσιμότητά σας και τη σύμφωνη γνώμη σας
για τη συνέχιση της διαδικασίας, καθώς υπάρχει ένα συγκεκριμένο
χρονοδιάγραμμα που καλούμαι να τηρήσω στο πλαίσιο των ακαδημαϊκών
μου υποχρεώσεων.

Σας ευχαριστώ θερμά εκ των προτέρων για τον χρόνο σας, την κατανόηση και τη
συμβολή σας στην παρούσα ερευνητική προσπάθεια.

Με εκτίμηση,

Rentzeperi Maria

Business Service Finance

Inventory Management Supervisor

AB Vassilopoulos

A: 81 Spaton Av., 15344, Athens, Greece

T: +30-210-6608194

Appendix C: “Interview guide”

Demographics

Gender:

Age Group:

Current Position in the Company:

Years of Work Experience in Retail:

Years Working at AB Vasilopoulos:

Questions for the semi- structured interview

1. What drives you to do your best job every day at AB?

(βασισμένο σε intrinsic & extrinsic motivation — Ryan & Deci)

2. How much do you think AB shows that they value your work? Could you please offer an example?

(βασισμένο σε Herzberg: recognition = motivator)

3. How do you feel about the leadership in your shop or department? How does your boss affect how motivated you are?

(βασισμένο σε transformational leadership & social exchange theory)

4. Do you think you can learn, grow, or move forward in your career at AB? How does this change how motivated you are?

(training & development → competence → intrinsic motivation)

5. What would you say about the work atmosphere and interactions amongst team members at your store? Do they help you stay motivated?

(organizational climate & social motivation)

6. Working in retail means dealing with consumers on an emotional level. How does this emotional side of things affect your energy or motivation at work?

(emotional labour — Hochschild; retail-specific stressors)

7. Do you understand and can handle the duties and obligations that come with your job? How do your

workload and the expectations for your position impact your motivation?

(role clarity, role overload, role conflict — Arnold et al.)

8. What kinds of incentives (money or not) do you think are the most important or motivating in AB?

(extrinsic motivation + fairness/equity theory)

9. What do you think AB does especially well to keep employees motivated?

(strength-based: identifies organisational practices)

10. What might AB do better to make workers like you more motivated and happy at work?

(forward-looking question, essential for qualitative depth)

Author's Statement:

I hereby expressly declare that, according to the article 8 of Law 1559/1986, this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work, does not infringe any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties, does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required, is not the product of partial or total plagiarism, and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and meet the rules of scientific citations.