AN INVESTIGATION INTO VOLUNTARY EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND RETENTION FACTORS IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract	

In the past few decades, sport organizations have undergone a major change in their management practices as they are expected to become more and more formal and professional-like. Despite this pressure, human resource managers should give more attention to the retention function in human resource management systems. As employees are the lifeline of sport organizations, much emphasis should be placed on preventing their voluntary turnover.

Utilizing qualitative and inductive grounded theory building methods this study aims to provide invaluable information to sport managers about why employees leave or remain in sport organizations. Given the scant research on turnover and retention in sport organizations, this study addresses the questions: "What factors influence voluntary employee turnover intentions in swimming clubs, and what are the top factors that drive employee retention in such sport organizations?" Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with eleven instructors of a local swimming club.

The data analysis produced two models, one indicating the possible reasons for voluntary turnover in sport organizations, and the other possible retention factors in those organizations. The findings suggest that a challenging job, unsatisfying work environment, and an unrewarding job were amongst the common reasons for intended turnover of key employees. In contrast, a good person-job fit, well-managed organization, and value of the job were some of the factors that were thought to enhance employee retention.

The findings of this study are discussed in the context of extant literature and implications for management practice and future research are described. All in all, the findings of this current study increase understanding about the turnover intentions and retention practices in sport organizations.

Keywords	
Sport organizations, voluntary employee turnover, retention practices, grounded theory	
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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

Researchers and scholars in the field of social sciences are increasingly showing interest towards the study of non-profit, voluntary organizations or the third sector (Anheier, 2006). Anheier (2006) discloses that this dynamic and interdisciplinary field has not only gathered momentum during the past three decades but also gained more prominence in research and teaching. The non-profit sector can be described as being rich in organizational activities and forms but more specifically it is the sum of voluntary, private, non-profit organizations, and associations. What is more, the sector is extremely diverse ranging from museums and research institutions to human rights organizations and sport and recreation clubs.

Today, there is a much greater interest in the operation, management and organization of non-profit organizations than there was in the past (Anheier, 2006). In general, non-profit organizations today are required to be more business-like in their attitude and operation and it is therefore not surprising that the need for management knowledge, training and skills in the sector has increased since the 1990's (Dart, 2004; Anheier, 2006). However, managing non-profit organizations may be a difficult task at times, since management issues are not always related to specific economic measures (Wolf, 2012).

Sport organizations are a good example of a sector that has undergone a significant change in the management practices as they have become more professional-like during the last thirty years (Hoye, et al 2015). There are millions of people around the world who are employed in sport organizations in diverse areas ranging from coaching to event management and volunteering (Taylor, et al 2008). Hoye et al. (2015) believe that the change in the industry has forced sport managers to adapt business skills and collaborate with a vast number of different parties in order to get their increasingly complex and multidimensional work done.

To a certain degree, managing sport organizations resembles that of the majority of modern businesses and that managers share many of the same tasks as other managers in the non-profit sector, such as managing human resource, engaging in strategic planning, and working with other networks (Hoye et al., 2015). What is more, sport organizations, as any other non-profit organizations, could not function without paid employees and volunteers (Taylor et al., 2008). Taylor et al. (2008) emphasize that both of these entities have a vital role in the existence and function of the organization, and that in order to gain competitive advantage, sport organizations must attract, retain and develop high calibre people. The authors also note that although some employees may choose to work in a sport organization due their passion towards the field, this passion can only attract and retain employees to a certain extent.

The phenomena of voluntary employee turnover and retention have been and will remain salient management issues for different types and sized organizations, sport organizations being no exception (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Given the importance of coaches and instructors, sport organizations must make strategic decisions in order to retain them as replacing valuable employees is much more costly than retaining them (Inglis et al., 1996). It is therefore unsurprising that the topics of voluntary employee turnover and retention, and their various aspects have been researched by scholars extensively, and several models have been promulgated throughout the years.

Although employee turnover is well-known and greatly researched social phenomenon, there is no one model that is perfectly suited to resolve each and every turnover case, due to the fact that the turnover studies are high in volume and diverse in content, and the integration between the studies is limited (Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980; Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). Retention practices are also diverse and dependent on the sector of interest. Therefore, discovering a model that is relevant for most sport organizations, such as swimming clubs, remains challenging.

Accordingly, there is a need for further research that focuses on factors influencing voluntary employee turnover and retention strategies that are appropriately aligned with the unique characteristics of sport organizations. As mentioned earlier, non-profit organizations such as sport organizations are required to adapt more sophisticated managerial practices and therefore increasing interest should be shown towards the heart of the organization – the employees. Without these valuable assets and their input, sport organizations and other non-profit organizations alike would hardly exist. Hence, managers need more information as to what retains their employees and what leads to their departure.

In light of this need, the purpose of the current study is to investigate factors that influence voluntary employee turnover in especially swimming clubs, as well as to find factors that contribute to employee retention in such clubs. Due to the novelty of the research, a grounded theory was ultimately formulated regarding the two phenomena. The aim of this study is to enrich the existing research on voluntary turnover and retention in sport organizations, thereby addressing the gap in the literature.

1.2   Purpose of the Research and Research Questions

Little is known about the factors that influence voluntary employee turnover in swimming clubs and what the best practices to retain the key employees are. Employees are the lifeline of the swimming clubs, as they are in most organizations, and understanding why they voluntarily leave or remain in the organizations is vital for management. Hence, the purpose of the current study is to respond to this gap in the sport management literature. In addition, the findings

of this study will also enrich the existing body of non-profit organization literature.

Swimming clubs are vital to the wellbeing and safety of people, as swimming skills are the only form of sport that can save one's life. The swimming clubs' ability to contribute to these skills relies on the organizations' human resources – the employees who have the skills and knowledge to teach the invaluable learning outcomes. It is therefore important that the retention of competent and skilled workforce is given grave attention in swimming clubs. As important is to avoid voluntary turnover of employees, since it oftentimes effects these organizations negatively either directly or indirectly.

The current study hence addresses the questions:
"What factors influence voluntary employee turnover intentions in swimming clubs, and what are the top factors that drive employee retention in such sport organizations?"

Moreover, the study explores two research objectives:
1) Common reasons why employees would voluntarily leave swimming clubs
2) Best practices to retain employees in swimming clubs.

The underlying purpose of the current study is to explore the voluntary employee turnover and retention phenomena in swimming clubs and ultimately produce new knowledge in the field of sport management. Due to the lack of research on the topic, the current study will be implemented with qualitative research methods. Data was gathered from swimming club instructors of a local club in Jyväskylä, Finland, through semi-structured interviews. The research has been limited to portray the thoughts of swimming club instructors only and therefore the standpoints of other employees of the organization have not been included.

What is more, inductive approach will be employed in the current study, since the aim is to deepen the understanding of the two phenomena: voluntary employee turnover and retention of employees in swimming clubs. The collected primary data has a key role in inductive research approach. The lack of existing theory on the topic encourages the current study to employ features of Grounded theory design to form a general and abstract theory of the processes being studied (Creswell, 2013).

The current study comprises six chapters. The investigation into existing literature of voluntary employee turnover and retention practices will be continued in the following chapter. Chapter Two presents the related literature that covers five main areas: human resource management in the non-profit and sport organization sector, voluntary turnover of employees, employee retention, the commitment of employees, and voluntary turnover and retention practices in sport organizations. The chapter concludes with a summary of most relevant literature regarding this study. Chapter Three introduces and explains the research design and methods used for the current study. The chapter begins by justifying the choice of an inductive research design followed by a description

of the data collection methods, research sample, and the data analysis approach. Chapter Four then provides general information related to the results as well as presents the findings of the interviews with the swimming club instructors. The Fifth Chapter discusses the current findings and relates them to existing literature. The chapter then provides implications for sport organization practitioners as well as describes the limitations of the current study. The Sixth and final chapter draws conclusions about the current study and the research objectives and findings. Lastly, the final chapter makes suggestions for further research.

1.3   Key concepts of the study

A *non-profit organization* is an organization within the nonprofit sector, also known as third sector, voluntary sector or philanthropic sector (Pynes, 2008). The sector entails those organizations that are not private for-profit or government organizations (Pynes, 2008). Non-profit organizations rely on multiple revenue sources, are ownerless, and oftentimes struggle in raising adequate capital to achieve public benefits (Brown, 2014). To be recognized by a non-profit organization, following characteristics must be evident: the organization is specifically designated as a non-profit when started; assets or profits are not divided among members, directors or officers in a corporate dividend manner; and it may only pursue such purposes that are permitted for such an organization (Pynes, 2008).

Sport organizations are immensely diverse organizations in terms of their scope and size. Organizations in sport sector range from small local clubs with no paid employees, to medium-sized organizations that employ both paid staff as well as volunteers, to multinational corporations with a global workforce (Taylor et al., 2008). According to Hoye et al. (2015) sport comprises of three sectors: state or public sector (e.g. local, state and national governments), voluntary or non-profit sector (e.g., community based clubs, regional, national and international sport governing bodies) and commercial or professional sector (professional sport teams, sport facilities and sport equipment retailers). The organizations within these sectors have a slight difference in how they form partnerships, conduct business and influence each other's operations (Hoye et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2008).

Human resource management (HRM) is an organization's design of formal systems that assure the effective use of employee's abilities, knowledge, skills and other characteristics to achieve organizational goals (Pynes, 2013). Put simply, HRM is about managing work and people towards desired ends and is an inevitable outcome of starting and growing an organization (Boxall et al., 2007). Human resource management is present in numerous activities within an organization, such as recruitment, development and retention of employees, and benefits and compensation (Pynes, 2013). In addition to the vast styles in the

field of HRM, Boxall et al. (2007) distinguish three major subfields of knowledge: Micro HRM, Strategic HRM and International HRM. The authors also identify two ultimate objectives of HRM: social-political (e.g. managerial autonomy and social legitimacy) and economic (e.g. organizational flexibility and cost effectiveness).

Employee turnover and retention both concern the movement of employees in organizations, yet they are two different phenomena (WeiBo et al., 2010). Voluntary employee turnover relates to employees leaving an organization voluntarily, due to concepts external or internal to the employee (Lee et al., 1994). Generally, employee turnover is as a complicated process whereby individuals assess their personal situation, work environment and feelings, and eventually decide whether to stay or leave an organization (Lee et al., 1994). Researchers have identified several antecedents of voluntary turnover throughout the years such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job alternatives (Mitchell et al., 2001b). Contrarily, employee retention refers to employees staying in the organization (Hausknecht et al., 2009). Number of factors such as satisfaction, commitment, and extrinsic rewards have been found to contribute to employee retention (Hausknecht et al., 2009). It is important to notice that predictors that affect turnover do not necessarily mean that they will affect retention (Cho et al., 2009).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Human Resource Management in the Non-Profit and Sport Organization Sector

The human resources of an organization are not only a necessary resource, but also a critical success factor, and the success of any organization relies on the required amount of committed and motivated workforce (Viitala, 2007). Therefore, organizations, such as non-profits, should always be aware of their current human resource capacity and its balance (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). According to Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) this capacity refers to the talent, experience and abilities of the internal workforce of the organization, such as volunteers, paid staff, board members and directors. The scholars also note that the current human resource capacity should comply with the projected or current human resource needs, and that if the capacity is unbalanced, organizations can either recruit new individuals or develop the current employees' abilities to meet the current needs. The scholars conclude that the practices and policies to mobilize and maximize the resource capacity in organizations are at the core as human resource management.

Managing people is oftentimes the most problematic and perplexing of managerial tasks, and demands a lot of managerial attention (Chelladurai, 2006). Furthermore, according to the HRM paradigm, human resource management should not only be the top priority of separate HRM functions, but it should also be embedded in the values and priorities of the whole organization (Vanhala et al., 2012). Vanhala et al. (2012) believe that among other tasks, human resource management should aim at developing the commitment, skills, knowledge and abilities of employees through organizational structures and culture as well as adequate HM policies and practices. According to the authors, the desired outcomes of these factors include committed and competent employees, low turnover rates and absenteeism, and cost-efficiency and high performance.

In the recent years, managers in the non-profit sector have fortunately realized that the knowledge of good HRM practices can result in, for instance, improved organizational effectiveness (Guo et al., 2011). Ultimately, the underlying goal of any organization and their HR management is to get the best out of the employees, sport organizations being no exception (Taylor et al, 2008). Masteralexis et al. (2011) stresses that every sport manager (can go by many other different titles) must understand the basics of what it means to be a manager in the twenty-first century. An effective HR system and good management are the cornerstones of sport organizations, alongside other important intangibles such as customer relationships and brand value (Taylor et al, 2008).

To achieve their social missions, all non-profit organizations rely heavily on the dedicated work of their paid and unpaid employees (Guo et al,

2011). During the past few decades, there has been a shift in the increasing number of paid employees within sport organizations, forcing these organizations to gradually professionalize and adopt more sophisticated management systems (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Taylor and McGraw (2006) believe that there are several factors influencing this change: the government has pressured sport organizations to formalize their HR practices to qualify for funding; there is greater competition to acquire members and volunteers; and the requirements of staffing and compliance are becoming more specialized.

Furthermore, Koski (2012) notes that the operations of sport clubs have originally been based on volunteer work, and that this principle remains present in many small sized sport clubs. However, the author recognizes four main reasons for employment and increased trust in paid employees: cultural and social changes, and the increased number of sport club members, and the growth of operations. What is more, the author points out that especially the successful and success-oriented sport clubs are more likely to hire paid employees.

From a local perspective, Koski (2012) reported that in Finland, hiring full-time employees had a positive effect on the development of sport clubs. According to the author, employing paid employees, as well as coaches and instructors, increased not only the number of members in sport clubs but also the expertise and know-how in the sport clubs. Furthermore, the author continued that operations of the clubs in general became more diversified, systematic and consistent as a results of paid employees. Koski (2012) also noted that the overall atmosphere had also improved, and the collaboration between different interest groups grew.

Taylor and McGraw (2006) suggest that the organizational context defines and determines what management practices work best within different environments. It is therefore not surprising that the special and unique characteristics of sport (e.g., differences in judging performance, anti-competitive behavior and high degree of brand loyalty) have also distinguished the management practices in sport organizations (Taylor et al, 2008; Hoye et al, 2015). Hoye et al. (2015) believe that human resource management in sport organizations is essentially about ensuring that the workforce is satisfied and effective. The authors suggest that the successful execution of HR management relies in its integration to other key management tools in the organization, such as managing organizational culture and strategic planning. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon that organizations adopt various styles of management for their employee groups, such as volunteers and paid staff (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Masteralexis et al. (2011) mention that sport managers work in a "people-intensive" industry, which requires interpersonal skills as well as excellent oral and written communications skills. Moreover, the authors believe that so called "people-skills" are also needed in order to manage the diversity in the sport industry, such as different races, sex and people with disabilities. The authors continue that motivating employees to achieve their personal objectives and goals as well as organizational objectives and goals are other challenging skills the managers should possess.

Despite the growing interest towards HRM policies in non-profit and sport organizations, the lack or shortage of formal (strategic) management of people in sport organizations is contributing to the challenge of attracting, developing and retaining valuable and talented employees (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Taylor and McGraw (2006) found in their study that the selected organizations did not use formal HRM practices and policies to gain a competitive advantage. Surprisingly, the size of the sport organization was not related to the degree of formalized HR practices in this study. The authors found that the most evident challenge in using effective HRM techniques is the growth of the organization.

2.2   Voluntary Turnover of Employees

Organizations evidently invest substantial resources in their employees over time, thus it is no wonder that high retention rates are usually desired (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Consequently, voluntary employee turnover has been and will remain a salient management issue for all kinds of organizations (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Due to its popularity as a social phenomenon, there is a high volume of turnover literature dating back to as early as 1912 (e.g. Crabb, 1912). Nevertheless, there is no one model that explains each and every turnover situation, due to the insufficient integration between the turnover studies (Morrell, et al. 2001; Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). Withdrawal behaviors have been generally studied in one of two ways: actual employee turnover or employee intention to leave. However, intention to leave the organization has been shown to be a direct antecedent of actual turnover (Mitchell et al, 2001).

Although the turnover models have evolved during the past 60 years, there are some prominent turnover models by several authors (e.g. Porter & Steers, 1973; Mobley, 1977; Lee & Mitchell, 1994) that have inevitably been duplicated by others. Despite the different emphasis among scholars, the models have rather consistent underlying principles (Gialuisi, 2012). Some antecedents of employee turnover have been widely accepted, and are usually categorized into one of the following three disciplines: economic, individual employee, and work-related (Gialuisi, 2012).

Some might argue that the foundation of turnover literature was laid out by March and Simon in 1958, as they concluded that employees' degree of perceived desirability and ease of movement determines the likelihood of them seeking a new job (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). The perceived desirability of movement comprises of job-related attitudes and internal opportunities, while the ease of movement comprises of factors such as availability of alternative jobs and unemployment levels (Tanova & Holtom, 2008).

Individual personal circumstances and personality traits consists of many variables that may result in turnover intentions (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). For example, personality traits such as aggression, independence and high achievement orientation (Porter & Steers, 1973), as well as marital status, and

the number and age of children (Muchinsky & Tuttle, 1979) have all been found to have positive correlation with turnover. What is more, a person's positive self-evaluation of their self-worth and employability may influence turnover, as the person might actively start searching for alternative employment opportunities (Trevor, 2001; Booth & Hamer, 2007).

A common finding in the turnover literature is that job dissatisfaction is directly and positively to turnover (Gialuisi, 2012). However, scholars such as Mobley (1977) have challenged the two variables directness and proposed instead that there are intermediate linkages between experienced job dissatisfaction and the decision to leave. Mobley's model includes a series of post-job dissatisfaction steps: thoughts of leaving, intention to search for alternative job prospects, actual job search, evaluation and comparison of alternatives, intention to quit or stay and turnover or retention. The scholar also suggests that there are some individuals who do not engage in such intermediate steps but instead leave their jobs impulsively.

As an extension of Mobley's work, Hom and Kinicki's (2001) found that inter-role conflict emerging from inconsistency between personal endeavors and work can influence a person's turnover decisions. What is more, regular tardiness, absenteeism and other forms of organizational withdrawal behavior (all related to job avoidance) can ultimately lead to turnover. There is also evidence that part-time employees are significantly less likely to indicate an intention to stay with the organization, compared to their full-time colleagues (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003).

Lee and Mitchell's (1994) on the other hand suggest in their model that there are shocks or critical events that may lead to an individual reassessing their current job and the possibility of leaving. According to the scholars those shocks or critical events include: having a spouse transfer to another location, low tolerance for authority, adopting a child, working in a large/small organization, receiving a bonus, downsizing and missing a promotion. The start of the turnover process is initiated when the experience of a shock or a critical event is combined with social and cognitive circumstances (i.e. decision frames). The scholars believe that the individual ultimately follows one of three decision paths: 1) shock that is followed by a match between past and present decision frames which leads to a decision to stay or leave; 2) shock leading to a reassessment of organizational commitment; and 3) shock leading to an assessment of the probability of commitment to another organization. The fourth decision path on the other hand, is only triggered by the individual's reassessment of his/her commitment to an organization.

In general, it is important that organizations understand that voluntary turnover of employees is not merely and event, but rather a process of disengagement that may take time until the decision to leave is finalized (Branham, 2012). Branham (2012) believes that disengagement and considerations of leaving occur when one or more human needs are not being met at the workplace: the need to feel competent (e.g. job is in accordance with skills), the need to have hope (e.g. the ability to grow and develop skills), the need for trust (e.g. treating everyone fairly), and the need to feel a sense of worth (e.g. recognition).

Branham (2012) also listed seven "hidden" reasons for why employees leave their jobs: 1) the job or workplace was not as expected, 2) the mismatch between job and person, 3) too little coaching and feedback, 4) too few growth and advancement opportunities, 5) feeling devalued and unrecognized, 6) stress from overwork and work-life imbalance, and 7) loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders.

Moreover, other scholars have found that organizational commitment and intention to leave are significant predictors of employee turnover (Loi et al., 2006). Also, several scholars have utilized job embeddedness to explain turnover patters (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2001). Job embeddedness includes the following components: fit, links and sacrifice. Firstly, Mitchell et al. (2001) believe that inconsistencies between the employee's career goals and personal values may indicate a poor fit or job compatibility, which may affect the willingness to leave. Secondly, the scholars suggest those employees who are loosely bound to the organization and their job, also known as links, are more inclined to quit. Thirdly, if an employee does not believe that departing one's job will result in any considerable loss, then the employee is more likely to leave an organization (Mitchell et al., 2001). Hom and Kinicki (2001) also comply with the last component, as they suggest that if the turnover costs are relatively greater compared to the benefits of leaving, then the employee's turnover intentions will be more unlikely.

Generally, dissatisfaction with pay can be seen as one of the main reasons for employee turnover in non-profit organizations (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003). Ryan and Sagas (2009) also found that both pay satisfaction and work-family-conflict in sport organizations may impact the turnover intentions of coaches. More specifically, the authors found that pay satisfaction has a direct effect on turnover intentions and that work-family conflict is also a significant reason for the turnover of coaches.

When voluntary turnover occurs the cost of hiring replacement employees may be significant in terms of organization, work-unit and personal readjustments (Lee et al., 1994). The true costs of turnover may be far greater than immediate management issues such as time spent by human resources personnel, advertising, new employee training and overtime pay for remaining employees (Kim & Lee, 2007). Additionally, high turnover often increases the workload of remaining employees thereby possibly damaging employee morale, and it may also compromise the quality of the organization's services (Kim & Lee, 2007). Therefore, when voluntary turnover occurs, it is valuable for the organization to recognize the reasons behind the employee separation. One way of determining the causes behind the separation is to, for instance, conduct "exit interviews", which offer priceless information for the organization (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012).

Most often in times of economic hardship, employee turnover may be seen negatively in organizations. However, research claims that there is, in fact, an optimal turnover rate that is unique for every organization: it depends on the "circumstances that influence the balance point between retention and turnover costs" (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984: 335). Moreover, Glebbeek and Bax (2004)

generalize that there is, in fact, "functional" and "dysfunctional" turnover in all types of organizations, which implies that not all turnover is necessarily harmful for organizations. The scholars suggest that it is preferable that human resource managers have a sense of what the optimal rate of turnover for their organization is.

What is more, turnover can also be seen to have a healing effect in organizations (Viitala, 2007). It is due to turnover that organizations get "new blood", and oftentimes the leavers are those who do not consider their work as their own or do not succeed in their work well enough (Viitala, 2007). It is therefore important to remember that organizations have various types of turnover and even various types of "leavers" (voluntary turnover groups) that require different types of retention strategies (Lee et al., 2008).

Despite the possible positive effects of turnover, filling positions in a sport organization and in non-profit organizations in general, is daunting task: the chances of obtaining qualified candidates is reduced, the costs for employee training and development are increased, and service disruption occurs with a higher chance (Kim & Lee, 2007). Taylor et al. (2008) hence argue that adequate management of volunteers and employees in sport organizations is vital for the existence of these organizations. The authors imply that fortunes of a sport organization can be transformed in a short period of time due to, for example, changes in the workforce.

2.3   Employee Retention

In order to achieve long-term and sustainable competitive advantage, organizations need employees who are passionately committed to their jobs and organization, and retaining such employees is a central task of human resource management (Alasoini, 2009; Hamel & Breen, 2013: 56-65). The value employees create for organizations generates from the strong commitment, creativity and initiatives of employees (Hamel & Breen, 2013: 56-65) believe that). High commitment human resource practices that retain employees have been found to not only contribute to the well-being of employees and but also the organizations productiveness (van der Voorde, 2009).

Retention of the most valuable employees is evidently important to every organization but the task is not always simple: the typical obstacles standing in the way of employees' commitment are the limited opportunities for self-directedness and establishment of a sense of community amongst people, as well as failing to create such goals that enable people to find a deeper meaning for their employment relationship (Hamel and Breen, 2013: 56-65). Other factors such as the ever decreasing number of employees in many countries forces organizations to develop new ways to, in general, attract the workforce they want and need (Alasoini, 2009).

Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) suggest that there may be some differences in the work motives of employees depending on whether they work for a non-

profit organization or a for-profit organization. Nevertheless, the scholars note that some managerial "best practices" for retention apply to both employees. For example, the authors believe that no matter what the organizational form, appropriate compensations are expected, informal and formal acknowledgements of performance are desired, and extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are valued when it comes to maintaining involvement. It is also important to note that there are also individual differences as to what degree of emphasis employees place on retention different factors (Arthur, 2001).

Hausknecht et al. (2009) found evidence that there are personal differences as to what retains individual employees: hourly employees and low performers, for example, were more likely to cite extrinsic rewards as reasons for staying, whereas non-hourly workers and high performers were more likely to cite advancement opportunities and organizational prestige. Other scholars have also distinguished retention differences between strong and weak performance employees (Sheridan, 1992). In conclusion, Hausknecht et al. (2009) suggested that resource management practices should be differentiated in order to retain employees with different personal preferences.

In addition, the scope, sophistication and formality of human resource practices may differ depending on the size and characteristic of the organization (Gialuisi, 2012). For example, Lewis and Coetzer (2009) found in their study of small firms that most firms utilized non-financial retention practices: the surveyed firms emphasized person/organization fit during employee selection processes, developed social bonds through group works and fulfilled employee affiliation needs.

Mission statements are also strong management tools for organizations such as non-profits, as they tend to motivate employees and keep them focused on the purpose of the organization (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003). Brown and Yoshioka (2003) concluded in their study that employees' positive attitudes towards the organizations' mission (mission attachment) were related to the satisfaction of the employees and their intentions to remain with the organization. Overall, the authors imply that mission attachment is a valuable tool for attracting and retaining employees in non-profit organizations given the "doing more with less" environment they operate in. However, the scholars also noted that dissatisfaction with pay tended to override employee's mission attachment as explanation of voluntary turnover.

Contrarily, Arthur (2001) finds evidence that compensation is not as important to all employees, such executives, as having a fulfilling job and working for a great company. The author notes that non-monetary factors such as company values and culture, freedom and autonomy and a well-managed company all influence business leaders' will to remain with the company. The author also mentions that open communication between employees themselves and management is also an important non-monetary factor that retains employees, in addition to other factors such as a good fit with the boss, challenge, and career advancement. Moreover, the author suggests that many employees and applicants also find control over their current and future lives particularly important, in addition to wanting work that is exciting, interesting, and fun.

Arthur (2001) also believes that appreciation for work well done is one key factors that retain employees: a study conducted by Gerald Graham showed that employees top five workplace incentives were personal thanks from manager, written thanks from manager, promotion for performance, public praise, and morale-building meetings. Viitala (2007) on the other hand lists that good human resource policies, good management, opportunity to learn and develop oneself, opportunity to harmonize work and family life, an interesting job, and a competitive salary or other gains or benefits for the employee, all contribute to employee retention.

Many scholars have also found that organizational culture has a direct influence on employee satisfaction and commitment and turnover intention (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005). Other studies have shown that the organization's enjoyable atmosphere and an opportunity to make an impact in one's job are important retention factors nowadays (Arthur, 2001). Other scholars such as Guthrie (2001), have found evidence that high-involvement work practices contribute to the retention of an organization's critical human assets. The author found a positive association between use of high-involvement work practices and employee retention as well as firm productivity. Scholars have also repeatedly recognized that employees' expressed intention to stay is not only a reliable precursor to actual turnover and but also a reflective of commitment to the organization (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003).

2.4   The Commitment of Employees

The commitment of employees has been studied from numerous different theoretical perspectives, thus some scholars have remarked that the term should perhaps be abandoned altogether (Angle & Perry, 1981). Nevertheless, the most noted framework on commitment might be that of Porter et al. (1974), which defines organizational commitment into three major components: 1) a strong acceptance and belief in the goals of the organization, (2) a readiness to exert noticeable effort on behalf of the organization, and (3) a definite will to maintain organizational membership. The author further suggests that strength of an individual's commitment to the organization affects factors such as the person's desire and intent to stay with the organization, absence and other forms of withdrawal from work, work performance, and job satisfaction. Other research conducted within the framework of Porter et al. (1974) has also shown that commitment is a predictor of employee retention (Angle & Perry, 1981).

Steers (1977) on the other hand believes that employees' organizational commitment comprises of three factors: the personal attributes and background (goals and subjects of interest, education, age, family relationships), work and job description related features (job demands, interaction between colleagues, feedback), and the individuals prior experience of the organization (opinion about the organization, the reliability of the organization). Buchanan (1974) also found evidence that social interaction with organizational superiors and peers,

hierarchical advancement and job achievement have been found to relate to commitment.

Moreover, other scholars have also found evidence that a better match between employee and organizational values predicts satisfaction and commitment (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) on the other hand concluded that the basic antecedents of perceived organizational support such as favourable job conditions and rewards, supervisor support, and fair organizational procedures can result in increased affective commitment to the organization, improved performance and also reduce employee's withdrawal behaviours.

Furthermore, Laschinger et al. (2009) suggest that empowerment (i.e. strategies that are designed to increase employees control over their work) is linked to employees' improved job satisfaction and enhanced organizational commitment. According to the authors, specifically structural empowerment, which includes employees' access to information, access to support, access to resources needed to do the job, and opportunities to learn and grow, has been reported to enhance productivity and commitment.

Other studies have indicated that many demographic factors are related to employee commitment. Age and organizational commitment correlate positively as older employees have been found to be more committed than younger employees (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Labatmedienè et al., 2007), and respectively those employees who have worked at the organization for a longer time are more committed than those who have worked a shorter time (Bergmann et al., 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). The relationship between the years of work and organizational commitment has been explained using Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. According to this theory, employees see the years working for an organization as investments and leaving the organization for another job would cause financial and social expenses (Kaur & Sandhu, 2010).

In addition, higher professional status also projects a stronger commitment (Vanhala & Pesonen, 2008). Conversely, education has a weak negative correlation with commitment, as highly educated employees might not feel as challenged in their jobs as less educated employees (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Steers, 1977). Another explanation for a negative correlation is taking notice of alternative workplaces, in other words, better educated employees detect these alternatives more which reflects to organizational commitment (Kim et al., 1996).

Marital status and family obligations may also affect the level of commitment because the existence of family reflects not only financial obligations but also the possible challenges employees face when combining work and family (Joiner & Bakalis, 2006). The role of gender, on the other hand, has not been seen to affect commitment a great deal, and studies in this area have been conflicting (Marchiori & Henkin, 2004; Singh et al., 2004).

Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) have recognized some practices that enhance commitment especially in non-profit organizations such as job rotation, distraction reduction and offering challenging yet attainable occupations. Moreover, non-profit organizations may increase their employees' motivation

and satisfaction by adjusting work so that it is more meaningful, interesting and personally fulfilling (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). Furthermore, non-profit organizations should not only rely on employees' intrinsic motivations in staying with the organization as extrinsic motivations are usually as important (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012).

2.5 Voluntary Employee Turnover and Retention Practices in Sport Organizations

Turner and Chelladurai (2005) stress that given the importance of instructors, coaches and other staff, sport organizations should make strategic decisions in recruiting employees and retaining them. The authors note that as in any other organizational form, it is more cost effective to retain a proficient employee than it is to search and ultimately replace one. The authors continue that in order to avoid costly turnover of employees in sport organizations, every effort should be made to retain those employees who have been successful in their jobs. According to the authors, efforts should made to understand the dynamics of employees' continued participation in or exit from the occupation and/or organization.

Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) believe that when turnover is dysfunctional, organizations must reassess their organizational practices and what their retention efforts are. According to the authors, non-profit organizations may have issues hindering employee retention: the employee selection processes may not produce good employee-organization-fits, there may be issues in working conditions, or there are existing conflicts between co-workers. The authors also found that in non-profit organizations especially, director's turnover can be caused by inadequate pay as well as burnout and overpowering fundraising responsibilities.

Moreover, Turner and Chelladurai (2005) found in their study that organizational commitment was related to coaches' intention to leave the organization. The authors found that those employees who had invested a lot in the organization and those who were more committed to the organization for normative and affective reasons were more unlikely to leave.

What is more, MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) found that in the fitness industry, elements of organizational culture influenced both job satisfaction and intention to leave the organization. More specifically, the scholars found that the cultural dimensions of formalization, atmosphere, and service-programs had an impact on job satisfaction which further impacted the employees' intention to leave.

The underrepresentation of women in sport administrative positions has been a focus of many scholars in the past, and most studies in the sport management literature have concentrated on the entry and exit phases of the job cycle (Inglis et al., 1996). According to Inglis et al. (1996), scholars have found evi-

dence that females exit their positions due to factors such as burnout, lack of job satisfaction, discriminatory practices and role conflict.

Wicker and Breuer (2013) emphasize that in many countries, non-profit sport clubs are a leading provider of sport opportunities for the population. However, the authors note some of these clubs face many challenges including those relating to the scarcity of human resources, predominantly found in the area of volunteers. The authors point out that sport clubs experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers due factors such as the increasing complexity of tasks and people's unwillingness to volunteer. Koski (2012) notes however, that it is important to understand that the increased demands in the working life as well as the perceived scarcity of free time can both affect people's willingness to spend time on volunteering or being committed to it. The author also notes that the members of sport clubs expect more professional service in return for their membership fees and may not volunteer due to this reason.

Some scholars have argued that the retention function in human resource management systems is not given enough attention from human resource managers as other functions such as training, compensation and employee selection (Inglis et al., 1996). Inglis et al. (1996) stress that retaining key employees in sport organizations is critical in maintaining consistency in work flow, preventing employee (dysfunctional) turnover, and avoiding costly recruitment and training of new paid employees.

One of the most well-known studies on employee retention in sport organizations was conducted by Inglis et al. in 1996 (Inglis et al., 1996). The scholars identified three factors in their study that yielded retention of paid staff in sport organizations: *inclusivity, recognition and collegial support, and work balance and conditions*. According to the authors, Inclusivity factor refers to the existence of an organizational-work environment that pursues to have equal representation of both men and women, accepts persons with different sexual orientations, and is free from racial and sexual harassment and supports individual differences. Recognition and Collegial Support factor refers to the prestige, status, and the public recognition related with one's position. Finally, the Work Balance and Conditions factor refers to the importance of one's time demands at work and at home. The authors believe that identifying these factors may help to create such a work environment that it encourages employees (coaches and managers) to remain in their positions.

What is more, with regard to the work of Inglis et al., Cunningham and Sagas (2003) found in their study that the those organizational environments that emphasized Inclusivity employed persons who intended to remain in the coaching profession after they turning a certain age, in this case 55. Also, the authors concurred with previous research that women consider an inclusive work environment to be more important than do men (Cunningham & Sagas, 2003).

Moreover, in their the study of leader intentions and employee perceptions of organizational culture of a private fitness corporation, MacIntosh and Doherty (2005) found that the organizational culture had a greater or at least

more direct impact on the corporations' employees than its clients. The findings of their study coincide with previous ones, suggesting that a strong organizational culture is associated with employee retention also in sport organizations (MacIntosh and Doherty, 2005).

Lussier and Kimball (2013) on the other hand concluded in their study that there are several strategies for retaining employees; justly rewards, a good work environment, challenging work and feedback, and a highly skilled and informed HR department. In addition, the scholars highlighted compensation (the total cost of benefits and pay to employees) as an area that especially affects employee retention in sport organizations.

In addition to the contribution of paid employees, the successful operation of sport clubs is highly dependent of volunteering. Hence adequate HRM practices are often needed to ensure retention of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Cuskelly et al. (2006) concluded that especially HRM planning and orientation practices were associated with fewer retention problems in sport clubs. Other scholars have identified other volunteer retention factors such as personal contact, respect and recognition of voluntary work (Wicker & Breuer, 2013). However, Cuskelly et al. (2006) note that HRM practices not only differ in the way they are executed in sport clubs but also their influence in diminishing volunteer retention problems also varies between the volunteer positions.

Itkonen et al. (2000; 116-118) conclude that the challenge of managing sport clubs revolves around encouraging and reinforcing all the actors to commit to the clubs' values, goals and strategies. The authors note that this encouragement is especially important in those organizations who are not able to offer monetary compensations or obligate people to work.

2.6   Summary of Most Relevant Literature

The human resources of an organization are not only a necessary resource, but also a critical success factor of any organization (Viitala, 2007). Managing these resources, however, is oftentimes the most problematic and perplexing of managerial tasks (Chelladurai, 2006). The underlying goal of any organization and their HR management is to get the best out of the employees, and the same applies for sport organizations (Taylor et al, 2008). Every sport manager should therefore understand the basics of what it means to be a manager in the twenty-first century (Masteralexis et al., 2011)

All non-profit organizations rely heavily on the dedicated work of their paid and unpaid employees (Guo et al, 2011). The increasing number of particularly paid employees and pressure from other entities has forced sport organizations to gradually professionalize and adopt more sophisticated management systems (Taylor & McGraw, 2006). Despite the pressure, formal (strategic) management of people in sport organizations is still oftentimes lacking, which contributes to the challenge of attracting, developing and retaining valuable and talented employees (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Withdrawal behaviors have been generally studied in one of two ways: actual employee turnover or employee intention to leave (Mitchell et al, 2001). Although there is an optimal turnover rate that is unique for every organization, voluntary employee turnover has been and will remain a salient issue for managers (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984: 335; Lee et al., 1994). Despite the rich understanding of turnover factors, there is no one model that explains each and every turnover situation (Morrell, et al. 2001). Nevertheless, some antecedents of employee turnover have been widely accepted, and are usually categorized into one of the following three disciplines: economic, individual employee, and work-related (Gialuisi, 2012). Although there are many downsides to turnover when it is dysfunctional turnover can also have a healing effect in organizations (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012; Viitala, 2007). Generally, when voluntary turnover occurs, it is valuable for the organization to recognize the reasons behind the employee separation (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012).

Retaining employees remains a challenge in the area of human resource management (Alasoini, 2009). There are numerous arguments as to what factors retain employees including non-monetary factors, organizational culture values, mission attachment, and appropriate compensations (Arthur, 2001; Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Sheridan, 1992; Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). What is more, since employee commitment has been identified as being a predictor of employee retention, organizations must therefore strengthen their employees' commitment by, for example, empowering them, and ensuring favourable job conditions and rewards, and supervisor support, (Angle & Perry, 1981; Laschinger et al., 2009; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Given the importance of instructors, coaches and other staff, sport organizations should make strategic decisions in recruiting employees and how to retaining them (Turner & Chelladurai, 2005). Until this day, scholars have found that at least inclusivity, strong organizational culture and compensation are key factors in retaining key employees in sport organizations (Cunningham & Sagas, 2003; Inglis et al., 1996; Lussier & Kimball, 2013; MacIntosh and Doherty, 2005).

There is a growing need in sport organizations to understand the reasons behind employees' intentions to leave the organization. As important for the organizations is discovering the key factors that contribute to employee retention. Although there is some existing literature on these two vital topics, more research and theories are needed in the field of sport management. One way of formulating new theory is through inductive research, which allows the researcher to draw conclusions from particular cases. Applying this research design, the current study will attempt to fill the research gaps and discover reasons for intentions to leave as well as generate fitting retention practices for sport organizations; especially swimming clubs.

3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD

In this chapter, the research design applied in the current study is explained. The chapter then continues to focus on the data collection procedures to retrieve information on the research objectives. This is followed by a description of the sampling methods and interview process. Thereafter the data analysis methods are elaborated and the data structures of this study are revealed.

3.1 Research design

This study aims to produce a better understanding of what factors possibly influence employees' intent to leave sport organizations (voluntary turnover), and seeks to develop managerial implications to keep the key employees in the organization (retention). Although these two topics (voluntary turnover and retention) have received vast attention among scholars, there is scarce knowledge about the topics the sport management field. Hence, qualitative methods are implemented in the current study in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena in question (Kananen, 2014). What is more, qualitative research aims at providing practical knowledge for ordinary problems around the subject being studies as well as create new scientific knowledge (Flick, 2009).

According to Taylor et al. (2015), qualitative methodology is essentially research that produces descriptive data, that is, people's own spoken or written words and observable behavior. Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research does not aim at generating statistical generalizations, but rather tries to explore and understand a phenomenon (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Creswell, 2013). Overall, qualitative researches follow a rather flexible research design (Taylor et al., 2015). What is more, in qualitative research, the researcher should be as objective as possible, which according to Eskola and Suoranta (2008) is essential, yet almost an unattainable goal.

Essentially qualitative research is understanding people from their own frames of reference, forcing the researchers to set aside their own views and perspectives (Taylor et al., 2015). Creswell (2013) notes that in qualitative research, the researcher's focus is most often on a single phenomenon or concept from which interpretations are made. In other words, qualitative research usually concentrates on a small scope of cases that are analyzed as rigorously as possible (Eskola & Suoranta, 2008). The strategies of inquiry employed in qualitative research include case studies, ethnography and grounded theory (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research is also inductive, since the researcher develops insights, understanding and concepts from patterns in the data (Taylor et al., 2015). The inductive analysis approach employed in the current study allows,

according to Thomas (2006), research findings to "emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies". Furthermore, the aim here is to inductively develop "grounded theory", which will, according to Gioia et al (2013), provide "rich and deep theoretical descriptions of the contexts within which organizational phenomena occur". The approaches mentioned above have been chosen for the current study, because they are well suited for answering the research questions and objectives.

3.2   Method - Grounded Theory Approach

Methodology refers to the way in which researchers approach problems and seek answers (Taylor et al., 2015). Grounded theory can be seen as the method and the end result of a research process, consisting of specific procedures in developing theory throughout the research process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The roots of the theory go back to 1967 when Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss wrote their book The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The basic position of the writers is that "generating grounded theory is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses" (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). Glaser and Strauss (2009) believe that the discovery of theory from data, which they call grounded theory, is understandable to laymen and sociologists alike, fits empirical situations, and most importantly it provides relevant applications, explanations, predictions and interpretations.

Today, the grounded theory approach is widely used in various studies, such as leadership studies and organization studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Eriksson & Kovalainen (2015) suppose that the uniqueness of the approach lies in the constant interplay and overlap between data collection and analysis phases. The authors note that since the introduction of the theory in 1967, different versions have been developed and used in qualitative. Research has been drawn to different directions resulting in different styles and terminology used within the approaches (Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2014) for example sees grounded theory as a "constellation of methods" rather than bundle of different methods.

The pursuit of creating a theory begins by gathering data (Charmaz, 2014). Conducting interviews is one data collection method for grounded theorists, which leads to developing abstract conceptual categories and theory construction (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory offers a rather simple guideline of when a researcher can stop gathering data: the idea of saturation (Creswell, 2013). When gathering data no longer reveals new properties or provides new insight, in other words no new patters or possible concepts, the researcher is complete with the primary data collection phase and can leave the field (Creswell, 2013; Goulding, 2002).

Traditionally, developing a grounded theory is divided into four stages: codes, concepts, categories and theory (Creswell, 2013). According to Eriksson

and Kovalainen (2015), the most important stage in grounded theory methodology is the coding process (conceptualizing data), which consists of three types: open, axial and selective coding. The first step, open coding, is essentially about developing the theoretical tools for classifying, indexing and explaining the gathered data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The second step, axial coding, consists of intense analysis of different categories and ultimately links subcategories with their respective categories (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Lastly, selective coding integrates and refines the analysis and produces one core category, which forms the basis for the theory (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, there are various approaches to grounded theory and the terminology used differs accordingly. Rather than using the coding process presented earlier, Gioia et al. (2012) have a slightly different view of the process leading to the data structure: The analyses phase begins, similar to axial coding, by seeking differences and similarities among the several emerged categories and eventually reducing them to a more manageable number of so called 1st order concepts. The categories are then given labels after which they are considered further. Thereafter, more abstract 2nd order themes, which may help to explain and describe the observed phenomena we are, are developed. After a workable set of concepts and themes have been produced, the researcher further considers whether it is possible to refine the 2nd-order themes into 2nd-order ''aggregate dimensions''. Ultimately, after generating 1st-order terms, 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions, Gioia et al (2012) suggest that the basis for building a data structure is ready. According to the authors, the end goal of this process is to build a dynamic inductive model that is grounded in the data.

As a final step, some scholars suggest that the researcher should review other literature related to the field of study and conceptually connect it to the ideas of the developing theory in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity (Goulding, 2002).

3.3   Data collection and background of the participants

Conversing with people is a great tool for gathering information. In qualitative studies, interviews are oftentimes used as the method of data collection. The data collection for the current study makes no exception, as the data was gathered via semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008), the main objective of interviewing is to unravel what the other person has in mind. The authors see interviewing as a kind of discussion that is initiated and led by the researcher, yet there is a constant interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. The authors also find the idea of interviewing of being rather simple: when we want to know something about the other person, why not simply ask that person directly?

Longhurst (2003) on the other hand sees semi-structured interviews as a verbal interexchange between the interviewer and the interviewee, where the

former attempts to elicit information from the latter by asking questions. According to the author, in this type of interviewing, the interviewer has prepared a list of predetermined questions, yet the conversational manner of semi-structured interviews enables the participants to explore issues they consider important. The author notes that this form of interviewing is also referred to as conversional, 'soft' and informal.

Since the aim of the current study is to discover factors that influence employees' intentions to leave (turnover) and their willingness to stay (retention), there needed to be room for flexibility and open responses in the interviewees own words. Semi-structured interviewing allows this flexibility and openness (Longhurst, 2003) and was thus chosen as the data gathering method. The chosen form of interviewing mainly relies on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, hence it is important to there is mutual trust among the two parties (Longhurst, 2003; Eskola & Suoranta, 2008).

Accordingly, data for this study was gathered from 11 research participants who engaged in individual semi-structured interviews conducted in Finnish. The interviews were guided by pre-determined questions and some additional elaborating questions were asked throughout the interviews. The interviews began with asking some background information about the interviewees. The most valuable interview questions were categorized under two main topics: voluntary turnover and employee retention. Direct and indirect questions were asked in order to reveal answers to the main topics. This form of interviewing allowed the interviews to maintain a conversational feel, which led to a flexible and participant-led process where the participants could freely express their feelings and ideas.

All interviews were digitally recorded and notes were written throughout the discussion. The average duration of the interviews was 43 minutes, 59 minutes being the longest and 32 minutes being the shortest interview. After the interviews, the collected data was transcribed using both the recordings and notes as resources, since they might have entailed different interpretations and emphasis. The hand-written notes and transcripts were read repeatedly and the key statements and ideas were highlighted to aid the following data analysis phase. Throughout the analysis process, anonymity and ethics were given much though and emphasis.

The participants of the interviews all work at Swimming Jyväskylä, a local swimming club established in 2000 (swim.fi). Swimming Jyväskylä represents the biggest swimming club in Central Finland and is also one of the leading swimming clubs in the nation. In addition, Swimming Jyväskylä has been given recognition for its top quality operations and enabling professional swimming (uimaliitto.fi). In 2016, the swimming club employed 67 coaches and instructors altogether (swim.fi). Swimming Jyväskylä organizes swimming courses, competitive swimming, synchronized swimming and diving in the Jyväskylä area (swim.fi). The swimming club is a non-profit organization that employs three full-time employees and three part-time employees (swim.fi). The size, merits and number of staff were among the most important reasons for choosing this sport organization as the source of data.

As mentioned earlier, in total 11 swimming instructors were interviewed during a two week period at different locations. Ten participants were female and one was male. All of the 11 participants are employed by Swimming Jyväskylä either as swimming instructors or both as a coach and a swimming instructor. The participants for the interview were chosen on the basis of their education in swimming. The 11 instructors shared in common the completion of a valued course in the field of swimming instructing. The course in question is organized by the Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation: after the completion of the course one is a certified "Swimming Instructor". There are in total 16 certified swimming instructors working at Swimming Jyväskylä, out of which 11 agreed to an interview.

The reasoning behind choosing only instructors for the interviews was that for example, their working hours, responsibilities and work routines differ from those of coaches. Mixing the responses of these two groups of people may have affected the results of the study. Moreover, the coaches and instructors have different managers and colleagues, which may also impact the responses and results, and ultimately the validity of the current study. In addition, the completion of the Finnish Swimming Teaching and Lifesaving Federation's course is a shared factor among the sample, which might contribute to the validity of the results.

The instructors usually have 1.5-6 working hours a week and they often work during the weekends when the swimming courses are organized (swim.fi). What is more, they are responsible for teaching few groups during one shift, which can either be same or different in terms of their teaching content (swim.fi). One group has usually two or more instructors, and the pairs are oftentimes chosen by the managers (swim.fi). Ideally, new instructors are paired with more experienced ones in order to maintain a high quality in instructing.

The 11 interviewed instructors have been working for Swimming Jyväskylä for a varying amount of time: some have only began their work at the swimming club while others have worked there for several years. The average working years among the participants was two years. Moreover, although the motives for applying for their current positions varied among the participants, they all shared in common either their own background in competitive swimming or, in general, love for the sport.

3.4   Data analysis

The data analysis process in this research follows that of typical Grounded theory research as it includes coding strategies: interpreting interviews, observations and other relevant data into specific units of meaning which are then labelled and generated into concepts (Goulding, 2002). The two data analysis processes of this thesis followed that of Gioia et al (2012). More specifically, the process begins by generating the 1st-order terms first, after which they are refined into 2nd-order themes. Lastly aggregate dimensions are going to be pro-

duced in order to create a basis for building a data structure (Gioia et al, 2012). Each phase of the coding process evidently presents dilemmas in terms of interpretation, and therefore it is important to use prepositional and inference thinking throughout the process (Goulding, 2002).

Since the study has two main topics that need answers, it was appropriate to conduct two separate data analysis. The first process generated a data structure shown in Figure 1, which demonstrates the data analysis of possible factors that lead to voluntary turnover. An important note here is, however, that since the interviewees were all existing employees rather than those who have exited the organization, the results of the voluntary turnover topic are speculative and also demonstrate factors that influence the employees' intent to leave. Figure 2 on the other hand demonstrates the factors that influence employee retention in the organization. More detailed and in-depth descriptions of both data structures of Figure 1 and Figure, and their formulation processes can be found in the following chapter.
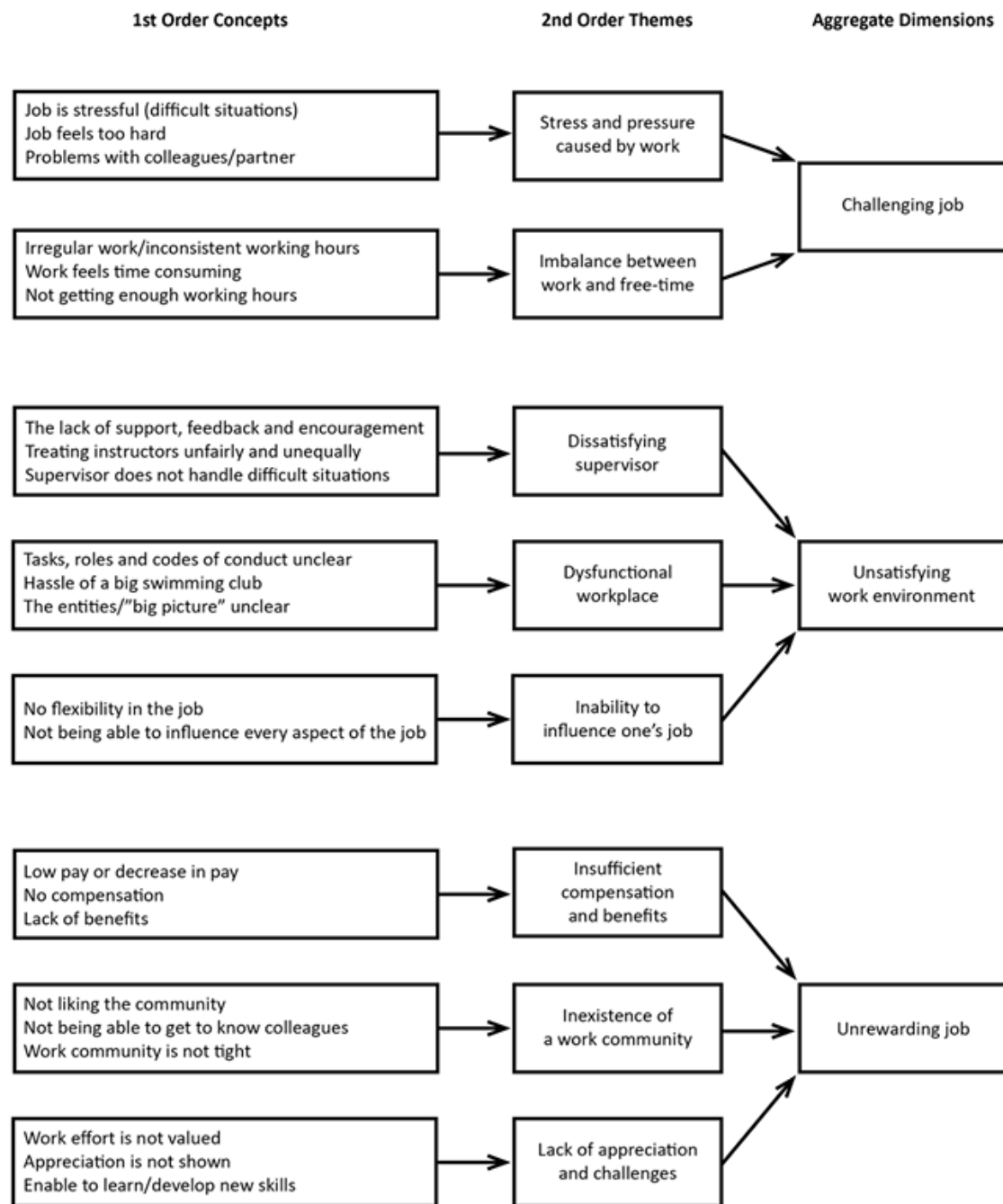
1st Order Concepts **2nd Order Themes** **Aggregate Dimensions**

Job is stressful (difficult situations)
Job feels too hard
Problems with colleagues/partner
→ Stress and pressure caused by work

Irregular work/inconsistent working hours
Work feels time consuming
Not getting enough working hours
→ Imbalance between work and free-time

→ Challenging job

The lack of support, feedback and encouragement
Treating instructors unfairly and unequally
Supervisor does not handle difficult situations
→ Dissatisfying supervisor

Tasks, roles and codes of conduct unclear
Hassle of a big swimming club
The entities/"big picture" unclear
→ Dysfunctional workplace

No flexibility in the job
Not being able to influence every aspect of the job
→ Inability to influence one's job

→ Unsatisfying work environment

Low pay or decrease in pay
No compensation
Lack of benefits
→ Insufficient compensation and benefits

Not liking the community
Not being able to get to know colleagues
Work community is not tight
→ Inexistence of a work community

Work effort is not valued
Appreciation is not shown
Enable to learn/develop new skills
→ Lack of appreciation and challenges

→ Unrewarding job

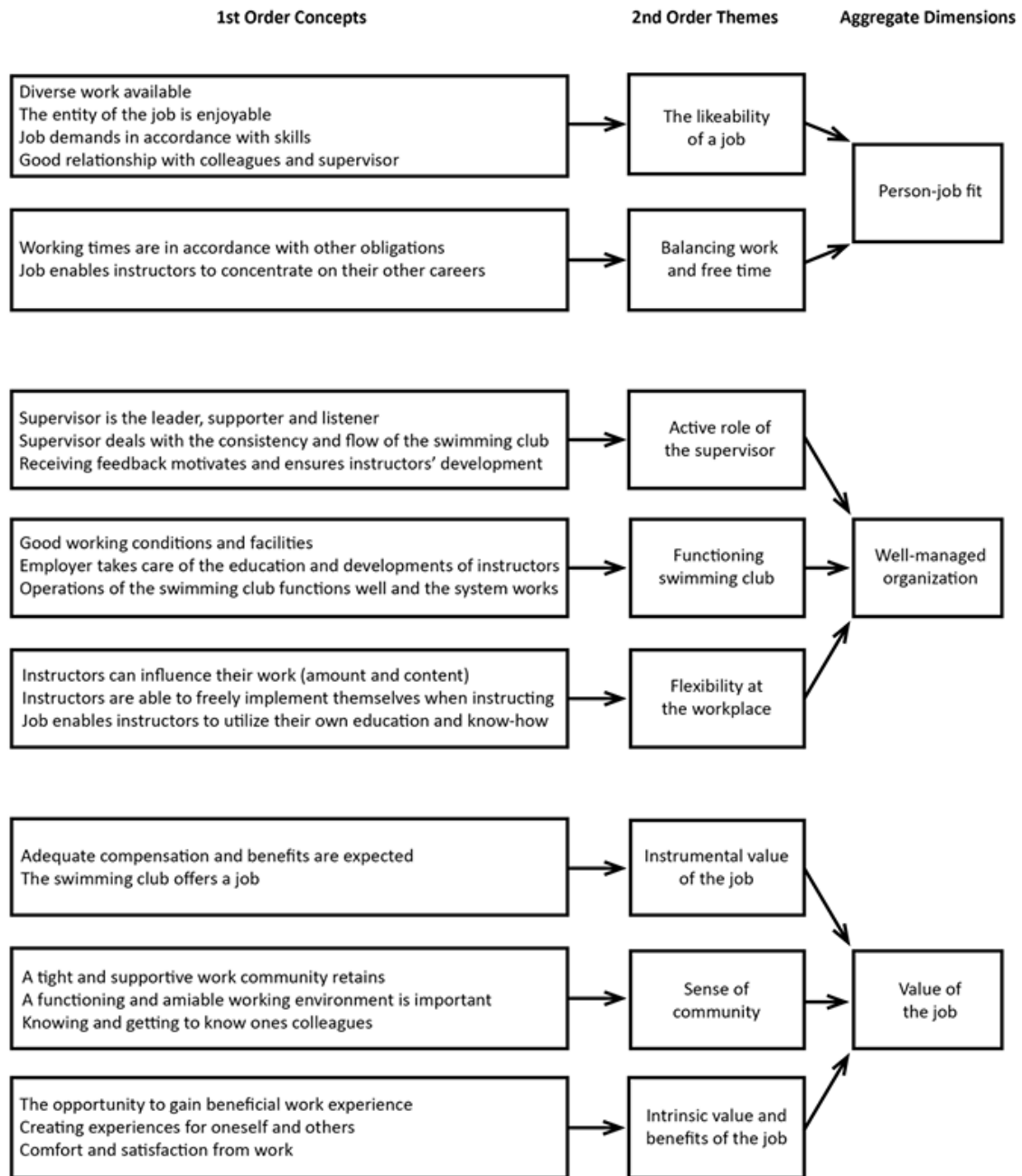Figure 1. Voluntary Employee Turnover. Data structure.

Figure 2. Retention of Employees. Data Structure.

4   RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into two sections as there are two different areas of analysis: factors influencing employees' intention to leave and the retention of employees. Both subchapters begin by providing more specified information about the data analysis phase, which resulted in the data structures demonstrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Both subchapters then focus their attention on describing the content of the aggregate dimensions that emerged from the analysis of the interviews. Each theme is illustrated with the aid of quotations by the interviewees.

4.1   Findings – Voluntary Employee Turnover

In the following pages general information about the data analysis phase of discovering factors that may lead to voluntary turnover is provided. Thereafter, the emerged aggregate dimensions *challenging job*, *unsatisfying work environment*, and *unrewarding job* are presented and explained in detail.

4.1.1 General information

All in all, all of the 11 interviewees were asked the same 15 interview questions, out of which five questions yielded the most relevant and valuable comments and information for answering the research question: "What factors influence voluntary employee turnover intentions in swimming clubs?" The following five questions yielded the most relevant and valuable comments and information for answering the research question:

> *What factors do not motivate employees to work for Swimming Jyväskylä?*
> *Why do employees not like to work for Swimming Jyväskylä?*
> *What factors "push you away" from Swimming Jyväskylä?*
> *What could Swimming Jyväskylä do as an employer to retain you for as long as possible?*
> *What changes should Swimming Jyväskylä make in order to increase your willingness to stay with the organization?*

The interviewees revealed that many of the components that affects their wiliness to stay, would affect their leaving if those factors were not functioning well. In other words, many instructors believed that the opposite of a retention factor would be a cause for possible turnover. Nevertheless, the data analysis clearly showed that there are several other reasons for turnover intentions.

The analysis phase began by transcribing the eleven interviews and continued by selecting initial terms and codes from selected interviewees' answers.

Evidently there were some repetition found in the answers of the 11 interviewees': some answers were identical to one another while others' context was the same despite the different wording. Hence, some answers were combined as one category. Moreover, at first glimpse, some answers appeared to have the same meaning but ultimately revealed slightly different focuses and were therefore separated as two different categories.

The interviewees' answers initially resulted in 45 1st-order categories altogether. The vast number of categories is typical for the research method chosen for this thesis. The initial categories were easily detectable and emerged without any difficulties. Generally at this stage the meaning was not to faithfully adhere to the "informant terms" but rather to "get lost" in the data and proceed to the next stages of the analysis (Gioia et al, 2013). Indeed, as a result of further interpretation and analysis, the initial 1st-oder concepts were reduced to a more manageable number of 23. Lastly in this stage, the 1st-order condensed categories were carefully read and analyzed once more and were eventually given phrasal descriptors.

From the ample number of condensed concepts one could easily detect emerging themes explaining the retention of employees, which fluently allowed the analysis to proceed to developing 2nd-order concepts. The category development stage resulted in eight 2nd-order concepts, which explain and describe the factors influencing the intention to leave. The concepts were defined in the following way: *stress and pressure caused by work, imbalance between work and free-time, dissatisfying supervisor, dysfunctional workplace, inability to influence one's job, insufficient compensation and benefits, and inexistence of a work community, and lack of appreciation and challenges.*

Thereon, investigation of the eight concepts led to their further distilment into 2nd-order aggregate dimensions: *challenging job, unsatisfying work environment, and unrewarding job.* Lastly, the eventual full set of 1st-order terms, 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions formed the basis for building a data structure. The final data structure is presented in Figure 1, which demonstrates the possible factors that influence voluntary employee turnover intentions in swimming clubs. In the following pages, the concepts and themes leading to the aggregate dimensions are described more in depth and detail.

4.1.2 Challenging job

Two specific themes relating to the challenging job dimension characterized the interviewees' turnover intentions: (1) stress and pressure caused by work, and (2) imbalance between work and free-time. These two themes can be seen as feelings or even symptoms caused by the larger reason, the job being challenging in general. Next, the two themes are explained more in detail by elaborating the all the 1st-order concepts.

Stress and pressure caused by work
None of the interviewees disliked the instructing job itself but some aspects of the job like instructing very big groups of children, was seen unpleasant:

> *"Big instructing groups… You have to give a lot of thought on how you are going to manage the group… Large group sizes can be stressful."*

What is more, "difficult cases" (i.e. restless or hyperactive children) within those groups were also seen as a challenge of the job that caused pressure. The major stress factor among the instructors was the difficultness or inability to find substitutes, and many felt that that resulted in negative feelings towards the job and affected their motivation:

> *"What does not motivate… Well if there is no flexibility and if you are not able to find a substitute when you need to."*

Also, instructing with an unsuitable working partner influenced the sense of disliking the job. In addition, many instructors felt that if the job felt too hard and intimidating it would cause stress, and the motivation to work would be affected negatively.

Imbalance between work and free-time

Although the flexibility of the work is highly valued, the lack of regularity and consistency (only instructing once a week or less) impacted the motivation of the instructors several instructors:

> *"If you only instruct once a week, it is not regularly enough… You do not get enough working hours."*

Not getting enough working hours sometimes led to searching for other work and thus the commitment towards the swimming club decreased. In addition, some felt that the hours of work are at challenging times:

> *"Working times are extremely challenging… Sunday evenings…"*

What is more, some felt that the job is time consuming at times, in terms of coming to the swimming hall very early to change into instructing clothes/bathing suits and preparing the swimming pool for instructing. This aspect of the job was seen unpleasant, since the instructors do not get paid for the time they have spent in preparations. Evidently stress and pressure caused by work and the perceived imbalance between work and free-time both indicated the job was, in general, challenging.

4.1.3 Unsatisfying work environment

Three specific themes relating to the unsatisfying work environment dimension characterized the interviewees' turnover intentions: (1) Dissatisfying supervisor, (2) dysfunctional workplace, and (3) inability to influence one's job. These three themes were perceived and more precise reasons for turnover intentions indi-

cating a bigger organizational issue. The three themes are explained more in detail in the following pages, as all of the 1st-order concepts are elaborated.

Dissatisfying supervisor
Some of the instructors believed that their motivation would decrease if the supervisor was unsatisfying. In general, receiving feedback, cheering and encouragement was evidently important, and lack of them would result in decreased work motivation, which could ultimately lead to leaving:

> "I would like more feedback… At the moment I feel like I am not getting enough…"

Overall, the instructors wanted to be heard, cared about and offered help when needed. The instructors expected the supervisor to be present, fair and treat everyone equally and if this was not the case, the employees would be more prone develop negative feelings towards the organization. What is more, few instructors though that if the supervisor is not ready and willing to make difficult decisions (i.e. interfere with unacceptable behavior etc.) it would be discouraging:

> "When there are certain mutual rules and if someone does not follow them, and the supervisor has been told this many times and the problem is not addressed… It eats you up a lot."

In addition, the supervisor was expected to handle other challenging situations such as parental feedback. Another "push factor" mentioned by the instructors would be if the supervisor would not listen to the instructors requests and assigned the instructing groups against the instructors' wished. In general, if the contact with the supervisor was limited, the instructors felt that the relationship was distant between them and therefore not functioning well.

Dysfunctional workplace
In general, some instructors desired more clarity in the entities of the job in order to "see the big picture". Overall, unclear codes of conduct among employees would be seen unfavorable among the instructors, as would any possible conflicts in the organization. Many also emphasized the importance of having clear mutual rules among the workers because the lack of rules contributed to their motivation:

> "What does not motivate… A (poor) working partner and if the mutual rules are not clear."

In addition, some felt that the size of the swimming club eventually led to a certain degree of "hassle" within the workplace, which was seen as an unpleasant feature of the workplace. Working conditions, like instructing in cold water was

also seen as a negative feature of the job. Moreover, some felt that it was hard to reach some of the facilities where the instructing takes place:

> *"Going to the farther swimming hall on Saturday mornings does not motivate much… If I had a car I could take working hours there."*

Many instructors concluded that if the information flow in general would lag, or if responsibilities and tasks were unclearly delegated and assigned, the uncertainty led would lead to frustration towards the organization. Ultimately this frustration could lead to the increased feeling of dissatisfaction and eventually intentions to leave.

Inability to influence one's job

It became evident from the instructors' answers that they would be unpleased with the employer if the job lacked the current flexibility. If one is not able to influence the (personal) most important aspects of the job, this would lead to negative feelings towards the organization. Some also felt that the organizational bureaucracy contributed to the decreased feeling of one being able to influence one's job:

> *"It would most likely not motivate if there was no room for flexibility… If the employer is too strict or if there is too much bureaucracy etc."*

Some instructors felt that if their ideas are not valued and executed, it might show in their level of motivation. A major "push factor" for some would be that if they would be obligated to instruct groups they did not want:

> *"If I was forced to instruct a group that I most certainly did not want to instruct… I would start to wonder if this (job) is something I want to do alongside my studies anymore."*

What is more, there were some other aspects of the job that the instructors wanted influence more, such as designing the course structures and contents. Again, if the instructors would not be able to influence those factors, it would affect their contentment towards the overall work environment. Overall, dissatisfying supervisor, dysfunctional workplace, and inability to influence one's job reflected dissatisfaction toward the work environment.

4.1.4 Unrewarding job

Three specific themes relating to the unrewarding job dimension characterized the interviewees' turnover intentions: (1) insufficient compensation and benefits, (2) inexistence of a work community, and (3) lack of appreciation and challenges. The emergence of these three concepts indicate that if the job in general is unrewarding employees might be more inclined to leave. These three themes and their concepts are described and elaborated in the following pages.

Insufficient compensation and benefits

Some interviewees felt that the (low) pay in instructing does not always motivate working, and that if one did not get any compensation from it one would reconsider whether to work at all. Any possible decrease in pay would also be seen very negatively among many instructors as it would affect the willingness to remain in the organization. Some felt that if the pay system is unfair and not tied to the level of education, it would have a negative effect on motivation:

> *"Pay should be in accordance with work experience and skills… It is unfair that inexperienced instructors get the same pay than the ones who have been instructing for many years."*

In addition, some felt that it would decrease motivation if the instructors would not get paid for their breaks. The lack of benefits, such as free of charge swimming hall visits, were also mentioned as one factor that influenced the likeability of working for the swimming club and contributed to a feeling that the job was unrewarding.

Inexistence of a work community

Generally, a common "push factor" for many was if they did not know their working partner or other colleagues. The instructors understood that there is inevitably much happening in such a big swimming club, and therefore the sense of community is not as intimate:

> *"Swimming Jyväskylä is rather big… There is a lot going on so the community is not so tight… There are only certain groups of people that you know."*

Thus, many instructors emphasized the importance of arranging more meetings and get-togethers among the group (of instructors), in order to develop a sense of belongingness. These gatherings would result in improved clarity of the organizations' functions and improve the collective aspect of the job. The lack of these meetings clearly affected the instructors' sense of having a job that is generally rewarding. Moreover, few new instructors thought that it was slightly difficult develop a sense of belongingness with the community right away and at times felt like outsiders:

> *"It is rather difficult to enter the swimming club as a new instructor… There is a sense of a feeling that the old instructors are coping better."*

Some felt that it would not motivate if the work community would be unaccepting, unfair or if people would not be nice to new co-workers. In addition, some also felt that having a poor working partner or changing a functional working pair would result in lack of motivation towards the job.

Lack of appreciation and challenges

Many of instructors felt that if their (work) effort is not valued, this feeling could negative affect the willingness to work for the organization. In general, not appreciating the employees input and the lack of praise does not increased work motivation:

> *"One gets praised less frequently… One gets some feedback, but not always appraised by one's supervisor."*

Others emphasized the importance of learning something new regularly to prevent the job from feeling like a routine. Some thought that if the work would not be challenging enough it would not motivate them:

> *"If the job description would not be demanding enough and I would not able to improve my skills… I would not consider it a challenge."*

Overall, it would be seen as a drawback, if the supervisor would not enable this opportunity to find the challenge in one's job. Lack of appreciation and challenges therefore both contributed to the sense of the job not being rewarding.

4.2   Findings – Retention of Employees

In the following pages general information about the data analysis phase of discovering antecedents of employee retention in swimming clubs is provided. Thereafter, the emerged aggregate dimensions *person-job fit*, *well-managed organization*, and *value of the job* are presented and explained in detail.

4.2.1 General information

In addition to finding possible antecedents of voluntary employee turnover, the purpose of this study was to discover what factors retain employees in swimming clubs. From the 15 interview questions, five questions yielded the most relevant and valuable comments and information for answering the research question: "What are the top factors that drive employee retention in swimming clubs?" The research findings were generated mainly from the answers from the following interview questions:

> *What factors motivate employees to work for Swimming Jyväskylä?*
> *Why do employees like to work for Swimming Jyväskylä?*
> *What factors retain you (to work for Swimming Jyväskylä)?*
> *What could Swimming Jyväskylä do as an employer to retain you for as long as possible?*
> *What changes should Swimming Jyväskylä make in order to increase your willingness to stay with the organization?*

The interview questions above seemed, at their formulation stage, to generate similar answers from the respondents due to the slight repetition of the focus of the questions. However, the questions fortunately generated new insight from all the respondents which gave more data for the analysis phase. Evidently, most of the interviewees needed some time process their own thoughts and feelings about the reasons behind their staying with the swimming club and therefore analyzing the topic from different angles was beneficial and needed.

The analysis phase followed the same steps as the previous analysis (of possible turnover factors). First, initial terms and codes were selected from the (transcribed) interviewees' answers. These answers indicated possible antecedents of retention, which resulted in 89 1st-order categories altogether. These categories were clearly detectable from the interview answers and therefore emerged rather easily. The number of 1st-order concepts was also much higher than that of the voluntary turnover categories.

There were again some repetition found in the answers of the interviewees', thus some answers were combined as one category. Similar answers were, however, treated carefully and some answers with slightly different focuses resulted in two categories. The initial 1st-oder concepts were eventually reduced to a more workable number of 23. Then, the 1st-order condensed categories were carefully read once more before eventually giving them phrasal descriptors.

Detecting emerging themes from the condensed concepts was quite easily done, hence the analysis proceeded to developing 2nd-order concepts. The category development stage resulted in eight 2nd-order concepts, which explain and describe the reasons and factors why swimming club instructors remain in their jobs. The concepts were defined in the following way: *the likeability of the job, balancing work and free time, active role of the supervisor, functioning swimming club, flexibility at the workplace, instrumental value of the job, a sense of community, and intrinsic value and benefits of the job.*

Thereon, investigation of the eight concepts led to their further distilment into 2nd-order aggregate dimensions: *person-job fit, well-managed organization, and value of the job.* Resultantly the eventual full set of 1st-order terms, 2nd-order themes and aggregate dimensions formed the basis for building a data structure. The final data structure is presented in Figure 2, which shows the concepts and themes on which I built my model of employee retention in swimming clubs. In the following pages, the concepts and themes leading to the final aggregate dimensions are described more in depth and detail.

4.2.2 Person-job fit

Two specific themes relating to the person-job fit dimension characterized the interviewees' retention intentions: (1) the likeability of the job and (2) balance between work and free time. These realization of these two themes may indicate in general that the person is well suited for the job. Next, the two themes are explained more in detail by elaborating the all the 1st-order concepts.

The likeability of the job

In general, having a job that is rather easy and enjoyable, in terms of instructing nice groups, affected the instructors' sense of working in a likeable job. Moreover, despite the easiness of the job, many instructors felt that the job demands are adequately challenging and in accordance with the instructors' skills. Many also believed that instructors should be given enough responsibility – which at the moment is the case. Several instructors also enjoyed the freedom of the job in terms of modifying the course objectives of the group in the way they felt best. What is more, some emphasized that a good relationship with supervisor and a working partner who has similar views motivates to remain with the swimming club:

> *"As to what retains… Probably the work community. It is important to have a working partner who you see eye-to-eye with."*

> *"In a sense it has motivated me to stay with the organization – the fact that I have had nice colleagues."*

Several interviewed instructors mentioned that they value the opportunity to work in different tasks (instructing different groups) and felt that new and exciting was work available to them if they wanted change. Other instructors felt that the level of value shown to instructors influenced the overall likeability of the job, whereas others felt that the overall enjoyable entity of the job is a key factor. Generally, all of the interviewees liked their current job and tasks and felt that they are suitable for the job in terms of their skills and abilities.

Balance between work and free time

What became evident from the interviews was that the instructors enjoyed their working hours, times and durations because they were usually in accordance with other their other obligations such as other work and school:

> *"Instructing times that fit my own schedule (retains)… There are no overlaps."*

That is to say, the interviewees felt that their job enables them to concentrate on their other careers as the working hours of the job fits well with their personal schedule. Overall, fitting and flexible working hours and commitment obligations were important retention factors:

> *"You only have commit to working for one term if you want… You know that, okay, I am going to work for this spring term and then see about the next… I can work just one term at a time."*

This balance is an important feature of the job and was one of the factors that yielded the continuance of working with the swimming club. Lastly, some interviewees emphasized the importance of altering their tasks and job descriptions to better fit their current life situation and personal resources. Overall, the

perceived likeability of the job and the ability balance between work and free time can indicate a good person-job fit in general.

4.2.3 Well-managed organization

Three specific themes relating to the organizational support dimension characterized the interviewees' retention intentions: (1) active role of the supervisor, (2) well-managed organization, and (3) flexibility at the workplace. The actualization of the three themes demonstrates that the organization is overall well-managed. The three themes are explained more in detail in the following pages, as all of the 1st-order concepts are elaborated.

Active role of the supervisor
According to the interviewees' responses, their supervisor seemed to influence their jobs, and ultimately retention, in numeral ways. Some of the instructors highlighted the importance of the support they get from their supervisor, in terms of the latter dealing with the direct feedback from parents, and being responsible for the overall consistency and flow of the swimming club. Many also felt that the supervisor helped them in difficult situations. Many instructors emphasized the importance of the supervisor listening to their requests and being fair when assigning tasks and other work:

> *"Being able to influence which groups one takes motivates… We were just asked what groups we want to instruct next term."*

Some interviewees also felt that it was nice that the supervisor enables new challenges as well as more working hours if needed. What is more, in general, the supervisor was seen as a leader, supporter and listener. Some of the interviewees valued the openness in the interaction between the supervisor and the instructors. Others highlighted the importance of the relationship between the supervisor and employee. A supervisor who cared about the instructors was desired:

> *"A good relationship with between the employees and the supervisor is important… It increases your willingness to stay if you feel like you and your input (work) is valued."*

Generally, it was seen important that the supervisor trusts the employees in terms of asking for their opinions and taking into consideration their ideas and suggestions, and eventually executing requests. What is more, the feedback given by the supervisor was seen as a motivational factor and many believed that it leads developing the skills of the instructors. Clearly the instructors desired encouragement, attention and thanks from the supervisor.

Functioning swimming club

Due to the large size of the swimming club, many felt that there are a lot of work available and some especially valued the diversity of the work. Few instructors appreciated the fact that they are able to work in good working conditions and facilities. Moreover, few instructors also appreciated the resources the swimming club has in terms of "tools" (i.e. teaching equipment and toys) for working, which are provided by the swimming club:

> "The swimming club is so big and there is diversity… And the facilities are good and you are able to do things (instruct)… The equipment are in order and you can yourself influence what equipment are acquired."

For some, the big size of the club created a sense of a safe working environment. What is more, many instructors praised the fact that their employer wants to educate the instructors. Overall, many of them felt that they are able to educate and develop oneself in their jobs because the swimming club takes care of that by organizing education:

> "Yes we are encouraged to educate ourselves; almost in every meeting upcoming courses are promoted and if someone wants to go you just contact the supervisor, or if some courses are desired the supervisor tries to make that happen."

Overall, the instructors felt that operations of the swimming club functions well, there are clear guidelines and protocols, and the system works smoothly. Many felt that information flows well and efficiently. In addition, some instructors felt that the signed work contract itself obligates working and thus retained them. Overall, the swimming club was seen to function well as a whole.

Flexibility at the workplace

Several interviewees valued the decision-making power the instructors are given in terms of being able to influence their work in terms of the amount of working hours the take. Receiving more working hours easily when desired, was something many instructors were thankful for:

> "Each instructor can present their own wishes – if one want more or less work, or more responsibility… Of course it motivates (to work) when you are able to influence things."

Also, several employees appreciated the opportunity to work in different tasks, and the ability to negotiate changes in one's job. In general, the fact that one can influence and decide which groups one instructs, how one instructs and with whom, was seen as a motivational factor:

> "Maybe it's the biggest reasons (that motivates working) – that you can influence your job… You have decision-making power in terms of how you do things."

Many of the interviewees also felt that the swimming club's instructors can freely express themselves when instructing, and that the job enables instructors to utilize their own education and know-how in the field of swimming and instructing:

> *"The freedom in instructing (motivates); you are given certain frames but you can implement and mold them to fit the facility and group size… It's good that instructors can decide what happens in the pool."*

Moreover, some interviewees mentioned that having the freedom of staying with the organization (working) for as long as one wants was also one factor that influenced the level of motivation. Evidently, many instructors valued the jobs' and the swimming clubs' overall flexibility as well as the swimming club functioning well.

4.2.4 Value of the job

Three specific themes relating to the value creation dimension characterized the interviewees' retention intentions: (1) a sense of community, (2) instrumental value of the job, and (3) intrinsic value and benefits of the job. The emergence of these three themes indicate that employees seek overall value from their job. These three themes and their concepts are described and elaborated in the following pages.

A sense of community
Most of the respondents felt that the social context of the swimming club is a highly important factor when it comes to retention. It became evident that instructors desired collective and social activities among them in order to become a more compact group, which in turn would contribute to further developing the sense of community. Some instructors also felt that having collegial support and possibility for mentoring were both factors that influenced the general feeling of having a social community around them:

> *"As a new instructor I feel like it would be nice to have them (more experienced colleagues) so I could listen to them and ask what they have done."*

> *"More experienced instructors could, somehow, mentor or tutor the new instructors… There could be an open discussion amongst the instructors."*

Feeling a sense of belongingness and being part of the community both also affected the instructors' willingness to remain with the swimming club. Overall, many valued a pleasant working environment and emphasized that knowing ones colleagues is highly important:

> *"As a work community and community in general the swimming club is fair, flexible and the atmosphere is frank – I can go up to anyone for help."*

The age differences between the instructors was not seen as a major factor that influenced the sense of community. The instructors felt that the community spirit was nevertheless good and that the instructors shared a common understanding.

Instrumental value of the job
Some of the interviewees did mention adequate compensation as being a factor that influences their decision to continue working as an instructor. Although there were differences in the opinions as to what is considered adequate pay in their job, compensation was expected and desired among the instructors:

> *"Well of course the wage influences my willingness to stay, the reason why I like to instruct the weekly swimming courses is because the pay is good and in accordance with the workload."*

> *"Every time I am offered more work I think: what is the price of my free-time."*

What is more, some instructors desired other benefits such as bonuses in addition to the monthly wage. Few of the instructors also suggested that they would appreciate a clear wage-structure and that wages should be linked to the employees work experience and number of working years in the swimming club. Moreover, the swimming club offering a job in general was also seen as a valuable opportunity amongst the instructors. Overall, the "final value" of the job influenced the retention on several employees.

Intrinsic value and benefits of the job
Succeeding in their jobs, in terms of seeing improvement in the swimming skills of the children they instruct, was seen as a gratifying aspect and benefit of the job. In general, many instructors felt that creating experiences for oneself and others was one of the main benefits of the job:

> *"Teaching swimming to a child is kind of a big thing; for the child and the family. What one can accomplish in one's work is rewarding. It is a motivation factor in the background, even though one does not always acknowledge it."*

What was important to some, was that work provides them comfort and satisfaction, and that one was able to improve one's skills as an instructor on the job. Moreover, the job presents an opportunity to gain beneficial work experience, which one of the respondents believed to be beneficial in the future:

> *"I have been instructing for a long time… Maybe a future employer would appreciate the fact that I have continued instructing for as long as I have"*

One instructor felt that instructing also uplifts one's mood thanks to the pure joy children spread. Some instructors also felt that swimming and instructing is a way of life, and therefore they had intrinsic motivation to work:

"… you do this because you like instructing and swimming, and that it is at least somewhat important to you that you share that knowledge with other people"

As a non-monetary benefit one instructor also proposed that those instructors with more experience would be given the privilege of being the first ones to select the groups they want to instruct. In other words, working years with the swimming club would result in certain entitlements. All in all, it was clearly important that the instructors felt that they belonged to a (work) community, the work had instrumental value in itself, and that it also provided some intrinsic value and benefits.

5   DISCUSSION

The current study employed an inductive research design to addresses the questions: What factors influence voluntary employee turnover intentions in swimming clubs and what are the top factors that drive employee retention in such sport organizations? This chapter discusses and further examines the findings presented in the previous chapter and addresses the research questions. The discussion of the findings is organized according to the two research objectives. In doing so, relevant literature, in particular the literature covered in Chapter Two, is linked to the current findings. Lastly, the chapter includes managerial implications aiming to contribute to the field and bring new insights, and also presents the limitations of the study.

5.1   Possible reasons why employees voluntarily leave their jobs

Challenging job
The perceived feeling of the job being too challenging was identified as one of the most prominent causes of possible voluntary turnover among swimming instructors. The concept of a challenging job included *stress and pressure caused by work and imbalance between work and free-time*. In other words, if these hindrances occur in one's job it may indicate that the job is too challenging either on a personal level or the organizational level. Although the current sport management literature has not identified these predictors, the findings of Branham (2012) on the other hand may offer some support, as the author believes that finding the job stressful and hard may indicate that there might have been unrealistic expectations about the job or that the initial job description was not realistic to the job seeker (Branham, 2012). Moreover, according to Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) perceived stress and pressure caused by work may also be indications of a poor fit with the organization, which is one of the main dimensions of job embeddedness: generally those employees with lower job embeddedness may be more prone to leave the organization. What is more, Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) also stressed the importance of producing good employee-organization-fits in non-profit organizations. The need to feel competent (e.g. job is in accordance with skills) in one's work is one of the main human needs that impact disengagement and considerations of leaving if the need is not met.

As for the concept of imbalance between work and free-time, Branham (2012) again offers support as stress from overwork and work-life imbalance was one of the seven reasons for voluntary turnover. The findings of this current study shows a minor conflict in the interviewees' responses: the flexibility of the work, in terms of working hours, is highly valued yet the irregularity of the work and inconsistent working hours was seen as a factor that might be a factor influencing turnover. Not receiving enough working hours meant that

some employees chose other work (sometimes over instructing) – which again was a possibility that the instructing job offered. The study by Brown and Yoshioka's (2003) may offer some support, as they believe that part-time employees are significantly less likely to indicate an intention to stay with the organization (compared to their full-time colleagues). The findings of the current study are also supported by Hom and Kinicki (2001) as they found that inter-role conflict emerging from inconsistency between personal endeavors and work can influence a person's turnover decisions. There is also existing evidence in the sport literature of the imbalance between work and free-time, as Ryan and Sagas (2009) found that work-family-conflict may indeed impact the turnover intentions of coaches.

Unsatisfying work environment

As indicated in the findings chapter, perceptions about an unsatisfying work environment contributed to voluntary turnover intentions among the employees of the swimming club. The concept included 2nd order concepts of a *dissatisfying supervisor, dysfunctional workplace, and inability to influence one's job.* The realization of these factors in the workplace may indicate that work environment in general is unsatisfying for employees. Being dissatisfied with the supervisor, in terms of not receiving enough support or feedback was named as one of the major reasons for possible voluntary turnover in the current study. Treating everyone equally and delegating work fairly was also seen highly important, and opposite behaviour may lead to turnover intentions. The work by Branham (2012) again complies with this view as the author believes that too little coaching and feedback, and the lack of trust (e.g. treating everyone fairly), are one of the top seven reasons for employees leaving their jobs. It is becoming clear that many of the turnover factors among employees are same and that most employees expect similar treatment, regardless of the organizational form (nonprofit or for-profit). The current sport literature also provides some support that dissatisfaction with the supervisor may influence turnover: Inglis et al. (1996) found evidence that females exit their positions in sport organizations due to factors such as discriminatory practices.

In regards to the influence of the workplace being dysfunctional on turnover, MacIntosh and Doherty's (2010) findings provide support that level of formalization in sport organizations influences the turnover intentions. This was the case in the current study as well, since factors such as unclear tasks and codes of conduct seemed to influence the turnover intentions of instructors. The employees' negative feelings towards the hassle of the swimming club might indicate that there is, in fact, a lack of formalization in the organization, which in turn might influence the employees' intention to leave. Some interviewees also noted that working conditions, such as the far away facilities, were not always pleasant and impacted, to an extent, the intention to leave. Concurrently, Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) believe that in non-profit organizations perceived issues in working conditions might oftentimes be the cause for turnover.

Inability to influence one's job was also a crucial factor that impacted the instructors' turnover intentions. Although there is not clear evidence in the turnover literature that this inability impacts turnover there is, however, some proof that non-profit organizations may increase their employees' motivation and satisfaction by adjusting work so that it is more meaningful, interesting and personally fulfilling (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). If the employee is able to their job descriptions or tasks to fit their needs and desired better, the turnover intentions might thereby diminish. In regards to this, research has shown that limited opportunities for self-directedness stands in the way of employees' commitment the (Hamel & Breen, 2013) showing once again that inability to influence one's job is a turnover factor that should be considered in sport organizations.

Unrewarding job
Another crucial theme influencing the turnover of instructors was an unrewarding job, which included concepts *insufficient compensation and benefits, and inexistence of a work community, and lack of appreciation and challenges*. Evidently, if an employee felt that these concepts were evident in their job it may indicate that the job is either unrewarding in general or on a personal level. Insufficient compensation and benefits were two important factors that influenced the instructors' willingness to leave the organization. Low or inadequate pay or decrease in one's pay would, according to the interviewees, affect their turnover intentions greatly. This finding is supported by several authors in both general turnover literature as well as sport management literature. Dissatisfaction with pay is one of the main reasons for employee turnover in non-profit organizations (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003), and for example director's turnover in especially non-profit organizations, can be caused by inadequate pay (Tschirhart & Bielefeld, 2012). Ryan and Sagas' (2009) study also complies with this finding: pay satisfaction has a direct effect on turnover intentions of coaches. It may be concluded that given the vast evidence, insufficient pay is one of the most evident reasons for voluntary turnover intentions in sport organizations.

Moreover, the inexistence of a work community was a clear factor that contributed to the turnover intentions of instructors. If the community was not perceived tight, or if the instructors did not know their colleagues, these factors might lead to the negative emotions towards the job and ultimately turnover. The social aspects of the work (non-monetary values) are evidently important and the existing literature complies with this finding. For example, MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) provide evidence (in sport management literature) that elements of organizational culture and atmosphere influence the intention to leave the sport organization. There is also evidence that job embeddedness, especially the links within the organization, predicts turnover intention (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008). Moreover, Hamel and Breen (2013) also believe that not establishing a sense of community amongst people is hindering employees' overall commitment to the organization.

The interviewees' answers also revealed that the lack of appreciation and challenges affected their willingness to leave the organization. If the instructors felt that their work effort is not valued and appreciation was not shown, they would be more inclined to leave. There is again existing literature that supports this finding: feeling devalued and unrecognized are a few main reasons for why employees leave their jobs (Branham, 2012). Branham (2012) also emphasized that in general, the need to feel a sense of worth (e.g. recognition) is considered one of the human needs that if not being met, can lead to considerations of leaving. Moreover, in regards to providing enough challenge, Branham (2012) also sees that too few growth and advancement opportunities can influence turnover.

5.2   Possible retention practices in swimming clubs

Person-job fit
As indicated in the findings section, the data of this study yielded several possible retention practices that apply in swimming clubs. The concept of person-job fit was one of the ultimate aggregate dimension that included retention concepts of *the likeability of the job and balance between work and free time.* In general, if the employee perceived the job to be likeable and that it enables them to balance their other obligations, it can be said that there is a proper fit between the job and the employee. In general, the interviewees felt that when their job was easy yet adequately challenging, the sense of liking the job increased, which in turn affected their willingness to remain with the organization. Overall, it was evident that all of the interviewees enjoyed various aspects of their job, which also indicates a good fit between the person and the tasks. There is existing evidence of the importance of a person/organization fit, as it has been found to contribute to the retention of employees (Lewis & Coetzer, 2009). Mitchell et al. (2001a) provide further support be providing evidence that employees oftentimes stay because of attachments and their sense of fit, both in their community and on the job. Moreover, scholars have also indicated that having an interesting job overall contributes to employee retention (Viitala, 2007).

It was evident that having a decent balance between work and free time was desired among the employees and that the balance affected their willingness to remain with the organization. Inglis et al., found evidence of the importance of this balance (time demands at work and at home) in sport organizations already in their study in 1996 and clearly this factor remains as important today as it was over 20 years ago. Other scholars also comply with the view that the opportunity to harmonize work and family life is one of the main factors that retain employees in organizations (Viitala, 2007). Given the evidence in both general retention literature and sport management literature, this balance is evidently very important to enable the employees in sport organizations.

Well-managed organization

The findings also revealed that working in a well-managed organizations was one of the three main retention factors. This aggregate dimension included concepts of *an active role of the supervisor, functioning swimming club, and flexibility at the workplace.* When the employee feels that these concepts are actually true and noticeable in one's job, it suggests that the organization, as a whole, is well-managed. This sense can ultimately affect the employees' willingness to stay. Firstly, many instructors expected the supervisor's role to be active rather than passive: the interviewees highlighted the importance of the supervisor being supportive, giving feedback and handling difficult situations. The existing retention literature complies with these findings as scholars have found that factors such as supervisor support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), feedback (Lussier & Kimball, 2013), good human resource policies, and good management (Viitala, 2007) all contribute to the retention of employees. Other scholars have found evidence that the active role of the supervisor influences retention, as general appreciation for work well done and a good fit with one's boss both influence employees' willingness to stay (Arthur, 2001).

It was clear that many employees also valued the fact that the workplace was functioning as a whole in terms of the operations of the swimming club functioning well, the existence of guidelines and protocols, and the system working smoothly. The employees also valued the swimming club's interest towards educating their instructors. Scholars in the past have concluded that a good work environment in general is something to strive for, as it impacts the retention of employees (Lussier & Kimball, 2013). Moreover, there is evidence that favourable job conditions and fair organizational procedures can also result in increased affective commitment to the organization, improved performance and also reduce employee's withdrawal behaviours (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Other factors such as adequate challenges and the opportunity of career advancement can affect the retention of employees (Arthur, 2001). Overall, the fact that the workplace functions well clearly affects the employees' willingness to remain with the swimming club.

As important for the interviewees was the flexibility at the workplace – majority of the interviewees mentioned it being one of the key reasons for staying with the swimming club. The interviewees valued the decision-making power the instructors were given in terms of being able to influence their work; the amount of working hours, what groups they instruct and how they instruct. There is some existing evidence of the importance of this factor. Although there is not much existing evidence of flexibility at the workplace influencing retention in sport organizations Arthur (2001), for example, provided information about non-monetary factors, such as freedom and autonomy, and their effect on business leaders' will to remain with the company. What is more other scholars have found that empowerment (i.e. strategies that are designed to increase employees control over their work) has been linked to the improved job satisfaction and enhanced organizational commitment (Laschinger et al., 2009).

Value of the job

The findings also revealed that the employees wanted to gain value from their jobs. The concepts that rose from the interviews were *instrumental value of the job, a sense of community, and intrinsic value and benefits of the job.* In other words, if the employees feel that they gain these factors from their job, the job in general has value that retains. The instrumental value or "final value" of the job was evidently important to the instructors. This concept included values of pay and having a job in general. Getting adequate pay was mentioned repeatedly among the interviewees indicating its' importance as one of the retention factors. Several scholars have emphasized the role of pay as being one of the most important retention factors. For example, Viitala (2007) believes that competitive salary is one of the main retention practices in organizations, while Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) believe that no matter what the organizational form, employees expect appropriate compensations. Lussier and Kimball (2013) also concluded in their study that receiving justly rewards is a key factor in retaining employees. It is important to note, however, that some scholars such as Arthur (2001) have found evidence that compensation is not as important to all employees as having a fulfilling job and working for a great company.

The findings of the study also showed that the perceived sense of having a work community was highly important to the interviewees. It became evident that a tight and supportive work community retains employees in the swimming club. This finding is unsurprising as many scholars have emphasized the importance the social aspects of the work. For example, inclusivity (Pastore et al., 1996) and a strong culture in an organization (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005) are some of the "community" factors that contribute to the retention of employees. In addition, collegial support has also been previously recognized as one factor influencing retention in particularly sport organizations (Pastore et al., 1996). In addition, social interaction with organizational superiors and peers has been found to relate to the overall commitment of employees (Buchanan 1974). The diverse and large body existing evidence and the findings of this current study indicate that a sense of having a work community is clearly a critical retention factor is sport organizations.

In addition to the instrumental value of the job and perceived sense of community, the findings of this study indicated that intrinsic value and benefits of the job were also key retention factors among the instructors. Gaining work experience, offering experiences to others and oneself, and getting satisfaction from work were factors relating to this concept. There is supportive evidence that intrinsic value and benefits of the job indeed relate to the retention of employees. Tschirhart and Bielefeld (2012) for example concluded that intrinsic rewards are valued when it comes to maintaining the involvement of employees. Arthur (2001) also suggests that the opportunity to make an impact in one's job is an important retention factors for employees. What is more, scholars have found that the opportunity to learn and develop oneself (on the job) contributes to the retention of employees (Viitala, 2007). In general, having a fulfilling job

(Arthur, 2001) and job that enables achievements (Buchanan 1974) impacts employee retention and clearly this is the case in sport organizations as well.

5.3   Managerial implications and limitations of the study

The goal of this study was to build two vibrant inductive models (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) that are grounded in the data, which capture the informants' experiences in theoretical terms. The previous pages further explained the phenomena and made relevant data-to-theory connections. In the following pages, the current study offers numerous managerial implications for managers in sport organizations that are struggling with issues related to turnover and retention of key employees.

Preventing Turnover
The findings of the study indicate that a challenging job, unsatisfying work environment and an unrewarding job all contribute to voluntary employee turnover. Generally, supervisors should minimize the stress and pressure employees experience by preventing and/or helping in difficult situations instructors face in their jobs, ensuring good match between the employee and the job demand, and intervene in conflicts between colleagues. In addition, supervisors should ensure a proper balance between the instructors' work and free-time by offering more consistent and adequate amount of working hours and understanding reasons why the job feels too time consuming. The organization may benefit from detecting the possible person-job fit already in the recruitment stage by truthfully telling about the job demands and job description to ensure a better fit from the start thereby diminishing the sense of a challenging job later. In addition to the job being challenging on a personal level, organizations should evaluate their job demands to ensure that they are attainable by their current or future employees.

What is more, in order to prevent the dissatisfaction towards the management, the supervisor should offer the subordinates enough support, feedback, and encouragement. The supervisor should also treat everyone fairly and equally, and handle difficult situations. Overall, the tasks, roles and codes of conduct in the workplace should be clear, and the general hassle should be reduced to the minimum. In general, all the employees should be able to "see the big picture" in terms of understanding the relevant aspects of their workplace. One way of ensuring this understanding could be further crystalizing the job descriptions and demands, and presenting these to the employees. Additionally, it is also important that the employees are able to influence their jobs. This flexibility is built on trust and employee empowerment. However, although the employees are offered flexibility, it is the organization's role to guide and educate the employees enough that they are able to make the right changes in their jobs. In general, if the workplace functions well as a whole the turnover intentions can be diminished.

Furthermore, turnover (intentions) could be decreased if the compensation and benefits are sufficient enough. The organization may also benefit from a structured "pay level" which is not only fair, but also transparent to the employees. Moreover, creating and developing a proper work community which is tight and where everyone knows each other should be among the top priorities of the workplace. Get-togethers and collective brainstorming sessions might be helpful tools to unify the work community. Moreover, it is important that the employees are shown appreciation and value, as well as provided sufficient challenges in which they are able to learn and develop their skills. Systematic feedback and performance appraisals may be useful to ensure these actions. By taking these steps, the organization may encounter fewer turnover intentions.

Ensuring Retention

The most valuable key employees are at the heart of the sport organizations and those whose work affects the swimming skills of people of all ages. Therefore, retaining these invaluable employees is highly important. In addition to understanding the turnover (prevention) factors mentioned above, the supervisors in sport organizations should also understand the determinants that retain their employees in order to continue on the right path.

The findings of the study indicate that a good person-job fit, a well-managed organization, and perceived value of the job all contribute to the retention of employees. Fostering the likeability of the instructing job ultimately contributes to the retention of the employees. Providing diverse work and ensuring that the entity of the job is enjoyable are apparent factors affecting retention. In addition, supervisors should give some thought as to what job is offered to whom, as it is important that the job demands are in accordance with the instructor's skills. The organization might benefit greatly from having a conversation with the employee about his/her preferences and competences, and strive for a successful job design in order to ensure the perceived likeability of the job. Furthermore, employees should have good relationships with their colleagues and supervisor, and these relationships should be fostered especially at the workplace to improve the tightness of the work community. What is more, enabling a balance between work and free time in terms of providing a chance to concentrate on other obligations and careers, for example, is also important. All of these factors above can influence the employees' willingness to stay with the organization and should be therefore given thought.

The active role of the supervisor is evidently one of the main retention factors that emerged from the data of this study. In order to ensure retention, the supervisor should be a leader, supporter and listener. In addition, it is the supervisor's job to guarantee the consistency and the "flow" of the swimming club. This "leading role" may affect the increase trust towards the workplace and affect the perceived feeling of safety in the workplace. More importantly, receiving feedback from the supervisor is crucially important as it not only motivates the employees but also ensures the development of their instructing skills (not forgetting the improved instructing quality that influences the skills

of the people being instructed). What is more, the fact that the workplace is functioning as a whole is also an important retention factor that should be considered. Overall, the organization should ensure good working conditions and facilities, and opt for the "system" working soundly. Equally important is taking care of the instructors' developments through educating them further. This will benefit both the organization and the employees immensely. Moreover, the flexibility of the workplace clearly retains employees and should thus be accommodated. In sport organizations especially, employees should be able to influence the amount and content of their jobs as well as being able to freely implement themselves when instructing and utilizing their know-how.

Another retention factor the current study revealed was the value of the job. In other words, it is essential that the job generates value for the employees. The employees clearly expect instrumental value from their jobs in the form of compensation and having a job in general. Compensation should be in line with the skills and work experience of the employee in order for it to retain. As the job is vital to many employees, the organization should continue to offer jobs to those who are in need of work and who are suitable candidates. In addition to the "final value" of the job, the perceived sense of work community is tremendously important for the employees. As noted earlier a tight and supportive work community retains them, hence these features should be reinforced. In general, a functioning and amiable work environment is a factor that affects retention. Lastly, the intrinsic value and benefits of the job relate to the retention of employees in several ways. The job should enable the employees to create experiences for others and themselves, and the employees should get satisfaction and comfort from work, as well as the opportunity to gain beneficial work experience. All of these benefits contribute to the retention of the employees in swimming clubs.

Limitations

Despite the numeral implications presented in the previous pages, this study has several limitations that are worth elaborating. Firstly, the sample size was small and limited to only certain instructors who had a specific education. The findings may have been different had the sample size been more diverse and bigger. Moreover, the sample only represented one swimming clubs' instructors' perceptions and thus may not be, to a certain extent, directly applicable in other sport clubs and their employees (i.e. coaches or other personnel). In addition, the demographic location of swimming club as well as the size of the club may also affect the applicability of the findings: smaller or bigger clubs may find other factors that are more relevant in their environment.

There was also an underrepresentation of male respondents and few interviewees had only just started working for the organization, thus both of these factors may also contribute to the study's limitations. Consequently, male instructors and employees with a longer work history may leave or stay for other reason undefined by this study. What is more, the timing of the interviewees could have also affected the responses, as the interviews were conduct-

ed in the beginning of the (fall) term rather than after the term was over. Further, the interview settings differed slightly from one another as some were interviewed at their workplace and others at various locations. Nevertheless, the interviewees chose the interview setting themselves leaving room for the choice of comfort. Other limitation of the current study is that the interviews were conducted in Finnish and were transcribed into English by the interviewer. Despite the language proficiency of both languages there may be slight falsity in the translations.

It is also important to note that the factors influencing voluntary turnover were gathered from the existing employees, rather than those who have truly exited the organization, and therefore the factors are speculative. Future studies may therefore collect turnover reasons from those employees who have actually left the organization. Nevertheless, the factors presented in the current study are, at least, factors that indicate the employees' possible intentions to leave (which may or may not lead to actual turnover).

Furthermore, organizations must also be cautious of treating everyone the in the same manner and assume that they all share the same reasons for leaving and staying. Evidently, there are individual differences that should be taken into consideration. Lastly, the research design and method also contributed to the validity of the study. Inductive reasoning applied in this study may be limited, and the observations and conclusion may be incomplete or incorrect. Hence, the logic of this study may be sound but proven incorrect by further observation.

6   CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the considerable research on voluntary employee turnover and retention, there is a research gap in linking these to sport management and sport organizations. This gap thereby limits our understanding of the possible reasons of employee turnover and retention in the field of sport. Hence, the purpose of this study was to fill this gap by identifying the common reasons why employees voluntarily leave swimming clubs, and sport organizations in general, and the best practices to retain the key employees in those clubs and organizations. The topic is relevant to study further as sport organizations offer invaluable experiences and skills for people through their employees.

The findings of this study are novel in many ways. The paper's principal theoretical contribution is the formation of the two models: one presenting the possible reasons for voluntary turnover of employees (Figure 1) and the other the most important retention practices (Figure 2). The models presented in this study are among the first of their kind in sport management literature, and provide an invaluable tool for supervisors in swimming clubs and others alike. The models and their elaborations and explanations offer insight for management in need of understanding how to prevent voluntary turnover of employees and how to retain their key employees.

The findings of this study indicate that a challenging job, unsatisfying work environment, and an unrewarding job all contribute to voluntary turnover of employees in swimming clubs. Concentrating on fixing these hindrances may decrease turnover intentions and eventually lead to prolonged willingness to remain with the organization. In addition to the described turnover factors, the study revealed clear concepts relating to the retention of employees. A good person-job fit, a well-managed organization, and value of the job are all relevant factors that contribute to the retention of employees. The reliability and validity of this study relies on the saturation of the interviewees' answers as well as the extensive analysis of the data. The data analysis was appropriate given the lack of previous research on the topic.

The current findings of the study are provided support by existing turnover and retention literature, indicating that many of the same human resource practices apply in sport organizations as they do in other organizations. Despite the uniqueness of sport organizations, the values of employees appear to be similar to those working in any other organizational form. Overall, the current research was authentic in terms of being worthwhile to study as it provided valuable information for sport managers, and ultimately affects the existence and success of sport organizations as employees are at the core of those organizations. The managerial implications of this study can be, to some extent, applied to other non-profit organizations, as many of them share the same features as swimming clubs and sport organizations in general.

As mentioned, it is important that the topics of this study are researched further, as sport organizations (and other non-profit organizations) are becom-

ing more and more professional-like in the upcoming years. Future research could seek to, for example, expand the sample size and aim for a more heterogeneous sample to see if diversity affects the findings of the current study. Alternatively, research could more rigorously limit the study to a very homogenous group of informants in order produce more streamlined and defined results. The findings of this study could direct further research and be tested in other non-profit organizations (local or international) to see if the current implications apply in other unique settings. It would also be interesting to study, for example, which influences turnover more: the existence of factors influencing turnover or the lack of retaining factors. What is more, the (retention related) findings of this research could be compared to the actual retention practices of non-profit organizations to see whether they are engaging in activities most beneficial to them.

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