Degree Project

Bachelor

Analyzing motivational factors which may influence seasonal retention

A case study on Kolmården Zoo Park & Leksand Resort

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Abstract

Unveiling the factors which drive the seasonal workforce in a family-park tourism destination setting through interviews with previous workers of those destinations, and to understand the challenges of working seasonally opposed to working full-time.

Keywords: Seasonal Employees, Human Resource Management, Seasonality, Retention, Motivational factors.
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1. Introduction

In the past few decades Human Resource Management (HRM) has become the most used approach to managing people in an organization (Lendzion, 2015). Human Resource departments at an organization concentrate on developing their staff, on their level of commitment, development and motivation (Long, Ajabe & Kowang, 2014). This thesis will take the reader through collective information pertaining to the case of seasonality, to help understand what it is, who it involves, and what importance it has for those who work seasonally. The method chosen to accumulate in-depth information about workers perspective, was qualitative semi-structured interviews, which provides a deeper insight into the motivations behind seasonal workers. Leksand Resort in Dalarna and Kolmården in Östergötland were chosen as the main sources of interviewees, due to the fact that the researchers worked at these places during the summer season in the year 2017 and had contacts to allow access to the interviewees. A comparison of two different sites was also thought to be beneficial to add depth and validity to findings. After looking into seasonality, the researchers will then focus on the challenges of seasonal workers in order to give a better perspective on what makes them different full-time work. The next sections will outline the research aim and research questions for this research.

1.1 Research Problem

Every year there are seasonal employees who return to their workplace from previous seasons. Organizations often provides some encouragement to seasonal employees to entice them to return for another season, for example, they will not have to go through the interview process again or they have a higher rate of pay. Each season the organization will have to put in a huge amount of investment into the recruitment process. In this case, what could the seasonal workplace do to reduce the high rate turn-over?

As both researchers have been seasonal workers, there was an interest to try to understand why these employees decide to return season after season. This has provided the motivation for this research.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aim is to understand employee retention within a returning workforce to two destinations in Sweden influenced by seasonality. As part of the research aim, this research
expects to provide an understanding into how seasonal workers feel about their work and what indirect factors could persuade them to come back for the next season.

1.3 Research Question

What are the factors which entice the seasonal workforce to return the following season?

Understand the connections between job satisfactions, loyalty of the worker to the company and commitment is an important issue for organizations (Jeong Kim, Tavitiyaman & Gon Kim, 2009). Therefore, HRM strategies to motivate employees and have a well-established training and development program are crucial to keep a turn-over rate low. The reason behind this is because for each new employee, the organization needs to spend economical resources and time for their orientation during the first days of their job. The same could apply to seasonal employees, if more of them decide to return to the workplace, it’s more beneficial to the organization because of all the money and time saving. The question above will guide the research.

The following two sections will briefly describe the two seasonal workplaces which this research was conducted and where the researchers worked at during the 2017 summer season. This gives the reader a better understanding of the destinations.

1.4 Kolmården

More than 50 years ago, Ulf Svensson, open up the biggest Zoo Park in the Nordic countries. Since then, Kolmården has been working towards giving endangered animals a chance for better life (Kolmårdens Djurpark, 2018).

That is what Kolmården Zoo Park is for, they rescue animals which are in danger and put them into the Zoo. Not a Zoo where the animals are locked up in cages, but a Zoo where the animals are able to roam freely. The park has more than just wild animals, it also has attractions, restaurants, a hotel and camping spot. But it is most famous for its wilderness and attractions. They also provide different types of shows for the guests, such as dolphins show, bird show etc (Kolmårdens Djurpark, 2018).

Since the day Kolmården opened to the public, it has been through a lot of development, and has created many jobs. As it is a big park different jobs are involved, such as selling tickets, taking care of the park, and being in the restaurant.
Kolmårdens’ staffs are called for artists, this is to give them a sense of equality with their co-workers. Like many other organizations, Kolmården also have different job title for each job, for example, there is park chief, the human resources management department, Unit Management and the Artist. The reason behind bringing up all these different job titles is to give the reader a clarification of what the different jobs are and what do they do, as it will be mentioned later in the finding section how these different people with the job title, may have an effect on the returning seasonal employees. Most of the job titles are in Swedish, and they have been translated into English. Most of the job title are quite similar in English so it was not difficult. However, “Enhet Ansvarig” is a Swedish word, and to translate it directly into English it means “Unit Manager”, employees with this job title are responsible for taking care of groups of individuals with similar job tasks in the park, as support and the management of the correct procedures. For example, in the restaurant or a store, their job mainly is to make sure that everything functions within those units and assist the new artists, in a way that the ‘artists’ (as the workers at Kolmården calls themselves) can develop and be able to work independently. The HRM Department is there to make sure that they are available for the artists in case they have any questions or concerns regarding their general work experience.

1.5 Leksand Resort

In the central area of a small county called Dalarna in the middle of Sweden, lays a large lake named Siljan, which is host to many summer vacationers. Amongst these touristic hotspots, you will find a camping and waterpark area which is known as Leksand Resort. This is a collaboration between three different companies which form Leksand Resort namely, Leksand Sommarland, Leksand Strand, and Mat vid Siljan (Leksand Resort, 2018). Their values are “Joy, Environment, and Community”, and they hope to achieve the “greatest possible experience for everyone”, translated from Swedish, (Leksand Resort, 2018). Leksand Sommarland is a well-known vacation spot for many Swedes when they were growing up, much like a tradition. The area is filled with activities and rides inside and outside of the water, which caters to younger family members. The park entry ticket gives you unlimited access for the day to ride as much as you would like and explore all the wonders Sommarland has to offer. The water park has been in existence since 1984, attracting around 125 000 guests per year.
After an exhausting day in the park you may walk straight out of the exit into the camping grounds of Leksand Strand where you can stay in a large camping/cabin destination. The camping area has enough electricity and grass area to host up to 367 campers with caravans or campervans. The rest of the campers which wish to use their own tents may camp in an area amongst the nature without electricity. The cabins which are offered range from basic cabins for 2 people, up to the luxurious cabins which fit 12 people. A total of 3000 guests per day can be accommodated on any day during the summer, in the winter camping is not so popular and most of the cabins are cleaned and maintained before being closed for the winter season. In terms of the location and its commodities, there are several services houses which provide the basic necessities. The camping area has a reception in the middle and a convenience store besides it, which provide the guests with all the basic food products and holiday equipment. There is also a restaurant which is found near the beach of the camping grounds, and the restaurant offers many assorted foods for all ages. The restaurant is the third part of Leksand Resort which is called Mat vid Siljan.

Leksand Resort provides many other great experiences such as shows, events, pony rides, and arcades which cater to the needs of the younger children. This makes this the perfect getaway for the family during their summer vacation period.

Having described the two research areas and identified aspects of seasonality, the thesis will now go on to discuss the relevant literature in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discussed the methods we used in this research. Chapter 4 is our finding and Chapter 5 concludes the thesis.
2. Literature review

This chapter outlines the literature around seasonality and seasonal workers. As our research about seasonality may come from other destinations, it is key to consider that seasonal employees are common around the world. Many holiday resorts or destinations must deal with a larger influx of customers during a specific period of time of the year. One of the main causes of seasonality is the way in which schools schedule their holiday period (Amelung, Nicholls, & Viner, 2007). In order to combat this flow of customers, businesses will employ more staff during these periods on a temporary basis. Further information about what seasonality is and how it works, is in Section 2.1 which follows.

In an organization the employee relations are mainly to maintain a healthy working relationship between management and employees to sustain satisfactory productivity, motivation and a high morale work environment, which helps to enhance job satisfaction for employees, as well as helping the organization to meet their goals (Long et al., 2014). To increase the success rate of the management programs in an organization, the philosophy must be connected to the business goals and the skills of those responsible (Long et al., 2014). In an organization the most valuable assets are the employees and by educating the employees, there is a greater chance for success of an organization. Organizations can implement different motivation theories on employees and cause an impact on the employee commitment in an organization (Sunil, R., 2004). When employees are motivated they may be discouraged to leave the organization in the future, and they become more effective and productive at their work due to the cumulative experience from previous seasons.

It has been pointed out that training is the core of strategy implementation, for it has been shown that for the employees to do their job correctly, they need to understand what is needed to be done in different scenarios (Long et al., 2014). When an organization invests more resources into employee training, they enhance the possibility for the employees to become more productive at their jobs. As cited by Hausknecht & Holwerda, (2013), when an organization has a high rate of employee turnover, it creates a negative impact on the organization’s operations, routines, human and social capital, and organizational learning (Argote and Epple 1990, Dess and Shaw 2001, Price 1977, Staw 1980). Therefore, it is
important to keep the turnover rate as low as possible (Ozolina-Ozola, I., 2014). Keeping the knowledge created by employees within the organization will help organizations to sustain a competitive advantage within the global economy and meet the needs and expectations of the market.

In the coming sections, different terms which are connected to the research aim will be explained and described. As it is necessary to understand the connection between them and the seasonal employees. Because, our research focus is about understanding the motivation be of the employees to return to the seasonal workplace.

2.1 Seasonality

As stated by Thulemark, Lundmark, & Heldt-Cassel, (2014, pg. 403), “tourism employment is found to be a pull factor for in-migration of highly skilled and well-paid people” In their case they were analysing at the winter destinations yet the effects of the seasonality on the workers are very closely related to our two cases of the parks. As stated McCole (2013 pg. 193), “many seasonal employees are migratory, the employment situation must be desirable enough to entice employees to relocate back each year”. This statement helped the researchers to understand the importance of seasonal employee retention and that it may be found that the destinations implement strategies or incentives for the returning employees.

Since the two parks in this research have summer-based seasonality, the target market is families with children, which falls upon school vacation time and during most holiday events, creating a short window where a vast number of incoming visitors to spike. The target market is defined by Charles Doyle (2011) in the Dictionary of Marketing, as the particular audience or segment which is viewed as being the most likely customers for a product or service. The Swedish school summer holidays generally start in June and end in August, weeks 24 to 33, according to Krimpen (2018). This holiday period is the chance for all those families to travel on vacation. Most Swedish school holidays are determined centrally by the government (Krimpen, 2018). Hence, it is crucial that the destination have enough staff during this time, due to the fact that it could be a surplus of families going on holidays. The majority of travellers within Europe take trips during the summer holidays, which our parks are catered to provide a service for. More information about the facilities of Leksand Resort and Kolmården can be found in Section 1.4 and Section 1.5.
Seasonality is a very common topic when it comes to tourism destinations, and as stated by Baum (1999, pg. 7), “seasonality causes major operational and policy challenges for the hospitality and tourism industries”. Furthermore, some of the greatest challenges lay within staffing, and the more often staff return to work at these destinations, the greater the familiarity they may have doing the tasks of their jobs through repetition. Seasonal staffing will be further discussed in Section 2.2.

The most interesting fluctuation on the Figure 1 above, is the green line which represents around 32 million total number of nights spent in tourist accommodation during the year 2016, Eurostat (2017). These nights were spent on camping areas which can accommodate trailer, campers, and tents. This is relevant to one of the two parks which is described in more detail in Section 1.5 Leksand Resort. Briefly, the park hosts up to 125 000 guests per year and caters to all types of campers and provides lodging too (Leksand Resort, 2018).
Here within Figure 2 the focus is on the point in the graph which is circled. The central point of the circle marked SP1, is pointing towards the peak of the blue line which represents Sweden. The marking was made to distinguish it from the other confusing colour choices. Note that Sweden had just over 20 million total number of nights spent in tourist accommodation establishments (Eurostat 2017). This was during the month of July, when compared to the Figure 1 during the same month, there were around 27 million nights spent at destinations with camping facilities. What Figures 1 and 2 show is that there is a spike in visitor numbers during the summer. This means that destinations need to have extra staff to cope with the increased numbers of visitors during this time. The following section will help us understand when seasonal workers work and why they are not employed full-time, year-round, and what entices their movement within their career or job progression.

2.2 Seasonal workers

The seasonality which affects the tourism industry and places such as Leksand Resort and Kolmården, creates an increased demand of new employees entering the workforce for each peak season (Thulemark, 2016). Some may have connections to friends or family who may live close to the place of work or they may have grown up in the area. According to a study on Seasonal Worker Migration and Mobility, “the motive to seasonally migrate to tourism employment is lifestyle-related and not meant to be permanent” Lundmark, (2006, pg. 197).
Through this quote it is possible to understand that the workers may not be permanently moving to these destinations. In order to get a closer look at the movement of workers and to understand what makes working at a tourism destination for a limited period of time of the year attractive, interviews with employees of those types of companies is why the researchers were motivated to use Leksand and Kolmården as the primary cases. More information about what the results from the interviews can be found in the Chapter 4.

In the next subsection the researchers will take a closer look into the responsibilities of those who manage the workforce. The motivation behind looking into this is to understand how the employer keep their employees motivated and satisfied during seasonal work.

2.3 Seasonal Worker Management

It is important for organizations to retain human capital due to the direct and indirect costs of employees who leave the organization (Long et al., 2014). Therefore, it’s essential for organizations to develop and implement correct motivational practices. The reason why human capital is so important and valuable for organizations is because those employees possess skills, experience and knowledge which can contribute towards the guest satisfaction and their experiences. The organization contributed to the training of its employees before introducing them to the workplace (Sunil, R., 2004). As it is important to know, what the work is about and how to do it properly. Losing the employees comes at a cost of time and money for both employer and employee in the new recruitment process (P. Bandura & R. Lyons, 2014). A fair share of research is missing on exactly how much companies must pay in order to recruit new employees. The recruiting process could have a various cost, such as, advertising, interviewing and screening costs of hiring a new employee (Bandura et al., 2014). The article by Schnotz, (2017) further explains how the costs may vary depending on their earning level and lower-wage employees can be replaced, quicker and cheaper than trying to replace a management position. When it was looked at how this could affect seasonal workers, it was possible to look into what tasks the employees at our case destinations have. Such as waitering or serving food, office work, ride operator, maintenance, cleaning, security, and store related operations. The article used an average result from 15 studies, which said that an 8$ per hour employee would cost just below $9500 per turnover, (Schnotz, 2017). This was about studies done in the United States, and that is why it is in USD exchange, although the point which is trying to be conveyed here is that the costs of
replacement may entail setback. Some of the setbacks may include a shortage of staff causing those who work there, to work harder for longer. Additionally, those who are part of the frontline staff may be cheaper to be replaced compared to management. Overall, there is a higher turnover of frontline staff which is more costly in both time and money.

As stated by Ainsworth & Purss (2009, pg. 222), “tourism more generally, depends on seasonal employment for successful operations”, most importantly relating to the review of what has been found within travellers during the peak seasons presented in our Figures 1 and 2. They continued to say that seasonal employees provide most of the face-to-face contact with the guests. Here it could be understood why the role of the HRM may have significant importance. Such as the role of motivating and keeping the staff consistent in their quality of service can provide the guests with an experience which will make them return another year or spread by word-of-mouth, the quality of the service they received. And since the employees have the most contact from the companies’ side, they greatly influence the service quality and how the customer perceives the experience (Ainsworth & Purss, 2009).

Much of the strain from seasonality on tourism destinations will have factors in common. A comparison between our case and a ski resort, may have similar peak season characteristics, showing a larger influx of tourists during the winter for the ski resort and a larger influx during summer for our case. Much of the basic commodities can be analysed as in both instances it may be found accommodation, attractions, food & beverage, entertainment, and services. Although, the camping might pose as a challenge during the winter, the focus is aiming at the role of the HRM, who has the responsibility of providing the human resources to these job vacancies. The HRM face the challenges which come with the recruitment process, along with attracting, motivating, and managing a significant amount of temporary workforce every year, while still trying to maintain consistent service quality standards, (Ismert & Petrick, 2004).

**2.4 Seasonal Retention**

Under this section of the paper, various factors that could be the motivational influences for the seasonal employees to return will be discussed. As it could bring to light, the motivational factors which influence the decision making behind why the seasonal employees return to seasonal workplace. Many researchers before had different thoughts regarding what may
have been the motivational factors (Alverén, Andersson, Eriksson, Sandoff & Wikhamn, 2012). Below, a Model of Motivational factors is included. Figure 3 may help us get a better overview of what may be expected to be found during our interviews.

Figure 3: A model of motivational factors, job satisfaction, intention to return and OCB. Source: (Alverén, Andersson, Eriksson, Sandoff & Wikhamn, 2012).

The most prominent attributes from the Figure 3 will be considered in our analysis of the interviews in Chapter 4. Therefore, some of the attributes will be brought up during the discussion to why they may be relevant to the research. From Figure 3, it is possible to have an overview of what may be the most important factors which contribute towards the job satisfactions and furthermore, intention to return.

Figure 3 show some really good motivations factors. Which could be the main motivational factors for the employees to return but there are some that was not mention in the model. For example, the benefits to work at a seasonal workplace. What are the different benefits for the employees working at a seasonal workplace? For example; employees at Kolmården gets a free entrée ticket at Liseberg. In many researches before, it has been mentioned that the most
important factors which contribute the most was the bond between the employees (McCole, Jacobs, Lindley & McAvoy, 2012)

In a journal about retention within large US theme parks and attractions by Milman & Dickson, (2014), their focus was on what makes employees stay instead of why they leave. In their results from what they found out of the 27 employment characteristics to be the most important predictors of retention within hourly employees were; employees’ level of satisfaction, better experience with pay and employee development training classes, employees’ negative experience with flexible working hours and performance reviews (Milman & Dickson, 2014). As expressed by Gentry, Kuhnert, Mondore, & Page, (2007), when the retention of employees is successful, the company's resources can be focused towards development and performance enhancing efforts instead.

According to Lundberg, Dunsdon, & Andersson (2009), by giving the employee feedback and responsibilities, it shows that the employer cares about the employees, these are two of many other factors that contribute towards the job satisfaction at the workplace. Feedback from the supervisors and colleagues are one of the ways to let the employees know how they are doing. Therefore, it is essential that the feedback perceived as fair (Sparr & Sonnentag, 2008). To make it is easier for the employees to take and give feedback, it is important that the employees to get a chance to know each other better. Dermody, Young, & Taylor (2004) proposed that camaraderie has a significant impact on job satisfaction. By having a friendly atmosphere at the workplace, it may increase the work efficiency. Therefore, it is important that the manager encourages social activities outside of the workplace, in order to increase the bond between the employees.

In this chapter, different types of seasonal work are outlined, as the researcher want to highlight what the most important parts are. Thus far, the researchers have analysed the value of seasonal workers to tourism destinations. Also, explored are what the seasonal workers are faced with, in terms of personal and work-related lifestyle. Followed by the tasks of the HRM, which shows great importance in reducing the impacts of seasonal staff turnover. And finally, in the literature review the researchers found a starting point for the motivational factors behind the effects which influence retention with a model in Figure 3 (Alverén, Andersson, Eriksson, Sandoff & Wikhamn, 2012). The next chapter will describe how the information was gathered at the two destinations.
3. Methods

The focus of this section will mainly be to discuss the methods used to how our information was obtained. In this research, a qualitative approach was the method of gathering information. By conducting semi-structured interviews, it was possible to gain an understanding of individual’s perceptions and a deeper understanding of their thoughts, ideas and opinions toward the subjects being discuss during the interview (Appleton, 2017).

The best way to understand the reason behind why the seasonal employees return to their previous workplace is by doing qualitative approach. In this way the seasonal employees get the chance to describe and discuss what their motivation factors were to return to their seasonal workplace.

The data was collected by interviewing the seasonal employees from two different seasonal workplaces outlined in Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

For this research, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain knowledge to assist in answering the research questions. An interview guide was created to assist and guide the interviews, which included themes which was found relevant to the research. With the help of interview guide the interviewers hoped to be able to lead the conversation forward and get the answers which supported the flow of the interviews. The interview guide consists of different themed questions, because asking direct questions will not give the interviewees the chance to express themselves. Convenience sampling was used in this research. Seasonal employees from the two different resorts, Leksand Resort and Kolmården Zoo Park were approached and interviewed. One of the reason behind the research is to identify if the HRM have any strategies towards the employees at Kolmården and Leksand Resort, and what approach they use for their employees and encourage the employees to come back. This is to see what the similarity between these two resorts. The interviews were analysed in part by using the factors outlined in Figure three (in Chapter 2).

In the coming sections, the reader will find a discussion of what approach the researchers used to conduct the research as well as an explanation for using Kolmården and Leksand Resort as our two main case studies.
3.1 Qualitative Methods
Much research has compared quantitative methods and qualitative methods, in order to determine which method is better to conduct the research (Barczak, 2015). They both are good in their own ways. In this part of the paper, there will not be an in-depth explanation about quantitative methods. However, it will be mentioned for what reasons quantitative methods are not suitable for this research. As it will help to clarify to the reader the reason behind choosing qualitative methods instead of quantitative. Stated by Appleton, (2017 pg. 3) “Quantitative interview are structured in their nature, have a semiformal character, and are conducted in surveys using a standardised interview schedule. The qualitative interview, however, is semi structured and takes a more conversational and reflective approach, shaped by the interviewer's interest and rationale for the research along with enabling theme and topics to emerge from the interview itself”.

As mentioned above, with the help of the qualitative method it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of a person’s perceptions, thoughts, ideas and opinions of a subject. Therefore, by using qualitative methods it can assist in finding information which could be used to answer the research questions. Qualitative methods encourage observation, discussion, and reflection and can help the researcher to identify issues and problems and get to the details of such situations, or conversely can help to demonstrate the impact and value (Appleton, 2017). The aim of using Qualitative Methods is to be able to understand the seasonal employees’ emotions and their feelings behind their motivation for returning to their seasonal workplace. The next section will go into details about how the data was collected.

3.2 Data Sampling and Collection
The data was collected through interviews with seasonal employees from Kolmården and Leksand Sommarland. Ten were conducted, five from each park. At each destination, four interviews were conducted with employees and one with a supervisor or manager who worked with the Human Resource Management department (HRM). The two types of interviews were chosen in order to have opinions from both the employer and the employee’s perspective. It allowed the researchers to see if they had similar motivations behind seasonal retention. One of the researchers conducted the interviews at Leksand Resort, while the other researcher did those at Kolmården Zoo Park. The sampling methods which the researchers used was the convenience sampling as the interviews was conducted with those that were
available at that time. The interviews took place over the internet and were approximately between 15 and 30 minutes. Most of the interviews were conducted during week 18 during 2018. The following Picture 1 displays how the interviews were guided in terms of the topics discussed. Even though the guide helped to keep us on track, additional questions were asked so that participants could go off topic from time to time as this is only a semi-structured interview method. Both interviewers asked the same basic questions, then depending on the answer received during the interviews, a follow-up question was asked to find out more about why they responded in that way.

![Interview guide summary](image)

The researchers experienced that a point of data saturation was reached and decided that 10 interviews were sufficient. As stated by Fusch & Ness (2015, pg. 1408), “Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study”. It was difficult to set up a face-to-face meeting with the people who are important to the research. Therefore, it was done through the internet. To be more precise it was done through the Facebook chat “Messengers” and “Skype”. Some argue that, by doing interview over the “telephone” or other device is restricted, due to the fact that it is not possible to see the other persons body language and their facial expressions regarding the questions (Shuy, 2003). However, the technology has been developing the past few decades and has made it possible to have a video conversation. As mentioned earlier in the paper, the interviewers wanted the interviews to be informal, as this could help the interviewees to be relaxed and be able to speak their mind. By doing so, it was possible to look at people’s reactions to certain questions and their face expressions. This can also be limited by the internet connection. If the connections are bad, it will disrupt the conversation and it could have some delay in between. Worst of all, there could be static sound that you may hear in the background.

As mentioned previously, the interviews were conducted through different platforms and were chosen, because the researchers were familiar with them and they were free. During the interviews, where possible, webcams were turned on, because it was easier to see the
person’s reactions, but the software which was used to record, only recorded sounds and not videos. Out of 10, 6 interviews were in Swedish, since the interviewees feel more comfortable to speak in their native language. Although Swedish and English are quite similar to each other, the structure of the sentence is different, therefore, while translating from Swedish to English, the sentences had to be rebuilt to make more sense. At the same time the researchers try to keep it as close to the original as possible.

The difference between interviews with visual and those with only audio has been argued that the greater quality of data is obtained having both visual and audio. The use of the telephone could undermine quality when reporting that telephones were substituted for face-to-face interviews only when necessary (Opdenakker, 2006; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Sweet, 2002). Another journal about conducting interviews mentioned the face-to-face interviews as the “gold standard” when it comes to doing qualitative research (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). However, the importance of establishing a relationship in an interview is mentioned by Novick (2008), which makes complete sense when trying to connect on a more personal level with the interviewee. In our case, the researchers conducting interviews with the personnel, have already developed relationships with the interviewees from the previous work experience they had together, reducing the guard of the interviewee and substantially improving the quality of the data achieved.

The transcribing of the interviews was not verbatim transcription. Our process consisted of gathering key themes within the interviews and discussing together within Chapter 4 later on. The interviews were with past colleagues of the researchers, and thus more off-topic discussions not related to our interview questions/themes were disregarded. As the interviews are with mainly Swedish personnel there may be errors and misinterpretation and this complex decoding of the interviews may have “considerable costs in terms of both time and resource consumption to the research process”, (Wellard & Mckenna, 2001). Once all of the interviews are recorded, they then are reviewed by the researchers together and discussed to highlight evident themes and use quotes from the findings to support a discussion around the identified themes. In the case against verbatim transcription, MacLean, Meyer, & Estable, (2004) further mentioned that the costs of having verbatim transcription was resource intensive and needed to be weighed up against the potential benefits. However, one of the strengths according to Halcomb and Davidson, (2006) would be if the researchers transcribe it themselves, as they have first-hand information on how the interview process was planned.
out, has researched the subject thoroughly, and have had contact both verbally and nonverbally with the interviewees. In this case, the researchers have personally come to know the interviewees in a previous work experience, all contributing to clearly understood data quality from the recorded interviews. To make sure that the both researchers had the same mind set while doing the interview, they first did a test run. Where they interviewed a friend that also worked at a seasonal workplace previously.

The software which was used to conduct the interviews were, Skype and Facebook Messengers. These platforms create a great opportunity for the research, such as, the webcam, because it was possible to look at the other person. However, recording was not as easy, due to the fact that not all software records both sound and video chat. Those which do, have limited time, for example: some software allowed to record for a maximum of five minutes and then it was necessary to hit record button again. This would ruin the flow off a conversation, therefore, the search for a new software was needed. In the end, three different software programs were found fitting. One was Audacity, the second one was Evaer, and lastly Cube ACR (Automatic Call Recorder). These three recording software programs were used to record the interviews on the computer and the cell phone. Some issues came up such as, some recordings which were too large of a file to share between the researchers, so time was taken to find new software that was able to convert the files into workable sizes.

After all the interviews was conducted, the researchers sat together and went through the interview one by one. While listening to the interviews, the researcher made notes which they later discuss with each other. After each interview they brought up different quotes which was said in the interviews and discuss it with each other, as to see if it is relevant to the research to maintain quality of data.
4. Findings

After conducting the interviews, quotes have been grouped together from the different participants and sorted into their respective themes. Table 1 below refers the reader to who the participants are, where they have worked and for how long. The names has been changed for reasons of confidentiality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Job Position during Season</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Seasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Park food</td>
<td>Kolmården</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddalen</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Park food</td>
<td>Kolmården</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Leksand Resort</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Park food</td>
<td>Kolmården</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Team leader (HRM)</td>
<td>Kolmården</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>Leksand Resort</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dani</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Leksand Strand Reception</td>
<td>Leksand Resort</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>Other work/studying</td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Leksand Resort</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Store Manager</td>
<td>Leksand Resort</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerald</td>
<td>Studying at University</td>
<td>Park food</td>
<td>Kolmården</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 Overview of participants

There has been substantial research regarding the motivational factors to why seasonal employees return each season. We use Figure 3 in Section 2.4 as a guideline to assist and gain a better understanding of some of the factors which may influence the seasonal employees at Kolmården and Leksand Sommarland to return another season. The following will be a themed discussion, where each theme will have comments and quotes from the interviews which are relevant to the identified themes and each section will have a short discussion from the researchers. Further detailed information on the interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1 Work Environment

Feedback is used at the workplace to help the employees to learn from their mistakes or what they can do to improve. Marie, Team Leader at Kolmården state that:

“We want people that are willing to work and work effectively. But also like to work and think that it is fun to work. Also, people that are able to work with others that also have a positive attitude and are willing to get to know more people. We want employees that are service minded and like to have fun at the workplace”

Tanya said:

“Overall, the work experience was fun, like the customers, most of them were nice and chill, and the working team was very, very nice like working with you and the others, it was really fun”.

It is noticeable that it was an important need for the employers to create a fun, positive working environment in order for the new employees to feel welcome and helps them to settle into their new surroundings. Having a greater bond between the employees can encourage them to communicate with their fellow colleagues, which makes it easier to solve problems and sharing knowledge.

4.2 Responsibility

At certain workplaces it was important to show that you can work independently and take responsibilities without it being given. As Jasmine said,
“I don't think that they gave responsibilities, but more like, I have to step up and take responsibilities”.

Therefore, people that are returning next season have an idea of what needs to be done and what they can do to help the new employees. Steve, the HR representative at Leksand Strand stated that

“Everyone that’s coming back, we want them to feel like ambassadors, so they have a responsibility to take care of the new staff that maybe afraid, and don’t know what to do and how to talk with the guests and where’s the toilet and everything. Yeah so, the old staff feel the responsibility to help the new co-workers, to learn them and just to inspire them to know how to be good employees.”

Marie:

“When you recruit someone new, you have to dare to let the person go a little bit, so they can prove that it was right of us to trust them”

The employers try to give the employees a sense of responsibility within their tasks and encourage them to take the initiative. They recognise that more experienced employees should have a responsibility to help the new employees and to make them feel like they are part of the team. This may be a very positive aspect as sharing knowledge from old employees to new ones can be beneficial in delivering high service quality. Although, it could also create pressure on the old employees and possibly distract them from concentrating on their own tasks. Especially during peak of the seasons when new employees get recruited and have to learn the tasks from scratch causing a disruption in the work flow.

4.3 Camaraderie

The Camaraderie between colleagues came out as important theme and was about how good the bond is between employees. One person stated that, because of her colleagues, it made the job a lot more enjoyable. As Jasmine stated,” Work itself is not that fun, but mostly because of the people that I work with make it that made it fun” (sic). Others consider that their colleagues, push the positivity out of them, so that it was more fun to work. Even though
Jerald had low expectation in the beginning after he had been working for a while he said “I highly consider that my colleagues have pushed me unconsciously the positive out of me, and force me to change my opinion, which made it a fun work place”. Jerald continued, “Honestly, 80% was because of the colleagues that I worked with, but the rest 20% is because I was open minded and wanted to change my opinion about Kolmården”. At the beginning of a season it may be difficult to feel like a part of the group as Monica shows: “I wasn’t really one in the gang, or what do you say? I became that but not in the beginning”. After working with the same people for a while, the employees starting to build up this special bond between them. Tanya stated, “Like a Family”.

In this section we noticed how the bond between the colleagues affected their work. Most statements were about how the colleagues were motivated by each other and that it was not the work itself which kept them going. In this sense, the workplace environment became more positive. It is important that everyone feels included in order to create the type of work environment which aids employees in connecting with each other to be able to share knowledge effectively. Although, having established work groups could affect the workplace environment, such as having issues with sharing knowledge between the established work groups with other employees. Within the groups there will be more effective knowledge sharing as they feel more comfortable with each other, but when someone from outside of the group tries to communicate with them, it may be more difficult to attain or of less quality. This is where the HRM could assist in bridging the gaps between these groups.

4.5 Support Colleagues

Depending on the day to day, it can be difficult at the workplace, therefore, it is good to have colleagues to back them up. Amy mention this in the interview; “If somethings wrong, people help you, so I have had a quite good experience, but it eh, it can get chaotic sometimes”. Not only there were they there to help each other when something is wrong but also support each other when they wanted to improve. Amy continued “When people want to come back, you are going to choose the ones who actually work the best because you know they work the best already and want to improve”. Tanya mentioned that

“You don’t have to worry about being alone and being helpless because of, like everyone is very friendly and it’s like a big team and you’re never alone. And third, you get a new life
experience and you get new friends because there are so many activities outside work, so yeah.”

It shows that many of our respondents have similar feeling towards their colleagues, Maddalen said,

“It was both the Team Leader and my colleagues which motivate me to come back, because they showed that they are available when you need them and listen when someone has a complaint”.

Another mention about support for colleagues was demonstrated by Amy:

“We small people had it hard”. She was referring to the times when produce was delivered and the smaller girls who were working in the store needed to carry all this heavy produce, under pressure too when there were frozen goods which needed to be placed in the freezers as soon as possible. There were many times which Amy had to get help from other colleagues to help her carry in the produce during the last season.

The section above demonstrated how the employees were able to rely on each other. What made the workplace more pleasurable for the employees, was the support which they shared, and that support was important when overcoming obstacles in the workplace.

4.6 Management Attitude

This is the management's attitude towards the employees which is important, as it could affect their decision on returning next year. At some resorts there are more than one type of manager, for example at Kolmården, there are Team Leaders and Unit Managers. Laura, who has been working at Kolmården for three seasons stated that:

“The Team Leaders made sure that they learnt everybody's name, always be positive and happy. Made sure that they were available and always happy to help when it gets out of hand. And the Unit Managers took huge responsibilities to create activities after work for the artists, to make sure that they could have fun and hang out with each other.”

Jasmine talked about how the team leader’s role and how they helped employees. She said,
“I really liked last year Team Leader, they were very serious about their work and they were always available at all time so that I was able to go to them in case there was anything, such as, this is not good this need to change for example, this person and I are not able to work together. It feels really good as they were really good at listening to us”.

Some other positive things which Leksand Resort wanted to focus more on was the staffs and as Steve mentioned,

“We work a lot to get it as comfortable as possible for the staff, so everyone will enjoy going to work. You know at all the stations we now have like chairs that you can sit on, Inside the reception we have bought new, eh ‘matter’ (carpet), we bought 30 of them to put everywhere where staff is standing, also the new staffroom was renovated, because I wanted to do that for...”

Here the interviewer cut in to say, “I saw the pictures were amazing“ and the interviewee was trying to say, “for such a long time”. Steve responded with,

“Yeah it’s going to be really, really good”. This suggests that management are consistently trying to improve the working area of their employees. The management’s support towards the physical needs of the employees, shows that the management cares about the staff and wants them to be more comfortable when they are at work.

Even though management’s efforts to make the workspace comfortable for the employees were great, one comment which was said by Tanya,

“It was kind of boring sometimes when we didn’t have customers as you remember, so it was pretty sad that we could not do anything but sit and wait like we were not allowed to use the phone or anything, which I don’t really understand because if you don’t have any customers, why not?”

The resorts try to create a professional workplace, therefore, they may not use the phone while they are on the front, but when they’re in the back and no customers can see them, they are allowed to use their phone.

One of the long-time staff mentions the effort of the management, which has increased and changed focus towards their staff, supported by Amy’s statement,
“Because I have worked there for 6 years, it has definitely improved, and they worked a lot with the staff, because when I started it was chaos.”

It was noticed that the resorts continue to create a more enjoyable, relaxing, and comfortable environment for the employees. The influence from the managements’ side has a great impact on overall experience and efficiency of the employees. Creating this positive environment could cause the workers to have a more pleasurable experience which may motivate them to return another season. As the efforts for the employees’ environment improves, it shows how the focus of the HRM has shifted. Thereby, they may have realised that if the employees feel better at work, the better quality service they may provide.

4.7 Intention to return

By using the Figure 3 motivational factor to assist in discussing the findings key point that emerged was about job satisfaction, which lead to seasonal employees to returning to the workplace. Under this section of the paper, a discussion will be held about why the employees would return to the workplace.

At Kolmården, the retention for each season is explained by Marie,

“Each season, it can be between 20-50% that return from previous season. We always wish for as many as possible to return. Because it shows that they had fun last season and have experience from previous season and can help to teach new artists”.

When asked to explain their reasons to return to the workplace, Maddalen responded with,

“It was both the Team Leader and my colleagues which motivated me to come back, because they show that they are available when you need them and listen when someone has a complaint”.

Jerald stated that

“One of the reason why I apply to Kolmården so late is because, I was not too sure if I wanted to work at Kolmården again this year even though I had so much fun last year, the reason is because I thought that “the magic disappear after you done it once”.

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He continued,

“First, when I heard about that Kolmården taking away paid lunch, I thought it was absurd, I still thinks about it now, but it just wrong, dumb and mean. Because the more benefits they are taking away, the more I think that Kolmården grown into this big and mean park and resorts corporation which used teenagers who just wanted to earn their first salaries on a serious working place but also want to party and mess around”

In terms of retention for the year 2018 at Leksand Resort, Steve responded with,

“Actually, this year we have like 50% of the last years staff that’s coming back so that’s really good”. When asked if they would be returning this year (2018), Monica responded: “Yeah I am, um, I just wanted to go back to Leksand and I was like yeah, I know what to do. And I, hopefully I can, um, decide a little bit when I have days off”.

She wasn’t so sure she would be able to do this because she heard that there apparently might be one person short this year (2018) working with her in her group. Amy:

“Yeah, but I don’t know what I’m doing yet because I probably won’t go back to the ‘butik’ (shop/store)”.

Some of the interviewees expressed difficulty in housing during their work at the locations, as Amy stated:

“It’s really hard, even the people who want to come back, they can’t find housing anywhere”. This became an interesting topic so further questioning resulted in Amy saying, “It was better a couple of years ago when they had staff housing, it was so great when that existed because people gathered there and they ate dinner and we barbequed and we celebrated midsummer, everything was happened there”.

She continued,

“They came from far places like Gothenburg and Stockholm, it was very far away from Leksand, you meet so many new people and that was really great. Now it’s a little more local, so that isn’t really that great”.

This statement was supported by Steve saying,
“It depends from year to year, but a couple of years ago we had more, eh, staff that came from outside of Leksand, you know like Stockholm and Gothenburg and everywhere in Sweden, because we had staff apartments”.

And as Steve continued,

“The last couple of 2-3 years we didn’t have the apartments, so we have to recruit a lot of people from the neighbour towns. Of course, when we had the staff apartments we had older staff, you know middle age, and that was good because they are a little bit older and know how to work with people and then, yeah, it was a lot of easier”.

It seems that staff accommodation was a key motivator for those who were coming from distant areas, and now that the staff apartments are no longer there, they are receiving more local job applications. The staff which has been recruited during the past few years, has consisted of students and younger people between the ages of 16 and 26 who seek work during their holiday break between their studies. When they had the staff housing, it provided accommodation for older people between the age of 26 and 40, who had a greater sense of responsibility and were between jobs.

After finding interesting perspectives from both the workers and HRM, we have gained valuable information on the different themes. The interview guide helped us to maintain direction, whereas the model gave us a foundation to begin the discussion of the themes. The following chapter will summarize the prominent themes and recommendation for future development and planning will be discussed.
5. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to understand why the seasonal employees at Kolmården Zoo Park and Leksand Resort return to the workplace the following season. In order to get a deeper understanding, different terms needed to be defined, as it is relevant to the research. Therefore, in the literature review section there are different seasonal terms that were described and explained. We then continue with conducting interviews, which was the main source of information about the employees’ perspective towards the subject. The job satisfaction model, figure 3 was used to outline what could be the motivational factors that contributed towards the job satisfaction. As all the motivational factors were relevant to the topic, it was essential for the researchers to keep an open-minded approach. A large part of the motivational factors were concerned with group formations or social affiliations rather than work itself as mentioned in Thulemark (2017).

According to the employees at Kolmården Zoo Park and Leksand Resort, they were great places to work, they felt appreciated, had a good relationship between each other and the management. According to the research by Alverén et al., (2009), the motivational factors that contribute the most to seasonal employees’ decision to come back the following season are; feedback, responsibility, camaraderie, management attitude and agreeableness. We had expected that the money would have a big effect which could motivate the seasonal employees to return the following season. While conducting the interviews, we notice that no employees mentioned that money was their motivation to return, even though Steve mentioned that, for each year the employees return, they would earn 5kr extra per hour, per each year returned. It was interesting to find that money didn’t have such a huge impact on the motivational factors.

What was most obvious was that most interviewees mentioned their colleagues, and the bond between them which motivated them to come back each season. As Laura stated:

“You get the chance to learn so much in both service and how to handle different type of people, but also be able to handle stressful situations and learn to work with different people. But it is also fun because people that I work with, we got really close to each other, since we meet each other almost every day during the whole season”.
As our motivation to pursue this topic came from working at the parks in 2017, we have remained fascinated, and have learnt so much more than we expected. Both of the researchers will be going back to work at the parks they worked at before. So, completing this research just before the start of our next journey within seasonal work, made the timing of this so much more rewarding. As quoted from Maya Angelou (2014), “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” This is something which was mentioned by a previous teacher of ours who taught us much about cultural awareness. From working at these seasonal parks during the summer time in Sweden, there has always been something very special about being part of the creation of the guests’ experience. During the time which is spent with those you care about and share moments which will forever be remembered.

5.1 Answering the Research Question

The research into the factors which enticed seasonal workers to return to their place of work for another season has been identified. Factors such as work environment, responsibility, camaraderie, and management's attitude towards seasonal employees were most prominent. It was interesting to find how the human resource management’s focus has shifted towards providing a better environment for the seasonal staff to feel more comfortable and satisfied. Since the retention of the employees proved to be a valuable resource, efforts to improve retention and lower the rate of turnover has to be considered when managing seasonal workers. Future research on the topic of retention within seasonal workforce could be done on a larger scale which may require much more time and effort to attain, although the data which we retrieved through our qualitative methods gave us a great understanding into what motivated the seasonal workers to return.

5.2 Recommendations

Transitioning to the recommendations of what we have found in our research points to a few factors which may need to be considered when trying to attract seasonal employees. One major point which was mentioned by Steve and Amy from Leksand Resort, was the staff housing which seemed to have great influence in creating a more desirable place to work. Amy said that it was difficult to find accommodation and those who wanted to return, were restricted by the lack of housing options. If Leksand Resort would like to attract older
workers who are more experienced in people skills, as Steve explained, then perhaps future park development could include seasonal worker accommodation. This housing opportunity was also discovered to be an influence in social bonding and provided the means to meet interesting people from all over Sweden, and not just local job seekers which was less attractive, as Amy mentioned.

It was mentioned in the interview with Jerald, if Kolmården keep taking away the small benefits which contribute towards the overall experience. It could have a negative impact as people may not want to come back to Kolmården. Due to all these small benefits being taking away, such as no more paid lunch. For the future, it could be wise that Kolmården keep the small benefits as it could contribute towards the employee’s motivation to keep coming back season after season.

5.3 Limitations

In this section the researchers will highlight some of the limitations which were found to be most prominent. The first limitation has to do with the convenience sampling method which was used to obtain interviewees. We may have accumulated higher quality data if we chose to interview workers from all different work stations/areas, yet some of the interviewees mentioned to have worked in several locations within the company. Also, the interviews were not done in person and that may have affected our data quality due to not being able to see their mannerisms. Yet we were able to obtain efficient data due to the assistance of the programs we used, which had video and audio to be able to see facial expressions. Another limitation was the ability to create a comfortable environment in order to conduct the interviews to help relax and calm the interviewees to be able to get them to open up. This limitation was not such a great issue as we worked around the limitation by letting the interviewees know how long it would take and asking them when it would be the best time to contact them and having known the interviewees from previous work experience made it easier for them to talk freely.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview guide:

Background - About themselves, general connection to company and they got acquainted - How did you acquire this job? How long were you working for? Include: general feeling towards company and how the company perceives them.

Motivation for returning - Understanding why they would return and what is a push or pull factor, follow the story of the person being interviewed which will be analysed at a later point.

Experience - What kept them going during the time they spent at work and how was their overall feeling about their experience. What did they like and not enjoy so much about the experience. And finally, to compare their previous seasons worked to their others if they have worked there for multiple seasons.

Expectations and future plans - Trying to understand what the interviewee would like to see made better by the company. What they could improve to provide greater seasonal experiences. If they plan to return the coming season and what they hope it will be like.

From the Employers’ side - More about their plans to attract the seasonal workers, incentives and motivating factors.

Appendix 2

The interviews transcription:

Laura (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you not working at Kolmården?

Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.

Laura (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you not working at Kolmården?

Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.

Laura (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you not working at Kolmården?

Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.

Laura (Park food, Artist)

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Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.

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Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.

Laura (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you not working at Kolmården?

Laura “I’ve been working at Kolmården for three seasons, right now I’m a studying to become a Doctor”.
Q. You mentioned that you been working at Kolmården for three seasons, what motivate you come back each season?
Laura “You get the chance to learn so much in both service and how to handle different type of people, but also be able to handle stressful situations and learn to work with many different people. But it is also fun because people that I work with, we got really close to each other, since we meet each other every day”

Q. How did Team Leader contribute towards your motivation to coming back?
Laura “Make sure that they learned everybody’s name, always positive and happy. Made sure that they were available and always happy to help when it is too much. And the Unit manager took huge responsibilities to create activities after work for the artists, to make sure that they could have fun and hang out with each other”.

Q. Why are you not returning this season?
“I got an internship at a nearby hospital to where I’m studying” Q. Would you return if you didn’t got the internship?
“For me, I thought that three season is enough. I thought about it last season as well. I think I got the most out of the job, there is nothing left for me to learn from there”

Maddalen (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you’re not working?
Maddalen “I have been working at Kolmården for three season, I worked as park care my first season, while the latter two season I work at park food. I’m not doing much right now, but will start studying again in autumn”

Q. Could you explain what are the main difference between working as park care and park food?
Maddalen “The main difference between the two is that, while working as park care it was really lonely, as I was walking around and picking up garbage everywhere, while working as park food, it was more fun, because it was a better connection between the people I worked with”

Q. What was your motivational factors for returning each year?
Maddalen “It was both the Team Leader and my colleagues which motivate me to come back, because they show that they are available when you need them, and listen when someone has a complain”

Q. What skills have you gain from working at Kolmården?
Maddalen “I learn to handle the cashier, and work with other people while in a stressful situation. To add more, it is so much better to work at Kolmården now than the first season, because, now I’m more aware of what it is that I need to do and so on”

Jasmine (Park food, Artist)

Q. How long have you been working at Kolmården? And what do you do when you’re not working?

Jasmine “I have been working at Kolmården for one season, will start my second season this summer. I was at the park food department in Kolmården. What we do is making fast food. Right now, I’m studying”

Q. How was your first season?

Jasmine “It was really fun, when I get off work and step on the bus to go home, I was looking forward to coming back the next day even though my feet were hurting. I didn't want those empty days, I wanted to work all the time, but it was good that you get those free days, where you can rest and recover your energy”

Q. What makes you feel like that?

Jasmine “Work itself is not that fun, but the mostly because of the people that I work with make it that made it fun”

Q. What was your expectation?

Jasmine “Heard from friends that been working there before and been telling me that it is really fun to work at Kolmården, therefore that was my expectation. But at the same time going to Kolmården everyday doesn’t seem like work for me but more like, to go somewhere to be able to hang out with my friends and enjoy each other company”

Q. Did the Unit Manager and Team Leader gave you a lot of responsibilities?

Jasmine “I don't think that they gave responsibilities, but more like, I have to step up and take responsibilities, after working for a while, you starting to notice which time will be the most busy, therefore it was up to me and my colleagues to prepare enough food, not too much nor too little, because too much will make so that we got to throw it away, too little made it so that we won’t have enough. And it will take time to make more, and some guests are not happy about it”

Q. We were talking about Team Leader and Unit Manager, what are your feelings toward them?
Jasmine “I really liked last year Team Leader, they were very serious about their work and they were always available at all time so that I was able to go to them in case there was anything, such as this is not good this need to change etc. this person and I are not able to work together, it feels really good as they were really good at listening to us”

Jasmine “It was Unit Manager that I had issues with” Q. What type of issues?

Jasmine “They had their gang from last year which they worked with and sat in the personal room and being lazy and was not in kitchen to help in case we needed it. When it was a lot of guests they try to avoid work by saying that they need to do the ordering list. The most point here is that, they don’t want to be there when it the guests starting to pile up. This made me feel awful towards them.” From time to time when our Unit Manager was not there, Another Unit Manager came instead of them, I was a huge difference such like night and day. The Unit Manager that we had, was not encouraging and was vert retracted. So, when you opening up the Unit with them usually you had to walk around for an hour or two all by myself and had no one to speak too, but when the rest of the employees starting to coming in, the unit became more alive”.

Q. Would you Recommend Kolmården to someone else?

Jasmine “Yes, definitely. It may not fit everybody, but it is a great place to start, as it has a big variation of work, such as, work at the cashier, work with theatre, also work with animals. Kolmården is a good place to gain experience”

Jerald (Park food, Artist)

Q. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and what are your collection to Kolmården?

Jerald “I like to find different way to express myself, right now I’m studying at University, my collection to Kolmården is that, I have been to Kolmården a lot since I was a kid. About a year ago, I was in need of a job, as I don’t want to work at my previous one, such as picking weed at the church”

Jerald “I have always hate the concept to work in the service business, but like i said I was in need of a job, so my Ex-girlfriend almost forced me to apply to work at Kolmården”

Jerald “I had really low expectation in the beginning of the, but after a while it turns out that it was really fun working at Kolmården, I always expecting the worst so that I can be positively surprised” “I was very passive in the beginning as well, because I don't want to be personally attach to the place, it is difficult to be positive at the same time not to be attach to
the place, especially when you starting to feel comfortable with the people you’re working with”

**Q. What was it that made it more comfortable for you at the workplace?**

**Jerald** “Honestly, 80% was because of the colleagues that I worked with, but the rest 20% is because I was open minded and wanted to change my opinion about Kolmården” “But I highly consider that my colleagues that pushes me unconsciously the positive out of me, and force me to change my opinion changes, which made it a fun work place”

**Q. Why did you apply to Kolmården again this year (2018)?**

**Jerald** “One of the reason why I apply to Kolmården so late is because, I was not too sure if I wanted to work at Kolmården again this year even though I had so much fun last year, the reason is because I thought that “the magic disappear after you done it once” ”I have low expectation again, but I also have high expectation, because this year I know who is going to work there, which I didn’t know last year. So now I know how works there, who I want to work with, those that I look forward to working with, and those that I’m looking forward to hanging out with. But, somehow I don't feel like it will have super-duper fun like I did last year”

**Q. What do you think about the changes that Kolmården made this year?**

**Jerald** “First, when I heard about that Kolmården taking away paid lunch, I thought it was absurd, I still thinks about it now, but it just wrong, dumb and mean. Because the more benefits they are taking away, the more I think that Kolmården grown into this big and mean park and resorts corporation which used teenagers who just wanted to earn their first salaries on a serious working place but also want to party and mess around”

**Q. What do you think about your Team Leader and Unit Manager?**

**Jerald** “I didn’t get a good picture of who my Team Leader was, except for one. And that he always sits on his office and said no changes. I thought that it was a distance between me as an employee and my Team Leader, it would have been better if we get to know each on a personal level or at least a face to the name, now I only know that he said no to stuff”

**Jerald** “And there was a female Team Leader which was on the scene most of the time. She didn’t give off the Team Leader feelings, I didn’t know she was Team Leader until the season was almost over. She was running around a lot, but it could be that the Team Leader agreed upon that's how they want to work”

**Jerald** “And the Unit Managers, I have different opinion about them. First the unit that I was assign to. When I first started to work, it feels like the Unit Managers were very hard and stiff. They were really good at their job, very good at informing the people of what to do and
keep the positions. But at the same time, it feels outside, because they were the one that supposedly teach me what to do and how to do it. And I feel like, like one of Unit Manager only show how it is done once, this made me feel insecure and I felt discourage to turn to them to ask for help. It felt like the Unit Manager was going behind people back and was talking shit about them. I felt like they were the cool kids that was sitting in the school yard. But in general, I felt left out and constantly judge by these Unit Manager, and at the same time, felt like they were looking down on you.”

**Jerald** “And when I get to know them better on a more personal level, everything I thought about them were correct, it was nice that I get to know them on a personal level. But at the same time, it was very unprofessional of them to talk so much shit behind everyone’s back. Obviously, they talk shit behind my back as well if they do it with everybody else”

**Jerald** “When I was working at other Unit, it gave me another perspective of Unit Manager, it felt and look like those Unit Manager was parent to the artist”

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**Marie (Team Leader HRM)**

Q. **Tell me a little bit yourself and what are your position at Kolmårdens?**

**Marie** “I’m Team Leader at Kolmårdens and my job is taking care of the employees. When I’m not at Kolmårdens, I’m studying, and writing my thesis as well right now”

Q. **What type of characteristics are you as an employer look for in the potential employees?**

**Marie** “First and foremost, we want people that are willing to work, and work effectively. But also like to work and think that it is fun to work. Also, people that are able to work with others that also have a positive attitude and are willing to get to know other people. Most important of all people that are service minded and like to have fun at the workplace. That is because the guests will notice. Because if the artist is having fun at the workplace, it will spread to the guests as well”.

Q. **How do you think the group formation has been at the different Unit in the park?**

**Marie** “It has been difficult for people which was recently recruited, due to the fact, that they have to learn so much in a short amount of time. Which means that we as employers have high requirement from teenagers, and the teenagers may want to have summer vacation instead of working. It has been difficult at the beginning, because of small issues, such as people have been sick and doesn’t want to work. But when it finally starts, I think it has been working fine. Due to all the positivity colleagues that are there to help each other when they are in need and work together as a team”
Q. You call your employees for artist why is that?
Marie “That is because you go on stage, because everyone has the same title, and everyone is equal, when you put on your stage clothes, you are going to do a good job. Provide the best service for the guests. Therefore, we also have backstage and stars.

Q. How many percent of the artists that return each season from the previous one? And do you think that motivate them to coming back?
Marie “Each season, it can be between 20-50% that return from previous season. We always wish for as many as possible to return. Because it shows that they had fun last season and have experience from previous season and can help to teach new artists. And we don’t need to keep an eye on them, as they can work independently, and they are included in decision making at the Unit Manager”

Q. What type of education and training do you provide for your employees(artists)?
Marie “It depends on which year they are in, for example the first season employees get to go on a “guests in focus” course which is a service education, which is the basic about services. We called service staircase, as each year they get to educate themselves in something different. And for those that want to lead a unit or work as a Team Leader, get to go on a course that call Leadership Training. Also depending on where they are working at, they get to go on a course about it”

Q. You mention that you didn’t have time to go and talk to the employees last season, how did you show that you’re available for them in case they want to speak to you?
Marie “Mhmm, therefore, it is important to have a good relationship between the me as a Team Leader and the Unit Manager, because the Unit Manager are the one that have to inform us or me on the current situation at the Unit. For example, this person doesn’t feel well, or this person need to speak to you. It is difficult for us to say hey to everyone because during one day, it could be around 100 to 120 people that working at the same time so that’s why it is important that the Unit Manager inform us what’s going on. But when I have time, and be at the unit, I show that I’m available to speak to in case someone want to talk to me. I try to get closer to the employees so that I’m able to gain their trust and let them know that they can speak to me whenever they need to. Give them a sense of safety. All this so we can create credibility and honesty at the workplace”

Q. You talk about trust at the workplace, is not it difficult to blindly trust that person?
Marie “It is difficult, but when you recruit someone new, you have to dare to let the person go a little bit, so they can prove that it was right of us to trust them” Marie “But then when you notice that they create issues instead, it is important that we catch it on early so, that we
can speak to the person, and tell them that it is not right the way they’re doing it and tell them that they should do better. But if the issues continue, it will end up with that we letting that person go”.

Monica
“Actually, I never planned to work there, because everyone was working at Leksand Sommarland when I grew up, but I never wanted to work there because everyone else did that, so I never did”
Monica“I only have work until like, middle of April, so when I was done I was like okay, what am I going to do until the summer starts, because it’s easy to find summer job, but not like May and half of April.”
Monica“I started like cleaning cabins and stuff like that, and helping out on ‘Sommarland’, and then when the season started, I started working at the reception”.
Monica“I didn’t know anything, and I didn’t know anyone, so I was like, hello I’m the new one, what can I do?”
Monica“I liked it, everyone was nice”
Monica“I wasn’t really one in the gang, or what do you say? I became that but not in the beginning”
Monica“And I didn’t have regular working hours either, and was more like only when they needed me”
Monica“It’s hard to get to know the group when you’re not working so much”
Q: So, you hoping to go back this year? (2018) A: Monica“Yeah I am, um, I just wanted to go back to Leksand and I was like yeah, I know what to do. And I, hopefully I can, um, decide a little bit when I have days off”. She wasn’t so sure she would be able to do this because she heard that there apparently might be 1 person short this year (2018) working with her in her group.
Monica“We didn’t have so much contact last year”. Referring to restaurant staff and how many people we knew from that area of work.Monica“I missed all those opportunities, I don’t know what I did”, interviewer reminded her about how she was running a lot during that summer, and Monica responded with: “Yeah! That's true, I was working out a lot on my race”
Tanya
Tanya “The first thing I thought about is how serious they are, like before you even start working”

Tanya “I was searching for a job and I don’t find anything, so I wanted to give up, and then when I went to Leksand Sommarland’ webpage, I saw that they were looking for workers during the summer”

Tanya “When I received the email saying congrats you’re part of the team, it was not about the coffee place but about the shop”, which she had originally applied to work at. So not really what I was expecting”

Tanya “I also think it’s based by age, like everyone under 18 works at Sommarland, and everyone above 18 works at the camping, I didn’t know about that”

Interviewer: Q: That’s interesting, do you think there’s more students that work at Sommarland? A: Tanya “Yeah I think so because they younger and they don’t have to sell alcohol and stuff like that”.  

Tanya “At the camping if you work at the shop or the restaurant you have to sell alcohol, so yeah”

Q: was it fun working in the store? A: Tanya “Yeah, quite fun. It was kind of boring sometimes when we didn’t have customers as you remember, so it was pretty sad that we could not do anything but sit and wait like we were not allowed to use the phone or anything, which I don’t really understand because if you don’t have any customers, why not?

Tanya “Overall, the work experience was fun, like the customers, most of them were nice and chill, and the working team was very very nice like working with you and the others, it was really fun”

Tanya “Like a family”

Tanya “Everyone was so nice and willing to help, it was great”

Q: Are you coming back to work the next season (2018)? “I hope so, I’m not sure, I asked for it, um, we’ll see”. “Thing is than I needed 2 weeks holidays, because a friend of mine is coming to Sweden”. Although, Tanya added that she discussed some sort of arrangements about dates of her holidays period and as the HRM manager explained to her why finding suitable vacation dates was difficult. Tanya “he didn’t really want me to miss the high season when there are lots of customers because it is really hard to replace me”

Tanya “But I also wish they would make the season, like narrow it, because the last week, the very last week, there are no customers at all, you remember? I had like 2-3 customers a day”

Tanya “At least find something to do”, she was referring to what to do when there are few customers on the shoulder season when the season is coming to an end.
Q: would you recommend this work to someone else? A:Tanya “Oh yeah, absolutely, yes”
“First of all, it’s a very serious place to work at, you get your paycheck information, insurance and everything, so you don’t need to worry about a thing, they do everything for you. And particularly you don’t have to worry about being alone and being helpless because of, like everyone is very friendly and it’s like a big team and you’re never alone. And third, you get a new life experience and you get new friends because there are so many activities outside work, so yeah.”

Steve“Actually, I grew up here in Leksand, and LS was like, everyone’s’ first work here”
Steve“It depends from year to year, but a couple of years ago we had more, eh, staff that came from outside of Leksand, you know like Stockholm and Gothenburg and everywhere in Sweden, because we have staff apartments.”
Steve“The last couple of 2-3 years we didn’t have the apartments, so we have to recruit a lot of people from the neighbour towns. Of course, when we had the staff appts we had older staff, you know middle age, and that was good because they are a little bit older and know how to work with people and then, yeah, it was a lot of easier”
Steve“But now we have to recruit a lot of young people and this year it’s...very young people. Yeah, so i think this year the middle age is 17 and half year, and before we had like 20 and a half years. I think it’s bad, but we have to work harder to get older people to work here,”
Steve“We try to keep the workers as long as we can, you know like 2-3 seasons, usually you know like good to get new people start working here and to get the old ones to learn the new ones”
Steve“Actually, this year we have like 50% of the last years staff that’s coming back so that’s really good”
Steve“We work a lot to get it as comfortable as possible for the staff, so everyone will enjoy to go to work. You know at all the stations we now have like chairs that you can sit on, Inside the reception we have bought new, eh ‘ mattor (carpet)’, we bought 30 of them to put everywhere where staff is standing, also the new staffroom was renovated, because I wanted to do that for...” Here the interview cut in to say, “I saw the pictures were amazing “and the interviewee was trying to say “for such a long time”. Steve responded with, “Yeah it’s going to be really, really good”
Steve “Besides that, we give everyone that’s coming back, higher payment, you know like 5kr per years extra, you know per hour. But if you come back for the second year you get 5kr/hour If you come back the third year you get 10kr/hour.”

Steve “Everyone that’s coming back, we want them to feel like ambassadors, so they have a responsibility to take care of the new staff that maybe afraid, and don’t know what to do and how to talk with the guests and where’s the toilet and everything. Yeah so, the old staff feel the responsibility to help the new co-workers, to learn them and just to inspire them to know how to be good employees.”

Q: Is it like the people like to have a sense of community inside the workplace, people work together better, when they feel more comfortable around each other. Steve A: “Yeah! of course, of course that’s the most important”.

Dani “I started working at Sommarland first, and then I worked 8 summers, in the restaurant ‘Oasin’, and now is my third season at the reception”

Dani “It feels great working there, working 8 summers in the restaurant, so of course you learn the area, you really learn your job, yet at the same time I wanted to try something new and came out of the restaurant, then ended up here “

Dani “It feels cool to try it out, you learn much about different lines of work”

Dani “It’s absolutely fun to meet old employees you worked with before, and it’s cool to meet new ones too”

Dani “It’s definitely fun when everyone comes again and so”

Dani “Short period that is high pressure, just under the summer, for the most part, and hinders all the employees that are working, it’s a short period”

Amy “I come from Leksand and grew up there, when you live there, that’s the first job you get, it’s like the first summer job. So, when it’s the first year you have like a lot of people in the same age cos it’s the first year. So how I got into this, was yeah its always been there and was easy to get in.”

Amy “We knew it exists, and we knew people who worked there. But the family knew people”

Q: So, are you coming back this summer? (2018) A: Amy “Yeah, but I don’t know what I’m doing yet because I probably won’t go back to the ‘butik’(shop/store).”

Amy “We small people had it hard”, Referring to the times when produce was delivered and the smaller girls who were working in the store needed to carry all this heavy produce, under
pressure too when there were frozen goods which needed to be placed in the freezers as soon as possible.

Q: How does it feel to work there? A: Amy “Because I have worked there for 6 years, it has definitely improved, and they worked a lot with the staff, because when I started it was chaos.”

Amy “I liked work, like, I want to work at those kind of places, because I like the interaction with people, I think it’s fun and its happening things”

Amy “You know people, it’s not like you sit in the corner and like, not want to talk to people. Everyone was quite open, and if somethings wrong, people help you, so I have had a quite good experience, but it eh, it can get chaotic sometimes”

Q: family feeling? Amy “Yeah, people coming back and like, ‘I haven't seen you in a year’, and people have gone different places and done different things”

Amy “When people want to come back, you going to choose the ones who actually work the best because you know they work the best already, and want to improve”

Amy “A few people there have worked there since I started, it’s quite nice too like, ‘I recognise you, but I haven't talked to you much but i do recognise you”

Amy “Dinners and barbeque buffet and stuff, they do stuff for the staff, and I like that. You can't really expect them to do that because it's quite much to do anyways”

Amy “It was better a couple of years ago when they had staff housing, it was so great when that existed because people gathered there and they ate dinner and we barbequed and we celebrated midsummer, everything was happened there” “they came from far places like Gothenburg and Stockholm, it was very far away from Leksand, you meet so many new people and that was really great. Now it's a little more local, so that isn't really that great”

Amy “It's really hard, even the people who want to come back, they can’t find housing anywhere”