

# **Motivation out of stock?**

**A diagnosis of part time store employee motivation at  
Albert Heijn**

*Master thesis*



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## **Abstract**

As where motivated employees are essential for achieving organizational goals, Albert Heijn currently experiences some concerns with regards to their part time store employees. By examining both the organizational structure, as well as the degree of work motivation of part time store employees, aimed is at getting to know whether there is a lack of motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn, and trying to find out whether the organizational structure has an effect on this employee motivation. In order to diagnose the organizational structure, a sociotechnical systems design approach by De Sitter (2000) was adopted, using the design parameters. This study entails a practice-based research, diagnosis the organizational structure. To achieve this, several semi-structured interviews were conducted with part time store employees from multiple Albert Heijn stores. High degrees of specialization of operational tasks, as for separation of operational and regulatory tasks have the biggest impact on the work of the part time store employees. It is argued that this also affected their motivation to a certain extent. Recommendations for possible redesign, as well as for further research are given.

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## 1. Introduction

At Albert Heijn, more than 100,000 people work every day in order to feed roughly 6 million people in the Netherlands (Werken bij Albert Heijn, 2022). Therefore, the supermarket firm, founded in Zaandam, has a large impact on the day-to-day lives of many people. A considerable part Albert Heijn's employees work in the 1,100 stores distributed around the Netherlands and in Belgium.

Like many organizations, supermarkets are attempting to remain profitable by adapting to changes in order to suit the expectations of their customers (Felfe & Schyns, 2014). A key aspect of the competitive performance of the retail sector is the successful motivation of store staff, as the retail industry remains to be a labor-intensive industry (Bent & Freathy, 1997).

Intrinsic motivation is one of the key components of employee motivation (Kreps, 1997). Once intrinsically motivated, employee performance too increases, also regarding the achievement of organizational goals (Olusola, 2011; Shahzadi, Javed, Pirzada, Nasreen & Khanam, 2014). Therefore, a high degree of employee motivation is highly desirable in organizational contexts. Yet, a concern that organizations have to deal with is a lack of employee motivation (Goyal & Gupta, 2016).

Of all of Albert Heijn's *store* employees, the main share works on a part time basis, i.e., with a labor contract of 12 hours a week or less. Tilly (1991) defines two kinds of part time jobs. First, *secondary* employment jobs are defined as temporary part time jobs as a result of unsatisfying corporate results, whereby an employer temporarily reduces workers' hours (Tilly, 1991, p. 11). Secondly, for this thesis relevant, Tilly (1991, p. 11) explains *retention* part time jobs, which are 'good' part time jobs created to retain values employees whose life circumstances do not allow for full time employment –mostly students and women with young children. At Albert Heijn, many employees mostly work as a side job, next to their high school or other education.

For Albert Heijn stores, employee motivation is a highly important aspect, since they are highly dependent on their HR, as it holds for many organizations (Bent & Freathy, 1997). However, according to an HQ employee in the department of human resources, Albert Heijn stores currently experiencing some concerns among their part time store employees regarding their motivation. A lack of motivation in the workforce can be explained by a wide array of causes. Theory on motivation however mostly agrees on the fact that motivation is a process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment (Latham & Pinder, 2005).

Already in 1964, Vroom discussed his view on the expectancy theory, which argues that employees are motivated by the ratio of effort to reward. Also, a lack of motivation may be caused by the fit between the characteristics of the job and the employee's values, according to Latham and Pinder (2005).

The awareness for job characteristics is one of the key aspects of sociotechnical design theory, which, among other things, prescribes certain design principles that should be considered for a job to be meaningful (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). According to these authors, this meaningfulness is required to ensure that "an organization's members connect to each other and become more than a mere aggregate of individuals" (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p.25). Furthermore, a cohesion of interactions might result in a higher level of motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005, p.488). Also, according to Campbell, Datar and Sandino (2009), there seems to be a positive relation between *market-type dispersion* (varying customer demand across different locations) and organizational design choices among convenience stores in the US.

### 1.1 Research objective, research question and sub questions

This study will investigate motivation among part time store employees as it is right now, and subsequently there will be attempted to explain this from a sociotechnical perspective, based on sociotechnical systems design theory (STSD) by De Sitter (2000). Since sociotechnical theory provides explicit variables through which an organizational structure can be diagnosed, this perspective is the basis of this theoretical framework, and thus for performing this study. With an STSD approach, the organizational structure of Albert Heijn stores is analyzed, which is argued to be of influence on the motivation of employees. This research will therefore show a gap analysis of the motivational problems, after which structural parameters will be analyzed that might explain these problems. This is in order to analyze the structure of Albert Heijn and define possible motivational problems among its part time store employees.

The goal of this study will be to analyze the structure of the organization, and the part time store employee motivation, in order to complete a diagnosis of the organization. The research question of this research is formulated as followed:

*" What is the relation between organizational structure and motivation of part time employees in the stores of Albert Heijn?"*

Answering the research question will be supported by answering the sub questions below, after which the main question is answered.

1. *What is the current state of motivation among part time employees in the stores of Albert Heijn?*
2. *How can the organizational design of the stores of Albert Heijn be characterized, based on sociotechnical systems design theory?*
3. *How does the current structure of Albert Heijn stores affect the motivation of the part time store employees?*

## 1.2 Relevance

Motivation among retail employees has been researched before, however no research on motivation among part time retail store employees has been performed on a sociotechnical basis. This study will combine two fields of literature: literature on motivation and sociotechnical systems design literature.

Research on motivation among part time store employees has been performed in the past. Addair (2019), as well as Bent and Freathy (1997), have examined motivation among store employees and motivation in retail organizations. Current research differs from previous studies like these mainly in two aspects. First, previous studies focus solely on full time store employees, whereas a possible problem regarding motivation at Albert Heijn seems to be the most significant among part time store employees, according to one of Albert Heijn's HR Business Partners. This dissection might lead to new perspectives, and possibly new insights. Second, this study prefers a sociotechnical perspective on motivation. Analyzing part time store employee motivation from a structural point of view can provide new insights in both sociotechnical literature as well as motivation literature.

The practical relevance will be attributed to an explicit diagnosis of the organization's structure, followed by some possible redesign recommendations for Albert Heijn. The analysis of the organizational structural, and in particular of part time store employees, can offer possible solutions for structural redesign, in order to increase employee motivation. Besides that, this study can contribute practically since the retail industry can benefit from insights on organizational structure and its impact on part time store employee motivation.



### 1.3 Outline

This thesis consists of six chapters. To gain a general understanding of the main concepts, the next chapter will elaborate on a theoretical framework, in which relevant theories are highlighted and discussed. After that, the methodology used to perform this research will be explained. The fourth chapter entails the results of the research that is conducted, also containing the final diagnosis. After that, the conclusion is the study is explained, followed by the last chapter on the discussion and recommendations for redesign, and further research.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter consists of four parts. In the first section, an elaboration is given about employee motivation, the dependent variable of this study. The theory that is used for measuring this dependent variable is elaborated on in this section. After that, organizational theory on job design is discussed. In the third section, a more focused view is provided on the use of sociotechnical systems design theory, as well as for this research relevant design parameters as proposed by De Sitter (2000). The fourth section will go into the relation between the employee motivation and the organizational structure design.

### 2.1 Employee motivation

‘Motivation is the driving force in pursuing and satisfying one’s needs’ (Kontodimopoulos, Peleologou & Niakas, 2009). As Naile and Selesho (2014) state: ‘‘Motivation focuses on and includes the processes that guide the general strength and direction of a person’s action over time’’. Moreover, motivation seems to be a fundamental instrument for administering the work behavior of employees, as it is considered as a factor that drives the employees toward achieving specific goals of the organization (Olusola, 2011; Shahzadi, Javed, Pirzada, Nasreen & Khanam, 2014). Motivational theories are widespread and diverse. McGregor (1960) argued that employees are either extrinsically or intrinsically motivated in fulfilling their tasks. Respectively, he describes these opposing approaches as Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). Theory X not only assumes that *the average human being* inherently dislikes work, but also considers that as a result of that employees must be coerced and controlled. (McGregor, 1960). Therefore, people are extrinsically motivated in the sense that without this coercion employees are not encouraged to perform their work. On the other hand, Theory Y is among other premises based on the assumption that ‘‘the average human being does not inherently dislike work’’ (McGregor, 1960). Motivation in this sense is obtained by engagement and participation, and human beings are perceived as intrinsically motivated.

Building on that phenomenon of intrinsic motivation, Kreps (1997, p. 359) claims that intrinsic motivation stems from adherence to social norms, which are defined as general rules of voluntary behavior – ‘[...] from the very general norm of reciprocity (treat others as they treat you) to more specific rules such as tipping 15 percent and face the front in a crowded elevator’. Regarding norms in organizations, he argues that job design can affect the transparency of an employee’s actions to others, this statement being accompanied by the assumption that adherence to norms leads to better treatment by others (Kreps, 1997, p. 359). The main question

in the article, touching upon intrinsic motivation as well, is whether people adhere to norms because it is a norm, or because there is something desirable in a particular norm (Kreps, 1997, p. 359)? In other words, is a human being intrinsically motivated to adhere to the norm, or is there something glued to the norm which makes a person to comply? Along with various other authors, Kreps contends that extrinsic incentives are generally pointless and may even be disadvantageous for employee motivation (Kreps, 1997, p. 359; Larkin & Pierce, 2015; Underhill, 2016). Extrinsic incentives causing a significant increase in work effort would only apply to employees showing high levels of intrinsic motivation (Kreps, 1997, p. 360).

Intrinsic motivation has been studied quite intensively in multiple contexts. Ryan and Deci (2000) mention that *to be moved* to do something is the definition of motivation. According to the authors, one can be *moved* in two ways, intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic motivation is thus defined as ‘the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence’ (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Kreps (1997), intrinsic motivation may be in some cases an employee’s response to extrinsic incentives such as, for example, above-market pay, opportunity for promotion, and peer pressure. Employees do not always realize that this motivation actually is affected by these extrinsic motivators.

Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) build on the self-determination theory (SDT), arguing that intrinsic motivation, as a particular type of autonomous motivation, refers to activities for which the motivation lies in the behavior itself. The framework of SDT created by Deci and Ryan is also the basis for the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) (Gagné, et al., 2010), which also comprises intrinsic as well as extrinsic items. Gagné et al. (2010, p. 629), similarly to Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017), argue that intrinsic motivation is defined as doing something for its own sake, because it is interesting and enjoyable, while extrinsic motivation is defined as doing something for instrumental reasons, such as money, status, social contacts, avoiding punishment and such like. Extrinsic motivation is then by the authors further explained in certain levels of self-regulation (Gagné et al., 2010). The highest level of these regulations is *integrated regulation*, which means that employees identify with the value of an activity in such high degree that that it becomes part of the ‘person’s sense of self’. This comes close to intrinsic motivation; however, integrated regulation differs from intrinsic motivation in that the activity is not done so much for its own sake (i.e., the activities themselves), rather for the instrumental value it represents (Gagné et al, 2010, p. 629). Furthermore, the authors distinguish *identified regulation*, *introjected regulation*, and *external regulation*. Together, these

three dimensions compose extrinsic motivation. Since the MAWS is a validated scale that can be used for measuring intrinsic as well as extrinsic employee motivation, the instrument is used in this study for diagnosing the motivation of part time store employees at Albert Heijn.

This thesis is mainly interested in the intrinsic motivation among part time store employees in the retail sector. Harunavamwe and Kanengoni (2013) already studied the effect of monetary and non-monetary rewards on motivation among lower-level employees in retail shops. The study was concerned with the effect of rewarding employees on their motivation and found that monetary rewards had a larger effect on retail employee motivation than non-monetary rewards. Addair (2019) tried to explore the strategies retail industry leader used to motivate their employees to achieve higher levels of workforce productivity. She found that ‘there are a variety of ways that a retail organization may try to keep employees motivated such as an increase in pay, more benefit options, or offering educational opportunities (Addair, 2019, p. 77). Thus, also Addair (2019) focuses on reward affecting retail workers’ motivation. This thesis however tries to find the answer to the question if not reward, but organizational structure affects the motivation of retail part time store employees.

## 2.2 Theory explaining motivation through job design

Multiple theories on employee motivation have tried to map how and why workers behave the way they do, based on job characteristics and/or structural design choices. This section will briefly discuss some influential job design theories, which all in some way links individual job design to employee motivation. A historic overview can be argued relevant in the build-up to relevant theory on organizational *structure*, which is further explained in section 2.3.

As mentioned briefly, an influential theory on employee motivation is Vroom’s expectancy theory (1964). This theory claims that behavior is a consequence of conscious choices between alternatives, with an underlying purpose to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain (Vroom, 1964). The author states that there is a positive relation between efforts and performance, assumed that performance results in beneficial reward, and that this reward satisfies a need that makes the effort worthwhile (Vroom, 1964). The expectancy theory model consists of three components; that is, valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. With *valence*, Vroom (1964) refers to the value employees give to a certain outcome, e.g., a reward. The concept of *instrumentality* is based on the belief that an employee will receive a more desirable reward when meeting the expectations of the job (Renko & Kroeck, 2012). It assumes that an employee

being part of an organization, is acting as an ‘instrument’ contributing to the organization’s goals (Vroom, 1964). From this point of view, employers can decide on whether an employee is properly contributing to organizational goals and incentivize this employee by providing rewards. *Expectancy* is the probability that one’s own increased performance results in increased effort. Vroom (1964) predicts that increased effort often leads to increased performance, and that employees can be incentivized (or as Vroom says: *forced*) to increase effort by rewarding them.

Another dominant influential model on human resource management, which states that job characteristics can have a significant effect on employee motivation, is the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). This model mainly focuses on job strain and employee well-being, however motivational aspects are included. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2006), the well-known demand-control model on employee well-being by Karasek (1979), perhaps does not paint the whole picture regarding the effect of job demands on employee prosperity. An alternative model, the effort-reward imbalance model by Siegrist (1996), assumes that job stress is the result of an imbalance between effort and reward. I.e., when employees working hard and putting in lot of effort, but do not get rewarded equally and properly, job strain occurs (Siegrist, 1996). Unlike the demand-control model, the ERI-model proposes an individual and personal aspect to the model. The job demands-resource model builds on models like these (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). It recognizes two categories, *job demands* and *job resources*, and assumes that employees in all jobs somehow get to deal with these two job aspects. Job demands refer to aspects of the job that need physical and/or psychological effort (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). These demands are often seen as negative; however, they are not unquestionably so. Generally, job demands become job stressors when these demands need high effort but are not coped with appropriately. Regarding job resources, Bakker and Demerouti (2006) state:

*“Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or (1) functional in achieving work goals, (2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development.*

The interaction between job demands and job resources leads to a significant development of motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006). Job resources achieve their full capacity when

employees are met with high job demands (Hobfoll, 2002). Additionally, employee motivation seems to be low when job resources are scarce, but job demands are high. These resources Bakker and Demerouti (2006) talk about, can be attributed to the whole organization, interpersonal relations, but also to the organization of work, and at the level of the task. The organization of work in this sense can be understood as, for instance, role clarity and participation in decision making. According to Galbraith (1978), the organization of work is the definition of an organization's structure. This concept of structure is highly relevant and will be elaborated on in the next section.

### 2.3 Sociotechnical systems design theory

Theories mentioned in the previous section are mostly focused on the job characteristic on an individual level. Yet, this study is particularly aimed at diagnosing the organizational structure of Albert Heijn and measuring the part time store employee motivation, on a more meso-level. Therefore, a sociotechnical view on motivation is adopted, building on influential theories by, for example, De Sitter (2000) and Achterbergh and Vriens (2010; 2019). As will be explained in this section, sociotechnical systems design theory (STSD) reasons that organizational structures consist of four basic activities. Achterbergh and Vriens (2019, p. 26) argue the following: 'Organizations need knowledgeable, skillful, and *motivated* human resources. Without them, activities cannot be performed properly' (*italics added*). Therefore, a link between the organizational structure and motivation can be made. Since sociotechnical theory provides a clear-cut practice of diagnosing organizational structures, this perspective is the basis of this theoretical framework, and thus for performing this diagnostic study.

Organizations exist to achieve goals, which can be dissected into tasks as used as a foundation for jobs (Lunenburg, 2012). As Ahmady, Mehrpour and Nikooravesh (2016, p. 455) explain, 'organizational structures are frameworks of relations on jobs, systems, operating process, people, and groups making efforts to achieve the goals'. Galbraith (1987) defined the structure of an organization as the allocation of tasks and power over different individuals and teams. Another, more specified definition is proposed by Achterbergh and Vriens (2019), who state that the structure of an organization is the way tasks are defined, related, and divided. An overlap can be identified between these definitions, namely that organizations are characterized by a division of tasks, often to achieve certain organizational goals.

This study will look at organizational structures with a sociotechnical approach, as developed by De Sitter (2000). As mentioned, sociotechnical systems design theory presents a distinct way of ‘measuring’ an organization’s structure. The ideas and viewpoint of De Sitter’s theory are the foundation of the books by Achterbergh and Vriens (2010; 2019). According to Achterbergh and Vriens (2010), organizations are social systems of interlocking interactions, delivering a societal contribution. Multiple authors argue the importance of interactions within complex sociotechnical systems (Carayon, 2006; Harrison, Koppel & Bar-Lev, 2007; Neyer, Bullinger & Moeslein, 2009). The societal contribution, as referred to by Achterbergh and Vriens (2019) is seen as *meaningful survival* (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). This contribution consists of realizing particular goals, which are attempted by performing four basic activities (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2010). First, organizations perform their day-to-day primary processes. Sociotechnical theory is mainly focused on standardized, hierarchical organizations, producing goods or services (De Sitter, 2000). Producing these good and/or services thus are the primary processes of the organization. Then, an organization needs three kinds of regulation in order to maintain viable. The second basic activity of an organization is operational regulation, which means that the organization can deal with disturbances in the primary processes (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). Then, strategic regulation refers to setting goals related to the primary processes. Lastly, in order to make sure that all four activities can be performed, design regulation is needed, which entails making sure that so-called ‘organizational conditions’ are installed: HR, technology, and an infrastructure (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). Whether part time store employees at Albert Heijn are responsible for performing regulatory activities is one of the aspects to be clarified in this study, when diagnosing the structure of the Albert Heijn stores.

When these organizational conditions are installed accordingly, that is, when the organization reaches its societal goals, the structure is seen a proper structure. A proper, normal, healthy structure enables itself, as De Sitter (2000) states, for structural development. Ongoing interactions lead to different expectations and organizational goals, which necessitates a structure for redesign, or *restructuring* (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). This process of restructuring means that structures themselves create a new, improved structure, in order to meet new organizational goals and thus achieve its societal contribution. An organization’s structure, argues De Sitter (2000), has an effect on three *functional requirements*. One of these functional requirements, the Quality of Work, is defined by the authors as the degree of meaningfulness of jobs, which, among other things, reflects whether opportunities are created

for employees to live ‘a fulfilled life’, in the context of doing their jobs (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2010). For this study, of the three functional requirements Quality of Work is mostly relevant, since it contains certain aspects that are also essential in motivational concepts, such as growth and possibilities for development (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 64).

Ideally, an organizational structure has a low probability of disturbance, combined with a high regulatory potential, which entails potential to either remove disturbances or deal with disturbing events properly (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). Applying theory from the previous section would examine whether an individual job consists of high regulatory potential, as well as a low probability of disturbances. However, what STSD adds here, is that the starting point is the workplace or team in a structure (De Sitter, 2000). This broadens the concept of job design to an extent that where an individual might not have that much regulatory potential, teams do.

On the basis of De Sitter (2000), the structure of an organization can be ‘measured’ based on the seven parameters of the production structure and control structure, which each can have a certain value. It is then argued that if an organization’s structure has low parameter values, the structure can be identified as healthy, meaning that goals can be achieved, thus the societal contribution is fulfilled (De Sitter, 2000; Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). This also implies that such a structure is capable of structural development. High values on the design parameters result in a self-inhibiting structure, not capable of performing structural development (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). High values on parameters involve a high degree of complexity as a consequence of many interrelations in the structure, causing a high probability of disturbances. All seven parameters will be briefly discussed, based on Achterbergh and Vriens (2019).

Design parameters in production structure:

1. The degree of *functional concentration* refers to the degree to which operational tasks are related to all order types (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 55). This means, are tasks assigned to only one order type, or multiple?
2. The degree of *differentiation of operational tasks* refers to the degree to which operational tasks are divided into production, preparation and supporting activities (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 58).



3. The degree of *specialization of operational tasks* means the degree to which operational tasks are only a small part of the whole operational process (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 59).

Design parameters in the relation between operational and regulatory activities:

4. The degree of *separation* refers to the degree to which regulatory and operational activities are assigned to different tasks. A high degree of separation means that operational tasks do not contain regulatory potential, whereas a low degree of separation means that operational tasks have a high amount of regulatory potential (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60).

Design parameters in control structure:

5. The degree of *differentiation of regulatory activities into 'parts'* refers to the dividing of regulatory activities into monitoring, assessing, and acting (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 59).
6. The degree of *differentiation of regulatory activities into 'aspects'* entails the division between the different types of regulation –regulation by design, strategic regulation, and operational regulation– within one task (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60).
7. The degree of *specialization of regulatory activities*, just like operational activities, refers to the degree to which regulatory tasks are only a small part of the whole regulatory process (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60).

Organizations with high values on these parameters have a high probability of disturbances, and a low degree of regulatory potential, caused by, for instance, too many dependencies, a lack of knowledge on the process, and no proper goal setting (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019).

In this chapter, multiple theories on motivation are mentioned. Bakker and Demerouti (2006), as well as Vroom (1964), argue that motivation is an outcome of job design, focusing on the individual employee. In this thesis, it is argued that motivation is part of the functional requirement Quality of Work, as proposed by De Sitter (2000). That means that the degree of intrinsic motivation could be linked to the structure of the organization. Contrasting the aforementioned job design theories, a sociotechnical approach emphasizes the importance of designing entire work systems, in which social and technical aspects of the workplace of the team are integrated, interchanged with the environment, and mutually supportive of one another (Hackman, 1980). Therefore, when diagnosing the organizational structure, a STSD approach is preferred over job design theories.

#### 2.4 Relation between employee motivation and organizational structure

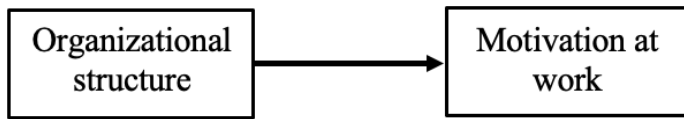
According to Sherman and Smith (1984), up until then, only little research has been done investigating the effects of the structural variables that ‘ostensibly are primary external constraints in any organization’. Therefore, Sherman and Smith (1984) propose that structural characteristics of the organization itself have an impact of levels of intrinsic motivation. Thus, it is implied that motivation and organizational structure cohere.

Sociotechnical systems design theory does not refer to motivation a lot. De Sitter (2000, p. 196) identified that lowering design parameters by means of redesign would possibly mean an increase in employee motivation. Furthermore, cooperation between workers improved. One set of basic assumptions of low parameter value structures (LVPSs) is related to employee motivation, stating that the degree of intrinsic motivation in LVPSs is higher than ‘egocentric motives put forward in agency theory’ (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 98). Redesigning structures, and lowering structural parameters, therefore could mean an increase in motivation.

Additionally, it can be argued that motivation could be part of the functional requirement Quality of Work, as proposed by De Sitter (2000). The criterion of Quality of Work is about being a ‘good employer’, describing the effective ‘mobilization of human resources’ (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 63). Motivation can be arguably relevant here, in mobilizing human resources, since unmotivated employees are less effective (Kamery, 2004). As Achterbergh and Vriens (2019) argue, organizations need knowledgeable, skillful, and *motivated* human resources, without which activities cannot be completed rightly.

Shahzadi et al. (2014) argue that there is a link between employee motivation and characteristics of a job. The stimulation and opportunity of growth, learning and development, which is one of the characteristics of job resources in the JD-R model, can also be recognized in De Sitter’s sociotechnical theory as the second-level aspects of the Quality of Work (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019).

It is expected that the structure of the organization, measured by De Sitter’s (2000) design parameters, has an effect on the motivation of part time employees at Albert Heijn stores. Therefore, the conceptual model below is proposed.



*Figure 1. Conceptual model*

### 3. Methods

This chapter will elaborate on the description of the research process. It comprises information concerning methods that were used to perform the diagnosis of the organizational structure of Albert Heijn, focusing on part time store employee jobs. First, the methodological approach taken in performing this study is explained. Then, the research design. After that, data collection technique is discussed, followed by an elaboration on instrumentation and informants. Then the data analysis technique is discussed. Finally, some ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity have been featured.

#### 3.1 Methodological approach

The main question of this study, as formulated in the introduction, was *‘What is the relation between organizational structure and motivation of part time store employees at Albert Heijn?’* To answer this question, a multiple case study is performed in order to gain insight into the current level of motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn, as well as the current organizational structure, particularly focused on part time store employee jobs. Although the Albert Heijn stores are all structured in the same way, the motivation in each store may differ. Diagnosing the part time store employee motivation is therefore done performing a multiple case study. The diagnosis of the motivation was then analyzed in the context of the organizational structure, which was perceived to be similar in each store.

This study has a diagnostic character. Verschuren and Doorewaard (2010) stated that after the problem has been identified, in the diagnostic stage the background and the causes of the problem can be examined, after which action needs to be taken to find a solution for this problem. Possible antecedents, backgrounds and causes are thus analyzed (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010). Therefore, qualitative methods were used, since such methods can help to understand people’s motivations, reasons, actions, and context for their actions in an in-depth way (Myers, 2013).

This study is mainly a practice oriented. According to Blijenbergh (2016) a practical goal is more about explaining a certain situation in a concrete organization. Qualitative methods can contribute to knowledge about a situation in order to hand various possibilities to change, or even improve, this situation (Blijenbergh, 2016). Since this study entails performing a sociotechnical diagnosis on the structure of the problems regarding motivation among part time

store employees in order to recommend possible suggestions for restructuring, qualitative methods were assumed to be sufficient.

Since the research subject has been defined from a clearly defined theoretical framework, a deductive research approach was adopted (Blijenbergh, 2016). On the basis of empirical material, that is compared to distinct expectations through previous literature, the research question is answered. Also, Simon and Cassell (2012) argue that through deductive reasoning, based on existing theories, assumptions can be developed and tested in practice.

### 3.2 Research design

This study entails a diagnosis, which is the first part of an intervention cycle consisting of Diagnosis, Design, Implementation and Evaluation (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). The diagnosis consists of two parts, a gap analysis, and a cause analysis, which is based on the results of the gap analysis.

First, based on validated items of the Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al, 2010), the motivation of part time store employees is measured. The Motivation at Work Scale consists of twelve validated quantitative items on intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation (Gagné et al., 2010). These items are re-written into open interview questions, since semi structured interview questions are required for conducting interviews (Blijenbergh, 2016). The results of this measurement then are analyzed to identify whether motivation indeed lacks among part time store employees at Albert Heijn. To explain this possible *gap*, with a sociotechnical approach the organizational structure is measured on the basis of a selection of the design parameters of De Sitter (2000), in order to examine whether certain design choices have contributed to the lack of motivation. This constitutes the *cause gap*. The design parameters themselves, as they are stated, are not fit to be adopted in the interview questions, since they contain term with which many people are unfamiliar (Blijenbergh, 2016). Therefore, the composing of the interview questions about the design parameters will be done following Gorden's (1988) instruction on drawing interview questions.

### 3.3 Data collection

The data are obtained following ten semi-structured interviews, focusing on the MAWS (Gagné et al., 2010) and the interview questions based on operationalization of the design parameters

by De Sitter (2000). Blijenbergh (2016) argues that semi-structured interview is sufficient for exploring central concepts. Semi-structured interviews are conducted by asking pre-formulated questions; however, they can be adjusted in the course of the interview (Myers, 2013). In order to accurately transcribe the interviews, participants are asked for accordance with taping the interview. The accurateness of transcriptions contributed to the credibility of this study, as proposed by Symon and Cassell (2012).

To establish the amount of semi-structured that was sufficient for performing a proper analysis, saturation must be considered. Mason (2010), states that ‘qualitative samples must be large enough to assure that most or all of the perceptions that might be important are uncovered’. To reach this saturation, ten interviews were conducted.

### 3.4 Informant selection

As mentioned, at the moment there are around 1,100 supermarkets under the name of Albert Heijn. Since, given the time limit, it is impossible to interview part time store employees in each of these stores, a sample of stores is made. Since this thesis is based on data from numerous stores, it can be considered a multiple case study (Yin, 1994). These cases are independent from each other, thus not influenced by each other. As Yin (1994, p. 149) argues: ‘the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as more robust’. Furthermore, cases were carefully selected for *literal and theoretical replication* to be considered, which means that similar results can be predicted, however also contrary results can be produced for predictable reasons (Yin, 1994, p. 150).

The stores are located in multiple cities in the Netherlands, namely in Nijmegen, Oldenzaal, Enschede, and Arnhem. The choice for conducting interviews in different parts of the country has been made to avoid a local and/or cultural bias that could occur when only interviewing part time store employees from one city (Myers, 2013). However, to maintain a certain degree of comparability, the stores that have been selected have similar numbers of employees and a comparable weekly turnover.

Two sampling techniques have been used for selecting the participating Albert Heijn stores, convenience sampling and typical case sampling (Gupta, Shaheen & Reddy, 2018). Convenience sampling entails selecting cases which are near-hand and therefore easy to reach (Gupta et al., 2018). Two cases have been selected following this sampling method. Typical

case sampling means that cases are selected with the help of key informants who know what cases might be interesting (Gupta et al., 2018). Before the problem statement of this study was made, a first conversation was held with a HR Business Partner at Albert Heijn headquarters. This employee selected four more cases for this study. Thus, a total of six cases will be analyzed in this study, which is sufficient for data saturation, according to Stake (2005)

The analysis of this study is based on the semi-structured interviews with ten store employees. Following the definition of Tilly's (1991) voluntary *retention* part time jobs, several selection criteria have been drawn, to which all informants needed to comply:

1. The store employee must work in an Albert Heijn supermarket;
2. the store employee has a labor contract of 12 hours a week or less;
3. in order to make somewhat generalizable statements, a particular type of store employees is interviewed; the employee must be a stock clerk.

In criterion 3, the term stock clerk is introduced. The stipulative job description of a stock clerk is an employee who primarily stocks shelves, racks, cases, bins and tables with merchandise and products bought by customers of the supermarket, and may occasionally perform other, stock related activities.

### 3.5 Data analysis

After collecting the data, the interviews have been transcribed, which made it possible to assign codes to certain passages in the text. Since this study was performed in a deductive way, it was expected that the codes were in accordance with the measuring instrument. That means that codes about the design parameters (De Sitter, 2000) and motivation through the MAWS (Gagné, 2010) were to be found. The concepts of motivation and organizational structure are, therefore, first explained in several dimensions. From these dimensions, several indicators are constituted. The complete operationalization is displayed in Appendix A. After conducting the interviews, the indicators in the transcripts that related to these concepts were gathered. The transcribed interviews were coded by using the theoretical indicators as discussed in the theoretical framework.

### 3.6 Research quality

Symon and Cassell (2012) have proposed universal criteria on the basis of which the quality of qualitative research can be assessed. The authors argue that the criteria for quantitative research

cannot be used for qualitative studies, since methodologies of these two types of research vary enormously. Therefore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) came up with four naturalistic assessment criteria for qualitative research, which correspond somewhat with the positivistic terms for quantitative research. They are displayed in Table 1.

Positivist term	Naturalistic term
Internal validity	Credibility
Generalizability	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

Table 1. Quality assessment criteria for quantitative and qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

The first criterion, *credibility*, refers to the researcher trying to find a good fit between interpretation and reality (Symon and Cassell, 2012). Regarding this study, credibility is mainly based on progressive subjectivity and member checking. That first entails that, while the research is ongoing, a record is kept of so-called *initial constructions*, in order to make a comparison with the constructions of research participants (Symon & Cassell, 2012). This way, credibility will be improved in the sense that consistency is constantly considered. Member checking means testing the researcher interpretation of the data with the participant, in order to ensure that participant's notions have been captured correctly. To achieve this, interview transcripts will be checked by the interview participants, giving them the opportunity to remark inaccuracies.

*Transferability* targets at the degree to which the results of the research can be generalized. By providing abundant details about the case context, for example through thick description), the reader can decide on whether the findings of the study can be used in their own context (Symon & Cassell, 2012). However, since this study regarded a diagnosis of the organizational structure and the motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn, the transferability of this study may not be relevant.

The third criterion Symon and Cassell (2012) propose is the *dependability* of qualitative research. Dependability is defined as 'demonstrating how methodological changes and shifts in constructions [...] have been captured and made available for evaluation' and is regarded as an audit practice (Symon & Cassel, 2012, p. 207). In other words, by explaining methodological



choices, it makes that the research process can be reconstructed, which is aimed for in this study.

Finally, *confirmability* means that it made clear where the gained data came from, making sure that the data, interpretations, and outcomes are not ‘simply figments of the researcher’s imagination’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To assure the confirmability of this study, it is precisely described what steps are taken conducting the research, and these steps are extensively reported. This way, it is clear that data are ‘rooted in contexts and persons apart from the researcher’ (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

Myers (2013) argues that it is vital that research are taken seriously since many ethical considerations exist when studying real people. He explains: ‘The process of applying for ethics approval also provides you with an opportunity to explain your research design to others’ (Myers, 2013, p. 48). In the *Concise, Oxford English Dictionary*, ethics is defined as ‘the moral governing or influencing conduct’, implying that ethics are the application of moral principles in conducting research. McNabb (2002) proposed four ethical principles that need to be significantly present: (1) *truthfulness* refers to the unethicity of lying, deceiving and fraud, (2) *thoroughness* means that researchers should be methodologically thorough, (3) *objectivity* regards the researcher as objective, not affected by their own values and possible biases, and (4) *relevance*, meaning that research should be meaningful, and not conducted for irrelevant purposes.

To meet ethical principles, gate keepers and interview participants have been informed about the research and its process at all times, and questions have been answered completely and truthfully. Interviews are accurately transcribed, implying that no text is added which is not articulated by the interview participants. All interview participants are asked for agreement on recording the interviews, and any refuses are respected. Participants’ identities have been covered unconditionally, which entails that the names of part time store employees that cooperated in this study will not be revealed.

Ensuring ethics is essential for conducting research (Myers, 2013). Therefore, all issues on informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy are considered as highly important (Shaw, 2003).

#### 4. Results and diagnosis

This chapter entails the results of this study, containing both the analysis on part time employee motivation as well as the analysis on the organizational structure within Albert Heijn supermarkets. Together, the diagnosis of the organizational structure in relation to the part time employee motivation is presented.

In the introduction, three sub questions were proposed. In this chapter, the results are discussed in accordance with these sub questions, in order to give an elaborate answer to the main question of this study. First, the analysis on the degree of part time employee motivation is discussed, based on the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) measuring instrument by Gagné et al. (2010). After that, the analysis of the organizational structure is given, based on the seven design parameters, proposed by De Sitter (2000).

The diagnosis is based on the ten interviews that were conducted with the part time store employees. Appendix 3 contains the full overview of the quotes that were used, together with the indicators they are linked with. Table 1 displays the overview of interview participants. The four-digit number behind AH stands for the store number, and therefore represent the different cases.

Code	Connected to	Function
SC1	AH 1644 Nijmegen	Stock clerk
SC2	AH 1644 Nijmegen	Stock clerk
SC3	AH 1867 Oldenzaal	Stock clerk
SC4	AH 1867 Oldenzaal	Stock clerk
SC5	AH 1492 Enschede	Stock clerk
SC6	AH 1492 Enschede	Stock clerk
SC7	AH 2229 Arnhem	Stock clerk
SC8	AH 2229 Arnhem	Stock clerk
SC9	AH 1021 Nijmegen	Stock clerk
SC10	AH 1021 Nijmegen	Stock clerk

Table 1. Overview of interview participants.

##### 4.1 Part time employee motivation

As mentioned, the employee motivation in this study is measured by applying the Motivation at Work Scale by Gagné et al. (2010). This instrument has developed multiple items on either intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation. This section discusses the degree to which the part time store employees are motivated intrinsically or extrinsically, according to the data that was

gathered. The MAWS by Gagné et al. (2010) consists of multiple dimensions: intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation and external regulation. These four dimensions will be discussed separately in the coming sections. After that, some other findings on motivation that stood out in analyzing the interviews will be discussed. In analyzing the results, the abbreviation SC will be used, corresponding for the term stock clerk.

#### *4.1.1 Intrinsic motivation*

Intrinsic motivation is about enjoying the work activities themselves, for their own sake, while on the opposite, extrinsic motivation is influenced by factors other (Gagné et al., 2010). In this thesis, a focus is laid on the intrinsic motivation of part time store employees at Albert Heijn. Here and there, interviewees expressed some intrinsic motivation, however only slightly. When expressing intrinsic motivation, most emphasis is on the *feasibility* of the job:

*“Yes, I enjoy my work, uhm, the work activities are doable, but indeed the joy I get from working comes from other things”* (SC5, 1492)

*“Yes, I do, but I do not think it is ‘the best job ever’ but I think it is chill, not very exhausting either, quite relaxed”* (SC8, 2229)

The above-mentioned quotes do not represent a high degree of intrinsic motivation among interview participants. In fact, most interviewees rather show quite a low degree of intrinsic motivation. SC5 and SC8 are active in separate cases, but as almost all of the interviewed stock clerks, they do not think much of their job. This is a notable trend in all cases. Some quotes show that the work activities themselves definitely do not motivate most stock clerks. The following quotes are from interviewees from the same store; however, in each case the same tendency became apparent:

*“It keeps me busy, but I do not like it actually. Stocking shelves is something I do not really enjoy.”* (SC1, 1644)

*“I’m just a stock clerk, uhm, nothing special, just stocking shelves.”* (SC2, 1644)

According to the definition of intrinsic motivation by Gagné et al. (2010), one can argue that the degree of intrinsic motivation, the first dimension in the MAWS, among part time store is

quite low since these employees seem not to enjoy the work activities themselves to a high extent.

#### *4.1.2 Identified regulation*

The second dimension of the MAWS is identified regulation, which is referred to as doing an activity because one identifies with its value of meaning, and accept it as one's own, meaning it is autonomously regulated (Gagné et al., 2010, p. 629). According to the authors: 'Identified people engage in a behavior or commit to an activity based on its perceived meaning or its relation to personal goals' (Gagné et al., 2010), p. 629). Therefore, the interview questions on identified regulation consist of questions about career plans, life goals and personal values. When asking certain interview participants about their plans to develop themselves within the organization in which they are active, some various answers were given:

*“No, I do not aim for that. I think that when I head to college that I will participate in a more serious job, not being a shift leader or manager here.”* (SC4, 1867)

*“Very possibly, just maybe I want to be a shift leader in this store, but I probably stick around here for maybe two more years and then look for something else.”* (SC3, 1867)

*“I hope to end up on the HQ in Zaandam. I started as a stock clerk, I want to become a shift leader and after my study I hope to intern at the HQ.”* (SC5, 1492)

In all five cases, stock clerks who were interviewed did not talk about pursuing their life goals at Albert Heijn, or that their work as a stock clerk fitted their personal values. An explanation for this might be the age and life phase of the stock clerks. The interviewees all were aged 15-18, and at the moment all of them attend school. Fitting personal values or reaching life goals perhaps is not such a big issue for students who just want to earn some money or get acquainted with the phenomenon of *working*. SC5 from case 1492 did talk about his career plans which he wanted to pursue at Albert Heijn, albeit on the headquarters. However, identified regulation, according to the MAWS, is focused on the current job. During the interview, SC5 was very enthusiastic about Albert Heijn, and explained that he wanted to develop himself within the organization. However, his identified regulation about his current job as a stock clerk was not much higher than others:

*“I do not think it was really about the work itself. [...] Indeed, I enjoy work because of social contacts and of course I earn some money with it.” (SC5, 1492)*

Generally, there seems to be little to no difference in the degree of identified regulation between cases. Therefore, conclusively, the degree of identifies regulation among the part time store employees that were interviewed is perceived to be quite low.

#### *4.1.3 Introjected regulation*

The third dimension of the MAWS is introjected regulation, which involves ‘taking in a regulation so that it becomes internally pressuring, thus implying partial internalization that remains controlling’ (Gagné et al, 2010, p. 629). Introjected employees engage in a behavior or commit to an activity out of guilt or compulsion, or to maintain their self-worth (Koestner & Losier, 2002). Interview questions on introjected regulation mentioned personal characteristics as ‘having to be the best’ or ‘not wanting to fail’, as well as reputation. Only one interviewee, from case 1492, responded to such questions, showing a high degree of introjected regulation:

*“Yes, I have a high willingness to perform, I think that plays a role too. To get the best out of myself, in that sense, yeah, I think that also plays a part.” (SC5, 1492)*

*“I want to prove myself at work constantly, I think, uhm, that captures a lot of my personality.” (SC5, 1492)*

SC5 clearly expressed that he wanted to maintain his self-worth, especially to other, which accords with the definition of this dimension by Gagné et al. (2010). It can, however, not be said that SC5 was committed to his work activities out of guilt or compulsion. Oppositely to SC5, other interview participants seemed to be much less ‘regulated’ in an introjected way:

*“Oh uhm, I wouldn’t say that I want to be the best, I think I don’t want to be the worst. I’m not putting in effort to excel and to distinguish myself to be honest.” (SC2, 1644)*

*“I don’t think I have a reputation. Uhm, I think nobody here has got a reputation, I guess. So, no I don’t.” (SC7, 2229)*

This tendency seems to go beyond specific cases, since only one of the interviewees showed a certain degree of introjected regulation. Almost all other interviewees, regardless of the case, showed a low degree of introjected regulation. As for identified regulation, it can be thus argued that the degree of introjected regulation is quite low.

#### *4.1.4 External regulation*

External regulation is the last of the four dimensions of the MAWS by Gagné et al. (2010), being defined as doing activities in order to obtain rewards or avoid punishments. This type of motivation was highly recognizable in analyzing the interviews. The interview questions on external regulation were explicitly about salary, as followed by the MAWS. Stock clerks from each store seemed to be motivated by money to a high degree. A couple of remarkable examples:

*“I’d rather do other things, but I get paid, and I don’t mind doing it.” (SC2, 1644)*

*“Uhm, the money really helps. For me it is mainly about the money [...].” (SC3, 1867)*

*“Money is my main motive I think with this side job.” (SC4, 1867)*

*“Uhm, I think I do it primarily for the money.” (SC9, 1021)*

*“Ultimately, I do everything for the money.” (SC8, 2229)*

From quotes like these, it can be derived that the degree of external regulation among part time store employees in all of the cases is quite high. It can be argued that the external regulation, and therefore the extrinsic motivation, of the interviewed stock clerk is much higher than the intrinsic motivation. Many of the interviewed stock clerks do not think much of their job, and they primarily (or only) work for their paycheck. In general, there seemed to be an overall consensus among the interviewed stock clerks from several cases that the paycheck was their main incentive to work and to keep working at Albert Heijn. Some respondents were asked to rate this work driver against other motivators:

*“Yes, right now I work here purely for the money, to the utmost extent. [...] I think 70/30, 70% for the money and 30% for the work itself, because I don’t hate it” (SC3, 1867)*

*“If I were to put it in proportion, maybe 70% for the money and 30% because I like the work at Albert Heijn, something like that”* (SC8, 2229)

SC3 and SC8, active in separate stores, similarly explained that 70% of their motivation is derived from earning money. That ratio was, to a certain extent, implicitly evident from more interviews than only these two respondents. SC5, who showed a high degree of introjected regulation, also explained that money is one of his biggest motivations:

*“I also have my fixed charges each month which I have to pay, so money is a very important reason for me also. [...] I think I can then achieve a standard of living which motivates me to a certain extent”* (SC5, 1492)

Avoiding punishment, which is part of external regulation, also occurred in one interview. One respondent stated that when a colleague, with whom she would be assigned to one aisle, is working slowly, she has to ‘up a gear’ to avoid the ‘punishment’ of doing overtime:

*“If you do not get it done, it is usual that you do a bit overtime, to finish your aisle. [...] But I prefer not to do overtime, so that’s why I work harder and up a gear.”* (SC10, 1021)

Across all cases, the degree of external regulation, which is particularly aimed at money as a motivator, is therefore perceived high. Even more, it can be argued the highest of the four dimensions, as proposed by Gagné et al. (2010).

#### *4.1.5 Additional findings*

The four dimensions of the MAWS consider multiple reasons for being motivated, taking an intrinsic, as well as an extrinsic perspective on motivation. During the analysis, however, some results stood out, which can be presumed to have an effect on employee motivation. These causes are explained in this section.

The dimension of external regulation in the Motivation at Work Scale is primarily interested in the role money plays in motivating employees. The motivational analysis showed that among the part time store employees who were interviewed, a fairly high degree of external regulation is present. However, during the interviews that were conducted, it became clear that not only

money was an external regulator for these employees. Across all cases, another motivator was mentioned often:

*“The ambiance here is quite nice, that motivates me to a large extent to work harder. [...] if I work with nice people I can enjoy working.”* (SC1, 1644)

*“...mainly because I made a lot of friends at the Albert Heijn, and that motivated me to stay here and not to leave. Because it is always nice with those people. [...] Work becomes less wearing, because you make some money, and you are with nice people.”* (SC2, 1644)

*“The joy I get from this job is because of the social contacts, and the connections I have with my colleagues. That makes me like it here.”* (SC5, 1492)

*“I enjoy work if I work with nice people, yes.”* (SC9, 1021)

Almost all interview participants, regardless of the store, mentioned that they like working also because of the social contacts they had with colleagues. This motivator can be possibly labelled as external regulation, since social interaction can be seen as a reward (Kawamichi et al., 2016). Although social interaction is not taken up in the MAWS, it could not be ignored since it is one of the most mentioned motivators among the part time store employees from each case, meaning it is valued highly by the interviewees.

Additionally, in performing the analysis on motivation, some other, smaller, effects became apparent, causing a lack of motivation. These effects comprise factors as time, ‘not feeling like it’ because of a long day at school, et cetera:

*“ Uhm, yeah, it depends. Sometimes you just don’t feel like it, you’d rather stay in bed then go to work, especially when it is that early.”* (SC9, 1021)

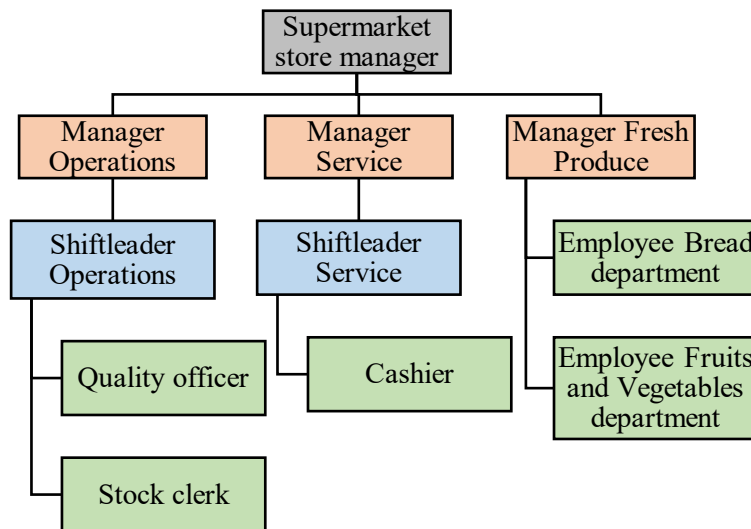
*“ Yes, maybe someone has had a long day at school, and he does not really want to work, that depends.”* (SC1, 1644)

*“ Maybe when I’m very busy because of school.”* (SC7, 2229)



#### 4.2 Organizational structure

The independent variable in this study of the organizational structure of the Albert Heijn stores in which the part time workers are employed. Figure 2 shows the organogram of all Albert Heijn supermarkets that were included in this thesis. This overview is drawn based on the ten interviews with the informants, as well as a conversation with one of Albert Heijn's HR Business Partners.



*Figure 2. Organogram of Albert Heijn stores in this study.*

The definition of organization structure in this study is based on the definition by Achterbergh and Vriens (2019): the way tasks are defined, related, and divided within an organization. Sociotechnical systems design theory is fit for diagnosing the operational structure of an organization, as well as the control structure. In this section, the seven structural parameters by De Sitter (2000) are discussed one by one, entailing both these operational and control structure. After discussing these parameters, a conclusive diagnosis of the organizational structure is presented.

##### *4.2.1 Functional concentration*

The degree of functional concentration refers to the degree to which operational tasks are related to all order types (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 55). From the interviews with the stock clerks, two order types can be derived in the stores at Albert Heijn. That is, the interviewees stock 'preservables' (Dutch: houdbaar) and 'fresh produce' (Dutch, vers). These two kinds of freight are mostly delivered to the store at a different time of the day. However, the stock clerks are responsible for stocking both order types:

*“Yes, fresh produce but mostly preservables” (SC1, 1644)*

*“Both, in the evening preservables and in the afternoon fresh produce” (SC4, 1867)*

*“Yes, I know that a 9-12 shift is stocking fresh produce, and 19-21 in the evening is preservables. So, I know what I will do in advance, looking at my work schedule” (SC10, 1021)*

Achterbergh and Vriens (2010, p. 57) distinguish two types of orders, *internal* and *external* orders. The stocking of two types of produce can be seen as internal request for particular output, thus being internal orders. External orders mostly have a higher impact on the degree of functional concentration.

Then, the question is raised to what extent the stock clerks, and their team, are dependent on the work of others/other teams. The interview participants all responded quite similar, explaining that between teams, little to no dependency exists.

*“Between teams there is somewhat dependency. Most things you can do without others, but there is a slight form of dependency” (SC2, 1644)*

*“Uhm, not a lot is happening between teams, no not really. We do not help each other or perform work for each other, nor do we depend on their work” (SC3, 1867)*

*“I don’t think the teams are connected actually. Operations is concerned with Operations, and that holds for other teams too” (SC5, 1492)*

Since there are only two internal order types, stock clerks are responsible for and given the fact that between teams there is little dependency, the degree of functional concentration is perceived to be quite low, which holds for all cases.

#### *4.2.2 Differentiation of operational tasks*

The degree of differentiation of operational tasks refers to the degree to which operational tasks are divided into production, preparation and supporting activities (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 58). After analyzing the interviews, it became clear that the team of stock clerks itself was

only slightly responsible for performing preparing and supporting activities. The preparing activities, such as assigning stock clerks to various aisles, and dividing the freight over the various aisles, is done mostly by the shift leader:

*“Dividing the freight into complete containers is something they do, a couple of shift leaders. And they tell us who does what, and how much time you have for it.”* (SC4, 1867)

*“Oh, not responsible for any planning. As a team of stock clerks, actually we come here empty-handed, and we hear who does what.”* (SC8, 2229)

*“Uhm, we are not responsible for that, that is purely done by shift leaders. I think all stores work like that. They are responsible for the planning, and the time we have. And we stock clerks perform the tasks.”* (SC5, 1492)

These shift leaders, which are mentioned by the stock clerks often, are not part of the team of stock clerks (see Figure 2 also). Therefore, it can be argued that the team of stock clerks do not perform preparing activities.

In the case of supportive activities, it can be argued that stock clerks have somewhat more responsibility for that. Stock clerks are not responsible for tasks, like checking other colleagues or taking care of the maintenance of equipment, but they do perform other activities that support the actual shelf stocking. For example:

*“Maybe tidy your aisle, or helping the shift leader when necessary, walking to the stockroom (Dutch: magazijn). Not exactly stocking itself you know.”* (SC5, 1492)

*“For example, getting some crates from the stockroom for the products that don’t fit on the shelves, or throwing away your carton in which products are packed, et cetera. We do that too.”* (SC9, 1021)

Supporting activities related to stocking shelves are thus perceived to be not only performed by the superiors. However, not much preparing and supporting is actually done by stock clerks themselves. Therefore, it can be concluded that in each store the value of the second parameter is quite high.

#### 4.2.3 Specialization of operational tasks

The degree of specialization of operational tasks means the degree to which operational tasks are only a small part of the whole operational process (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 59). This parameter aims, in contrast to the first and second parameter, at the individual workplace, not the whole team. Following the interviews, it became clear that, for the vast majority of time, a stock clerk performs only one task, stocking shelves:

*“I think 90/10. Most often I am stocking shelves my whole shift and maybe 10% other stuff, like answering customers’ questions.”* (SC3, 1867)

*“I am stocking shelves 90% of my shift. [...] The other 10% maybe I’m waiting for the shift leader or having a small chat with a colleague. Oh yeah and trying to find stuff I don’t know.”* (SC7, 2229)

*“For the largest part, I think. I think 90/10. Just stocking shelves, I guess.”* (SC4, 1867)

Stock clerks do, literally and figuratively, hardly leave their aisle during their shift, they say. For things like answering customers’ questions, and the supporting activities mentioned in the previous section, they stop stocking shelves. But as soon as they are done with those activities, they resume with stocking shelves.

Also, quite some dependency within the team of stock clerks exists. For example:

*“It happens quite often that in a particular shift, mostly in the afternoon, the work is done a bit messy. And you see that in the evening. When, for example, in the dairy aisle, you see something is not stocked FIFO (first in first out) you are responsible for correcting it. And that irritates me.”* (SC2, 1644)

*“Yes, quite some. Because uhm, when there’s two people on one aisle, and one of them is working slowly, or is working messy, the other has to compensate by working harder. I myself do not think that is pleasant.”* (SC7, 2229)

To summarize, it can be argued that the degree of specialization of operational tasks is perceived to be high. This was found in all cases.

#### 4.2.4 Separation of operational and regulatory activities

The parameter of separation refers to the degree to which regulatory and operational activities are assigned to different tasks. A high degree of separation means that operational tasks do not contain regulatory potential, whereas a low degree of separation means that operational tasks have a high amount of regulatory potential (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60).

Achterbergh and Vriens argue that a high level of separation holds for every activity, and therefore also for regulatory activities such as operational regulation, regulation by design, and strategic regulation (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 61). Clearly, stock clerks perform operational tasks. That becomes clear from the previous parameters that are discussed. Their regulatory potential, on the other hand, is much less integrated in the production structure. For example:

*“If we’re talking about stocking shelves itself, I don’t think you’re that dependent, but things around it, yeah, then it is necessary to have the shift leader, and other manager, around.”* (SC1, 1644)

*“Uhm, yes, I think every time when I work, I go to a shift leader or manager. For things like: I’m done with this, what do I do now. [...] Or when I have a problem with my work schedule. I can’t fix that myself in most cases.”* (SC9, 1021)

*“I think most, maybe all regulation comes from the shift leader. Also, for determining what goals need to be achieved. The shift leader decides what has to be done in what time frame.”* (SC7, 2229)

*“We, as a team of stock clerks, do not regulate much. Actually, we only perform our task of stocking shelves, as a stock clerk.”* (SC4, 1867)

The interview participants clarified that without the presence of the shift leader and other management, the stock clerks cannot perform their activities in a proper manner, achieving the goals of the process in an efficient and effective way. One respondent explicitly mentioned such a situation:

*“I think that when the shift leader is not on top of it, people will work slowly, fool around a bit, and that is not solvable within the team. Hypothetically speaking, we would be mature enough to then say that to each other, but it is good to have a shift leader around to keep us in check”* (SC1, 1644)

As can be derived from the interviews, workplaces possess little to no regulatory capacity. Regulating tasks seem to be assigned to a separate control structure. Therefore, it can be argued that the degree of separation at the team level of stock clerks is high in all cases.

#### *4.2.5 Differentiation of regulatory tasks into parts*

The degree of differentiation of regulatory activities into parts refers to the dividing of regulatory activities into monitoring, assessing, and acting (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 59). Respondents have been asked to what extent their team is responsible for checking and assessing its members own work, on the basis of which they act on improvement. The answers to this question were a divergent, but some common ground is present:

*“The shift leader checks our work and addresses any shortcomings directly to us. Then we have to correct it. [...] But during the stocking of the shelves you ‘check’ yourself also, to a certain extent, in the sense that you know when you did something wrong.”* (SC1, 1644)

*“If I speak for myself, I check my own work, and when I work with a colleague on the same aisle, I see when he does not stock a shelf completely the right way. When the coke is where the Fanta belongs, or so. And when I have to help in another aisle, I can also check him. [...] But eventually, the final check, and the assessment is done by the shift leader. And he speaks to a stock clerk when something is not right, and something has to change.”* (SC3, 1867)

*“I hardly check others on their work. The shift leaders do that. They give tips sometimes on how to work more efficient. But in the end, it is up to you if you ‘implement’ that.”* (SC7, 2229)

From the interviews, it can be derived that checking your own work, during the actual activity, is quite common. The assessment and the possible necessary acting, however, are as it seems assigned to the shift leader, who is not part of the team of stock clerks. Therefore, the degree of differentiation of regulatory tasks into parts in the current organizational structure of the stores

of Albert Heijn is perceived to be high since the regulatory activities seem to be assigned to different tasks, regarding all cases.

#### *4.2.6 Differentiation of regulatory tasks into aspects*

The degree of differentiation of regulatory activities into ‘aspects’ entails the division between the different types of regulation –regulation by design, strategic regulation, and operational regulation– within one task (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60). The interviewees were asked to what extent they are responsible for these types of regulation. Evidently, stock clerks have no influence in any form of strategic regulation or regulation by design. Setting goals, designing infrastructure, and making strategic decisions does not at all belong to the responsibilities of the stock clerk. Most of these regulatory activities are assigned to the management of the store, which means the top two layers. The supermarket store manager, together with the three department managers, define new HR, technology and decide the direction of the store. Since the stores, in which stock clerks were interviewed, are directly connected to the headquarters (not franchise), particular strategic and design regulations are given. However, there is quite some flexibility, as was told by one of Albert Heijn’s HR Business Partners. The stock clerks explained what they are responsible for, and what not:

*“Not very much, for us it is a given and we just have to comply to it and perform our work. There are particular rules which have to be followed, you don’t have to think about it yourself.” (SC8, 2229)*

*“Uhm, I think that there is much responsibility at the management level, what goals need to be achieved, not at the level of my team, the stock clerks. And the shift leader determine what needs to be done, and in how much time” (SC7, 2229)*

*“For instance, when a jar of beans has fallen, we can clean that up, but not everyone knows how to use the scrubbing machine, so most often the shift leader does that.” (SC3, 1867)*

*“I can clean something that falls on the floor, and it’s dirty, of course. And when a product is stocked incorrectly, I can fix that. But I do nothing more than that.” (SC2, 1644)*

The regulatory activities of a stock clerk do not go much further than cleaning up a broken product or correcting a wrongly stocked product. Achterbergh and Vriens (2010, p. 60) argue

that in a situation where a team of operational employees also perform operational regulation, and co-decide on and co-implement the infrastructure, and are involved in setting working goals, can be defined as an intermediate level of differentiation. However, since stock clerks simply have very little regulatory potential in each store, the degree of differentiation of regulatory tasks into aspects is perceived to be high.

#### *4.2.7 Specialization of regulatory activities*

The degree of *specialization of regulatory activities*, just like operational activities, refers to the degree to which regulatory tasks are only a small part of the whole regulatory process (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019, p. 60). As discussed in previous sections, the respondents do have only a very small regulatory potential. Therefore, it is hard to say if they perform only a small sub-activity in the whole regulatory process. The stock clerks are highly dependent on the regulatory activities from other teams, although they might not notice that:

*“ [...] We don’t notice what the managers and store manager do. That is, uhm, yeah, I don’t know.”* (SC4, 1867)

To examine whether within an Albert Heijn store there is specialization of regulatory activities, the respondents were asked if they had to go to different superiors for different problems. Many interview participants explained that most often, going to the shift leader is sufficient:

*“Often, they regulate things together. If I go to one of them, [...] he informs the rest. Some decisions are being taken together, I think, with the manager.”* (SC1, 1644)

Planning-related problems are, however, addressed at the manager:

*“Yes indeed, except for the planning. The Manager Operations is responsible for that, so if you have questions about that, you have to send him an email.”* (SC2, 1644)

Although stock clerks themselves do not have a broad regulatory potential, the degree of specialization of regulatory activities is, all in all, perceived to be intermediate.



#### 4.3 Relation between organizational structure and employee motivation

In the previous section, the organizational structure has been analyzed based on the seven design parameters, as proposed by De Sitter (2000), and provide a view on the way tasks are defined and related in some stores of Albert Heijn. When performing the diagnosis, it became apparent that, across cases, a lack of motivation is to a certain extent caused by the structural design of the store. However, the absence of motivation cannot solely be assigned to the organizational structure. This section explains the relation between the organizational structure and the part time employee motivation in the stores of Albert Heijn, and subsequently discusses some non-structural causes that do and do not motivate the part time store employees.

##### *4.3.1 Structural effects on motivation*

The relation between the organizational structure and the motivation of the part time store employees, across cases, was found to some extent. During the interviews, some interview participants already made a link between their motivation and certain structural characteristics of their workplace. For example, SC10 explained what she thought of the dependency between her and her colleagues:

*“Well, I don’t think it is pleasant or unpleasant, but I think I would like to be less dependent, just stocking products of your own container and being responsible for only that. It would be nice to be independent within my own team, I think. Maybe that would even motivate me.”* (SC10, 1021)

SC10 makes clear that the structure, in which she is active, does not motivate her fully. If the dependency between team members would decrease, for example by means of de-specialization, a possible outcome could be an increase in intrinsic motivation. Specialization accounts to a large extent for the lack of intrinsic motivation, as became apparent in all cases that were analyzed. A couple of examples:

*“The work itself is not enjoyable of course, it is only just about stupidly stocking those shelves. But I’m fine doing it.”* (SC4, 1867)

*“If you are positioned as a stock clerk, it feels like you’re stocking on autopilot, that’s it.”* (SC8, 2229)

It can thus be claimed that the current value of this structural parameter negatively affects the intrinsic motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn.

Separation of operational and regulatory activities, as well as specialization of operational tasks, play a large role in the motivation of the part time store employees. Some respondents even explain that their motivation would probably increase if they had a broader job, including other small responsibilities than stocking shelves alone:

*“I myself am someone who likes responsibility. So, if I get more of that I would be more motivated. Uhm, I don’t know, maybe is that also the case for others. There are several departments within an Albert Heijn store. And some departments require more responsibility than others. [...] I would say that would have an effect.”* (SC5, 1492)

Most of the stock clerks stated, however, that too much responsibility would not be beneficial to their motivation. This holds for almost all cases. For example:

*“I think I would like to have more responsibilities. But I don’t have to be a shift leader, that maybe means too much responsibility. Maybe a step between stock clerk and shift leader would fit me, would motivate me more.”* (SC8, 2229)

#### 4.3.2 Non-structural effects on motivation

Although the organizational structure seems to have a large effect on the motivation of part time store employees, some non-structural factors that stood out from the analysis also need to be considered. The greatest cause for motivation, as mentioned, is the external regulation as proposed by Gagné et al. (2010). An important, if not the most important, reason for working as a stock clerk at Albert Heijn is to earn money, as almost all interview respondents pointed out. Another motivator that was mentioned often by the interviewees is the amount of social interaction that was gained by working as a part time store employee at Albert Heijn. The ambiance on the work floor, and being able to talk to people, seem to be of great relevance in enjoying work. These monetary and social effects cannot be specified as structural causes for motivation, rather they are an aspect of the work itself.

Further, some other factors were identified in analyzing the motivation of part time store employees, such as the time of the work shift, the degree to which a part time employee is busy

with school or had a long and hard day before working in the evening. These factors too are not affected by the way tasks have been defined and related.

#### 4.4 Final diagnostic conclusion

This thesis has tried to diagnose the current situation regarding motivation among part time store employees, the organizational structure of the Albert Heijn stores, and the relation between these two variables. The results of this diagnosis are based on the ten semi-structured interviews, which are analyzed in the previous sections. In this section, the results are discussed once more briefly, in order to make a final diagnosis.

In this study, employee motivation was measured by means of the Motivation at Work Scale by Gagné et al. (2010). Four dimensions about intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation were distinguished. The degree to which the interviewed stock clerks, from all cases, were motivated intrinsically could be perceived as quite low. None of the interviewees explained to be really enjoying their work activities. The main reason for all stock clerks, regardless of the store they were active in, to be working a couple of hours a week at Albert Heijn was to earn some money, for different purposes. Whereas some would use their money to get by, to make ends meet, others would spend their money mostly on going out and buying new clothes. Also, a large motivator among the interviewees was the social interaction that was gained by working as a part time store employee at Albert Heijn. Across cases, stock clerks claimed that social interaction, a friendly atmosphere (Dutch: gezellige sfeer), was essential to their enjoyment of work. Since money and social interaction were so important, the stock clerks were extrinsically motivated much more than they were intrinsically motivated. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a lack of intrinsic motivation among part time store employees in all analyzed cases.

Regarding the organizational structure, quite some parameters could be perceived to have a high value. The degree of differentiation of operational tasks, specialization of operational tasks, separation, differentiation of regulatory activities into parts and the differentiation of regulatory activities into aspects could all be identified as high. In particular the separation of operational and regulatory tasks, and the specialization of operational tasks had a notable effect on the work of the stock clerks. This was found in all stores. Some respondents would even call their simple job ‘dumb’ and explained they would be negatively motivated sometimes as a result of dependency on colleagues within their team, as well as dependency on their shift leaders and

managers. There seemed to be little to no regulatory capacity among the part time store employees themselves, apart from cleaning a broken product. This was also found in all cases.

Furthermore, some stock clerks also would express their motivation to cohere with social interaction. Although this motivator is not included in the MAWS, it cannot be ignored that this external regulator plays a vital role in motivating part time store employees.

As previously explained, it can be argued that the structure of an organization influences employee motivation. Organizational structures can be diagnosed by adopting a sociotechnical approach. Sociotechnical systems design theory states that an organizational structure having high values on the seven design parameters affects its Quality of Organization and Quality of Work (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). This study shows that within the stores of Albert Heijn, the design parameters can be perceived as high regarding part time store employees. When perceiving employee motivation as a part of Quality of Work, it can be argued that the organizational structure negatively affects the intrinsic motivation of the part time store employees.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis tried to gain insight in the current situation at Albert Heijn stores regarding intrinsic motivation among part time store employee, the organizational structure, and the relation between these two concepts. The goal of this study reads as follows: to perform a sociotechnical diagnosis on the structure of the problems regarding motivation among part time store employees in order to propose possible suggestions for restructuring.

The research question of this research is formulated as followed:

*“ What is the relation between organizational structure and motivation of part time store employees at Albert Heijn?”*

In order to holistically answer this main question, some sub-questions have been composed:

- 1. What is the current state of motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn?*
- 2. How can the organizational design of the stores of Albert Heijn be characterized, based on sociotechnical systems design theory?*
- 3. How does the current structure of Albert Heijn stores affect the motivation of the part time store employees?*

To diagnose the employee motivation, the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) by Gagné et al. (2010) was used, going into both intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation. The four dimensions of the MAWS each contained four quantitative items, which were rewritten into semi-structured interview questions. The organizational structure was diagnosed with a sociotechnical perspective, applying the sociotechnical systems design theory by De Sitter (2000). This research is built on a deductive approach, based on the theories of Gagné (2010) and De Sitter (2000). In order to perform the diagnosis properly, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted.

While analyzing the employee motivation, it stood out that the degree of intrinsic motivation among part time store employees across all cases was very low. The interviewed stock clerks did not enjoy working at Albert Heijn because of the actual work activities they performed. Rather, they seemed to work primarily to earn money, thus a high degree of external regulation was found. On top of that, it was assessed that social interaction also played a large role for part

time store employees in all cases to work at Albert Heijn. The MAWS also includes identified and introjected regulation (Gagné et al., 2010). However, there was only little evidence that could be used to argue that the stock clerks fulfilled their career plans at Albert Heijn, nor did respondents think that their work was their life, doing everything not to fail. It can be argued that the part time store employees, regardless of the case, at Albert Heijn are mainly externally regulated, in particular being incentivized by their paycheck. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a lack of intrinsic motivation among part time store employees at Albert Heijn.

In the diagnosis of the organizational structure, when assessing the structure by means of the design parameters, high values were found on quite some parameters. Stock clerks themselves were not responsible for preparing activities and performed supporting activities only in the slightest. There is a high degree of specialization of operational activities, resulting in stock clerks performing the same task for the large majority of their work hours. Regarding their regulatory capacity, the interviewees stated that their regulatory potential does not go beyond cleaning a broken product, which can be seen as only a small part operational regulation. Regulatory activities are mainly the responsibility of shift leaders and managers, who fix problems, determine on issues of HR and technology, and make strategic decisions as well. It can, in that regard, be concluded that the organizational structure can be perceived as a high-value parameter structure.

According to sociotechnical systems design theory, lowering the parameter values means in increase in Quality of Work. Employee motivation can arguably be part of Quality of Work, which means that lowering parameter values would benefit the degree of intrinsic motivation of part time store employees.

## 6. Discussion

The part time store employees at Albert Heijn experience a lack of intrinsic motivation. As explained in chapter two and chapter four, this is partially caused by a complex structure. The way tasks are defined, related, and divided at Albert Heijn to some extent decreases the intrinsic motivation of its part time store employees. This last chapter entails the discussion of this research. First, the practical and theoretical implications will be presented. Then, since this research may have been influenced by some aspects, possibly affecting the outcomes, the limitations of this research are explained. Lastly, some recommendations for further research on this topic will be discussed.

### 6.1 Practical implications

This study diagnosed the organizational structure and the part time store employee motivation. The organizational structure was diagnosed based on sociotechnical theory by De Sitter (2000). Sociotechnical systems design theory proposes that lowering design parameters would increase Quality of Work, amongst other functional requirements. Since this thesis argues that employee motivation is part of the Quality of Work, that means that lowering parameter values is indeed what should improve employee motivation, for there is currently a lack of intrinsic motivation among part time store employees. Redesigning an organizational structure according to sociotechnical systems design theory means lowering the parameters by means of adding regulatory potential to workplaces or teams, while also maintaining a low probability for disturbances (Achterbergh & Vriens, 2019). The latter of the two can be achieved by decreasing the number of dependencies between tasks.

For example, if the role and activities of the shift leader would be integrated into teams of stock clerks, these teams would be responsible for preparing, supporting, and making. This would lower the differentiation of operational tasks but would also decrease specialization of operational tasks. Even more, such teams would have more regulatory potential, lowering the parameter of separation of operational and regulatory tasks.

The degree to which possibilities for structural redesign exist, is what Achterbergh and Vriens (2019) refer to as *solution space*. The solution space within the stores of Albert Heijn is hard to determine since most stores are directly tied to the headquarters. On the store level, not much can be changed structurally. Therefore, if redesign is perceived needed, in order to intrinsically

motivate the part time store employees more, this needs to be done on a top management level at the headquarters.

## *6.2 Theoretical implications*

Although this study entails diagnostic research of the organizational structure and part time store employee motivation at Albert Heijn, and therefore is characterized as an applied scientific study, some theoretical implications can be recognized.

Sociotechnical systems design theory is mainly focused on standardized, hierarchical organizations, producing goods or services (De Sitter, 2000). A production factory would be a good example of such an organization. However, this thesis is about a large organization in the retail industry. The retail industry was hardly ever mentioned in STSD theory before. Therefore, some new insights into STSD have been gained, focusing not solely on the standardized, hierarchical organization.

Secondly, employee motivation has been researched against the light of organizational structure before, however it is quite innovative in STSD theory. Although De Sitter uses the term motivation only once in his book (2000), this factor might not be underestimated as a relevant factor in Human Resources. As Achterbergh and Vriens (2019) argue: ‘without motivated HR, activities cannot be performed effectively and efficiently’.

Lastly, the control structure parameters by De Sitter (2000), and the MAWS by Gagné et al. (2010) both contain the word *regulation*. STSD proposes that a high amount of regulatory potential, among other things, allows for personal development. Gagné et al. (2010) propose different types of regulation as transcendent steps of gradual scale of internalization of activities. When only being regulated at the low level (external regulation), the only reason for doing activities is to obtain rewards or avoid punishments. Subsequently, there is not much internal potential for any growth. By means of identified regulation, one identifies with the value or meaning of an activity, and accepts it as one’s own, therefore being autonomously regulated (Gagné et al., 2010). Therefore, an employee who has this high level of autonomous regulation, would be more fit for involvement and development, in a STSD context. Linking a higher level of self-regulation to higher levels of involvement and development (STSD) therefore could be a contribution to the theory of Gagné et al. (2010).



### 6.3 Limitations

Albert Heijn stores come in different shapes and sizes. Whereas the large majority of them are directly linked to the headquarters (WWM), a fair share of the stores operates on a franchise basis. The general structure within these franchise stores is similar to WWM stores, however, these franchise stores have more room for interpretation. Also, Albert Heijn stores can be characterized in different sizes, ranging from a ‘neighborhood supermarket’ to an AH XL store. Although these differences are taken into account in this study by selecting stores that are similar in size, turnover, and number of employees, possibly there can be differences in outcomes in other sized stores. Therefore, the transferability of this study is limited to a certain extent. This limitation, however, was also considered in chapter three on Methods.

Furthermore, critical notes can be placed regarding the positioning of this thesis within theory on sociotechnical systems design theory (STSD). This study mentions that motivation is a part of, and therefore plays a role in Quality of Work, as proposed by De Sitter (2000). STSD argues that Quality of Work is a functional requirement of an organizational structure. This thesis, however, takes a stance that Quality of Work, and therefore motivation, is an outcome measure of the organizational structure. Here, a discussion point within STSD is stumbled upon. Within STSD, it can be argued that measuring the organizational structure will subsequently tell whether employees are involved, engaged, and possibly *motivated*. On the other hand, measuring motivation on itself, and then relating the outcomes to the diagnosis of the organizational structure, can provide whole new insights. Taking the latter perspective allow for outcomes in which the organization has a proper structure, but employees are not engaged, involved etc. Simultaneously, an improper structure can comprise engaged, involved and motivated employees, which means other factors need to be analyzed in order to get an appropriate understanding.

A third possible limitation of this thesis might be the focus on organizational structure from a sociotechnical perspective. Although this STSD perspective gives a thorough understanding of organizational structures, considering social and technical aspects of the workplace to be integrated, possibly other organizational perspectives can result in different outcomes of this study.

Then, also another remark can be made by maintaining a sociotechnical focus. Sociotechnical systems design theory assumes employees to be sustainable, having possibilities to learn and develop. This thesis, however, studies the motivation of younger, temporary, part time-based employees. This might have an effect on the outcomes of the study. Given the range of age of the respondents (15-18), it could have been expected that the degree of external regulation is higher than the intrinsic motivation.

Also, the number of interviews can be seen as a limitation. Saturation is aimed to be achieved; however, it is still possible that interviewing more part time store employees would have provided more notable, or even different, results.

A last limitation can be detected in selecting the measuring instrument by Gagné et al. (2010). The original MAWS was composed in the French and English language. The validation of the scale was done by the authors themselves, in both the French and English language. However, because this research was conducted in the Netherlands, and the interviews were held in Dutch, the semi-structured interview questions had to be translated to Dutch. This might have affected the internal validity of the construct.

#### *6.4 Recommendations*

Lastly, some recommendations for further research are given. One of the limitations in the previous sections entails that STSD assumes HR to be sustainable. This thesis, however, studies the motivation of younger, temporary, part time-based employees. Although this current research provides some new insights, further research could explore whether this difference in employee type has a significant impact on the results of such a study as this thesis. Motivation, as explained, plays a great role in retail. Quite some research has been done on the motivation of retail employees, but it is suggested that more research is conducted on the motivation of part time retail store employees. Also, this might be done from other perspectives than a structural perspective. Then, this thesis entailed a diagnosis of the organizational structure and the part time store employee motivation of Albert Heijn stores. The results of that diagnosis can be a starting point for redesigning the structure, increasing the employee motivation of part time store workers. Finally, albeit more labor-psychological, the impact of culture or background might be interesting in analyzing part time store employees. The MAWS proposed personal values to play a role in motivation. Different cultures or background can have different norms and values; therefore, the degree of motivation can differ too.

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## Appendix A – Operationalization

<b>CONCEPT: Organizational Structure</b>		
	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators (Achterbergh &amp; Vriens, 2019)</b>
1	<i>Functional concentration</i>	Division of activities of whole production process Dependency between teams
2	<i>Differentiation of operational tasks</i>	Allocation of production, preparing and supporting over different teams
3	<i>Specialization of operational tasks</i>	Extent to which operational tasks contain small part of the complete operational process Dependency within teams Doing other things than stocking shelves
4	<i>Separation of operational and regulatory tasks</i>	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks Need manager for problem
5	<i>Differentiation of regulatory tasks into parts</i>	Allocation of monitoring, assessing and action over different teams
6	<i>Differentiation of regulatory tasks into aspects</i>	Extent to which regulatory activities are divided into operational regulation, strategic regulation, and regulation by design Responsibility for strategic decision-making, operational disturbances, and HR, technology, and infrastructure
7	<i>Specialization of regulatory tasks</i>	Extent to which regulatory activities contain only a small part of the complete regulatory process

<b>CONCEPT: Motivation at Work</b>		
	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators (Gagné et al., 2010)</b>
1	<i>Intrinsic motivation</i>	Enjoying work activities Having fun Pleasure
2	<i>Identified regulation</i>	Reaching life goals Fulfilling career plans Fits personal values
3	<i>Introjected regulation</i>	Being a 'winner' Work is my life, don't fail Reputation depends on it
4	<i>External regulation</i>	Standard of living Make a lot of money Paycheck

## **Appendix B – Interview format**

“Dankjewel dat je de tijd hebt genomen om een aantal vragen te beantwoorden over je werk en hoe je je baan ervaart. Dit interview is deel van een analyse over de motivatie van vakkenvullers en ik onderzoek of hieraan structurele redenen ten grondslag liggen. Om dit te analyseren, neem ik meerdere interviews af met vakkenvullers om een zo goed mogelijk beeld te krijgen hoe zij hun baan ervaren.

Jouw identiteit zal te allen tijde anoniem blijven. Ik wil je ook graag vragen om toestemming voor het opnemen van dit interview, zodat ik dat later zal kunnen uitschrijven. Wanneer het getranscribeerd is, zal de opname worden verwijderd. Daarnaast, als je dat wilt, kan ik het transcript naar je toesturen, om je de mogelijkheid te geven opmerkingen te kunnen geven over dingen die niet goed zijn overgekomen op mij.

Als ik het in dit interview heb jouw ‘jouw team’, dan heb ik het over jou en iedereen die hetzelfde doet als jij, dus alle vakkenvullers.”

### **Algemene vragen**

- Wanneer ben je begonnen in dit bedrijf?
- Wat is je functie binnen het bedrijf?
- Wat houdt je baan in volgens jou?

### **Vragen over motivatie**

- In hoeverre doe je jouw werk omdat je het leuke werkzaamheden vindt?
- In hoeverre doe je jouw werk omdat het leuk vindt om te doen?
- In welke mate brengt jouw werk je plezier?
- In welke mate werk je hier om je levensdoelen te behalen?
- In hoeverre vervult deze baan je carrièredoelen?
- In hoeverre past deze baan bij jouw persoonlijke waarden?
- In welke mate heb je het gevoel dat je de beste moet zijn in wat je doet?
- In welke mate heb je het gevoel dat je werk je leven is?
- In hoeverre heb je het gevoel dat je reputatie afhankelijk is van je baan?
- In hoeverre werk je om een bepaalde levensstandaard te behalen?
- In hoeverre doe je jouw werk omdat je er veel geld mee kan verdienen?
- In welke mate werk je puur voor het salaris?



### **Vragen over organisatiestructuur**

- In welke mate zijn jij en jouw team afhankelijk van het werk van anderen?
- In hoeverre is het team waarin je werkt verantwoordelijk voor voorbereidende en ondersteunende activiteiten?
- In welke mate is jouw team afhankelijk van voorbereidende en ondersteunende activiteiten die door anderen/meerderen worden uitgevoerd?
- In hoeverre ben je tijdens werktijd alleen bezig met het vullen van vakken?
- In welke mate doe je ook andere werk-gerelateerde dingen dan vakkenvullen tijdens werktijd?
- Ben je afhankelijk van mensen binnen je eigen team?
- In welke mate kun je zelf, of iemand anders in je team, een probleem oplossen welke je tijdens je werk tegenkomt?
- Vaak naar leidinggevende toe voor vragen of problemen?
- In welke mate controleer en beoordeel jullie team zelf jullie eigen werk, op basis waarvan actie wordt ondernomen?
- In welke mate is jouw team zelf verantwoordelijk voor het stellen van bepaalde doelen?
- Moet je naar verschillende leidinggevers voor verschillende problemen?
- In welke mate heb je het gevoel dat jouw team 'regelende taken' slechts een klein deel uitmaakt van het geheel?
- In hoeverre ben je afhankelijk van anderen in het regelen van bepaalde zaken op gebied van OR, SR en DR?

## Appendix C – Interview quotes

CONCEPT: Motivation at Work			
Dimension	Indicator		Quote
<i>Intrinsic motivation</i>	Enjoying work activities	SC5	Yes, I enjoy my work, uhm, the work activities are doable, but indeed the joy I get from working comes from other things.
	Enjoying work activities	SC8	Yes, I do, but I do not think it is ‘the best job ever’ but I think it is chill, not very exhausting either, quite relaxed.
	Having fun - rev	SC1	It keeps me busy, but I do not like it actually. Stocking shelves is something I do not really enjoy.
	Having fun - rev	SC2	I’m just a stock clerk, uhm, nothing special, just stocking shelves.
Identified regulation	Fulfilling career plans - rev	SC4	No, I do not aim for that. I think that when I head to college that I will participate in a more serious job, not being a shift leader or manager here.
	Fulfilling career plans - rev	SC3	Very possibly, just maybe I want to be a shift leader in this store, but I probably stick around here for maybe two more years and then look for something else.
	Fulfilling career plans	SC5	I hope to end up on the HQ in Zaandam. I started as a stock clerk, I want to become a shift leader and after my study I hope to intern at the HQ.
Introjected regulation	Being a 'winner'	SC5	Yes, I have a high willingness to perform, I think that plays a role too. To get the best out of myself, in that sense, yeah, I think that also plays a part.
	Being a 'winner'	SC5	I want to prove myself at work constantly, I think, uhm, that captures a lot of my personality.
	Being a 'winner' - rev	SC2	Oh uhm, I wouldn’t say that I want to be the best, I think I don’t want to be the worst. I’m not putting in effort to excel and to distinguish myself to be honest.
	Reputation depends on it - rev	SC7	I don’t think I have a reputation. Uhm, I think nobody here has got a reputation, I guess. So, no I don’t.
External regulation	Paycheck	SC2	I’d rather do other things, but I’m getting paid for it, and I don’t mind doing it.

	Make a lot of money	SC3	Uhm, the money really helps. For me it is mainly about the money [...].
	Paycheck	SC4	Money is my main motive I think with this side job.
	Paycheck	SC9	Uhm, I think I do it primarily for the money.
	Paycheck	SC8	Ultimately, I do everything for the money.
	Standard of living	SC5	I also have my fixed charges each month which I have to pay, so money is a very important reason for me also. [...] I think I can then achieve a standard of living which motivates me to a certain extent.
	Paycheck	SC3	Yes, right now I work here purely for the money, at least to the utmost extent. [...] I think 70/30, with 70% for the money and 30% for the work itself, because I don't hate it.
	Paycheck	SC8	If I were to put it in proportion, maybe 70% for the money and 30% because I like the work at Albert Heijn, something like that.
Additional findings	Social interaction	SC1	The ambiance here is quite nice, that motivates me to a large extent to work harder. [...] if I work with nice people I can enjoy working.
	Social interaction	SC2	...mainly because I made a lot of friends at the Albert Heijn, and that motivated me to stay here and not to leave. Because it is always nice with those people. [...] Work becomes less wearing, because you make some money, and you are with nice people.
	Social interaction	SC5	The joy I get from this job is because of the social contacts, and the connections I have with my colleagues. That makes me like it here.
	Social interaction	SC9	I enjoy work if I work with nice people, yes.
Additional findings	Work schedule	SC9	Uhm, yeah, it depends. Sometimes you just don't feel like it, you'd rather stay in bed then go to work, especially when it is that early.
	School	SC1	Yes, maybe someone has had a long day at school, and he does not really want to work, that depends.
		SC7	Maybe when I'm very busy because of school.

CONCEPT: organizational structure			
Dimension	Indicator		Quote
Functional concentration	Division of activities of whole production process	SC1	Yes, fresh produce but mostly preservables.
	Division of activities of whole production process	SC4	Both, in the evening preservables and in the afternoon fresh produce.
	Division of activities of whole production process	SC10	Yes, I know that a 9-12 shift is stocking fresh produce, and 19-21 in the evening is preservables. So, I know what I will do in advance, looking at my work schedule.
	Dependency between teams	SC2	Between teams there is somewhat dependency. Most things you can do without others, but there is a slight form of dependency.
	Dependency between teams	SC3	Uhm, not a lot is happening between teams, no not really. We do not help each other or perform work for each other, nor do we depend on their work.
	Dependency between teams	SC5	I don't think the teams are connected actually. Operations is concerned with Operations, and that holds for other teams too.
Differentiation of operational tasks	Preparing activities	SC4	Dividing the freight into complete containers is something they do, a couple of shift leaders. And they tell us who does what, and how much time you have for it.
	Preparing activities	SC8	Oh, not responsible for any planning. As a team of stock clerks, actually we come here empty-handed, and we hear who does what.
	Preparing activities	SC5	Uhm, we are not responsible for that, that is purely done by shift leaders. I think all stores work like that. They are responsible for the planning, and the time we have. And we stock clerks perform the tasks.
	Supporting activities	SC5	Maybe tidy your aisle, or helping the shift leader when necessary, walking to the stockroom (Dutch: magazijn). Not exactly stocking itself you know.

	Supporting activities	SC9	'For example, getting some crates from the stockroom for the products that don't fit on the shelves, or throwing away your carton in which products are packed, et cetera. We do that too.
Specialization of operational tasks	Task is a small part of operational process	SC3	I think 90/10. Most often I am stocking shelves my whole shift and maybe 10% other stuff, like answering customers' questions.
	Task is a small part of operational process	SC7	I am stocking shelves 90% of my shift. [...] The other 10% maybe I'm waiting for the shift leader or having a small chat with a colleague. Oh yeah and trying to find stuff I don't know.
	Task is a small part of operational process	SC4	Uhm, for the largest part, I think. I think 90/10. Just stocking shelves, I guess.
	Dependency within teams	SC2	It happens quite often that in a particular shift, mostly in the afternoon, the work is done a bit messy. And you see that in the evening. When, for example, in the dairy aisle, you see something is not stocked FIFO (first in first out) you are responsible for correcting it. And that irritates me.
	Dependency within teams	SC7	Yes, quite some. Because uhm, when there's two people on one aisle, and one of them is working slowly, or is working messy, the other has to compensate by working harder. I myself do not think that is pleasant.
	Dependency within teams	SC10	Well, I don't think it is pleasant or unpleasant, but I think I would like to be less dependent, just stocking products of your own container and being responsible for only that. It would be nice to be independent within my own team, I think. Maybe that would even motivate me.
	Task is a small part of operational process	SC4	The work itself is not enjoyable of course, it is only just about stupidly stocking those shelves. But I'm fine doing it.
	Task is a small part of operational process	SC8	If you are positioned as a stock clerk, it feels like you're stocking on autopilot, that's it.

Separation of operational and regulatory tasks	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks Need manager for problem	SC4	I think most, maybe all regulation comes from the shift leader. Also, for determining what goals need to be achieved. The shift leader decides what has to be done in what time frame.
		SC1	If we're talking about stocking shelves itself, I don't think you're that dependent, but things around it, yeah, then it is necessary to have the shift leader, and other manager, around.
	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks Need manager for problem	SC4	We, as a team of stock clerks, do not regulate much. Actually, we only perform our task of stocking shelves, as a stock clerk.
		SC9	Uhm, yes, I think every time when I work, I go to a shift leader or manager. For things like: I'm done with this, what do I do now. [...] Or when I have a problem with my work schedule. I cannot fix that myself in most cases.
	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks	SC1	'I think that when the shift leader is not on top of it, people will work slowly, fool around a bit, and that is not solvable within the team. Hypothetically speaking, we would be mature enough to then say that to each other, but it is good to have a shift leader around to keep us in check
	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks	SC5	I myself am someone who likes responsibility. So, if I get more of that I would be more motivated. Uhm, I don't know, maybe is that also the case for others. There are several departments within an Albert Heijn store. And some departments require more responsibility than others. [...] I would say that would have an effect.
	Extent to which a team has operational tasks as well as regulatory tasks	SC8	I think I would like to have more responsibilities. But I don't have to be a shift leader, that maybe means to much responsibility. Maybe a step between stock clerk and shift leader would fit me, would motivate me more.

Differentiation of regulatory tasks into parts	Allocation of monitoring, assessing and action over different teams	SC1	The shift leader checks our work and addresses any shortcomings directly to us. Then we have to correct it. [...] But during the stocking of the shelves you ‘check’ yourself also, to a certain extent, in the sense that you know when you did something wrong.
	Allocation of monitoring, assessing and action over different teams	SC3	’If I speak for myself, I check my own work, and when I work with a colleague on the same aisle, I see when he does not stock a shelf completely the right way. When the coke is where the Fanta belongs, or so. And when I have to help in another aisle, I can also check him. [...] But eventually, the final check, and the assessment is done by the shift leader. And he speaks to a stock clerk when something is not right, and something has to change.
	Allocation of monitoring, assessing and action over different teams	SC7	I hardly check others on their work. The shift leaders do that. They give tips sometimes on how to work more efficient. But in the end, it is up to you if you ‘implement’ that.
Differentiation of regulatory tasks into aspects	Extent to which regulatory activities are divided into OR, SR and RbD	SC8	Not very much, for us it is a given and we just have to comply to it and perform our work. There are particular rules which have to be followed, you don’t have to think about it yourself.
	Responsibility for strategic decision-making, operational disturbances, and HR, technology and infrastructure	SC7	Uhm, I think that there is much responsibility at the management level, what goals need to be achieved, not at the level of my team, the stock clerks. And the shift leader determine what needs to be done, and in how much time.
	Responsibility for strategic decision-making, operational disturbances, and HR, technology and infrastructure	SC3	For instance, when a jar of beans has fallen, we can clean that up, but not everyone knows how to use the scrubbing machine, so most often the shift leader does that.

	Responsibility for strategic decision-making, operational disturbances, and HR, technology and infrastructure	SC2	I can clean something that falls on the floor, and it's dirty, of course. And when a product is stocked incorrectly, I can fix that. But I do not do anything more than that.
Specialization of regulatory activities	Extent to which regulatory activities contain only a small part of the complete regulatory process	SC2  SC1	'Often, they regulate things together. If I go to one of them, [...] he informs the rest. Some decisions are being taken together, I think, with the manager  'Yes indeed, except for the planning. The Manager Operations is responsible for that, so if you have questions about that, you have to send him an email