

**Czech University of Life Sciences**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Economics and Management**



**Diploma Thesis**

**Evaluation of corporate culture  
within selected company**

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# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Department of Management

Faculty of Economics and Management

## DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Pavlna Lukoszová

Economics and Management

Thesis title

Evaluation of corporate culture within selected company

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### Objectives of thesis

The main aim of the thesis is to evaluate the corporate culture of the selected company and to estimate the degree of optimism within the culture. The instrument for estimating the degree of optimism will be the "Life orientation" test which will be calibrated for the specific company. Such a calibrated test can be later used as a tool during recruitment processes.

### Methodology

The thesis will be divided into a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part will be based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources concerning corporate culture, optimism as well as the basic information about the selected company.

The practical part will focus on the culture of the selected company and the degree of optimism present within the culture. The tool for estimation the degree of positivism will be the "Life orientation" test which will be calibrated and optimized specifically for the chosen company. The test will be distributed among the employees through paper or by e-mail. The degree of optimism will be defined based on the results of the test.

### The proposed extent of the thesis

60 – 80 pages

### Keywords

Culture, optimism, pessimism, corporate culture

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### Recommended information sources

- CHANG, Edward C. Optimism: implications for theory, research, and practice. 1st ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, c2001, xxi, 395 p. ISBN 15-579-8691-6.
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- SCHABRACQ, Marc. Changing organizational culture: the change agent's guidebook. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, c2007, 254 p. ISBN 978-047-0014-837.
- SCHEIN, Edgar H. Organizational culture and leadership. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004, xvii, 437 p. ISBN 07-879-6845-5.
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### **Declaration**

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled “Evaluation of corporate culture within selected company” by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis.

In Prague on date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pavína Lukoszová

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Ing. Tereza Balcarová Ph.D. and company Eurest for their advice and support during my work on this Thesis.

**Evaluation of corporate culture  
within selected company**

**Evaluace firemní kultury ve vybrané  
společnosti**

## **Summary:**

The main aim of this diploma thesis is to specify the implementation of *Learned optimism* into Eurest corporate culture, state the level of optimism before the implementation and 4 months after and capture any significant changes between the socio-demographic indicators and optimism. The theoretical part of this thesis is based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources of literature concerning Corporate Culture, Positive Psychology, Learned Optimism and other relevantly related topics and serves as a base for analysis included in the practical part.

The practical part builds on the data included in the theoretical part as well as on information that were gained from the company sources and from the survey. It describes the selected company Eurest; summarizes its history and other information concerning their corporate culture and specifies the process of applying optimism into the culture. It also includes information about the conducted survey, its outcomes, evaluation of results and proposes recommendations for improvements.

## **Keywords:**

Corporate culture, Culture, Eurest, spol s r.o., Explanatory Style, Learned Optimism, Optimism, Pessimism, Positive psychology.

## **Souhrn:**

Cílem této diplomové práce je specifikovat implementaci *Naučeného optimismu* do firemní kultury společnosti Eurest, spol. s r.o., určení míry optimismu před implementací a 4 měsíce po ní; dále také zjištění případných změn v socio-demografických indikátorech a míře optimismu v rámci celé firmy. Teoretická část této diplomové práce se zabývá analýzou primárních a sekundárních zdrojů literatury, související s daným tématem. Tato část má především sloužit jako základ pro analýzu, která je zahrnuta v praktické části. Praktická část navazuje na data, jež jsou obsažena v první části, rovněž také na informace získané od interních zdrojů zkoumané firmy a také z výzkumu. Tato část popisuje firmu Eurest spol. s r.o., shrnuje její historii a další informace, které se týkají její firemní kultury, a upřesňuje proces implementace optimismu v Eurestu. Také zahrnuje popis provedeného výzkumu, jeho výstupy, zhodnocení výsledků a navrhuje doporučení na zlepšení.

## **Klíčová slova:**

Firemní kultura, Kultura, Eurest, spol. s r.o., Explanační styl, Naučený optimismus, Optimismus, Pesimismus, Pozitivní psychologie.

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# I. Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace is very diverse and is constantly changing. The typical employer-employee relationship that was commonplace in the past has nowadays been turned upside down. For years companies have been predominantly focusing on making customers and clients happy and as a result ensuring employee satisfaction and happiness has not always been such a big priority. Nowadays, employees are becoming more and more important. Most companies are now aware of the fact that it is no longer just the job scope itself that affects employee satisfaction. It is the workplace environment that hugely influences how employees feel at work, including relationships with their co-workers and managers; the whole corporate culture that impacts them every day; the space and opportunity for their own personal development, and many other factors.

People do not want a job where they constantly argue are not appreciated enough or are endlessly criticized. Most employees understand that a job has to be done, but they long to be treated sufficiently and to have a workplace where respect, friendly relationships and a good time can be achieved and maintained. Firms can attain this type of environment by practicing a few concepts such as ensuring trusting relationships, treating all employees fairly and equally, and by insisting on honesty and respect. A positive workplace makes employees feel good about being at work and doing their job, which can provide them with motivation to encourage them throughout the day. Creating a positive environment of satisfied and motivated employees and reliable relationships positively influences the performance of the whole company, its turnover, image and many other factors.

I have chosen this topic because it is a subject which is currently becoming more relevant, more widely discussed, and more popular in western countries. In addition, although not many companies in the Czech Republic are yet aware of the importance of the positive work environment, there are certainly some - such as Euresst, that are following the successful implemented patterns of companies from western countries. It is important to realize that the environment

really affects employees' performance and the overall efficiency within an organization and therefore it is important to also be able to adjust the organizational culture to satisfy any newly established needs of the work environment.

This work should not only provide the theoretical view on the concepts from corporate culture and positive psychology; moreover it should provide a description of the practical work processes that are carried out in the real business world and the problems that companies have to face nowadays.

The practical part of this thesis was devoted to the company Eurest, spol. s r. o.<sup>1</sup>, which is a catering company currently undergoing the implementation of optimism and positive attitudes into their corporate culture. The author has been working in this organization for almost two years and personally perceives this process of implementing optimism as being hugely important for the whole company. Thus, it seemed like a very good opportunity to conduct a study that would focus on the positive organizational environment and all of the steps and factors that lead to the successful implementation of optimism. My experience as an employee of the company and my communication with experts in the implementation of optimism have enabled me to gather enough data and qualified me sufficiently to properly analyse the internal processes of the company.

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<sup>1</sup>In the following text also „Eurest“.

# 1. Objectives of the Thesis and Methodology

## 1.1 Objectives of the Thesis

The purpose of this study is to describe the application of the whole concept of Learned Optimism in a workplace as well as to estimate the average level of optimism between the employees and also to concentrate on the factors such as age, gender or position within the company and define whether any of these factors can influence one's attitude to optimism or the opposite, to pessimism.

The main aim of this diploma thesis is to estimate an average level of optimism/pessimism in Eurest; catering company which is currently undergoing the implementation of optimism into their corporate culture. Moreover, it will map the whole implementation process in details and it will further evaluate the process of the above mentioned change. Particularly, it will evaluate the situation before and after optimism was introduced into their corporate culture. The following hypotheses were applied in order to achieve the above mentioned aims of the diploma thesis:

H1: In the first survey, most of the company's employees will belong to the *realist* category on the "Life orientation" scale.

H2: The younger employees will be more optimistic than older employees.

H3: Men will be more optimistic than women.

H4: Employees in Scolarest will be more optimistic than in Eurest.

H5: Younger people will be more easily influenced by the optimistic corporate culture than older people.

H6: Employees on higher positions will be more optimistic than employees on lower positions.

H7: After 4 months of applying the concept of Learned Optimism the employees will become more optimistic in comparison with the results from the previous survey (the average figure will move towards the optimistic pole of the scale).

## **1.2 Methodology**

The theoretical part of this thesis is based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources of literature concerning Corporate Culture, Positive Psychology, Learned Optimism and other relevant or related topics. The review of theoretical facts will then serve as a basis for the analysis conducted in the practical part of the study.

The practical part builds on the data included in the theoretical part as well as on information that was gathered from sources within the company and from the survey. The main aim of this part is to provide a description of the current situation concerning the application of concepts of the positive psychology field in a business environment. It describes the selected company Euresť; summarizes its history and other information regarding its corporate culture and specifies the process of applying optimism into their culture.

### **1.2.1 Research methods and techniques**

The following part will be dedicated to the research strategy and the techniques used in order to collect data. The research is going to be conducted through questionnaires, which will be based on questions from the “Life orientation test” and will also include several socio-demographic questions. You can find the full versions of the questionnaires in Czech language (appendix 2, appendix 3) and in English language (appendix 4, appendix 5) enclosed at the end of this diploma thesis. The principal aim of the quantitative research is the quantification of the conducted observations, which will make the observations more explicit and enable us to compare the data of the various categories easily, and thereafter to make conclusions based on statistical and other relevant analysis. The advantage of the quantitative method is the reliability, accuracy and the minimal risk of ambiguity. However, quantitative methods also have several fallbacks. For instance, a small number of returned questionnaires or a low amount of the information obtained may lead to low validity of the research. (Babbie, 2012; Disman, 2011)

A questionnaire is a very good tool for gaining desired information from a large number of people in a relatively short time and with rather low costs. Also, it provides a high level of anonymity. There is no risk of interviewer’s error in comparison with an interview. However, when using a questionnaire, the researcher

has only a little control over the respondents that fill in the questions and cannot prevent the respondents from talking to each other and therefore influencing each other's responses. (Disman, 2000)

The surveys will be distributed to Eurest employees completely at random and irrespective of gender, age, position within the company or any other factors. They were distributed in Czech language because all respondents are from the Czech Republic. The questionnaires in the first survey will contain a total of 16 questions and were distributed to the respondents in paper form. The questionnaires in the second survey will be distributed to the respondents after a period of 4 months. They will contain 17 questions and will also be distributed in paper form. The questionnaires consist of two parts. The first part comprises of questions concerning gender, age, length of the stay in the company, level of education, job position and whether the person works for Eurest or for Scolarest. The second part of the questionnaire is based on the Life orientation test – revised (Scheier, Carver, Bridges, 1994) - translated into the Czech language. The first part of the questionnaire consists of multiple-choice questions. In the second part, respondents are asked to respond to the questions using a Likert-type scale and by circling the letter (A-F) that best describes their answer to the question.<sup>2</sup>

### **1.2.2 Research sample**

The respondents of this research are employees of Eurest and Scolarest in the Czech Republic of different ages, gender, education levels, who are from the different regions of the Czech Republic and work mainly in the catering operations sector. A total number of 462 respondents participated in the first survey and 368 in the second survey.

The aim of the first survey was to state the level of optimism in the company before the application of Learned Optimism and the aim of the second survey, that is going to be conducted 4 months after the first one, is to evaluate the change in the level of optimism over this period of time, state whether the application of Learned Optimism was successful, and identify how it is perceived by individual employees.

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<sup>2</sup> A= strongly disagree, F = strongly agree

The whole sample will be analyzed and the average level of optimism/pessimism will be defined for the whole company. The second testing will be carried 4 months later. These results from the second survey will be compared with the results of the first survey and similar processing of the gained data will be used to highlight any differences or trends which have occurred.

### **1.2.3 Research process**

The questionnaires were equally distributed amongst the employees of Eurest and Scolarest in the Czech Republic. 13 out of 256 restaurant units with a total number of 2616 employees were chosen from Eurest and 9 out of 46 school restaurants with a total number of 448 employees were chosen from Scolarest. Before distributing the questionnaires, a collective email was sent to the unit manager in order to inform him or her about the survey. The questionnaire itself includes basic information about the research, an introduction to the overall aims of the study and a confirmation that all respondents would remain anonymous. The first survey took place in September 2014 and the second survey was conducted in February 2015.

A “pilot” questionnaire was pretested before the first questionnaires were officially distributed. A number of 10 Eurest employees that corresponded to the key aspects of the main target group were given the questions from the questionnaire and they were asked to state their opinion about the understandability of the questions. The comments were taken into account and the final version of the questionnaire was constructed.

### **1.2.4 Limitations to the survey**

The survey followed all the ethical rules according to the American Psychological Association. (Goodwin, 2007) The questionnaire was entirely anonymous and conducted through papers. Also, the participation in the survey was completely voluntary and no one was manipulated or obliged to take part. The aim of the survey was included in the introductory text in every questionnaire and also the unit managers obtained an email in advance giving them relevant information about the whole research and its purpose. Additionally, all the participants were informed that if they were in need of any more information about the study or had any doubts whatsoever, they would be able to contact me and I would be glad to help.

## II. Theoretical part

This part is going to provide an introduction to culture as a phenomenon itself, and attempt to outline its role and its importance in today's society. The following parts will also look at the concept of corporate culture in more detail, and most notably its specific aspects and various different forms. The last chapter concerning corporate culture will be dedicated to subcultures and will seek to explore their importance as a negative influence on the whole company as much as their importance as a positive one.

Secondly, the theoretical part will deal with the topic of Positive Psychology - the main component of the study - which is applied in the corporate culture of the researched firm through Learned Optimism. It is becoming a very popular phenomenon and a greatly discussed topic between psychologists and sociologists and it also affects today's business world. Consequently, information about Positive Organization Behaviour will also be included. Finally, within the scope of this chapter, the function of the "Life orientation test" will also be introduced and then described in detail.

The last chapter of the theoretical part is dedicated to the basic information of the researched company - Euresť, spol. s r.o. - and it will concentrate on the history, operations, financial results and corporate culture of the company. Also, the basic information about consulting company Centrum Dohody will be included, as it plays a crucial part in the whole process of applying Learned Optimism.



## 1. Corporate Culture

This chapter provides an overview of the literature concerning organizational culture. As it comprises from a large variety of approaches, the purpose of this part is to create a conceptual and theoretical framework for the latter study of Euresst corporate culture in the Czech Republic, emphasizing the most relevant factors to demonstrate a system of definitions as the bases of such a research.

In the first section, a concept of culture is introduced and followed by the more complex topic organizational culture. As the corporate culture is rather complex topic, it has been divided into several subchapters in order to present it clearly and methodologically for the purposes of this diploma thesis. The following subchapters focus on the term “*culture*” itself. Then, the corporate culture, its definition, main elements and types are discussed. The last section deals with subcultures that are relevant for every company.

### 1.1 Concept of culture

As all people have different opinions, attitudes, needs and wants; it might be of certain difficulties for particular people to interact with some other people. On the other hand, there are people who understand one another better in many aspects and make closer groups. Therefore, it becomes natural for us to aggregate into groups of people with whom we have certain things in common. People of the same culture share certain values, goals, or features of behaviour that help them to connect and to reach the common objectives.

*“Cultures are not countries or customs or symbols or myths or races or ethnicities. Cultures are ways of life. They are built out of dimensions of social life and continually put to the acid test of social viability. It is these social dimensions, and their viability criteria, that give us our categories of cultures.”* (Thompson, Wildawsky, 1986)

Even though, the term *Culture* is universally well known as well as its meaning understood, it is crucial to include its official definition for the purposes of this diploma thesis. As a matter of fact, culture does not have a commonly accepted

definition by the reason of the complexity of its meaning. Some of the authors even pointed to the lack of sufficient evidence in organizational culture research. (Humble, Jackson, Thomson, 1994) However, there are several authors that created their own concepts of culture in the environment of anthropology and corporate culture. Certain approaches connected to culture were created and still play a crucial role in present research as the principal elements of the theoretical background. For the complexity of the meaning of culture, several definitions will be included:

One of the most famous specialists in a field of culture, G. Hofstede (1984) specified culture as *“the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another.”*

Another very influential scientist E. Schein (2004) defined culture as: *“a result of actions, a product of people, a shared set of norms and beliefs.”*

More recent definition of culture was declared by A. Jordan (2006) as follows: *“Culture consists of shared ideas, behaviours, and material artefacts, values, symbols, behaviours, and assumptions.”*

For the purpose of this diploma thesis, culture will be understood as shared meanings, beliefs and understandings held by a particular group or organization about its problems, practices and goals. (Sun, 2012)

## **1.2 Concept of corporate culture**

Organization studies became the centre of the attention of researchers from different sections of social sciences in the past years, which provided various definitions concerning the topic. Taking into account that the literature connected to corporate culture is measureless, only several approaches and definitions concerning corporate culture will be listed in this chapter.

The leading authors conceptualize corporate culture as shared philosophy, assumptions, ideology, expectations, opinions, norms and beliefs that implicit or explicit the organization's acceptance on decided and solve issues. (Kilmann, Saxton, Serpa, 1985)

Others, as for instance Hall (1995) describes it as programmed way of perceiving that is derived from beliefs and values.

Schein (2004) defined corporate culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved problems and has worked well enough to be considered valid and is passed on to new members as the correct way how to perceive, feel and think in relation to those problems.

Lukášová and Nový (2004) generalize the meaning of corporate culture and suggest that it can be understood as a collection of assumptions, values, attitudes and norms shared in organization, which are expressed in perceiving, thinking and behaviour of the members of organization in results of material and immaterial dispositions.

Each conceptualization of corporate culture is in certain extent different to others. Still, there are certain characteristics that can be defined and according to which the corporate culture is indicated. For instance, Tureckiová (2004) characterizes corporate culture according to the following features:

- It is a group phenomenon and it is always in some extent common for all employees.
- It is a product of employees' behaviour and thinking. Therefore, it is necessary consider the structure of employees' personalities (their characters, temperament, skills, etc.)
- It influences human consciousness and subconsciousness.
- It cannot be ordered, it is shared.
- It is a product of the past; it connects the past and the present organization with its future.
- If it exists for a long time, it is considered granted without any possibility to change it.
- It can be recognized and measurable.
- It is temporary; it develops and changes, it also perishes as a result of various impacts from the inside as well as outside of the company.

Therefore, corporate culture expresses certain character, the soul of the company, internal rules that influence thinking and behaving of employees as well as the whole

company's environment. Managers are the main creators of corporate culture; they should set an example to their subordinates. The way how they communicate with their colleagues, business partners or customers, everything will be reflected in their subordinates' behaviours and together these patterns of behaviour will create the corporate culture.

### **1.3 The main elements of corporate culture**

People in organizations interact with each other using the same patterns, themes of everyday conversations and processes of daily routines. Such aspects seem to influence the corporate culture; therefore a person may think that culture can be influenced and easily changed. However, culture is less conscious and it exists at a much deeper level. Even though, culture may not be immediately observable, identifying a set of values and behavioural patterns might help us to describe the organizational culture more effectively.

The main elements are written or non-written rules of social communication, generally used preferred values and rules of morality at the workplace, loyalty to the firm, relationship to the customer and to business partners. All those aspects compose the corporate culture of shared symbols and norms of behaviour. (Bedrnová, Nový, 1994)

This diploma thesis includes the categorization of elements according to Schein (1992, pg. 29). The main aspects that they include in their categorization are Artefacts, Basic assumptions, Values and Norms.

#### Artefacts

*“Artefacts are the visible and tangible aspects of an organisation that people hear, see or feel and which contributes to their understanding of their organisation's culture.”*(Armstrong, 2014) Many of the types of artefacts can be very revealing such as the tone and language used in written and spoken communication, the manner in which people address each other, the welcome given to visitors and dealing with outside calls. Artefacts can further be divided into material and non-material:

- a) Material artefacts: firm's products, design of the firm's building, equipment, etc.

- b) Non-material artefacts: language, habits, ceremonials, etc.(Armstrong, 2014)

### Basic assumptions

Basic assumptions are fixed images about reality that people consider to be obvious and true.

### Values

Cultural values are one of the most important factors which reflect the character of a certain culture. These values help the individuals from different culture to understand the patterns of behaviour of the unknown culture. According to Adler, *“values are beliefs in what is best or good for organisation and what should or ought to happen.”*(Armstrong, 2014)

Armstrong emphasized that each organization has many sets of values that form its unique culture. However, some values are extraordinary not only because they seem to be important for that culture’s worldview but also because they seem to organize and determine the observed behaviour.

### Norms

Norms are unwritten rules concerning behaviour at certain situations accepted by an individual or a group of employees (conversation with clients/between employees, the type of language, dress code, and many others). (Armstrong, 2014)

## **1.4 Main types of corporate cultures**

There are many ways how to define and divide corporate cultures into “types”. The issue is that cultures can differ from one organization to another. Fortunately, certain commonalities between different organizations exist and several researches<sup>3</sup> developed models how to describe various indicators of corporate cultures.

Within this diploma thesis a typology of corporate culture by Ch. Handy (Lukášová, Nový, 2004) will be introduced in more details. He identifies four main types of corporate culture: Power, Role, Task and Person culture.

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<sup>3</sup> For instance Hofstede, Schein, Handy, and others.

- 1) **Power culture** includes a centralised system of administration where one or several selected individuals are in a control of the whole organization. It is usual for small or new organizations. Written rules are not very common, the main tasks and regulations are given by the key persons.
- 2) **Role culture** encourages specialization in a form of marketing, production, finance, etc. Where all these departments perform certain rules and tasks.
- 3) **Task culture** represents project based system where employees work together in order to perform task or achieve a certain goal and dismiss after the task or a project is completed.
- 4) **Person culture** can be described as a group of people of similar mind that are working together to achieve a goal. However, such an organization is not very common.

These models of different “types” of cultures are in general useful for identifying the real type or types of a certain organizational culture and it helps to understand the whole company.

### 1.5 Subcultures

Concerning organizational culture, we usually refer to the dominant culture – the main values, beliefs and goals that are shared by all the organization’s members. However, in reality organizations combine also of subcultures that are located throughout various departments, branches regions or occupational groups. For instance, people working on the marketing floor may emphasize innovativeness, whereas administrative department will focus on details. Subcultures may also arise from the personal characteristics of an employee and a manager is popular and his or her colleagues easily adopt his or her attitudes.

Repeatedly, regarding the previous topics, there is no single definition of an organizational subculture; most approaches to subcultures have common distinctions and features. In sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, a subculture is described as a group of people with a culture (whether distinct or hidden) which differentiates them from the larger culture to which they belong. (Boisnier, Chatman,

2012) Based upon this explanation, it becomes more understandable that usually every larger organization comprises of several subcultures. As mentioned above, subcultures influence the whole organization, including the individual employees as well as its main corporate culture.

Some of the subcultures support the dominant culture as they share the same values and beliefs. However, there are also subcultures that oppose the organization's core values. Those subcultures are called "countercultures" and particularly these types create conflicts among employees. Kerr defines it as "*shared values and beliefs that are in direct opposition to the values of the broader organizational culture.*" (Kerr, Slocum, 2005)

Even though countercultures usually imply problems, they may also serve two important functions. First, they maintain the organization's standards of performance and ethical behaviour. The employees who hold countercultural values are an important source of surveillance. Such groups encourage constructive controversy and more creative thinking about how the organization should interact with its environment.

Subcultures also help employees to not only blindly follow one set of values and, thereby, help the company to abide by society's ethical values. In fact, they bring the diversity to an organization and provide different points of view on various situations. The latter function of subcultures is that they are the producing grounds for new values that keep the firm aligned with the needs of customers, suppliers and the whole society. Firms eventually need to change their dominant values and use ones that are appropriate for the changing environment. If subcultures are suppressed, the organization may need longer to discover and implement values connected with the emerging environment. (Boisnier, Chatman, 2012)

To conclude, the corporate culture is a product of all its components: employees their behaviour and thinking; the company's successes as well as losses. It comprises of the past and also creates future. Even though, it exists through individuals, it is a group phenomenon. It influences the inner functioning of the company as well as the whole company's strategy and therefore its external functioning. It is not a stable phenomenon; it develops and changes over time again based on the human inputs and the influences from the environment. It usually does

not comprise only of one dominant culture, however, it is necessary to consider all the subcultures that may exist in one company. It is certainly important during processes of changing or applying certain innovations within the culture.



## 2. Positive psychology

Positive psychology together with all its components has nowadays become a very comprehensive and popular scientific field. Dr. Martin Seligman is a widely known cognitive psychologist who spent many years on studying the idea of positive psychology and is considered to be one of the founders of the positive psychology. Even though, the term itself was firstly coined by A. Maslow in 1950', it was officially accepted long time after, when Seligman in his 1998 APA Presidential address officially introduced Positive Psychology to the American Psychological Association. (Froh, 2004) He defined it as *“the science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions.”* (Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

This field was created as a contrast to the “classical” psychology that was formerly focusing on the negative. Seligman accredits that to historical development and to the whole society's orientation. (Seligman, 2011) In seeking the illusive solutions of curing mental diseases and dysfunctional behaviour, both practicing and academic psychologists had almost completely ignored human strengths and developing and helping healthy, productive people reach even higher levels of functioning. (Nelson, Cooper, 2007) He highlights the main aim of the whole positive psychology, meaning that scientists should focus on the reminding of positive aspects of human lives, while not forgetting or ignoring the negative facets.

Positive psychology is divided into 3 following main areas subsections:

- 1) The study of positive emotions, positive individual experience and well-being. This includes understanding the positive feelings and studying the internal peace with the past, experiencing happiness in the present and hope and optimism in the future.
- 2) The study of positive features, individual characteristics as for instance grace, strengths (emotional capacity for love, forgiveness, mercy, courage, creativity, integrity, etc.) This area also further comprises of the study of intelligence and talent.
- 3) The study of positive institutions; may include the studies of strong and functional institutions that use positive experience and produce positive emotions. It is interested in empowerment of institutions as equity, responsibility, ethics, tolerance, teamwork, care. (Seligman, 2002)

A great number of psychologists and scientists as well as the non-fiction writers have been lately focusing on the field of positive psychology. Researches prove that such studies are very beneficial, as the outcomes from it enable us to predict for instance different types of human behaviour during different life situations, emotional reactions and tendencies with which we can manage the stressful conditions.

Clearly, many researches have recently taken place in the field of positive psychology. However, the following paragraph will include the studies concerning optimism as it is essential for the later parts. Carver and Scheier's studies regarding optimism has become very popular, they stress the fact that optimists cope easily with illnesses such as cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer disease and others. (Seligman, 2006) There are many authors focusing on the positive effects of optimism who mention the fact that optimists deal with stressful situations more easily. (Carver, Scheier, Segerstrom, 2010) Peterson and Bossio (1991) see optimism as a collection of beliefs that lead a person to an action, according to them optimism is a source of action, that leads a person to make a certain change. The various viewpoints on optimisms suggest that optimists have easier life as it helps them get through certain obstacles more quickly. Also, we may assumed that optimists believe the goal they set up, is even through many difficulties achievable and they simply do not give up despite of the possible inconveniences. They are more persistent and patient. (Carver, Scheier, Segerstrom, 2010)

However, there are as several authors that have been criticizing this new approach, referring to certain negative aspects that this field includes. B. Held criticizes the leading figures of positive psychology mainly for the dominancy of the new flow and its separation from the humanistic psychology. She refers to the "*wrong kind of positivity*" which she calls "unscientific psychology" that Seligman aims to attain in humanistic psychology. Held also warns of the risk of the "blind or unrealistic optimism." As a reaction to Seligman's claim "*extreme optimists may be more at risk for depressive symptoms than pessimists when faced with negative life events*", she refers to Ch. Peterson who stated that people should be optimistic about the future situations that can be changed by positive thinking, however, not contrarily. (Held, 2004)

Seligman explains that the positive psychology along with optimism does not deny the existence of problems or simply avoids the sadness and anger. Conversely, the negative emotions are part of our emotional lives and we cannot just block or remove them. The main principle of positive psychology is to recall the positive aspects of our lives and highlight the importance of them while not forgetting about the difficulties and shaded facets. He even suggests that in situations when the future is uncertain it is better to choose the pessimistic approach. The optimistic attitude is more suitable for a person when he or she wants to achieve certain things, establish positive emotions or support enthusiasm. (Křivohlavý, 2012)

## 2.1 Concept of optimism

*“Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.”*

Victor Hugo

According to Seligman, the concepts of optimism and pessimism are connected to the person's future expectations. Such theories suggest a basis for some of the situations in which optimism and pessimism affect people's behaviour and emotions. The term *pessimism* originates from the Latin "*pessimus*", meaning "worst", is defined as the tendency to see the worst aspect of things and situations or believe that the worst will happen. (Oxford University Dictionary, 2014) Likewise, the term Optimism also comes from Latin, particularly from word "*optimus*", which means "best". An optimistic person is the one who always looks for the best in any situation and expects good things to happen to him and to others. Optimism is the tendency to believe, expect and hope that all obstacles in life are temporary and will soon disappear. Optimists also believe that everything, both good and bad that happens have a reason and they also expect a positive outcome of every situation. Even if something negative happens, for instance a person loses a job, gets a divorce etc., an optimist sees it as something temporary; something that was meant to happen, so the person could change certain things in his life. (Carver, Scheier, Segerstrom, 2010)

### **Optimism and age**

A general opinion that young people are more optimistic than elderly people is considered a common sense. (Balcha, 2014) To support this statement many analysis concerning people's satisfaction of their life took place in different countries. For

instance, according to a study from 2012 that was conducted in Great Britain, young people are on average more satisfied with their lives and very optimistic about next years; 80 –85% stated a medium to high level of optimism. (Potter-Collins, 2012)

### **Optimism and gender**

According to the latest statistics, it is scientifically proven that women in general, more pessimistic compare to men, 29% compared to 17%.(Mayo Clinic, 2014) One of Seligman’s theories concerning the women’s higher level of pessimism summarizes differences between men and women concerning optimism and it is closely related to the explanatory style that will be mentioned in the following paragraphs. Men are optimistic about work; where they see a failure as temporary. On the other hand, they are pessimistic about interpersonal failures, which they perceive as permanent. Women are the opposite: they are optimistic about social setbacks but pessimistic about achievements. (Seligman, 2004)

Certainly, there is a difference between men and women in relation to optimism and pessimism. Therefore, it should be taken into account while applying these concepts or while conducting researches.

## **2.2 Positive Organizational Behaviour**

We are now experiencing the change of economy based on money when people are making decisions based on what is financially beneficial for them to the “satisfaction economy” when people are choosing what satisfies them and makes them happy. Human basic needs are, at least in developed countries, satisfied. Therefore, it is natural that people want more. They aim for growth, self-actualization and appreciation which is also reflected in the business world. (Peterson, Seligman, 2004)

Some of the positive approaches to work can already be seen amongst many companies. For instance, we can include Benchmarking, which is based on the following good examples that work efficiently. Also management is concentrating on company’s and employees strengths as 360° feedback, work-life balance programs and others. (Lopez, Snyder, 2003)

F. Luthans was the initiator of the positive approach in organizational behaviour. He started his research in relation to the already mentioned Seligman's strategy. He applied the principals of positive psychology into the workplace. By researching positive organizational behaviour, which focuses on empowering human strength at work rather than on negative weaknesses that the organizations have; the positive organizational behaviour (POB) has emerged.

The principal of positive organizational behaviour is based on the concept of a satisfied employee who is fond of his job; she or he is looking forward to it, effectively uses the working time, performs well, cooperates with other colleagues and customers and actively looks for improvements. (Slezáčková, 2012) The authors that are using POB are moving from observing the negative concepts of organizational behaviour based on inefficiency of leader, stress, non-functional corporate culture or conflicts to positive aspects mentioned above. The aim of those authors who are following POB is to concentrate on positive features and strong aspects of human resources that can be measured and developed. They concentrate on the positive facets that are manageable and therefore they improve the employees' performance. (Bakker, Wilmar, 2008)

POB has, however, been criticized by several authors that have mentioned the subjective view on the reality, concentrating only on the positive aspects and distancing from the negative. Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) argue that POB approach only supports the traditional negative model by focusing on positive facets. However, it is not focusing only on the positivism, but includes the complex view of positive and negative facet in the concept of an organization.

### 2.3 Learned Optimism

*"I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will."*

Antonio Gramsci, Italian political theorist

According to Seligman optimism does not directly mean positive thinking. He explains: *"Pessimists can in fact learn to be optimists by learning a new set of cognitive skills."* (Seligman, 2006)

### 2.3.1 History of Learned Optimism

It has been stated that the concept of Learned Optimism is going to be the key factor of the research in the practical part. Therefore, this chapter will be dedicated to the process of learning optimism by human individuals and also some opinions of other competent psychologists and scientists. The whole calibrated process of Learned Optimism used within the Eures company will be describe and explained in details in the practical part of the thesis.

Until 1960' the existing explanation of human actions was that people were pushed by their internal needs or pulled by the external factors. However, the details of the pushes and pulls depended on particular theory that was currently the mainstream. The Freudians were explaining that the unresolved childhood behaviour had impact on the adult actions. The adherents of Skinner held the theory that human behaviour was repeated only when it was reinforced from outside. The ethnologists proclaimed that behaviour was a result of fixed action patterns predetermined by our genes. The last of the most famous theories concerning human actions was declared by the behaviourist followers of C. Hull and who declared that we are pushed into action by the demand to lower external drives and satisfy biological needs. (Balcha, 2014) Noticeably, all these theories agreed on the same, basic proposition of external and internal drives.

Starting around the year 1965 the common explanation began to change entirely. A person's environment and the external forces became considerably less important affecting one's behaviour. Several new theories emphasizing the importance of person's thinking and self-direction were composed from investigators as Chomski, Piaget, Neisser and others. They emphasised rather the self-direction than the external forces influencing human behaviour. It was then at the beginning of 1970' when the dominate theories in psychology were slowly shifting the focus from the power of the environment to the individual preference, decision, option and helplessness. (Seligman, 2006)

Seligman is considered to be the leading figure of the whole approach Learned Optimism. His research and studies led to the theory that became one of the most significant findings in psychology of the last twenty years and that is the fact that humans are able to choose the way they think. Nevertheless, it is necessary to

state that Seligman does not consider optimism a cure for all the life difficulties. He sees it more as a helpful tool that has a great potential for dealing with difficult life situations and everyday tasks. Goleman (2013) views Optimism as the attitude that strengthens one's endurance against hopelessness, depression and apathy in difficult life situations. Optimism can be considered as an emotionally intelligent attitude to life, which however, not every person possesses.

The very first of Seligman's experiments on such topic included mild electric shocks on dogs. He was trying to prove that dogs would give up trying to escape if they once realize that anything they may do will not change the future, more concretely – it would not stop the shocks coming. After 20 years of his research, one of his students suggested to try the experiments with people.<sup>4</sup> The findings from his were study very similar to Seligman's figures from the experiments with dogs. After several years of experiments, they came to conclusion that "*helplessness is not an inborn trait, it could be acquired.*" (Seligman, 2006)

Seligman and his colleagues started to concentrate on the very few individuals that did not become helpless; they were studying the similarities of their personalities comparing them with the people that became helpless right after few attempts. Seligman tried to convert this question into a real life. He was now studying what helps people to overcome life difficult situations such as divorce, loss of a job, etc. and rebound. He found out that these people do not possess any inborn trait of greatness; they have only learned a new way of examining the things that are happening to them. He discovered that the capability of certain people to recover from evident defeat is not a consequence of the human will. These people have developed a way of explaining the events that does not picture the defeat as persistent or influencing their basic value. Nor is optimism something that people can or cannot possess; it includes a set of abilities that a person can learn. (Seligman, 2006)

### **2.3.2 Positive explanatory style**

In the late 1960' started research on why some people achieve high goals and other people do not. After several years, Seligman together with other scientist discovered that it is highly connected to the way people think; how they perceive the causes of

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<sup>4</sup> Loud, unpleasant noise was used instead of electric shocks.

their successes and losses. Aforementioned “a way of explaining events” leads to Seligman explanation of the way people accept certain situations and how they explain such situations to themselves. This concept called “Positive explanatory style” became very quickly popular. (Seligman, 2006)

This approach is based on the hypothesis that pessimistic people have tendency to think that all the misfortune in their life is only their mistake. They believe that the cause of their specific misery is permanent (lack of intelligence, no talent, ugliness, etc.). Therefore, they do not try to change it. Long it was considered in psychology as “normal“. Seligman was, however, the first who said that it does not have to be this way. He explained that people can learn a different way of explaining setbacks to them the “explanatory style”. Such a way of explaining will protect human from depression.

Seligman describes it as a habit of thought, learned in childhood and youth. Person’s explanatory style develops directly from the view how the person sees his or her place in the world – if the person thinks he/she is valuable and deserves appropriate things or he/she is hopeless and worthless. This division also indicates whether the person is a pessimist or an optimist. Seligman, in his book *Learned Optimism*, states 3 dimensions to a person explanatory style:

1) *Permanence*

2) *Pervasiveness*

3) *Personalization*

The below mentioned division describes the main differentiations between the optimistic and the pessimistic explanatory style in relation to these dimensions:

**Permanence: Permanent vs. Temporary**

People who give up more easily than others think that the sources of bad events that happened to them are persistent. The negative situations in their lives will persist. People who are optimistic (who resist helplessness) believe that the bad events are only temporary and will end soon.



### **BAD EVENTS:**

#### Pessimistic (Permanent):

- *“Diets never work.”*
- *“You never talk to me.”*

#### Optimistic (Temporary)

- *“Diets don’t work when you eat out”*
- *“You have not talked to me lately.”*

### **GOOD EVENTS:**

#### Pessimistic (Temporary):

- *“It is my lucky day.”*
- *“I tried hard.”*

#### Optimistic (Permanent):

- *“I am always lucky.”*
- *“I am talented.”*

People with permanent pessimistic explanatory style relate bad events to expressions as “never”, “always”; as on the other hand, people who describe bad events with expressions as “lately”, “sometimes” tend to have optimistic explanatory style.

### **Pervasiveness: Specific vs. Universal**

This dimension relates to space. Certainly all the people have been facing difficulties at least once in a lifetime. This dimension shows that even if some people have serious problems in one aspect of their life (for instance work, love, family, etc.), they can function in the other spheres of their lives without any negative affection. However, there are obviously people whose problems affect all the aspects of their lives.

### **BAD EVENTS:**

#### Pessimistic (universal)

- *“All teachers are unfair.”*
- *“School lessons are useless.”*

#### Optimistic (specific)

- *“I am smart at math.”*
- *“I was charming to her.”*

### **GOOD EVENTS:**

#### Pessimistic (Specific):

- *“Professor Seligman is unfair.”*
- *“This lesson is useless.”*

#### Optimistic (universal):

- *“I am smart”*
- *“I was charming.”*

Universal explanations create helplessness in many situations whether specific explanations produce helplessness only in the problematic sphere. *The pessimistic people believe that bad events have universal causes and that good events are caused by specific factors.* (Seligman, 2006) The last of the aspects of explanatory style is personalisation.

### **Personalization: Internal vs. External**

This aspect suggests that a person believes the causes of the event are “internal” i.e. caused by the person, or "external" i.e. caused by somebody or something else. Low self-esteem commonly originates from an internal explanatory style for bad events.

#### **BAD EVENTS:**

##### Internal (Low self-esteem):

- “*I’m insecure.*”
- “*I have no talent at poker.*”

##### External (High self-esteem):

- “*I grew up to poverty.*”
- “*I have no luck in poker.*”

#### **GOOD EVENTS:**

##### Internal (Optimistic):

- “*A stroke of luck...*”
- “*My teammate’s skill...*”

##### External (Pessimistic):

- “*I can take advantage of luck.*”
- “*My skill...*”

The optimistic style of explaining good events works like the opposite that was used for bad events. People who think they are the causes of the good things like themselves more than people who believe that the good events that happened to them are only consequences of certain circumstances or results of other people. (Seligman, 2006)

**Table 1: Summary of 3 dimensions concerning explanatory style**

	<b>Bad events</b>	<b>Good events</b>
<b>Optimistic explanatory style:</b>	Bad events are temporary	Good events are permanent
	Bad events are specific	Good events are universal
	Blame other people/ Circumstances for bad event	Credit themselves for good events
<b>Pessimistic explanatory style:</b>	Bad events are permanent	Good events are temporary
	Bad events are universal	Good events are specific
	Blame themselves for bad events	Credit other people/ circumstances for good events

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015 based on "Optimism: How to expect best possible outcomes" (Langley, 2013)*

### **2.3.3 Learned Optimism in workplace**

This theoretical part will only include the methods that are significant for the practical section of the diploma thesis and that are adapted during the trainings into the Eurest corporate culture. The essential is the Life Orientation test that will be described in more details in further chapter. This test determines whether the person inclines more to the optimistic or to the pessimistic pole. Once a person knows his or her score on the scale between the poles, he can more easily understand and implement the following processes and learning practices. Dr. Seligman in his book *Learned Optimism* offers several methods and guidelines how one can become more optimistic person; how to change a person's way of thinking.

One of the most important methods, that is included in Seligman's book, is called "A, B, C, D, E change model". The main idea of this method is the realization that your thoughts can generate your feelings. Therefore, if you learn how to actively control your thoughts, you can also control your feelings. (Seligman, 2006) 'ABC' refers to how we reply negatively to success or adversity, while "DE" refers to how we are able to rethink the pessimistic reaction into an optimistic reply.

The letters are determined below:

*A = Adversity*; anything that could make a person angry (high bill, baby crying, etc.).

*B= Beliefs*; interpretation of the adversity (Thoughts)

*C= Consequences*; person's feelings about the adversity (Feelings)

*D= Disputation*; Distraction from negative thoughts by thinking about something else and then disputing the negative thoughts

*E= Energization*; The realization of the new consequences (feelings, actions) that could arise from a different, more optimistic explanation or set of beliefs

### 2.3.4 McGregor's theory of X and Y

Another theory that was used within Euresst to help employees learn how to obtain more positive attitude towards different work and life situations is Mc. Gregor's X and Y theory concerning motivation.

It is considered one of the most famous theories concerning motivation in the field of management was proposed by an American social psychologist Douglas McGregor in 1960. This method still represents a basic principle from which a positive management style can develop. McGregor's theory is still widely used as a tool for improving organizational culture and development.

The theory indicates that there are two crucial approaches how to manage people in an organization. A great amount of managers incline towards theory X and they usually have poor results. Other managers use theory Y, which creates better performance and outputs and also allows people to develop and grow. (Silverthorne, 2005)

The theory X and theory Y represents the different assumptions that managers hold about functioning of an organization. Theory X describes a type of manager affected by negative aspects of classical movement. On the other hand, theory Y defines a manager who adheres to the precepts of human relations movement. (Miller, 2014)

### **Differences of the theories**

Theory X; managers believe that employees:	Theory Y; managers believe that employees:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not like work</li><li>• Have to be directed if they do work they do not like</li><li>• Need to be controlled</li><li>• Need incentive schemes</li><li>• Need to be pushed in order to be more productive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have good ideas</li><li>• Want to be involved</li><li>• Can make decisions</li><li>• Will find work more interesting if they have more responsibility</li><li>• Share ownership tasks</li></ul>

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015, based on "The importance of effective management: People-focused management" (Chartered management institute, 2014)*

Before the Great Depression in 2008 took place, optimism was natural in business world; everyone was expecting the growth of the economy as well as the continual improvement of standards of living. However, since 2008 optimism became very uncertain. (Asbury, 2014)

During the times of economic instability and uncertainty, huge importance was given to the idea that organizations should develop cultures based on principles of integrity, trust, respect and ethics. The companies bring out the best in their employees by concentrating on positive aspects as, hope, strengths, self-confidence, self-motivation, joy and resilience. Organizations create conditions for their associates to grow; in order to connect both the economic and human development. (Froman, 2010)

According to the research by Porath and Spreitzer from 2012, manual workers with positive attitude to work have by 27% better results than less optimistic workers. When optimistic people encounter difficulties, they continue instead of giving up. (Lightman, 2005) Optimistic managers that apply positive leadership add to the engagement and productivity of their employees. (Nelson, Cooper, 2007)

Therefore having optimistic people in a company is considered a great competitive advantage. It has also been positively correlated with goal-setting and achievement and negatively with goal abandonment and resignation to fate. Other studies, statistics and sources of literature concerning better performance related to

optimism prove that positivism in the workplace is a very popular topic. (Centrum Dohody, 2014)

Positive approach in organizational behaviour is defined as *“the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace.”* (Luthans, 2002a) F. Luthans (2002a) pioneered the positive approach in organizational behaviour by mapping out positive organizational behaviour (POB). The main idea of this concept is concentrating on building human strengths at work rather than just managing weaknesses.

Another author that focuses on positive behaviour at work is K. Cameron and his colleagues (2003). He is considered the founder of the emerging area of positive organizational scholarship (POS). The basic concept is the studying of what elements are positive in organizations; it also includes an emphasis on identifying human strengths, creating resilience and recovery, and help in developing of individuals.

There are many other authors that are contributing to the field of positive psychology, particularly in organizations. As the practical part is dedicated to the study of organizational behaviour in Eurest, where mostly concepts of Dr. Seligman were used to change their culture for optimistic, thereafter the following part will mainly concentrate on explaining his techniques used within the company.

For his study concerning optimism in the workplace Seligman chose life insurance company Metlife. He suggested that during the recruitment they should hire applicants who score well for optimism and explanatory style. The result was that the agents hired before the optimism test during recruitment did worse by 20% than the new agents and in the second year by 57%.

Seligman mentions several factors that enhance positive behaviour in an organization:

- 1) The leader has to follow the positive approach; he gives a pattern of behaving in different situations to all his colleagues.
- 2) Giving feedback that supports the positive explanatory style

- 3) Hiring optimists – if optimists are the majority they influence the rest (pessimists)
- 4) Supporting the collective optimistic approach - regular optimistic meetings

He concludes his research with statements that pessimism promotes depression and makes inactivity in relation to misfortune. Positive leadership correlates with employee engagement and working, and further flourish the value of optimism in the workplace. (Seligman, 2006)

Positive psychology seems to be a very important field influencing today's whole society as well as the work environment. Profit, employees' efficiency and preventing problems or situations that might cause the decrease of profit or negatively influence employees' performance are one of the main aims of every company. These issues and their solutions are the subjects that matter also in the field of positive psychology. As there are some approaches of positive psychology that are already implemented in business world, there are also many that are just starting as for instance Learned Optimism. Still, many researches that have taken place and are only supporting the fact that optimism and optimistic behaviour at work is beneficial.

### **2.3.5 Life orientation test**

In order to determine one's attitude to optimism or pessimism, Carver and Scheier introduced the method known as Life orientation test. The measure evaluates individual differences in generalized optimism vs. pessimism. Such a method, and its successor the LOT-R<sup>5</sup>, have been used in a good deal of researches on the behavioural and physical health consequences of such a personality parameter. Even though the first version of the test was widely used, it had certain issues. One of the most significant problems was the fact that its original items did not all focus absolutely on positive or negative expectations for the future. They dealt more with coping style. The test was, however criticized because, most importantly, its original items did not all focus as explicitly on expectations for the future as theory established. Further, it became evident that some of the items asked about things different from expectations per person. Therefore, it was later in 1994 revised into a shorter form by Scheier. The second version consists of 10 questions (6 real

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<sup>5</sup> Life orientation test revised.

questions and 4 fillers) developed to assess individual differences in generalized optimism versus pessimism. (see appendix 7) This measure has been used in a great deal of studies and on the behavioural and health consequences of the Optimism/Pessimism dimension. (Scheier, Carver, Bridges, 1994) The LOT-R is a very brief measure that is easy to use and being used in scientific as well as in commercial projects, in which many measures are being used.



### **III. Analytical part**

Approaches based on positive psychology have relatively recently entered work field and they are still in development. However, some of them are already being widely used, as mentioned in the chapter positive psychology and are rather successful. Such an application of Learned Optimism concept into corporate culture in the scope that Euresť is applying is considered to be the first one in the Czech Republic. (Centrum Dohody, 2014) They aim to lower the rate of stress that the employees have to face, empower employees' self-confidence and also to set up friendly work atmosphere, which will reflect professional and friendly relationship between Euresť employee and a customer. They have used direct and indirect training lessons as well as posters and communication leaflets in order to implement optimism into their corporate culture.

The main aim of the whole research is to describe the application of the whole concept of implementing Learned Optimism in a workplace as well as to define the level of optimism within Euresť and to capture changes in between the particular categories. This part will be divided into two main chapters; the first section will include the description of the process of applying Optimism into Euresť culture and the second main part will deal with the research itself and the analysis of the data obtained from the surveys.

### 3. Eurest

The company Eurest was established in 1970 in France. Ever since its foundation it has been dealing with catering for business and workplace industry clients. The business has quickly expanded into other European states such as France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy and others. All the Eurest branches in each of the listed states are on the same level, none of them being superior; each of them is a partner to the others. Eurest spread to Czechoslovakia in 1991. In the same year the company also became a member of ACCOR group<sup>6</sup> and they joined Compass Group PLC, the biggest contract food service company in worldwide food industry in 1995.

#### 3.1 Compass Group PLC

For the purpose of this thesis it is essential to include information about Compass Group PLC as the controlling company of Eurest. Compass Group is passing all the important innovative projects and processes to its subsidiary companies therefore it plays a key role in Eurest image, operations and management.

Compass Group PLC is British Contract Foodservice and Support Service Company, founded in 1941 by Jack Bateman. Compass Group concentrated their business firstly in the United Kingdom, USA and in Scandinavian countries. Subsequently, they expanded into other countries.

Nowadays, Compass Group is the largest contract food-service company in the world and serves more than 4 billion meals a year in different areas of contract food services (offices, factories, schools, hotels etc.). It currently operates in more than 55 countries. Compass Group owns over 40 000 restaurants, employs 507 000 employees and the revenue for the last fiscal year is approximately 17 milliard GBP. (Compass Annual Report, 2013)

They provide services in the following areas:

- Corporate businesses, education, healthcare, contract food services
- Catering for army (NATO, OSN)

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<sup>6</sup>Accor, the world's leading hotel operator and market leader in Europe, operates in 92 countries with more than 3,500 hotels.

- Catering at airports, railway stations, fun parks, sports centres, congress centres, etc.
- Catering for special events (US open, the Academy Awards®, Wimbledon, etc.)

Eurest is a very important member of Compass Group; however, they include other companies too. Some of other subsidiary companies that belong to Compass Group are:

- Chartwells
- Eurest Support Services (ESS)
- Medirest (SSP)
- Levy Restaurants

### **3.2 Eurest in the Czech Republic**

Eurest started its operation in Czechoslovakia in 1991 and since then it has been a leader on Czech food market, that mainly offers contract food services for businesses, health and education sector. It also offers canteen service, party service, beverage vending machines, sale of supplements and other smaller catering services during conferences, seminars, business sessions and other meetings. Besides the aforementioned, the company also offers solutions for concepts of catering appliances, technological and consulting services.

The only stockholder of Eurest is the above mentioned Compass Group company that owns 100% of the paid-in capital which is approximately 52 000 000 CZK. The company's profit for the fiscal year 2014<sup>7</sup> was approximately 173 458 000 CZK. The net revenue was divided up to 90% for the annual share of the company's earnings. The rest of the retained earnings are used for the company's development.

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<sup>7</sup>1<sup>st</sup> of October 2013 – 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

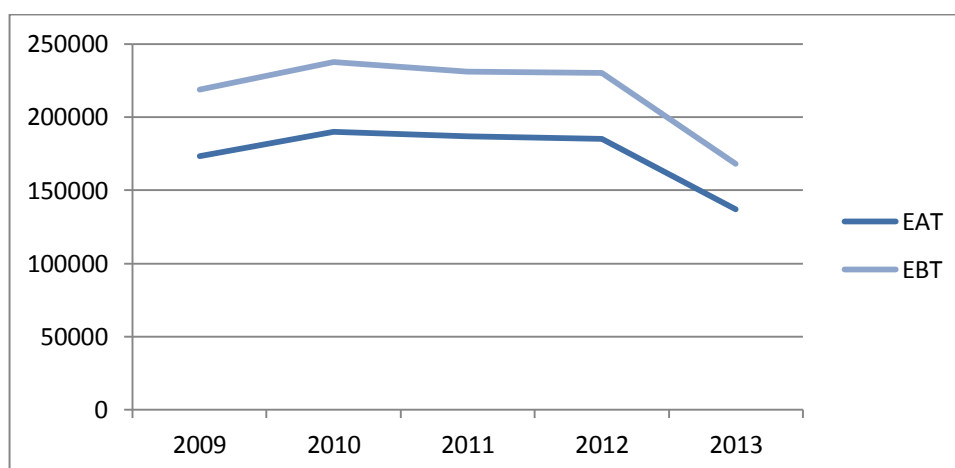
**Table 2: Development of company's earnings – Eurest**

(in thousands CZK)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>EBIT</b>	217 855	239 093	232 315	236 872	175 339
<b>Profit</b>	907	-263	-1 238	-6 679	-7 520
<b>EAT</b>	173 458	189 998	186 904	185 153	136 883
<b>EBT</b>	218 762	237 830	231 077	230 193	168 019

*Source: Author's own creation, based on Obchodní rejstřík, 2015*

The above table shows the overview of Eurest economy results for the past 5 years. From both, the table above and the graph below, it is visible that the increase in year 2010 was then followed by the slow continual decrease from the year 2010 until 2012 when a considerable increase occurred and levelled the profit to the lowest point in the presented five years term

**Graph 1: Development of the company's earnings (thousands CZK) – Eurest 2009-2013**



*Source: Author's own creation, based on Obchodní rejstřík, 2015*

**Major competitors:**

- 1) Sodexo
- 2) Aramark
- 3) GTH
- 4) Others

### **3.2.1 Organizational structure in Eurest**

Ing. Miroslav Šolc is the chief executive officer of Euresť and also he is a member of Europe & Japan Executive Committee. Hereinafter, the top management of Euresť in the Czech Republic is divided into several fields as it is stated in the organizational chart (see appendix 1).

### **3.2.2 Company's shared values**

After the Euresť joined Compass Group, in 1995, the new logo of Euresť was introduced to represent all the qualities and features of the Euresť brand. "E" stand for Euresť, smile (human factor), food on a plate, smell, motion and openness. It includes two colours red (vitality, energy, enthusiasm), blue (professionalism, quality, reliance) - see appendix 1, picture 1.

### **Company's newspaper**

"The Kaleidoskop newspaper" is issued every three months. The main aim is to promote the company amongst their clients and everyday customers. It also aims to strengthen the company's identity, corporate culture as well as the inner communication within the company.

### **Motto of the month**

The main principal of "motto of the month" is the systematic work with the workers, as the manager is trying to forward the message to his or her subordinates. The unit manager should organize brief five minutes meeting with the staff each working they in order to clarify the idea of the current motto and therefore, the actual aim of the whole team.

The project is in a form of posters that are placed on the walls of each Euresť restaurant. The text and the colour of the posters are changed every month.

The vision of the company is to be a world-class provider of contract foodservice and support services. They aim to have great teams, provide great service and deliver great results. They want to achieve that by full employees' commitment, delivering superior service in the most efficient way, for the shared benefit of their customers, shareholders and employees. They perceive business as

a contribution to cultivating economic environment in the Czech Republic. In addition to traditional approaches to business, Eurest subscribes to fair competition with educative elements and impact on the society as a whole. The top objective of the company's strategy is to become the most desirable catering company in the Czech Republic, they believe to reach it through the superior quality of their catering services. The main values that all the employees of Eurest should employ are:



Openness Trust  
and Integrity

**Openness, Trust and Integrity:** The highest ethical and professional standards at all times, relationships to be based on honesty, respect, fairness and a commitment to open dialogue and transparency



Passion for  
Quality

**Passion for Quality:** Passion for delivering superior food and service and taking pride in achieving this, replicate success, learning from mistakes and developing ideas, innovation and practices that improve their position in the market.



Win through  
teamwork

**Win through Teamwork:** They encourage individual ownership, but work as a team. They also value the expertise, individuality and contribution of all colleagues, working in support of each other and readily sharing good practice in pursuit of shared goals.



Responsibility

**Responsibility:** They take responsibility for their actions, individually and as a team. Continually they look to make a positive contribution to health and wellbeing of customers and the working communities.



Can-do

**Can-do:** They take a positive and commercially aware “can-do” approach to the opportunities and challenges they face.

### **3.2.3 Scolarest – zařízení školního stravování spol. s r.o**

Scolarest specializes in food and management services within the education sector. They supply catering services in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools as well as in universities. Through the international integration they share knowledge and experience from over 35 countries in which Scolarest is functioning. Scolarest in the Czech Republic has been functioning since 2012. It is currently operating in 200 schools and employs approximately 400 people.

### **3.2.4 The training program in Eurest**

One of the core values of Eurest is the importance of their employees, particularly their education, development, and trainings in different fields. The trainings they provide belong to the most important factors that affect and form Eurest corporate culture.

They prepare various training programs for each fiscal year that includes training their employees in different areas (managerial skills, controlling, hygiene, employment relationship, software, language, etc.)

*The training program Eurest CZ* includes a complete overview of all the trainings, seminars, lectures and other events that are connected to education and are being systematically implemented in the current fiscal year in order to increase the professional development and quality service.

### **An internal trainings system for units**

This method of educating the employees is based on trainings of employees of individual units according to the current topic. The main idea of this process is the systematic education of all Eurest employees. A team of 51 internal coaches is comprised of unit managers and headquarters employees, who each month provide training at different units according to the current topic (teamwork, quality, hygiene, optimism, etc.)

### **3.2.5 “Optimistic Company” training**

Since 2013 Eurest has been trying to change the overall company’s thinking to more positive pole of perspective. This chapter will include the description and the

overview of the process of adapting optimism to the corporate culture and influencing the employees' attitudes to work, thinking and thus the whole functioning of the company.

In order to change the whole company's beliefs and attitudes to everyday life, they decided to train all their employees, starting with the top management and later on passing the new knowledge and skills to the unit managers and then to the rest of the company. The main idea is that the managers on the higher posts absorb the important information and then they can easily pass it onto their subordinates during the regular meetings, everyday conversations and operations.

In connection to the theoretical part, a person is developing his or her optimistic/pessimistic explanatory style during the childhood or adolescence as a consequence to the feedback the person gets from the environment and as a relation to the behavioural patterns he or she observes in the environment. In later period of life, a personality of a partner, colleagues or the boss is playing a crucial role concerning this topic. Similarly, there is a certain connection between the corporate culture and the behaviour of top management. Therefore, the managers play a very important role in this situation; they can strengthen the optimistic corporate culture by:

- own optimistic attitude from which other employees learn,
- giving the feedback that empowers the optimistic explanatory style
- managing regular staff meetings in a positive way
- hiring optimistic people and creating more positive environment

In order to being able to pass the optimistic attitude to his or her subordinates, the manager must learn:

- see and hope for better future
- concentrate on positive events when negative situations occur
- being able to learn and improve from failures
- believe in people
- being open to the active approach of self-change (Centrum Dohody, 2014)



Also the feedback must be given in a way so the wrong behaviour could be seen as temporary and therefore changeable. On the other hand, praise should be expressed in a way so the employees would perceive their strengths as permanent.

The core of optimistic team that is being adapted in Eurest corporate culture is based on four pillars.

- 1) The manager; being able to produce and spread the positive atmosphere
- 2) Appreciation and praise of each employee
- 3) Support and enthusiasm of each member of a team
- 4) Specific recruiting process

### *Centrum Dohody*

Centrum Dohody is a Czech training and consulting company with extensive experience in Czech as well as international markets. It was established in 1996; it was the first Czech mediation centre, which soon started focusing primarily on the training of other specialists in negotiation, and later on the entire soft skills spectrum. Since 1999, they have focused their company strategy on development and improvement of management and company processes, as well as soft skills training, coaching and mentoring.

Their team consists of 22 specialists, who have broad experience in the area of management, psychology, teaching, etc. They cooperate with the top managers of companies, helping them to strategically plan and implement changes, develop specific skills and prepare important meetings and public appearances. Centrum Dohody has been cooperating with Eurest since 2013. They have been providing various types of trainings for their employees. One of the concepts that is implemented in Eurest company is Learned Optimism, which was introduced in 2013. (Centrum Dohody, 2014)

## 5. Application of Learned Optimism in Eurest

### 5.1 Methodology

First of all, it is crucial to segment all the employees of Eurest into groups. It is necessary, because the division of employees into certain categories will make it easier to assign the main goals and processes of achieving them as they may be moderately different for each category. The following table shows the actual division of employees into the certain groups according to their job position and department. Each category of employees is classified with quite a different content of the optimism training.

The topic is firstly introduced to the top management of the company in order for them to understand the whole concept and then assure the necessary changes in each of the company departments and inform their subordinates about the planned trainings. The main aim and the content of the individual trainings and the overall strategy of the whole project is introduced to the top management during the first training session. They learn about the importance of optimism in human lives as well as the success of adopting it in a business field.

The second wave of optimism trainings is performed a few weeks later and it concentrates on the employees from Operation and Sales department. Motivating salesmen and the operation managers seems crucial for the whole project and it is also specified as a success strategy step in Seligman's publication *Learned Optimism*, (Seligman, 2006) as was explained in the theoretical part of this thesis. Optimism can help those employees to be more efficient and persistent concerning their individual everyday tasks as well as main team goals. Salesmen and Operation managers are communicating with customers and clients every day, therefore it is crucial for them to adopt the new patterns of behaviour and to learn using them in a proper way. These employees learn certain techniques how to be motivated to think more positively and how to contribute and participate in the project actively as well as how to motivate other people to do so.

The following flow of trainings is focused on all Unit Managers as they are perhaps one of the most important elements in terms of communication with the individual customers and clients and they are the main initiators of the positive and

productive performance of the whole team. The training for unit managers is, therefore divided into several sessions. The first session deals with the introduction of the whole concept, the importance of optimism in business and it aims at motivating themselves as well as other people to see their everyday tasks in more positive way and also to motivate to active participation in the whole project. The second session focuses on the individual components of the concept “*Optimistic Company*” which includes an introduction and practicing methods concerning Optimism such as:

- *Method "A,B,C,D,E"*
- The Psycholinguistic method: *Using "I want ..." instead of "I must ..."*
- *The Constructive critique of employees*
- *Supporting the employees' independence*
- *Optimistic Recruitment*<sup>8</sup>

The last session of optimism training for unit managers introduces regular exercises for them to being able to use the recently learnt patterns of behaviours and particular communication techniques and so to influence the people they work with. It concentrates on making the individual unit managers more optimistic in their private lives as well as teaches them the optimistic approach to their job, subordinates, customers and clients.

The last category that is directly trained in optimism are internal trainers. It is a team of people formed from employees of different departments in the headquarters. The main goal of the training for this category is to give them various advice and tips on how to teach other people the basics of optimism, so they could actively guide the individual employees at each unit. Even though, the unit manager is trained and successfully applies the optimism concept in his or her team, it is still very important that the individual subordinates are trained as well and the basic rules are explained to them in details.

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<sup>8</sup>All the methods used within the trainings will discussed later in details in the chapter “Methods and techniques used.”

**Table 3: Methodology of optimism trainings**

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Topic of the training</b>
Top Management	Optimism, aim, strategy the content of the project
Operations and Sales Departments	Motivating to optimism and active participation in the project
Unit Managers	Introduction, motivating to optimism and active participation
Unit Managers I.	“Optimistic company”, Optimistic recruitment
Unit Managers II.	Follow-up, introducing regular practices
Internal Trainers	Advice and tips on how to train people to be optimistic

\*Source: Author’s own creation, 2015, based on *Materials for the corporate education, Eurest, 2014*

## **5.2 Aims of the trainings**

The main goals of the whole project of implementing optimism into Eurest corporate culture are to improve the overall work atmosphere, to make the individual employees feel more comfortable and happy and by doing so to influence the customers’ and clients’ perception of the whole company. The right way of adopting the already mentioned behavioural patterns into Eurest employees’ attitudes results in the overall well-being of individual employees as well as the improved work atmosphere, good relationships between individuals, team togetherness and higher performances. The outcome of all these elements is the satisfaction of customers and prestige of the company.

### The topic and goals of individual training sessions:

- A. Manager should realize that his/her behaviour is an example for his or her subordinates
- B. Managers should appreciate their subordinates’ work
- C. Managers develop optimism in their whole team

- D. Managers support teamwork and the overall atmosphere at the workplace
- E. Managers can summarise all the tasks and motivate employees to make them optimistic
- F. Developing good and reliable relationships within the team
- G. Lowering of stress in particular workplaces and amongst employees

Managers must be aware that they are hugely affecting their subordinates' attitudes to work and to their colleagues. In terms of implementing optimism into the culture it is also very important for the managers to accept such a fact. They are advised to follow all the methods and techniques introduced throughout the training sessions; therefore if they properly adopt the new attitudes, they may easily create and spread the optimistic atmosphere amongst all their subordinates.

Second very important aim of the project is to teach people how to appreciate one another in a team and to direct the managers to appreciate their subordinates work performances or commitment to their job, so they feel useful and needed; which makes them satisfied and happy. Those feelings of satisfaction and happiness and friendly atmosphere may then be forwarded to the customers who also feel good in such environment.

The crucial aspect of a strong, successful and comradely teamwork depends mainly on a manager. He or she is the one who introduces, establishes and controls how the team behaves, if they are treating all the members equally and if everyone is feeling well in a team as well as in the whole workplace. They should support and enhance the togetherness of the team all the time.

Another strategically essential step is for the managers to summarize all the tasks for the employees as he or she should always at the end of everyday short meeting point out the most important tasks of the day to make it easier for the subordinates. He or she should also evoke the optimistic atmosphere right from the beginning of the day.

Another goal that is included is the development of reliable relationships within the work team. The workplace is where people spend most of their time, therefore getting along with other colleagues is crucial. Many people may often experience stress because of the arguments and unfriendly behaviour inside the team.

In terms of optimistic training, managers should also focus on building relationships throughout the team based on trust and respecting each other.

Also, the result of implementing the positive techniques and methods is the lower level of stress amongst individual employees as well as the overall friendly atmosphere at the workplace. Happy and satisfied employees naturally influence customers' perception of the whole company which will contribute to the general image of the company.

### **5.3 Methods and techniques used**

#### Psycholinguistic method – using “*I want*” clauses instead of “*I must/I have to*” clauses

One of the techniques that are taught during the optimistic trainings is a psycholinguistic method, which is focusing on using positive expressions while talking about situations and tasks that people are not very eager to do. Including expressions “*I want...*” instead of saying “*I must...*” stimulates the brain and a person does not feel the irritating obligation to do something he or she does not like. It, in fact, evokes positive emotions and an individual handles the situation or the task better.

#### Positive thoughts about future and themselves “*I can... well/quite well*”

This is another activity that is introduced and practiced during the trainings. It is aiming at the increasing of self-confidence, which is a very important factor concerning the whole positive psychology and mental well-being. The participants are divided into pairs and asked to talk to each other about what they are good at; this activity is then performed for 2 minutes as an exercise. However, when it is implemented into daily routine, it can increase the self-confidence.

#### Supporting the employees' independence

This activity is based on learning how to be independent and how to show other people to become independent. It is very useful at workplace, especially when people work under stress. It illustrates how important independence is and it is explained at several real-life situations. The principle of this method highlights the importance of suggesting several solutions in case of any kind of a problem. While doing so, the colleagues learn this rule and apply it too.

### Method “A,B,C,D,E”

The principle of this method originated from the real-life situations when people perceive offences too seriously and by doing so, their psychical health is constantly being harmed, they have to face higher level of stress, and furthermore some people have tendency to act in an aggressive way. This method is intended to be used for unpleasant situations, which may easily provoke people to undesired behaviour. The exercise suggests dividing the situation into several steps:

**A:** The actual situation that happened

*“A customer complains about a lacking menu offer, but everything as usual and I have been working very hard today.”*

**B:** The reason why I am angry

*“I have been working very hard the whole day to satisfy customers’ needs.”*

**C:** How am I feeling? What do I want to do?

*“I want to argue with the customer.”*

**D:** Different point of view (What might be real reasons of the customer’s complaint)

*“He may have a bad day, problems at home or work.”*

**E:** What I will really do?

*“I will manage this. I am good at dealing with difficult situations; I can handle this case too.”*

### Constructive critique of employees

Constructive critique is another method that is taught during the trainings. It is aimed at the managers and it is based on teaching them how to show to their colleagues that they appreciate them and how to give them advice if they are doing something wrong and how to make them improve. The manager is taught how to give useful advice that should improve certain aspect or help individuals; he or she often ends the constructive critique with an offer of several possible solutions.



### McGregor's of X and Y

This well-known theory of motivating employees and approaching them differently is introduced to the participants. It suggests that managers should support creative thinking within their teams, involve the subordinates in decision making so they feel more important and responsible, which contributes to the whole atmosphere at the work place and it also affects the customers' perception of the service as well as the whole company.

### Changing the type of explanatory style

The participants are gradually learning how to change pessimistic explanatory style to the more optimistic explanatory style. The basics of the theory about explanatory style are explained to them and practical examples are also provided during the trainings. The participants are learned they can change their way of thinking as well as how to influence the way of thinking of their colleagues.

All the methods that are used during the training sessions are helping people to reach higher satisfaction level at their work, to increase their self-confidence and to overly contribute to the one's psychological health and stability.

### **Optimistic Recruitment**

Another component of the whole project that Euresst will adopt within the scope of optimistic corporate culture is the Optimistic Recruitment. As it was scientifically proven and also, Seligman states in his publication *Learned Optimism*, optimists perform their jobs better than people who are pessimistic. Seligman suggested to the company Metlife to hire only the people who score high for optimism. Then he concluded a survey and found out that people with high optimism score did by 20% better than people who were recruited regularly. (Seligman, 2006)

Euresst therefore, includes the "Optimistic Recruitment" into their new optimistic corporate culture. The recruitment process then includes several questions that can be divided as following:

- A. Questions on positives
- B. Questions on negatives
- C. Questions concerning handling changes
- D. Questionnaire concerning positivism

Questions aiming at finding whether an applicant is an optimistic, neutral or a pessimistic person are included into the process of standard recruitment. The recruiter is given a list of these questions together with a table describing how these three personality types answer the questions. Together with these questions, the applicants are given *Life orientation test - revised*, which estimates where on the Optimism/pessimism scale an applicant stands.

All these techniques help the recruiters to define whether an applicant would fit into Euresst optimistic corporate culture. The aims as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter are mainly to increase employees' satisfaction and their psychological well-being and the basic idea of Optimistic recruitment, based on Seligman's theory, is that hiring optimistic people would only improve the atmosphere at work, strengthen work relationships and improve the overall performance. On the other hand, hiring pessimistic employees could destroy friendly atmosphere at work, relationships and the overall employees' attitude to their job and the whole team.

## 6. Research

### 6.1 Results and conclusions of the survey

This part will deal with the description of the collected data and the way of processing them. Following chapters will comprise of comparison of the processed research data with the hypothesis and the evaluation of the results.

#### 6.1.1 Response rate

There were two surveys taking place. The first survey was conducted in September 2014 and the second survey took place in February 2015. The total number of employees in the company is 3,064<sup>9</sup> (2,616 in Eurest and 448 in Scolarest). There were 799 questionnaires sent to 720 Eurest employees and 79 to Scolarest employees in the first as well as in the second survey.

The total number of respondents in the first survey was 468, which consisted of 400 employees in Eurest and 68 in Scolarest. That represents 58.6 % response rate in total (55.6 % in Eurest and 86.1 % in Scolarest) in the first survey.

In the second survey 409 questionnaires returned from 799 that were originally sent. Particularly, 334 forms were returned from Eurest employees and 75 from Scolarest employees. That in total means 51.2 % response rate (46.4 % in Eurest and 94.9 % from Scolarest) in the second survey.

Concerning the participation rate of employees in the survey, 400 out of total 2,616 Eurest employees and 68 out of 448 Scolarest employees participated in the first survey. That represents 15.3 % participation rate of Eurest and 15.2 % of Scolarest employees. (see table 4 below)

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<sup>9</sup> October 2014.

**Table 4: Participation of employees in the surveys:**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>468</b>
Eurest	89	311	400
Scolarest	11	57	68
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>409</b>
Eurest	75	259	334
Scolarest	16	59	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>877</b>
Eurest	164	570	734
Scolarest	27	116	143

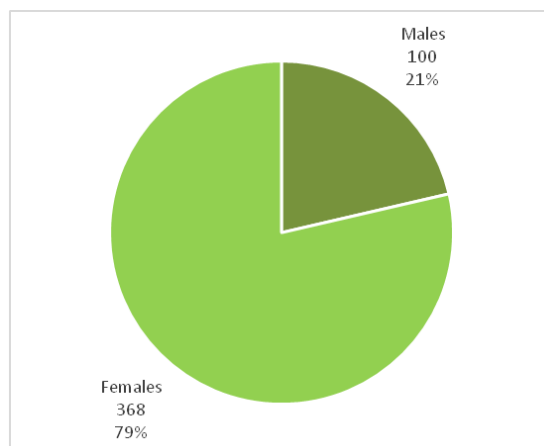
*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

### 6.1.2 Demographic analysis

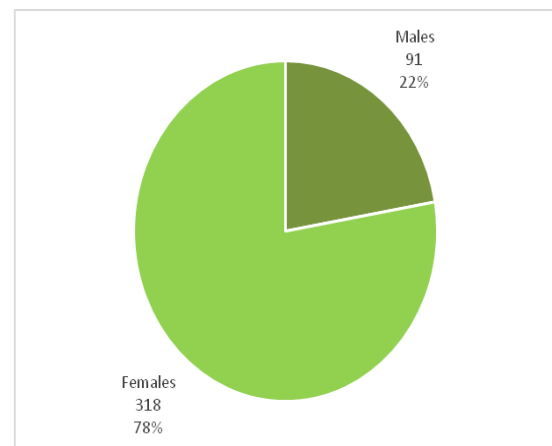
#### Gender

Since the majority of the employees in the company are women, there is an overwhelming percentage of questionnaires answered by women in both cases. As you may see in the graph 1 beneath, in the first survey there were 78.6 % (which is 368) of women respondents and 21.4 % (which is 100) were men. In the second survey 77.8 % (which is 318) of questionnaires were answered by women and 22.2 % (which is 91) by men. (see graph 2 and graph 3 below)

**Graph 2: Respondents by gender, 1<sup>st</sup> survey**



**Graph 3: Respondents by gender, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey**



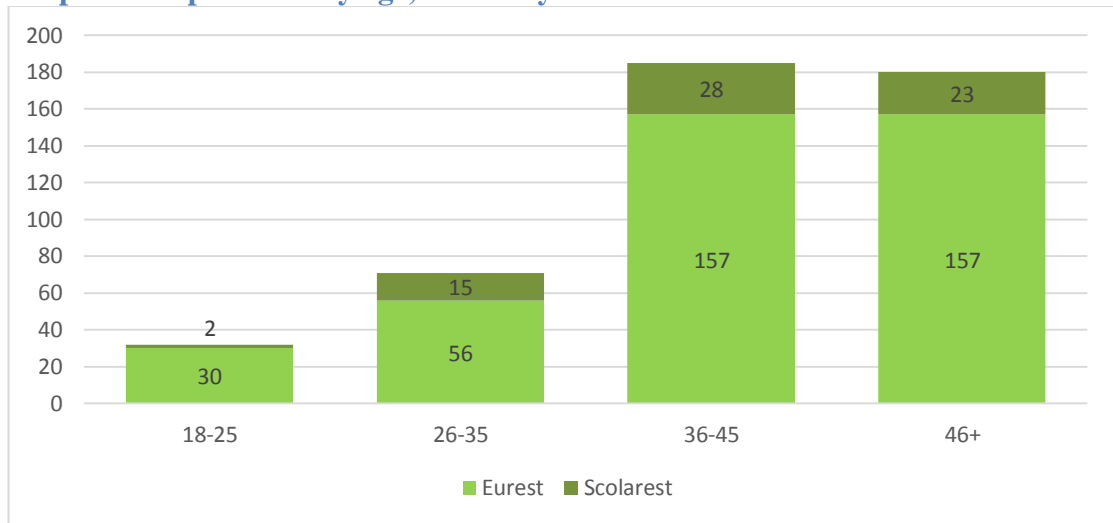
*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

## Age

The age categories 36-45 and 46+ dominated in both surveys. The employees of age 18-25 answered the least frequently. In the first survey 39.3 % (157) of Eurest employees were of age 36-45 and 39.3 % (157) of age 46 years and more. In Scolarest main category that led by 41.2 % (28) was 36-45.

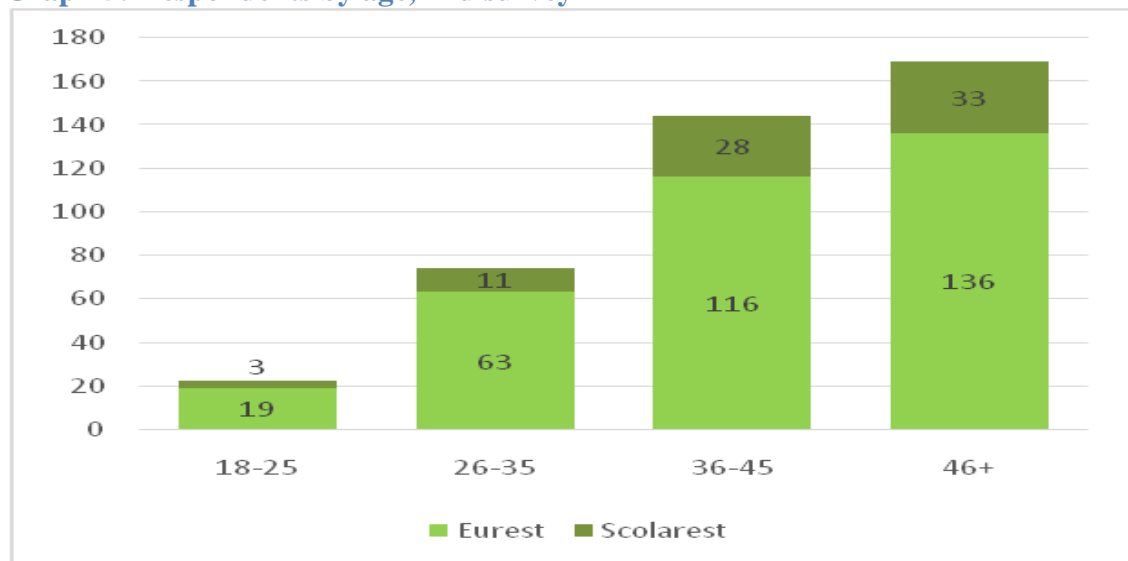
In the second survey both in Eurest and Scolarest the main category that was answering was 46+. Particularly, in Eurest it was 40.7 % (136), in terms of Scolarest it was 44.0 % (33). (see graph 4 and graph 5 below)

**Graph 4: Respondents by age, 1<sup>st</sup> survey**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Graph 5: Respondents by age, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey**

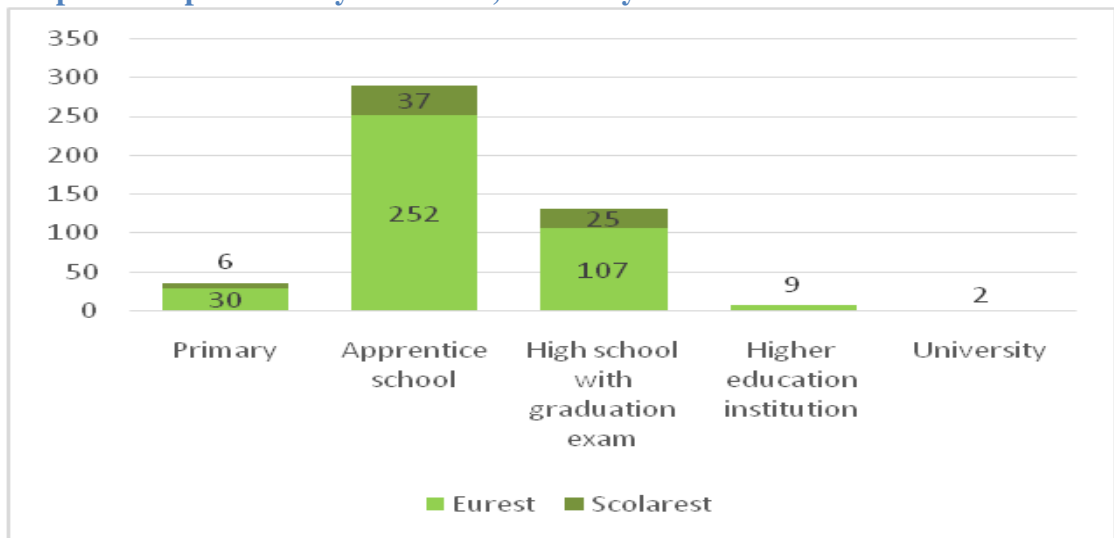


*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

## **Education**

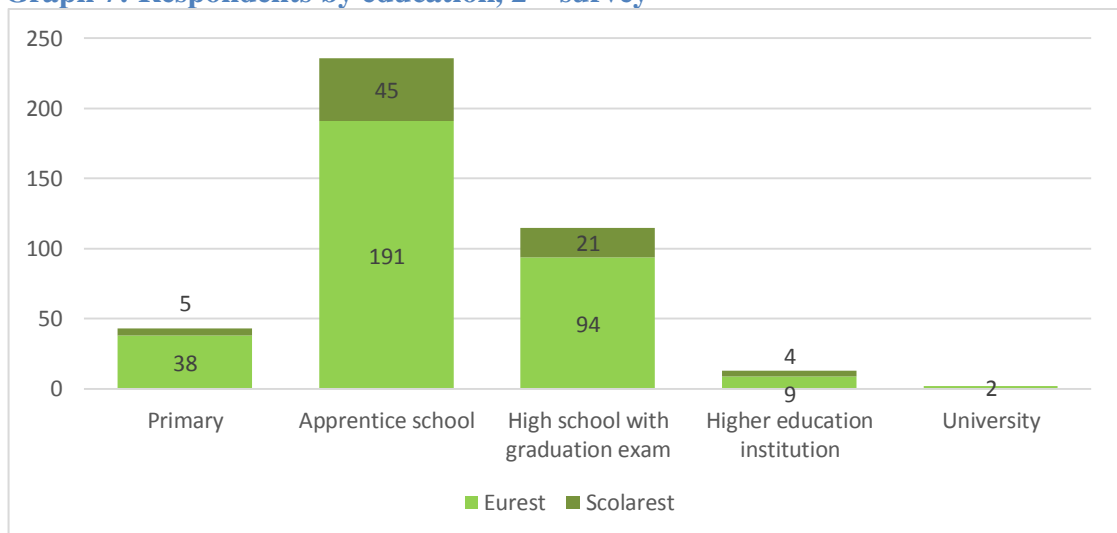
The education category that prevailed in both surveys was apprentice school. In the first survey it was 63.0 % (252) of respondents from Eurest and 54.4 % (37) from Scolarest who gained this education level. In the second survey it was 57.2 % (191) of Eurest and 60.0 % (45) of Scolarest respondents. (see graph 6 and graph 7 below)

**Graph 6: Respondents by education, 1<sup>st</sup> survey**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Graph 7: Respondents by education, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey**



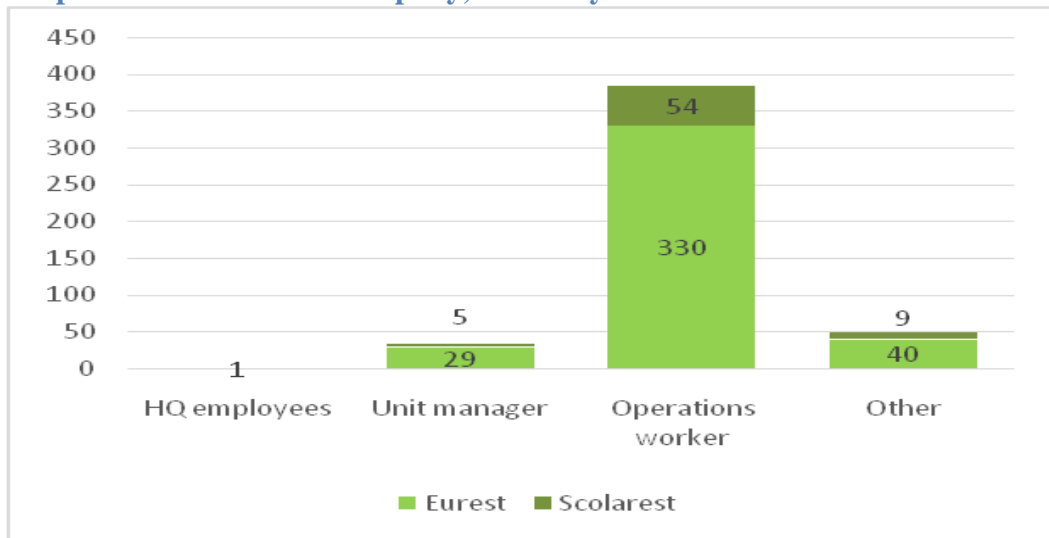
*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

### Positions within the company

Regarding the question on position within the company, there are 4 possible answers; as it was originally meant to include also employees from headquarters of the company. However, due to the company's denial, the survey was mainly distributed amongst unit managers and restaurant workers.

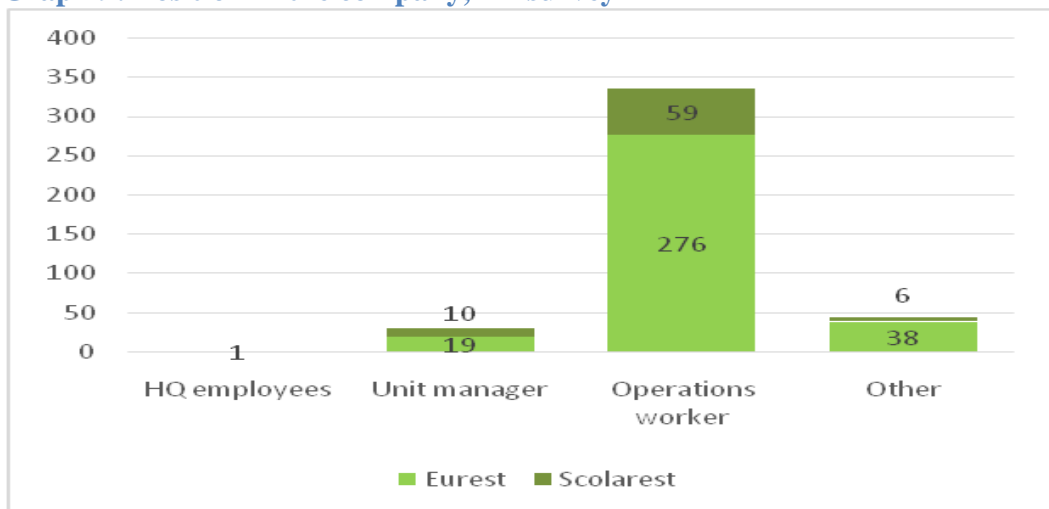
The dominated position category that answered in both surveys were operations workers. It was approximately 80.0 % of respondents in both surveys in both companies (1<sup>st</sup> survey: 82.5 % (330) Eurest, 79.4 % (54) Scolarest, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: 82.6 % (276) Eurest, 78.7 % (59) Scolarest). (see graphs 8 and 9 below)

**Graph 8: Position in the company, 1<sup>st</sup> survey**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Graph 9: Position in the company, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

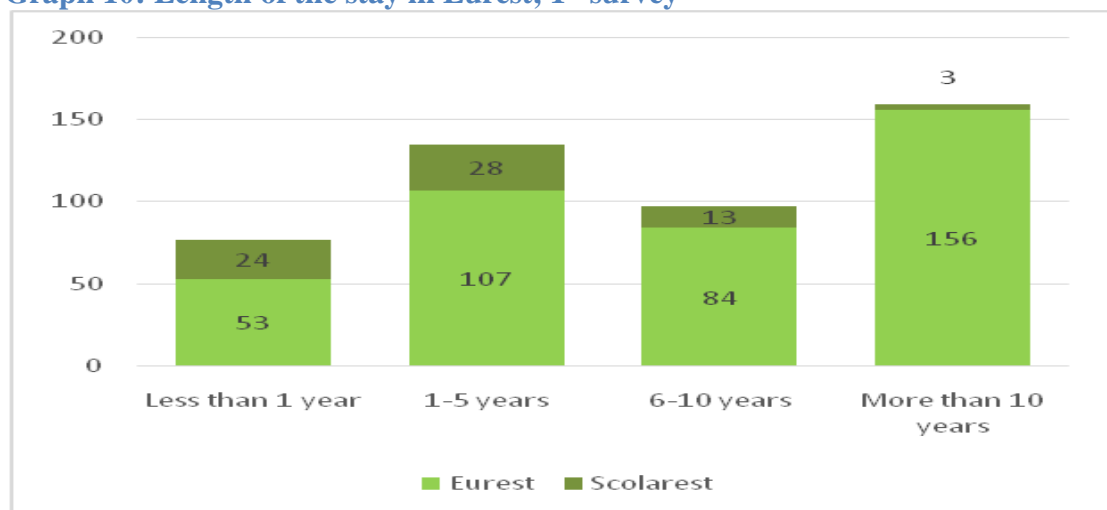
Forty (40) Eurest employees in the first survey chose the answer “other”. 17 of them stated “auxiliary labour” and 26 “shop assistant”. Less frequently there were also other positions as a “supplier of vending machine”, “delivery worker” included. Concerning Scolarest employees, 4 “auxiliary labour workers”, 4 “chefs” and 1 “cashier” were included in this category.

In the second survey, 38 respondents chose the answer “other”. 16 of them stated “shop assistant”, 14 “auxiliary labour” and others put “vending machine supplier” or “accountant”. In Scolarest 6 people marked the answer “other” and all of them stated they work as auxiliary labour workers.

### **Length of stay in the company**

There is no dominated category concerning this indicator neither in Eurest nor in Scolarest in both surveys. The respondents work in the company for a short period of time as well as for longer time. For instance, in the first survey 39.0 % (156) of Eurest employees are in the company for more than 10 years, 26.8 % (107) work there for the period of 1-5 years, 21.0 % (84) of employees 6-10 years. However, the least dominated category in this case are employees who work in the company for less than a year; they represent 13.3 % (53 employees). Similar results may be found within the second survey. (see graph 10 and graph 11 below)

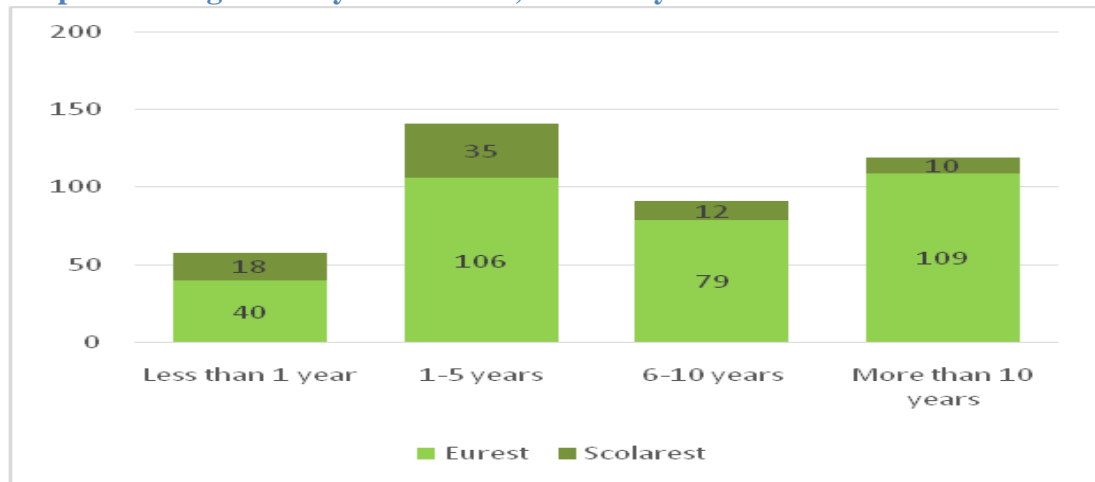
**Graph 10: Length of the stay in Eurest, 1<sup>st</sup> survey**



Source: Author’s own creation, 2015



**Graph 11: Length of stay in Scolarest, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

### **6.1.3 Life orientation scale questions**

This part will include a brief description of the part concerning on the questions concerning the second part of the questionnaire; the Life orientation test questions. In total there were 10 questions where questions number 2, 5, 6 and 8 are only fillers, they are not meant to be evaluated. Then, questions number 1, 4 and 10 are positively oriented questions (asking on positives) whether the rest of them 3,7 and 9 are negatively oriented questions (asking on negatives). All the questions are evaluated on scale 0-4 where 4 is the highest point for optimism and 0 is for pessimism. The questions are specially formed altogether in order to test individual's Life orientation (Scheier, 1994); therefore, what is important is the final sum of the points for each question, not really analysis of each individual question.

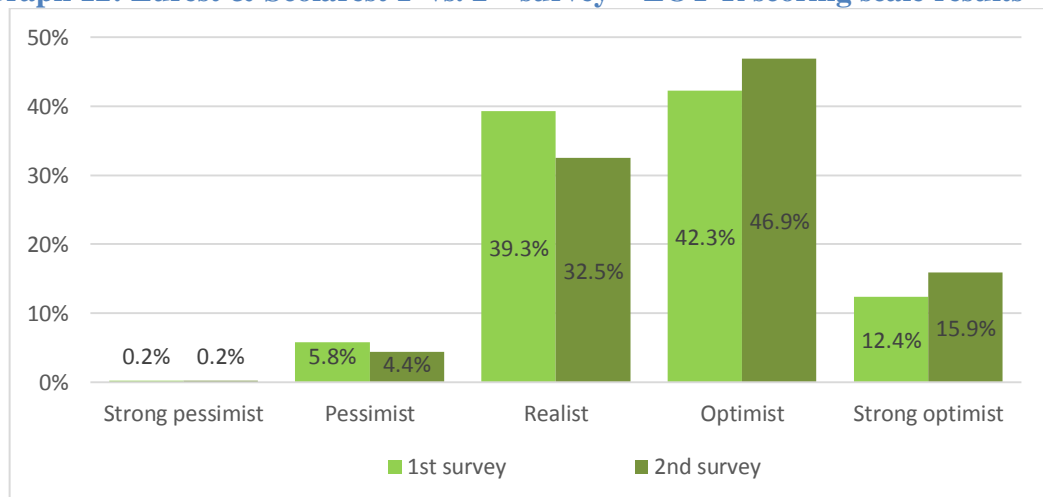
The frequencies of answers that individual respondents chose were in the most of the cases relatively similar, as there were no significant deviations. Most of the participants chose the answers that were inclining to the realist and further to more optimistic part of the Life orientation scale. As the total result based on the summed up points from the Life orientation test is considered important, it is going to be analyzed in the following chapter Final results.

### 6.1.4 Final results

This part will be focusing on the final results of the Life orientation test that individual respondents filled in. The categories of Life Orientation scale are *Strong pessimist*, *Pessimist*, *Realist*, *Optimist* and *Strong realist*. (Scheier, Carver, Bridges, 1994) The maximum of points that the respondent could have got is 24 for all 10 questions (as there were 4 questions not evaluated). The table 5 (see appendix 8) shows the overall results of Eurest and Scolarest employees in terms of the first and second survey.

The following graph (graph 12) shows the number of employees in percentages in the individual categories and it compares the results of the whole company from the first survey with second survey. It is visible that the percentage of the less optimistic categories in the second survey decreased and that the employees are moving to the more optimistic pole of the scale. Particularly, in the first survey there were 39.3 % (184) of *realists* and in the second survey the percentage lowered to 32.5 % (133) and the rest changed to the category *optimists* (from the original 42.3 % to 46.9 %) or even *strong optimists* (from 12.4 % to 15.9 %).

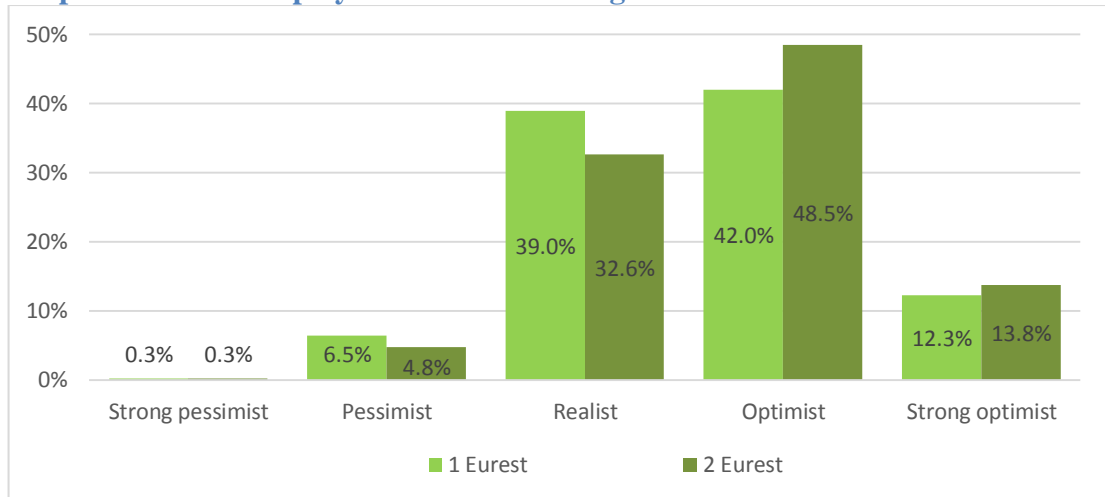
**Graph 12: Eurest & Scolarest 1<sup>st</sup> vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> survey – LOT-R scoring scale results**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

The graph 13 below compares the results among Eurest employees in the first and second survey. A significant change is visible in the category *realist* where the percentage lowers by 6.4 p.p. which results in increase of *optimists* and *strong optimists* in Eurest.

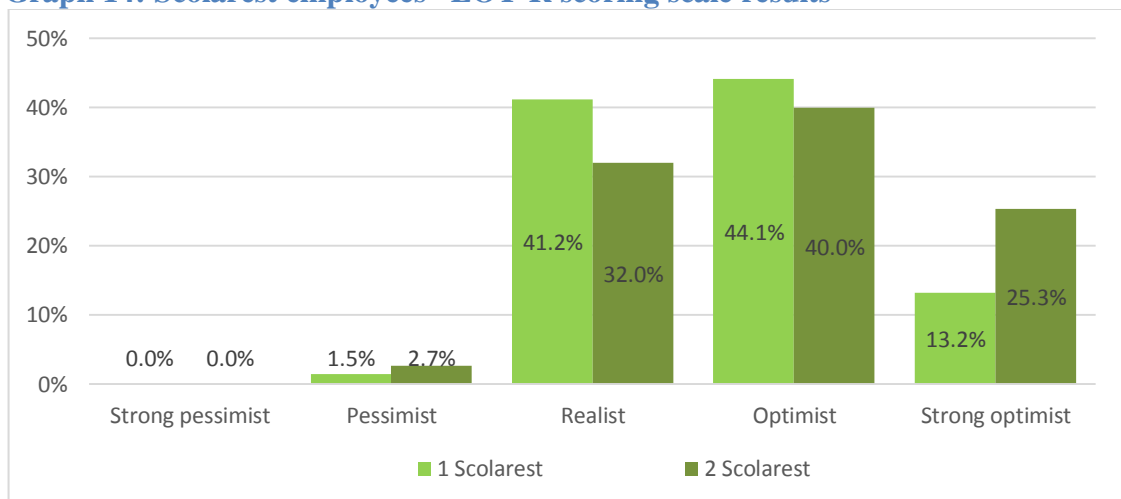
**Graph 13: Eurest employees –LOT-R scoring scale results**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

The last graph concerning this indicator compares Scolarest employees' results from first and second survey. Similarly as in the previous graphs, also here is a shift to the more positive pole of the scale. The lower number of *realists* and *optimists* in the second survey compare to their equivalent results in the first survey caused a decrease of *optimist category* up to 40.0 % (30) and an increase in *strong optimists* up to 25.3 % (19) of strong optimists. (see graph 14 below)

**Graph 14: Scolarest employees –LOT-R scoring scale results**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

Another indicator that was set as one of the main goals of this thesis was defining the average level of optimism on the Life orientation scale for the whole company. The below table 5 shows the average level for the whole company, which in the first survey was 14.8 points after 4 months of implementing the Learned optimism the

average figure changed by 0.6 point to 15.4 points. Average respondent in the first survey could be considered as a *realist* on the upper limit, in the second survey the average respondent is already considered as an *optimist*.

Furthermore, the table also presents the average level for Eurest employees which were of similar results as compare to the figures stated for the whole company. Even though, the Scolarest average figure of optimism was in the first survey higher than of Eurest (by 0.6 point), higher increase was score amongst Eurest employees as the average figure grew by 0.6 and in Scolarest it only increased by 0.3 point. (see table 5)

**Table 5: The average level of optimism**

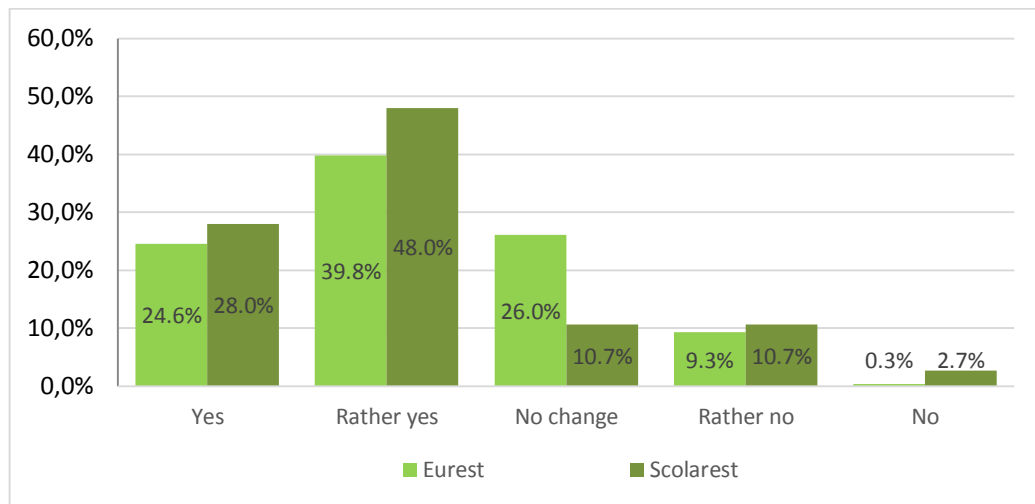
	Average points TOTAL
<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>	<b>14.8</b>
Eurest1	14.7
Scolarest1	15.7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>	<b>15.4</b>
Eurest2	15.3
Scolarest2	16.0
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>15.1</b>

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

### 6.1.5 Improvement of workplace atmosphere

The second survey included one extra question on whether the individuals have perceived any positive change in the workplace atmosphere. The graph 15 below presents the answers that support the final results concerning the employees shift to the more optimistic categories of Life orientation scale. Majority of Eurest and Scolarest employees positively answered the question. However, it is apparent that Scolarest employees perceive the change more; they stated *yes* by 28.0 % (21) and *rather yes* by 48.0 % (36) compare to 24.6 % (82) Eurest respondents who put *yes* and *rather yes* 39.8 % (169).

**Graph 15: “Have you perceived a positive change in a workplace atmosphere in the last 4 months?”**



*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

## 6.2 Comparison of survey results with hypotheses

This part will deal with the comparison and evaluation of the real data with the stated hypothesis. Some hypotheses have been set correctly, however one of them has been rejected and one of them has been approved in the first survey, however denied in the second survey.

**H1: In the first survey most of company's employees will incline to the “realist” category on the Life orientation scale.**

This hypothesis was not approved, as it is clear from the graph 13: *LOT-R scoring scale* the majority of employees in the whole company belong to the *optimistic* category. In particular, 54.7 % (256) of respondents belong to the optimist category. What can be considered as positive for the company is that there is a really low percentage of strong pessimists 6.0 % (28 respondents). It was assumed that the employees will be mainly realists; but the percentage of employees that are realists is even higher 39.3 % (184). On the other hand, it is even better for the company that they have so many optimistic people as it will be easier to explain them the basics of their new strategy and they might be more willing to adopt it than those who are pessimistic.

## **H2: The younger employees are more optimistic than older employees.**

Similarly, this hypothesis was not approved either. According the gained data from respondents younger employees (18-35 years) are less optimistic than the older ones (36+ years). The proportion and amount of *pessimists* among younger employees were in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey: 9.7 % (10) as well as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: 7.3 % (7) compare to the older employees in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey: 4.9 % (18) and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: 3.8 % (12). The *realist* category was quite equally represented by both categories in both surveys; particularly there were 44.7 % (46) younger employees in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey and 34.4 % (33) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey and 37.8 % (138) older employees in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey and 31.9 % (100) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey. The *optimistic* category of the scale was represented by older employees by almost 57.3 % (209) and in the second survey nearly by 65 % (201), but the younger employees fell within this category only by 45.6 % (47) in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey and by 58.3 % (56) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey. (see appendix 8, table 9)

The reason why younger employees are less optimistic than the older ones might be connected to the time period when the research was conducted. People have recently gone through the economic crisis and the older employees might have learnt the price of “being employed” and they might be more satisfied with their current life situation compare to the younger employees because younger employees might not appreciate their job as much due to high expectations and the difference between the expectations at the beginning of their careers with the real life situations, also as they start families they might not have as many abilities to live the life they expected and might be unsatisfied with their life situation which in certain extend influences their work performance and work satisfaction.

## **H3: Men are more optimistic than women.**

This hypothesis was approved in the first survey, where 56.0 % (56) of men inclined to *strong optimist* and *optimist* category and the same category is represented by women only by 54.3 % (200). However, in the second survey women scored more in the *strong optimism* and *optimist* category: 64.5 % (205) and men only 57.1 % (52). (see appendix 8, table 10)

Even though, the hypothesis was not approved in the second survey, it is possible to assume that statistical testing would not test these differences (between men and women) as statistically significant, both gender groups in both waves of the survey

are quite close in the proportion of optimism. However, an interesting result emerged is that the women improved regarding optimism by 10.1 percentage point which compare to men who improved only by 1.1 percentage point is quite a huge change and it may apply that women are more willing to learn new things or they are more open to changes, therefore this should be taken into consideration in case of any further training processes.

Concerning the average level of optimism between men and women, the following table (table 6) also supports already stated results that women are more optimistic and also improved their optimism level by higher percentage.

**Table 6: Comparison of optimism level between men and women**

	Average points MEN	Average points WOMEN
<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>14.9</b>
Eurest1	14.7	14.7
Scolarest1	14.1	15.9
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>15.6</b>
Eurest2	14.8	15.4
Scolarest2	15.0	16.2
<b>Overall average</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>15.2</b>

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

#### **H4: Employees in Scolarest are more optimistic than in Eurest.**

This hypothesis was approved by the real data. In the first survey the average level of optimism in Eurest was 14.7 points and Scolarest employees score 15.7 points on Life orientation test scale. That means that in the first survey Scolarest employees were more optimistic by 1 point. Eurest employees can be considered as upper to be on the upper level of *realist* category on the scale, but Scolarest employees already fall into *optimist* category.

Regarding the second survey, both Eurest as well as Scolarest improved their level of optimism, where Eurest employees scored 15.3 points and Scolarest 16.0 points. Such a result again supports the hypothesis that Scolarest employees will be more optimistic, it is so in the first as well in the second survey. Perhaps, it may be due to the fact that Scolarest employees work in more optimistic environment which is

connected to the children who probably complain to them less than customers in Eurest do.

However, what is an interesting fact is that Eurest employees improved their average level of optimism more than Scolarest employees. Even though the difference is only by 0.3 points it should be taken into consideration and further research should be conducted on the rate of optimism increase differences between individual Life orientation scale categories. The result might be that the people on the more pessimistic side of the scale will be easily influenced by the optimistic corporate culture than those who already optimistic are. (see table 7)

**Table 7: Differences of optimism level, Eurest vs. Scolarest employees**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey:</b>	<b>Average points:</b>
Eurest1	14.7
Scolarest1	15.7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey:</b>	<b>Average points:</b>
Eurest2	15.3
Scolarest2	16.0

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**H5: After 4 months of applying the concept of Learned optimism the employees will become more optimistic in comparison with the results from the previous survey (the average figure will move towards the optimistic pole of the scale).**

As the hypothesis was stated the level of optimism in the company really increased. The table 9 (see appendix 8) shows the percentage change between individual categories. The significant decrease in the pessimistic categories (-22.4 %) as well as a decrease in realist category (-17.3 %) resulted in the increase of more optimistic categories among respondents (optimist + strong optimist) by 14.9 %. (see appendix 8, table 11) These results prove that the company's strategy within the project as well as the individual optimism trainings of employees was quite effective and successful; and the majority of the respondents really moved to the more optimistic pole of the scale.

**H6: Younger employees will be more easily influenced by the optimistic corporate culture than older people.**



This hypothesis is approved by the results from the research. In the first survey younger employees that represented the strong optimist + optimist category 45.6 % (47) increased by 12.7 percentage points to 58.3 % (56) which is quite higher than it is in the case of the older employees who represented strong optimism + optimism category in the first survey by 57.3 % (209) and improved that only by 7.0 percentage points up to 64.2 % (201). (see appendix 8, table 12). One of the possible reasons for this situation is the fact that younger employees have less work experiences compare to the older worker. Therefore, their behavioural processes and opinions might not be as strong and deep-rooted in their personalities so they will be easier influenced by the changes in corporate culture as well as change in other spheres of their lives.

**H7: Employees on higher positions will be more optimistic than employees on lower positions.**

The hypothesis was approved by the clear results from the research. Unit managers are in both waves of the survey more optimistic than employees, particularly 85.7 % (30) vs. 52.2 % (226) in the first survey, 76.7 % (23) vs. 61.7 % (234) in the second survey. However, from the results is also visible the decrease of optimism level amongst unit managers in the second survey and on the other hand an improvement amongst the restaurant workers. Particularly, the unit managers' optimism lowered by 9.0 percentage points and restaurant workers' optimism increased by 9.5 percentage points. (see appendix 8, table 13)

The fact that the company carried its strategy from the top managers to the bottom employees might be a relevant reason why the optimism amongst restaurant workers increased in the second wave of the survey. The unit managers were the main category that had been trained in optimism and on whom the main focus was right before the first survey. Therefore, they might have been closely affected by it. However, the restaurant workers have not been trained yet and their optimism training lessons started two months after the training lessons of unit managers and therefore the second wave might have been influenced by that too. The increase among restaurant workers is quite significant, which proves that the training methods were successful and the strategy effective. However, the company should not omit unit managers and include them in further optimism strategy as they have quite significant influence on their subordinates.

## 7. Recommendations

As it has been proved by the surveys the application of optimism into Eurest corporate culture was successful. Even though the majority of the employees originally inclined to the more positive pole of the LOT-R scale, still after the application the average level of optimism increased. The time before those two surveys that were conducted also in order to define any possible changes of the optimism level within the company and therefore to evaluate the success of the application process was quite short. Hence, it can be assumed that after longer period of time there might be another increase of the optimism level expected. Perhaps, the time scope is quite a huge factor concerning this type of the implementation process.

According to the gained data concerning the difference of optimism level between unit managers and restaurant workers might be due to the fact, that the company started implementing the optimism amongst the top management and then continued its strategy onto another management levels to the restaurant workers who were actually the last category of employees who undergone this implementation process. Therefore, a suggestion for the company is from now on concentrate more and solely on the restaurant workers as they are the key factor in the everyday contact with the public.

Another fact that the literature supports and also was confirmed by the facts from the survey is that women and men perceive changes and innovations in different ways. Thus, another recommendation for the company is to do more research on the topic and perhaps pilots different exercises that consider and focus on these different behavioural processes. The similar case regards older and younger people. They also perceive change in different ways. Older people are not as open as the younger people and on the other hand younger people have still high life expectancies and might not be satisfied at the beginning of their work career. Therefore, if the company wants to make this implementation equally successful in terms of all categories, they should pay attention to those differences in perceiving of various types of people. If the company continues with the implementation of the Learned optimism they can be quite successful; however, it is important to concentrate on the lower positioned employees and take into consideration the individual differences given by age, gender, and other personal characteristics as well

as not to omit the higher positioned employees that have a significant effect on the corporate culture.

## 8. Conclusion

Over the last several years the role of work environment and corporate culture has become of higher significance in increasing number of companies. More and more organizations are aware of the huge impact that it represents. The relationships among employees, communication manners, the workplace atmosphere or the premises, all of that significantly influence employees' feelings about their job. It is not about the financial satisfaction any more that motivates employees to higher commitment to the company. In order to retain and motivate employees it, nowadays, takes much more. The employer should focus on how their subordinates actually perceive the overall corporate culture that they are actually a part of. Employees who are engaged and actively contribute to the company's goals and business strategies are more content and loyal to the company. If the employees are not happy, there is a high possibility that the performance of the whole company will not be of much success.

The main aim of this diploma thesis was to describe and evaluate the implementation of optimism into Euresst corporate culture, state the average level of optimism within the whole company and propose suggestions regarding certain deficiencies of the implementation process. In order to do that the aims had to be determined; a relevant theoretical overview included together with the description of the company and its corporate culture. Then, current implementation of optimism process was analysed and also evaluated.

Based on the internal document analysis it is clear that Euresst is aware of the importance of workplace environment and satisfaction of their employees. Through a complex system of employees' trainings and other company's internal processes company develops their corporate culture as well as contributes to personal development of individual employees. The latest optimism training processes that the company has implemented has been according to the above mentioned results successful. The level of optimism among individual employees has increased quite significantly and improvement of the work atmosphere was also supported by the prevailing majority of employees as they stated that they personally experienced an improvement of workplace atmosphere in the last 4 months.

On average the company scored as lower *optimist*, however after the optimism training the level increased. Even though the increase was not so significant, it is important to take into consideration the short period of time for application of the methods from the trainings. Supposedly, if the research had been done after longer period of time, more optimistic results could have been gained.

Based on the results of the survey, five hypotheses (H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7) that were specified in the methodology part were approved. The survey results support the facts that are included in the theoretical part that the women incline to the more pessimistic behaviour than men do. However, concerning this indicator it was also discovered that even though, women scored less in the first survey, their level of optimism increased in the second survey much more than it was in the case of men. Therefore, it may imply that women have different learning processes from men and thus it should be taken into consideration in case of any further learning processes.

The employees in Scolarest are more optimistic than in Eurest, (H4) which may be due to the fact that Scolarest employees work in more optimistic environment which is connected to happier premises, fewer complaints from customers and other more positive surroundings. However, similarly as in the previous case, there was an interesting fact discovered concerning this indicator. After four months of implementing optimism into the company's corporate culture, Eurest employees improved their average level of optimism in higher proportion than Scolarest employees, they moved from the *realist* category to the *optimist* category, whereas Scolarest employees stayed more or less on the similar level.

After 4 months of applying the concept of optimism the employees will become more optimistic in comparison with the results from the previous survey. (H5) The survey results proved that the company's employees after 4 months experienced a significant decrease of individuals in *pessimists* and *realist* categories and an increase in the *optimist* category. Such a result proves that the optimism trainings were successful and reached the company's goals.

Younger employees will be more easily influenced by the optimistic corporate culture than older people. (H6) Even though, the whole company moved to the more optimistic pole on the Life orientation scale, both older and younger

employees become more optimism, however, the increase of optimism level was among older employees smaller by 10 %.

The last of the approved hypotheses was hypothesis 7: Employees on higher positions will be more optimistic than employees on lower positions. It was found out that higher positioned employees scored more on Life orientation scale; however the second survey shows that the level of optimism among higher positioned employees decreased. The reason for this situation might be due to the fact that company focused its strategy of training their employees from the top positioned people to the low positioned people. Therefore, unit managers might have been influenced by the trainings while the first survey took place. The restaurant workers have been trained on optimism since the beginning of the year 2015, thus it can explain the higher increase of the optimism level among restaurant workers in the second survey. Thus, company should not forget to include all their employees into the training strategy and perhaps introduce and establish regular training sessions not only for restaurant worker but also for management.

According to the survey results, while adapting certain aspects into the Eurest corporate culture, it is important to consider differences between people and accordingly, to approach individual people in different ways. The survey data imply that men do not score the same as women; that younger employees can be more easily influenced than older people; or that higher positioned employees are more optimistic than lower positioned employees. Therefore, the company should study in details those differences and add certain adjustments to their training methods. To conclude, the implementation of optimism in Eurest can be, according to the results, described as successful. The average level of optimism was reached and the majority of individual respondent themselves perceived the positive change.

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## 11. List of abbreviations

EAT = Earnings after tax

EBIT = Earnings before interest and tax

EBT = Earnings before tax

HR = Human resources

LO = Learned Optimism

LOT-R = Life orientation test revised

P.P. = Percentage point

POB = Positive organizational behaviour

Spol. s r.o. = společnost s ručením omezeným

Vs. = Versus

## 12. Appendices

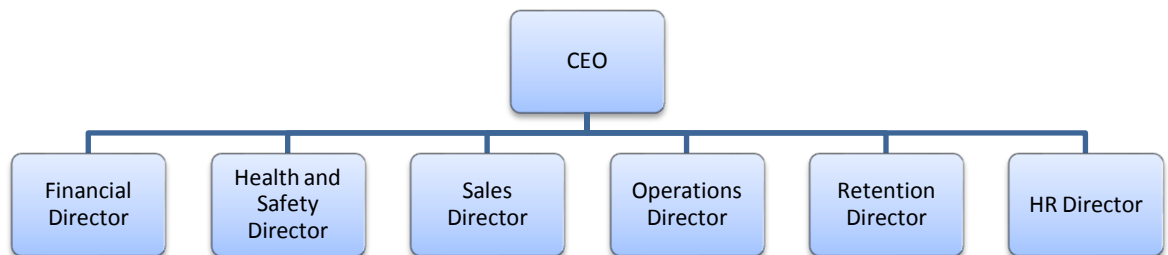
*Appendix 1: Logo of Eurest, spol. s r.o.*

*Picture 1: Logo of Eurest, spol. s r.o.*



Source: <http://www.eurest.cz/skolni-stravovani>

*Appendix 2: Organizational chart 1:Eurest, spol. s r.o.*



Source: Author's own creation. 2015





## Zjištění míry životní orientace



Dobrý den.

obracím se na Vás s prosbou o zodpovězení několika otázek v podobě dotazníku. Účelem průzkumu je zjistit míru životní orientace ve firmě Eurest. Dotazník je určen všem zaměstnancům Eurestu a je zcela anonymní.

Prosím o vyplnění dotazníku Vámi všemi, na které se obracím, neboť pro účelné vyhodnocení je potřeba získat co nejvíce odpovědí. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu budou sloužit účelům GPD a pro mé odborné studium.

**Děkuji Vám za ochotu a spolupráci.**

*Pavčina Lukoszová*

Prosím, u následujících otázek zakroužkujete pouze jednu z možných odpovědí.

**Pohlaví:**

- a) Žena
- b) Muž

**Pracujete v:**

- a) Eurestu
- b) Scolarestu

**Věk:**

- a) 18-25
- b) 26-35
- c) 36-45
- d)  $\geq 46$

**Pozice:**

- a) Zaměstnanec centrály
- b) Vedoucí pracovník
- c) Zaměstnanec restaurace
- d) Jiná

**Nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání:**

- a) Základní
- b) Výuční list
- c) Střední škola s maturitou
- d) Vyšší odborné
- e) Vysokoškolské

**Jak dlouho pracujete v Eurestu/Scolarestu?**

- a) Méně než 1 rok
- b) 1-5 let
- c) 6-10 let
- d) Více než 10 let

## Test životní orientace - revidovaný

Prosím, zakroužkujte písmeno, které je pro vás nejmýstižnější odpovědi na následující škále.

- A vůbec nesouhlasím
- B nesouhlasím
- C něco mezi
- D souhlasím
- E plně souhlasím

Přečtete si pozorně každou otázku. Buďte maximálně upřímní a snažte se, aby vaše odpovědi na jednu z otázek neovlivnily odpovědi u jiných. Neexistují správné nebo špatné odpovědi.

<b>1. V období nejistoty obvykle očekávám to nejlepší.</b>	<b>6. Je pro mě důležité stále něco dělat, být zaneprázdněný.</b>
A   B   C   D   E	A   B   C   D   E
nesouhlasím   souhlasím	nesouhlasím   souhlasím
<b>2. Dokážu se snadno uvolnit.</b>	<b>7. Většinou očekávám, že věci nepůjdou po mém.</b>
A   B   C   D   E	A   B   C   D   E
nesouhlasím   souhlasím	nesouhlasím   souhlasím
<b>3. Když se mi něco může pokazit, tak se to také pokazí.</b>	<b>8. Nerozčílím se příliš snadno.</b>
A   B   C   D   E	A   B   C   D   E
nesouhlasím   souhlasím	nesouhlasím   souhlasím
<b>4. Co se týká mé budoucnosti, jsem vždy optimista.</b>	<b>9. Většinou počítám s tím, že se mi nepřihodí nic moc dobrého.</b>
A   B   C   D   E	A   B   C   D   E
nesouhlasím   souhlasím	nesouhlasím   souhlasím
<b>5. Jsem rád se svými přáteli.</b>	<b>10. Celkově očekávám, že se mi přihodí více dobrých věcí, než těch špatných.</b>
A   B   C   D   E	A   B   C   D   E
nesouhlasím   souhlasím	nesouhlasím   souhlasím



## Zjištění míry životní orientace



*Dobrý den.*

*obracím se na Vás s prosbou o zodpovězení několika otázek v podobě dotazníku. Účelem průzkumu je zjistit míru životní orientace ve firmě Eurest. Dotazník je určen všem zaměstnancům Eurestu a je zcela anonymní.*

*Prosím o vyplnění dotazníku Vámi všemi, na které se obracím, neboť pro účelné vyhodnocení je potřeba získat co nejvíce odpovědí. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu budou sloužit účelům GPD a pro mé odborné studium.*

***Děkuji Vám za ochotu a spolupráci.***

*Pavčina Lukoszová*

*Prosím, u následujících otázek zakroužkujete pouze jednu z možných odpovědí.*

**Pohlaví:**

- a) Žena
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**Pracujete v:**

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**Věk:**

- a) 18-25
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**Pozice:**

- a) Zaměstnanec centrály
- b) Vedoucí pracovník
- c) Zaměstnanci restaurace
- d) Jiná

**Nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání:**

- a) Základní
- b) Vyučň list
- c) Střední škola s maturitou
- d) Vyšší odborné
- e) Vysokoškolské

**Jak dlouho pracujete v Eurestu/Scolarestu?**

- a) Méně než 1 rok
- b) 1-5 let
- c) 6-10 let
- d) Více než 10 let

**Zaznamenali jste v posledních 4 měsících pozitivní změny na Vašem pracovišti?**

- a) Ano
- b) Spíše ano
- c) Beze změny
- d) Spíše ne
- e) Ne

## Test životní orientace - revidovaný

*Prosím, zakroužkujte písmeno, které je pro vás nejdůležitější odpovědí na následující škále.*

- A vůbec nesouhlasím
- B nesouhlasím
- C něco mezi
- D souhlasím
- E plně souhlasím

*Přečtěte si pozorně každou otázku. Buďte maximálně upřímní a snažte se, aby vaše odpovědi na jednu z otázek neovlivnily odpovědi u jiných. Neexistují správné nebo špatné odpovědi.*

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## Survey: Life orientation test-revised



Dear Sir or Madam.

I would like to kindly ask you if you could answer several questions in the following questionnaire. The aim of this survey is to define the level of life orientation in Eurest and Scolarest. The questionnaire is aimed for all the employees of both organizations and is anonymous. It will serve for purposes of my future studies and also to purposes of Eurest HR department.

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

*Pavĺina Lukoszov*

Please, from the following questions circle one of the options.

**Gender:**

- a) Woman
- b) Man

**You work in:**

- a) Eurest
- b) Scolarest

**Age:**

- a) 18-25
- b) 26-35
- c) 36-45
- d)  $\geq 46$

**Position:**

- a) Headquarters employee
- b) Unit manager
- c) Operations worker
- d) Other: .....

**Highest education obtained:**

- a) Primary
- b) Apprentice school
- c) High school with graduation exam
- d) Higher education institution
- e) University

**How long have you been working in Eurest/Scolarest?**

- a) Less than 1 year
- b) 1-5 years
- c) 6-10 years
- d) More than 10 years

# Life orientation test - revised

Please circle the letter that best describes you answer according to the following scope:

- A I strongly disagree
- B I disagree little
- C I neither agree nor disagree
- D I agree little
- E I strongly agree

Please be as honest and accurate as you can throughout. Try not to let your response to one statement influence your responses to other statements. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers.

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## Survey: Life orientation test-revised



Good morning.

I would like to kindly ask you if you could answer several questions in the following questionnaire. The aim of this survey is to define the level of life orientation in Eurest and Scolarest. The questionnaire is aimed for all the employees of both organizations and is anonymous. It will serve for purposes of my future studies and also to purposes of Eurest HR department.

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

*Pavĺina Lukoszov*

Please, from the following questions circle one of the options.

**Gender:**

- e) Woman
- f) Man

**You work in:**

- h) Eurest
- i) Scolarest

**Age:**

- e) 18-25
- f) 26-35
- g) 36-45
- h)  $\geq 46$

**Position:**

- e) Headquarters employee
- f) Unit manager
- g) Operations worker
- h) Other: .....

**Highest education obtained:**

- c) Primary
- d) Apprentice school
- e) High school with graduation exam
- f) Higher education institution
- g) University

**How long have you been working in Eurest/Scolarest?**

- g) Less than 1 year
- h) 1-5 years
- i) 6-10 years
- j) More than 10 years

**Have you experienced any positive changes at your workplace in last 4 months?**

- a) Yes
- b) Rather yes
- c) No change
- d) Rather no
- e) No

# Life orientation test - revised

Please circle the letter that best describes your answer according to the following scale:

- A I strongly disagree
- B I disagree little
- C I neither agree nor disagree
- D I agree little
- E I strongly agree

Please be as honest and accurate as you can throughout. Try not to let your response to one statement influence your responses to other statements. There are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers.

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*Appendix 7: LOT-R scoring*

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Do not evaluate</b>				
<b>3.</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Do not evaluate</b>				
<b>6.</b>	<b>Do not evaluate</b>				
<b>7.</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Do not evaluate</b>				
<b>9.</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Final score</b>					

**Scoring scale:**

Strong pessimist	0-4
Pessimist	5-9
Realist	10-14
Optimist	15-19
Strong optimist	20-24

*\* Based on Life orientation test – revised (Scheier, Carver, Bridges: 1994). Adjusted by Eurest for internal purposes*

*Appendix 8: Tables connected to the research part*

**Tab 8: Eurest and Scolarest LOT-R final results**

	Strong pessimist	Pessimist	Realist	Optimist	Strong optimist	Total
<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>468</b>
Eurest	1	26	156	168	49	400
Scolarest	0	1	28	30	9	68
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>409</b>
Eurest	1	16	109	162	46	334
Scolarest	0	2	24	30	19	75

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Table 9: Differences between age categories regarding optimism**

Age 18-35		Strong pessimist + Pessimist	Realist	Strong optimist + Optimist	36+	Strong pessimist + Pessimist	Realist	Strong optimist + Optimist
	1 <sup>st</sup> survey	9.7%	44.7%	45.6%		4.9%	37.8%	57.3%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> survey	7.3%	34.4%	58.3%		3.8%	31.9%	64.2%

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Table 10: Comparison of optimism level between women and men**

MAN		Strong pessimist + Pessimist	Realist	Strong optimist + Optimist	WOMEN	Strong pessimist + Pessimist	Realist	Strong optimist + Optimist
	1 <sup>st</sup> survey	7.0%	37.0%	56.0%		5.7%	39.9%	54.3%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> survey	11.0%	31.9%	57.1%		2.8%	32.7%	64.5%
	Improvement (rel.)	57.0%	-13.9%	2.0%		-50.4%	-18.1%	18.6%

*Source: Author's own creation, 2015*

**Table 11: Improvements of optimism level**

	<b>Strong pessimist + Pessimist</b>	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Strong optimist + Optimist</b>
<b>In total</b>	<b>-22.4%</b>	<b>-17.3%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>
Eurest	-24.6%	-16.3%	14.8%
Scolarest	81.3% <sup>10</sup>	-22.3%	13.9%

Source: Author's own creation, 2015

**Table 12: Comparison of optimism level between younger and older employees**

		<b>Strong pessimist + Pessimist</b>	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Strong optimist + Optimist</b>		<b>Strong pessimist + Pessimist</b>	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Strong optimist + Optimist</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>		<b>Age 18 - 35</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>		<b>45.6%</b>	<b>Age 36+</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Eurest	11.6%		45.3%	43.0%	5.4%	37.3%		57.3%
Scolarest	0.0%		41.2%	58.8%	2.0%	41.2%		56.9%
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>	<b>7.3%</b>		<b>34.4%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>		<b>64.2%</b>
Eurest	8.5%		29.3%	62.2%	4.0%	33.7%		62.3%
Scolarest	0.0%		64.3%	35.7%	3.3%	24.6%		72.1%
<b>Improvement (rel.)</b>	<b>-24.9%</b>		<b>-23.0%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>-22.3%</b>	<b>-15.5%</b>		<b>12.1%</b>
Eurest	-26.6%	-35.5%	44.6%	-26.7%	-9.5%	8.7%		
Scolarest	0.0%	56.1%	-39.3%	67.2%	-40.3%	26.9%		

Source: Author's own creation, 2015

**Table 13: Comparison of optimism level between different job positions**

Unit managers		<b>Strongpessimist + Pessimist</b>	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Strongoptimist + Optimist</b>	Restaurant workers	<b>Strongpessimist + Pessimist</b>	<b>Realist</b>	<b>Strongoptimist + Optimist</b>
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> survey</b>		2.9%	11.4%		85.7%		6.2%
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> survey</b>		3.3%	20.0%	76.7%		4.7%	33.5%	61.7%
<b>Improvement (rel.)</b>		<b>16.7%</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>-10.6%</b>		<b>-23.8%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>

Source: Author's own creation, 2015

<sup>10</sup> The alarming 81.3 % increase was caused by a very low frequency of data (1<sup>st</sup> survey: 1 respondent, 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: 2 respondents).