

# **Hedonic and Eudaimonic Experiences: *Well-Being Across Work Situations***

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# Aim of presentation

- Present theoretical perspectives and preliminary empirical results on the relations between **positive experiences** defined as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being and **work characteristics**

## Two perspectives in well-being research (Ryan & Deci, 2001):

- Hedonic approach focuses on good feelings such as pleasure (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999)
  - The good life can be reduced to a Good-Bad dimension
  - Well being defined by pleasure attainment and pain avoidance
  - Core emotion: Pleasure / satisfaction

## Two perspectives in well-being research

- Eudaimonic approach focuses on the fully functioning person (Ryan & Deci, 2001)
  - To live in accordance with ones "daimon" – or true self (Waterman, 1993; Ryff and Singer, 2000)
  - adds flourishing to pleasure
  - Core emotion: Interest / engagement
  - The good life cannot be reduced to one dimension, and is more than pleasure
- Different research focus – knowledge both divergent and complementary

# Regulation of behavior

- **PLEASURE** (hedonic) signalizes well-being
  - A "returned to homeostasis" message
  - Arousal reduction
  - Cognitive flexibility
  - Broadens up attention (open for activity changes)
  - Builds social relations, fosters cooperation and playfulness
  - Driven by the "Liking" system (opiates, oxytocin/vasopressin)
- **INTEREST** (eudaimonic) signalizes commitment and expectation
  - Postpones homeostasis
  - Arousal increase
  - Motivates problem solving
  - Effort and exploration
    - Building skills (narrowed attention)
    - Not a particularly social emotion
    - Perhaps driven by the "Wanting" system (dopamine)

# Idea behind research question

- Well-being defined by the positive experiences employees have, both hedonic and eudaimonic
- Hedonia and eudaimonia are
  - founded in different motivational-emotional systems
  - have different functions in the regulation of human interaction and work behaviour
  - affect well-being among employees differently
- However, hedonic and eudaimonic emotions are experienced in different types of work tasks
- By investigating specific and typical work situations we can learn more about the complex nature of well-being

## Research questions:

- Eudaimonia (i.e. interest, engagement, curiosity) is typically experienced in core work
- Hedonia (i.e. pleasure, satisfaction, joy) is typically experienced in routine work and non work

# Method

- Data collected among members of Occupational Health Services in Norway (N = 465) by means of a questionnaire spring 2006
- Sample cross-sectional within health services, mean age 48 (SD = 10), 65% female and 25% male
- Analyses included Pearson's correlation, Factor analysis, MANOVA, ANOVA, Bonferroni Post Hoc Correction, and non-parametric test (Kruskal-Wallice)

# Questionnaire

- Day Reconstruction Method (Kahneman)
  - Work characteristics coded in core work, routine work and non work
- Hedonic: satisfaction, joy, happiness
- Eudaimonic: engagement, creativity, inspiration

Table 1; Differences in hedonic and eudaimonic experiences in work situations

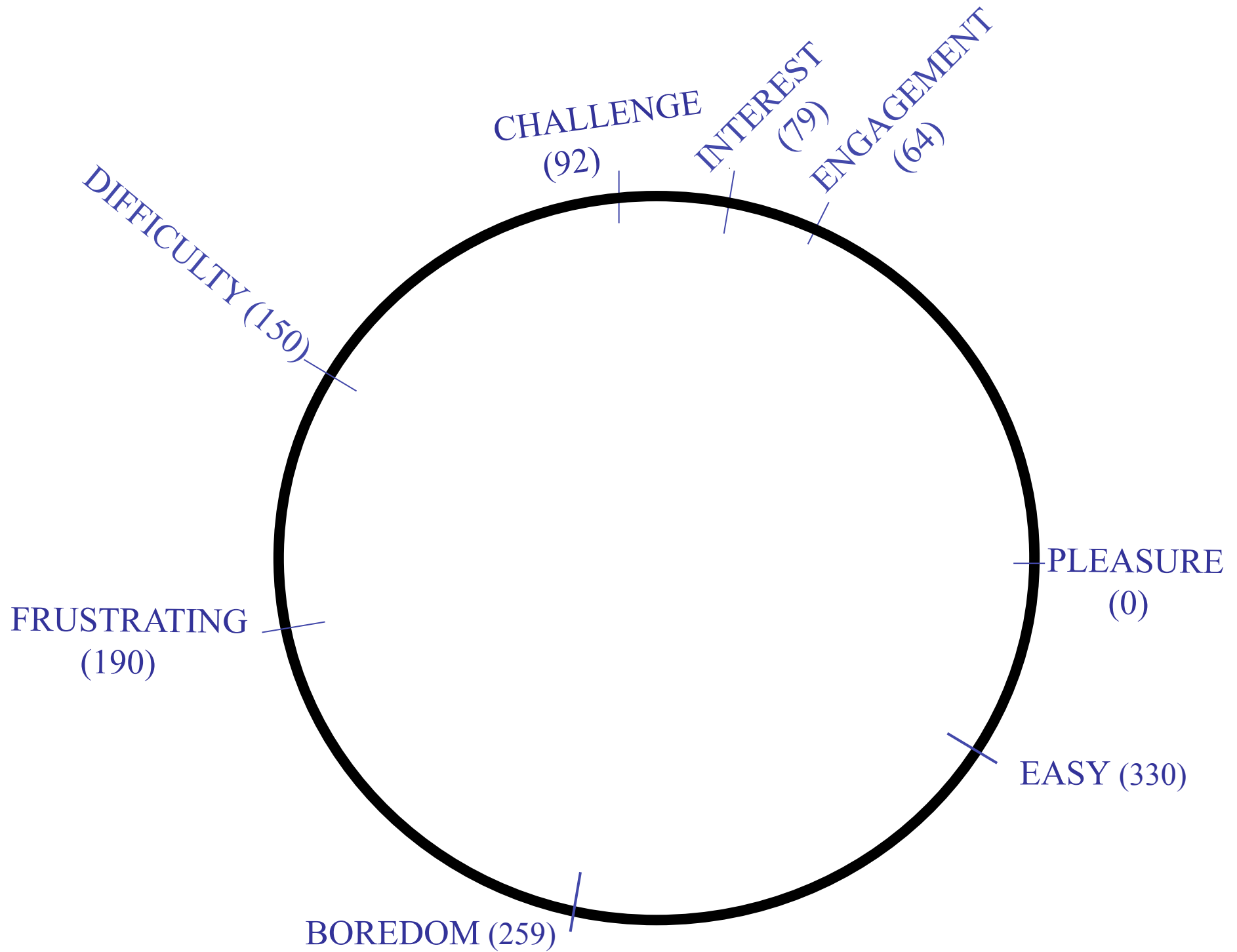
	<i>Situation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>Eudaimonic</i>	Core work	5,1	1,2	
	Routine work	4,1	1,3	
	Non-work	4,3	1,8	
	<i>Total</i>	5,0	1,2	34,7***
<i>Hedonic</i>	Core work	4,3	1,3	
	Routine work	3,8	1,5	
	Non-work	4,6	1,7	
	<i>Total</i>	4,3	1,3	6,9***

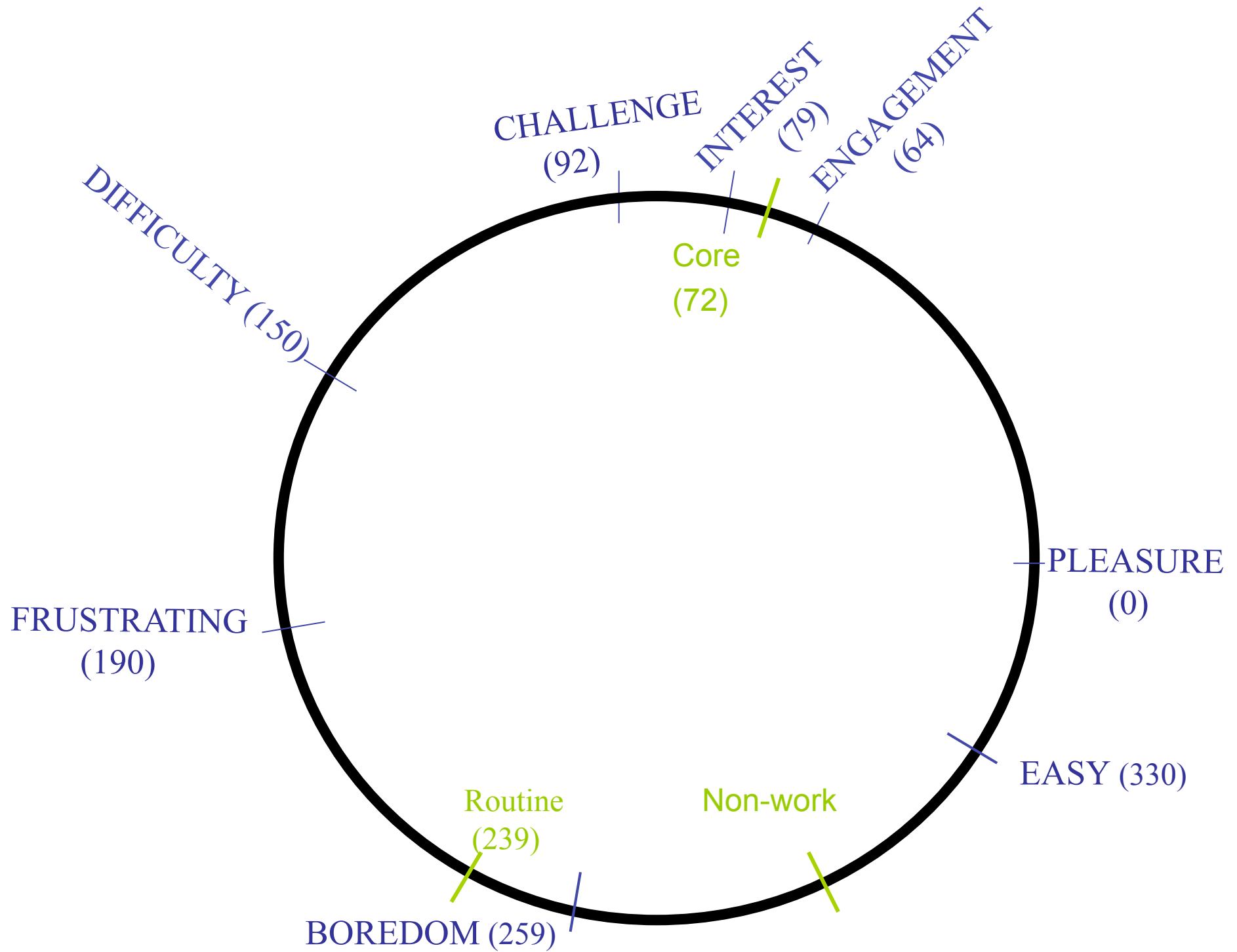
Note: N = 1040-94-27. \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ ; Wilks Lambda = .95,  $F = 16,7$ ,  $p < .001$

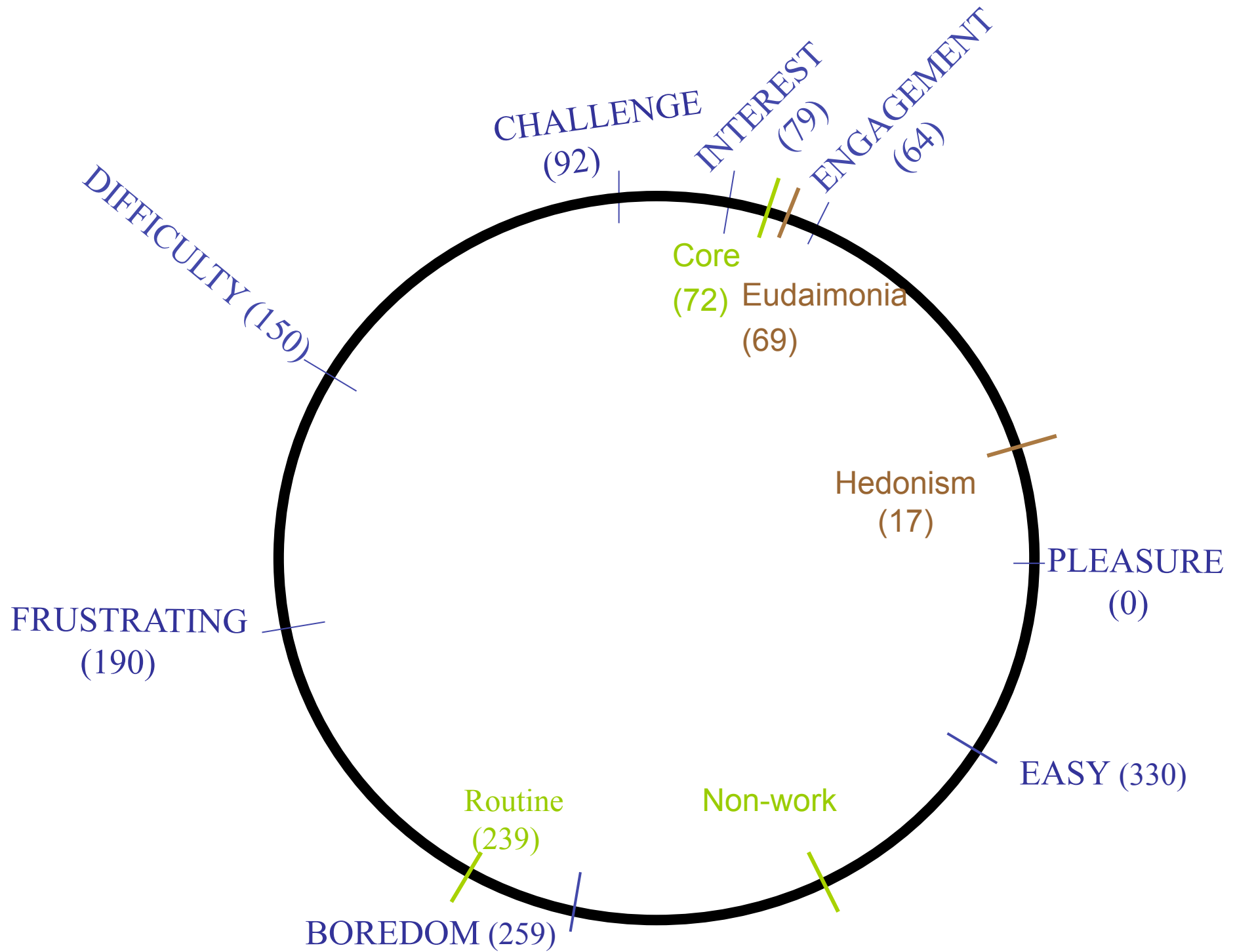
Table 2; Differences between core work, routine work and non-work.  
Results from Bonferroni Post Hoc Correction

	Core work	Routine work
<b><i>Eudaimonic</i></b>		
Routine work	$p < .001$	
Non-work	$p < .001$	$p = ns$
<b><i>Hedonic</i></b>		
Routine work	$p < .001$	
Non-work	$p = ns$	$p < .05$

Note: N = 1040-94-27; ns = non significant.







# Discussion


- Core work seem to be engaging and inspiring. Fosters personal growth
- Pleasure and satisfaction tendend to be more often experienced in non work situations (e.g. drive to work, talk on phone, surf on internet etc)

# Discussion

- Methodological implications
  - Sample size
  - multilevel analyses to control for within-subject variance
- Further research should include both approaches to well being in order to understand the complexity of well-being  
Not enough to ask employees to grade their well-being on a general measure of satisfaction

# Discussion

- These results give hints that support the assumption that
  - Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are experienced in different areas of work
  - Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being have different functions in the regulation of human interaction and work behavior
  - By investigating specific work tasks we can learn more about the complex nature of well-being

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hand holding a pen and writing on a document. The document has some faint lines and text, but it is out of focus. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "Thank you for your attention!" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is a light, neutral color. There are teal-colored decorative bars on the left and bottom edges of the overall image.

**Thank you for your attention!**