



Handelshøyskolen BI

GRA 19703 Master Thesis

Thesis Master of Science 100% - W

Predefinert informasjon

Startdato:	16-01-2022 09:00	Termin:	202210
Sluttdato:	01-07-2022 12:00	Vurderingsform:	Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)
Eksamensform:	T		
Flowkode:	202210 10936 IN00 W T		
Intern sensor:	(Anonymisert)		

Deltaker

Navn:

Informasjon fra deltaker

Tittel *:	Should I stay, or should I go? - An exploratory analysis of why some people decide to leave their organization after completing a leadership development program
Navn på veileder *:	Øyvind Lund Martinsen

Inneholder besvarelsen konfidensielt materiale?:	Nei	Kan besvarelsen offentliggjøres?:	Ja
---	-----	--	----

Gruppe

Gruppenavn:	(Anonymisert)
Gruppenummer:	154
Andre medlemmer i gruppen:	



Norwegian
Business School

Master Thesis

- Should I stay, or should I go? -

An exploratory analysis of why some people decide to leave their organization after completing a leadership development program

Hand-in date:

01.07.2022

Supervisor:

Øvind Lund Martinsen

Campus:

BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo

Examination code and name:

GRA19703 – Master Thesis

Programme:

Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, we want to thank our supervisor Øyvind Lund Martinsen for supporting us throughout the process. Thank you for all the feedback and input you have provided. We appreciate that you have challenged us and pushed us to think and work harder.

Without knowledgeable participants, this thesis would not have a good foundation. We want to thank our participants for taking the time, showing interest, and sharing knowledge and experiences. You all have inspired us, and we have learned an incredible amount, we really hope to see you again in the future.

We also have to thank all of our friends and family (and one of us is so lucky that she has a significant other), who has been there for us during this stressful period. You have felt our stress and worked as our psychologists, mentors, mental punching bags, and most prominent supporters all the way through. We totally agree upon one thing we; look forward to returning to our lives and spending time with you without having minor breakdowns or forcing you to talk about the theoretical foundation or empirical findings of our thesis. It may seem like we have forgotten that you exist, but you have to know that without you, we would not have been able to get through this period.

Last but not least, we would like to thank each other. There have been a lot of early mornings and even more late nights. There has been frustration, many documents, and countless hours of work put into this thesis. We have faced challenges from day one, and for two girls who have decision refusal far above average, it has not always been as easy to make choices. Yet we have stood together, motivated, and supported each other every step of the way. This process and this result would not have been the same without each other. So, thank you. Thank you for your patience, thank you for understanding, thank you for the discussions, thank you for inspiration, good conversations, stress, tears, and laughter. Now we have delivered and finished the task, but we will take the friendship that has developed with us on our journey.

Oslo, 01.07.2022



Martine Elise Hansen



Helene Uhlen Maurset

Table of content

Abstract	3
Introduction	1
<i>Research question:</i>	3
<i>Purpose of the study:</i>	3
Literature Review	3
<i>Leadership Development</i>	3
Definitions and distinctions	4
Leadership training programs.....	5
The outcomes of Leadership Development	6
A critical perspective on Leadership Development.....	8
<i>Voluntary turnover</i>	9
<i>Career mobility</i>	10
<i>What affects an individual's decision to transition into a new job?</i>	11
<i>Why do people stay, and why do people leave?</i>	12
Organizational Commitment	12
Perceived Organizational Support.....	14
Person-Organization fit.....	15
Perceived Support for Employee Development.....	16
Methodology	18
<i>Research method</i>	18
<i>Data collection</i>	19
<i>Sample</i>	20
<i>Conducting the interviews</i>	21
<i>Coding and analysis of data</i>	22
<i>Quality criteria</i>	23
Reliability	23
Validity	24
<i>Ethical considerations</i>	25

Empirical Findings.....	26
<i>Finding 1: Gaining confidence as a leader.....</i>	<i>26</i>
Confirmation of personal characteristics and ability	26
The language of leadership	28
Perceived external value of the leadership training	29
<i>Finding 2: Frustration towards the home organization</i>	<i>31</i>
Frustration at the home organization based on content	31
Realizing the organization isn't practising what they're preaching	33
Lack of follow-up after the program ended	35
<i>Finding 3 - Career ambitions and desirability of other options.....</i>	<i>36</i>
Inspiration for future career.....	36
Expectations after completing the training.....	39
Perception of career opportunities in the current organization.....	41
<i>Finding 4 - Loyalty to oneself vs. loyalty to the organization.....</i>	<i>43</i>
Obligation toward the organization	44
"Putting myself in the centre"	45
Discussion	47
<i>How leadership development can influence perceived accessibility of other career options</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>How leadership development can influence the desire to leave the organization</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>How leadership development can influence desirability of other options</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Increased loyalty versus increased agency.....</i>	<i>54</i>
Limitations and further research	56
Conclusion.....	58
References	60
Appendix A.....	66
Appendix B.....	69
Appendix C.....	72

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to shed light on potential unintended consequences of leadership development, more specifically why some participants choose to leave their organization after attending a leadership development program. The main focus is to investigate how leadership development can influence the participants' desirability of leaving the organization and perceived ease at leaving the organization.

The study was conducted by qualitative interviews with former participants of leadership development programs that had changed professional positions within two years after the program ended. The sample consisted of 9 participants from various organizations in both the public and private sector in Norway, and they had all attended leadership development programs held by different suppliers and facilitators. The research design adopted an exploratory approach, as the aim was to uncover the subjective experiences of the participants and search for emerging themes from appearing from the data.

The findings suggests that leadership development may influence the perceived ease of leaving the organization in multiple ways, such as increasing the participants perceived mobility capital, increased career ambitions and self-efficacy beliefs, which could affect the participants accessibility to alternative opportunities. Additionally, findings suggest that leadership development may trigger awareness about lack of P-O fit and Perceived Organizational Support potentially influencing the desirability of other options. The most prominent finding of why participants leave the organization after leadership development was lack of desirable and accessible career opportunities in the current organization. Some findings suggest that leadership development could influence the career ambitions and expectations towards reaching career goals, and thereby higher expectations towards career development at the current workplace.

The findings of this study can be used as a suggestion for further research on the topic, as well as increased attention on what we perceive to be a gap in the research literature related to unforeseen and unintended consequences of leadership development

Introduction

Businesses today are spending vast amounts of resources on leadership development (Ho, 2016). According to a survey carried out by *FRONT Leadership* (2021), organizations in Norway spend between thirty to forty thousand Norwegian Kroner (NOK) per leader, and 86% of organizations in Norway with more than 200 employees are practicing leadership development in various forms. Leadership development programs have been defined as “programs that have been systematically designed to enhance leader knowledge, skills, abilities, and other components” (Lacerenza, 2017, p. 1687). They are undoubtedly high on the agenda both in today’s business world and have gained an increasing amount of attention in recent research decades (Day, 2000).

You may ask why organizations spend these incredible amounts of resources on this? One desired outcome of leadership development is the learning of the individual leader, specifically the acquisition of competencies that support the individual’s ability to lead (Wallace et al., 2021). “A competency is an identifiable aspect of prospective work behavior attributable to the individual that is expected to contribute positively or and/or negatively to organizational effectiveness” (Tett et al., 2000, p. 216). Leadership is seen as a highly valued commodity as it influences the effectiveness and success of the organization (Yukl, 2013), and by improving the leadership competence of the individual leader, organizations are expecting a return on investment (ROI) in terms of both organizational and subordinate outcomes (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Organizations are thereby investing in increasing the competence of their leaders, hoping it will lead to a competitive advantage.

However, if the organization were to fail at retaining their leaders after sending them on a leadership development program, it would mean not only loss in terms of the general cost of turnover (Heskett et al. 2008), but also loss in terms of the investment the company has spent increasing the competence of the leader.

Explained by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and the Norm of Reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), it is widely accepted within the research of Human Resource Development that supporting employees with training and development opportunities lead to increased organizational commitment and thereby reducing turnover rates (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). However, some studies have probed into situations and contexts in which leadership development may have the opposite effect and increase turnover. In a qualitative study by Larsson et al.

(2020), some leadership training participants experienced negative emotions aimed at their home organization as a result of the program. The study suggested that sometimes leadership training can act as a catalyst of voluntary turnover due to employees distancing and disengaging with their home organization (Larsson et al., 2020), affecting the employee's *desire* to transition to a new workplace.

Additionally, several studies discuss the paradox of investing in employee development activities in terms of how it can lead to increased commitment and turnover intentions (Lee & Bruvold, 2003; Ito & Brotheridge, 2005; Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). If the employee experience perceived investment in development it may lead to increased affective attachment to the organization as the employee perceives the organization cares about their wellbeing and contribution, as well as facilitating a more significant obligation towards the organization as the employee wish to "return" the investment made in them (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). However, increasing the competence of an employee may also enable them to gain greater access to jobs outside the organization, as participation in development programs may send a signal to the external labor market regarding their value and thereby increase the individual's employability or mobility capital (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005). This affects the employee's *ease of movement*, a known predictor of turnover (March & Simon, 1958).

Why leaders choose to leave their job may be influenced by several factors (Feldman & Ng, 2007) and is extensively researched within the field of both turnover and career mobility. Organizations must be prepared to lose employees, especially in today's labor market, where employees expect their careers to unfold across multiple employers, organizations, and roles (Kraimer et al., 2010). When organizations invest in training and development, there is always a risk that the employee might leave despite the investments made in them, thereby losing expenditure and the competence itself.

However, we find it interesting to investigate further whether leadership development could, in some cases, contribute to increased turnover. What if the employee is leaving not despite the investments made in improving their leadership competence, but is there also a chance that the employee is leaving *because* of it? With this in mind, we propose the following research question.

Research question:

Why do some people decide to leave their organization after completing a leadership development program?

Purpose of the study:

In this study, we have conducted a qualitative study with former participants of various leadership development programs in Norway that have changed jobs, either internally or externally, short time (within two years) after the program ended. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into what effects attendance and completion of a leadership development program can have on the participants' career decisions within a few years after the end of the program, and especially what experiences and learnings the participants have that could have affected their decision to change jobs and leave the organization. Through qualitative interviews, we seek to highlight the participant's personal experiences and explore answers to the question of *why* some people decide to leave their organization after completing a leadership development program with an emphasis on how leadership development may influence the employee's *desirability of* and *ease of movement*.

Our contribution to research on leadership development is to shed light on potential unintended consequences of leadership development, as there seems to be a gap in research, especially related to possible adverse effects (Arnulf et al., 2016). Investigating why some people voluntarily leave their organization after leadership development is highly relevant for organizations to understand what the participants are experiencing. We also suspect that both organizations and leadership development suppliers are interested in learning more about the potential unintended consequences leadership development may lead to for the participants, considering the significant amounts of resources invested in such programs. These understandings can, in the future, lead to better HR planning and insight into how to a greater extent, one can retain leaders within the organization.

Literature Review

Leadership Development

Organizations have for years been lavishing time and resources on developing and improving the capabilities of managers and leaders. In the US,

leadership development remains a multibillion-dollar business (Yukl, 2013).

Leadership can be defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” (Northouse, 2019, p. 43). Throughout the years, many leadership theories have been developed, and it is seen as a highly valued commodity. Individuals seek information on how to become more effective as a leader, and organizations seek those with leadership ability to improve the bottom line (Northouse, 2019).

Leadership is something that all organization's care about. But what most interests them is not which leadership theory or model is “right” (which may never be settled definitively), but how to develop leaders and leadership as effectively and efficiently as possible.

(Day et al., 2014, p. 79)

While leadership theory and research have a more extended history of more than a century, the leadership development field has a relatively short history. The value given to leadership development follows the idea that with an increasing rate of change, organizations are dealing with both internal and experiencing external environments leading to many new challenges that leaders in the 21st century need to address and overcome (Yukl, 2013). Therefore, developing leadership competencies and techniques is seen as essential to ensure that leaders and managers have the capabilities to meet these challenges. The increasing spending of resources on this field is seen as a competitive advantage in business (Day, 2000). Naturally, it has also been a field given much attention in research in recent decades, as indicated by the number of publications on the topic (Day, 2000). Academic institutions have responded by providing more programs and subjects on leadership studies (Northouse, 2019).

Definitions and distinctions

There are disagreements on basic definitions, theoretical orientations, conceptual considerations, and measurement of leadership development (Wallace et al., 2021). A definition by Groves (2007) cited in (Amagoh, 2009) is that “institutional leadership development can be defined as planned and systematic efforts to improve the quality of leadership” (p. 990). According to Day (2000), leadership development approaches are oriented towards “building capacity in

anticipation of unforeseen challenges” (p. 582). Lacerenza et al. (2017) use the term ‘leadership training’ and define it as “programs that have been systematically designed to enhance leader knowledge, skills, abilities, and other components” (p. 1687).

There are several distinctions, first between leadership and management development and then between leader and leadership development. The difference between leadership development and management development lies in how generally leadership processes are seen as those enabling groups of people to work and function together. In contrast, management processes are more related to the specifics of the position and organization (Day, 2000).

The distinction between leader development and leadership development is also relevant to keep in mind. Leader development is an individual approach focused on building knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with formal leadership roles. The aim is to construct intrapersonal competence or human capital, including skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation (Day, 2000). Leadership development, on the other hand, relates to interpersonal competence, essentially building the capacity of social networks and relationships among a group of individuals that enhance cooperation and exchange processes. The emphasis on building social capital and interpersonal intelligence means focusing on the interaction between the individual and the organizational environment. Since leadership is seen as a social process including both leaders and followers (Northouse, 2019), building leadership capacity relates to all employees in an organization, not just individuals holding formal leadership roles. Although there is a distinction between these two approaches, it is generally seen as beneficial for organizations to bridge the two approaches when developing their leaders (Day, 2000) and the broad leadership development definition often includes both approaches (Day et al., 2014), as will it be used in the broad definition in this study.

Leadership training programs

Leadership can be developed in many ways, such as formal leadership training, development activities, and self-help activities. While developmental activities usually are embedded within the day-to-day job assignments, formal leadership training often occurs during a specific time frame and is conducted away from the manager’s work site and conducted by professionals in the field

(Yukl, 2013). Organizations widely use formal training programs for leadership development, and most large organizations use these programs. Most of these programs are designed to increase lower- and middle-level managers' generic skills and behaviors to improve managerial effectiveness and advancement (Yukl, 2013). There is also variation in the nature of these training programs. Some might last only a few hours, while many last for a year or more. These programs can also focus on specific skills or encompass a broader approach to leadership. Several universities offer a management development program (executive MBA). Many programs also apply a particular theory of leadership, such as transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Several activities can be used to facilitate learning both for formal and informal leadership development. Some common activities are 360-degree feedback, mentoring, coaching, simulations, development assessment centers, and personal growth programs (Yukl, 2013). Hereby, we will use the term *leadership development programs* to describe formal leadership training programs in a broad definition.

The outcomes of Leadership Development

A significant goal of leadership development is to increase leadership effectiveness, which is the leader's success in influencing followers towards the organizational goals (Amagoh, 2009). It is generally understood that the effectiveness of the programs depends on the context and organizational conditions such as learning climate and support from the boss of the participant; however, generally results from a specific method do not ensure results for the individual manager (Yukl, 2013). However, there seems to be lacking a shared understanding of the evaluation criteria of leadership development as well as what should be and would be the outcome of the process. There also seems to be a lack in measuring outcomes of the leadership development programs (Wallace et al., 2021).

Still, a meta-analysis by Lacerenza et al. (2017), reviews 335 leadership training evaluations where results indicate leadership training to be more effective than initially suggested. This review evaluates training effectiveness in four categories; reactions, learning, transfer, and results. Reactions refer to the attitudinal component, such as whether the trainee sees value in the training, motivational elements, or positive reactions (such as perceived organizational support). Often reaction data is collected after training programs but not

necessarily published or analyzed in the literature. Learning refers to permanent changes in knowledge or skills as the output of the experience, transfer refers to what the training will do or to what extent they use their learnings on-the-job (behaviors). Results refer to how training programs affect organizational objectives, often in terms of the benefit of training vs. program cost (ROI), and outcomes could be both organizational and subordinate. The findings indicate that training improves reactions (.63), learning (.73), transfer (.82) and results (.72).

Day et al. (2014) reviewed 25 years of leadership development literature to understand the field's development. It is not just about choosing a leadership theory and training people in behaviors supporting that theory. Still, it is a rather complex field that can sometimes be challenging to navigate. This could be connected to how human development involves a set of complex processes that need to be understood (McCauley et al., 2006), and also, since measuring the consequences and outcomes of leadership training provides challenges due to how the nature of leadership development is both multilevel and longitudinal (Day et al., 2014). Training, in general, typically involves the use of proven approaches to solve known problems. Many challenges that leaders face are complex and hard to define. Short-term training interventions are either not enough to make a difference, nor could it be hard to identify the intervention needed (Day et al., 2014). There is a lack of consensus regarding the correct approach to performing leadership development. There should be a link between development training provided and job performance (or other preferable outcomes). However, it is hard to measure these outcomes immediately and isolate the straightforward relationship between the two variables. Day et al. (2014) conclude that leadership development is a highly complex interaction between people and the surrounding environment. It is also partly influenced by parental modeling and factors such as personality, mental ability, and relationships with others.

In a review by Wallace et al. (2021) a typology is presented of leader and leadership development learning outcomes. The authors present a multidimensional framework of outcomes, including cognitive learning outcomes, behavioral learning outcomes, and affective/motivational learning outcomes. Cognitive learning is essentially the acquired knowledge turned into complex cognitive structures or schemas, behavioral learning outcomes build on the cognitive models and connect the mental models with behaviors and make these specific behavioral procedures. Lastly, affective/motivational learning outcomes

refer to changes in the individual's internal states that drive behaviors and change affective attitudes. These internal states can include motivational aspects, self-efficacy, goal-setting, and commitment as examples (Wallace et al., 2021).

A critical perspective on Leadership Development

In addition to the meta-analysis proving the efficiency of leadership development, other studies suggest more specific outcomes and more critical perspectives, as mentioned in the introduction.

Larsson et al. (2020) found that a significant implication of a leadership development program is how it can create dissatisfaction with the home organization. A study carried out by repeated interviews with ten managers participating in an open leadership program reveals that half of the participants reflected on a sense of distancing themselves from how the home organization practices leadership as a consequence of the program (Larsson et al., 2020). Reasons for this were found to be among a few things, that there is a paradox in leadership development. On one side, the development of leaders is supposed to enhance individual agency with a stronger sense of self and self-narratives. However, the leadership development outcomes are intended to be unitarist, meaning that all work for the same purpose: the organization's good. These programs can also become the context for framing narratives of the self shaped by the ideas forged in the program. This might lead to different outcomes. Some might appreciate the organization more, and others might be triggered to question how they fit in, relate to, or identify with the organization. The leadership development programs might offer participants a place for emotive release where suppressed emotions within the home organization are surfacing (Larsson et al., 2020).

For the participants that reported engaging with the organization after the program, it was seen to help them improve managerial practices, re-negotiate and re-shape the work environment and demand more from the supervisor. For the participants that became disengaged with the home organization after the program, the participants attributed problems to the organization (structure, leadership, communication) or felt that the organization did not fit the ideal presented in the program, which led to the managers distancing themselves from the home organization (Larsson et al., 2020). In essence, these programs have a dual role: enhancing agency and shaping expectations of how organizations

should be, setting up participants to return to the home organization with a potential heroic leadership or messiah discourse. Some might also subscribe to these programs as an exit route (Larsson et al., 2020).

The theoretical background within leadership development has increasingly put the spotlight on the participants' identity as a focus for development. The theory largely deals with how a participant's identity is strengthened, repaired and developed during and after a leadership development program (Carroll & Nicholson, 2013). Furthermore, Hay and Hodgkinson (2008) found that participants gained increased self-esteem in some leadership development programs, which can be categorized as the affective/motivational learning outcomes presented by Wallace et al. (2021).

Voluntary turnover

To understand why people leave their organizations after leadership development, it is relevant to investigate voluntary turnover and career mobility literature. Turnover is defined as the “movement of members across the boundary of an organization” (Price, 2001, p.600). It is in literature often researched as the voluntary choice of the employee to leave the organization (Staw, 1980)

Research on the determinants of voluntary turnover includes many variables. Still, a precise predictor of turnover is turnover intentions which explain “the (subjective) probability that an individual will change his or her job within a certain time period” (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004, p.113).

The subjective experience of work includes many factors, which entails that researching turnover and turnover intentions is highly complex. Many models have suggested determinants of turnover (Price) and a meta-analysis by Griffeth et al. (2000) presents a quantitative review of antecedents of turnover and turnover, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job search intentions, withdrawal behavior leadership, and factors related to the external environment such as alternative job opportunities (Griffeth et al., 2000).

Turnover has also been investigated as a process that unfolds over time due to how embedded a person is in the organization. In this model, the attractiveness of other jobs is determined by the fit with the current position, and to what extent the current job matches the goals and plans the employee has for the future (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Career mobility

Career mobility, also known as job mobility, refers to «patterns of intra- and inter-organizational transitions over the course of a person’s work life” (Sullivan, 1999). This definition encapsulates several different types of changes related to an individual’s career, such as job change, which refers to substantial changes in work responsibilities or hierarchical level in the same organization or organizational change refers to changes across different employing firms. (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Research on career mobility emerged in response to significant changes in local and global labor markets in the late 20th century (Sullivan, 1999). Arthur and Rousseau (1996) discussed the changing career landscape and new labor market realities in the publication *The Boundaryless Career*. The boundaryless career concept implies that employees hold expectations that their careers will unfold and develop across multiple employers, organizations and work roles and that it is primarily up to the employee to manage their career (Kraimer et al., 2010).

This attitude has led to individuals evaluating their careers on more subjective terms and criteria for success (Heslin, 2005). The trends in career research after the millennium focus much more on career transitions than career stability (McElroy & Weng, 2016). Employees today realize that job security may not be a realistic goal, and many are ready to become more mobile. Individuals have also become more self-directed about obtaining a variety of work experiences and knowledge across jobs and organizations. Many employees are willing to seek out different job positions, and some evidence that job mobility is increasing at least in industrialized countries (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004).

Job mobility is essential to understand for effective human resource planning and skill development (Feldman & Ng, 2007), and a considerable amount of research related to job mobility also exists in the field of economics (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004) considering the structural and economic barriers of mobility. However, in the field of psychology, job mobility is often researched in relation to turnover and turnover intentions (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2004) and overlaps in several areas.

Feldman & Ng (2007) also explain how individuals move from the point of career equilibrium where they are content and comfortable with their current jobs and see no urgency to change to a state of disequilibrium in which they decide to transition into something new. Three proposed broad categories disrupt

career equilibrium: (1) structural factors, (2) individual differences, and (3) decisional factors. Structural factors affect the opportunities for job mobility and exist at the societal level, individual differences affect preferences for mobility. They exist at the individual level and decisional factors determine to what extent a mobility option is executed and exist at the individual level. After individuals recognize the opportunity for mobility and have a preference for specific job mobility options, they need to decide whether or not to pursue the job change. These decisions are primarily determined by the individual's subjective norms and attitudes towards the behavior and perceived control of the behavior (Feldman & Ng, 2007)

What affects an individual's decision to transition into a new job?

Much of current research related to turnover is based on the foundation of March & Simon's (1958) general model of voluntary turnover, which predicts that turnover can be determined by *perceived desirability* of leaving and *perceived ease* at leaving the organization (Jiang et al., 2012).

Ease of movement is generally characterized by the availability of jobs (e.g. unemployment rate) and individual characteristics that may increase an employee's mobility, often referred to as mobility capital (Trevor, 2001). Individual mobility capital can therefore be seen as the determinant of how easy it is for an employee to move between jobs or "the likelihood that an individual could find alternative employment" (Trevor, 2001, p. 635). March and Simon state that "individual attributes define employability rank" (1985, p. 101), where the individual's experiences, skills, and competencies determine the individual's availability of jobs (Trevor, 2001). However, since an employee's productivity is generally not visible, specific attributes can signal to the external labor market regarding productivity and thereby the employee's value, which can affect alternative employment opportunities available. Completed development training should therefore signal productivity towards other employers. It enhances the individuals' movement capital and can signal to the market that they are worth hiring (Trevor, 2001).

Desirability of movement has mainly been connected to job satisfaction which can include various factors such as compensation, style of supervision, and participation in decisions (Trevor, 2001). Job satisfaction is a significant predictor of turnover in most research, and the psychological processes that lead to job

satisfaction to voluntary turnover have been frequently researched (Trevor, 2001). This is also consistent with the literature on career mobility. If the employee wants to do something more challenging and fulfilling or reach their career objectives and they see an attractive mobility option, this could increase desirability for mobility. Those who perceive that they have attractive opportunities at present, report less intention to relocate (Feldman & Ng, 2007). There could be many reasons behind a desire to transition into a new job, Nicholson and West (1988) found the two most cited reasons for job change were (1) wanting to do something more challenging and fulfilling and (“) wanting to reach career objectives. This is in line with career motivation theory (London, 1983) which explains that individuals’ work behaviors and decisions are to some extent motivated by their desire to achieve their own career goals. Employees may be motivated to engage in certain behaviors that may lead to being considered for future positions that are consistent with their career goals. On the other hand, employees may leave an organization voluntarily to pursue desirable career opportunities in other organizations or by self-employment if this is perceived to be the best way to reach their career objectives (Kraimer et al. 2010).

Another aspect of research on career mobility that affects the decision to transition into a new job is the individual's readiness for change or efficacy beliefs. Individuals will only feel ready to decide on change if they think they can successfully make the transition and succeed in their new role (Feldman & Ng, 2007). An individual’s job mobility and decision to transition into a new position are seldom determined by only a few factors. Often a wide variety of factors across different levels on both structural and individual levels of analysis will need to be favorable for an individual to engage in specific mobility transitions (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Why do people stay, and why do people leave?

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been extensively researched in relation to turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000), and can affect individuals’ desirability and perceived ease of transitioning into a new job. An understanding is that people stay if they are committed to their organization and satisfied with their job and leave if they aren’t (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Organizational Commitment has been defined in many ways. There has been a lack of consistency between the definitions of the constructs. Still, perhaps the common definition is Meyer and Allen (1991) “a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization” (p.67). Meyer and Allen (1991) also defined three themes of commitment within the research which are (1) affective attachment to an organization, (2) costs associated with leaving an organization, and (3) an obligation to remain in an organization. These three themes have been conceptualized as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The three forms of commitment are seen as separate psychological states but may not be entirely independent of each other.

Affective commitment is the “employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). This approach describes the employee’s affective orientation towards the organization, meaning that the employee stays with the organization because he or she wants to do so. Antecedents of affective commitment could be seen as mechanisms that help create a desire in the employees to remain in the organization. This could be any variables that contribute to (a) the employee becoming more involved in the entity, (b) the employee recognizing the value of associating with the entity, or (c) the employee deriving their identity from association with the entity (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Affective commitment has the most substantial negative relationship among the three factors with turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Continuance commitment describes how the continuation of remaining in the organization is a consequence of recognizing the costs related to leaving. Here it is the perceived cost if leaving that affects the employee, and they would stay in the organization because they *need* to do so. Costs could, for example, be side bets that are important to the employee (e.g., pension, seniority, benefits), which the individual will lose by leaving. Other factors could be considered costs for the individual, such as loss of freedom, psychological costs, and so on (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Normative commitment is when an employee remains in the organization due to a feeling of obligation to continue the employment. This means that the

individuals perceive it as morally right to stay within the company. They feel they *ought* to remain in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is about how employees beliefs concerning the extent to which their organization cares about their wellbeing and values their contributions (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011); in other words, does the employee believe that the organization is willing to provide resources for developing and rewarding the employee. Eisenberger developed this theory with colleagues who explained and predicted different causes and consequences of this belief. Later research has built on this theory and highlighted the importance of providing organizational support to employees to achieve higher organizational commitment (Pattnaik et al., 2020).

The foundation for POS is a social exchange, which is essentially about how individuals enter into relationships with others to gain or maximize resources (Blau, 1964). Therefore, individuals attempt to make sense of why another person has treated them favorably (or unfavorably) to decide whether to strengthen the relationship or not. The norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) is vital in social exchange theory, which assumes that individuals reciprocate favorable or unfavorable treatment. The norm of reciprocity also counts for an individual's relationship with their organization, meaning that work experiences contribute to the employee's perception of the organization's intentions towards them. Suppose the employee believes that the organization has benevolent intentions towards them. In that case, they will reciprocate with favorable treatment towards the organization by such as increased efforts, more outstanding affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2001), and a more outstanding felt obligation towards the organization (Allen et al., 2003). The favors of the organization can be both tangible resources such as monetary awards, promotion, and training opportunities, as well as intangible rewards such as goal alignment and support (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Support is seen as particularly high if the organization provides appropriate resources (Wayne et al. 2002).

Whether favorable treatment of employees leads to POS also depends on whether the employee believes the motivation behind the favorable treatment is sincere and based on actual regard for the employee and not due to external influences (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

Greater POS is expected to lead to greater attachment (i.e. affective commitment) to the organization as well as felt obligation (i.e. normative commitment) since the employee may feel inclined to repay the organization (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Perceiving greater support from the organization may also lead to the employee being less likely to seek alternative employment or intention to leave the organization (Allen et al., 2003).

Lower levels of POS, however, are linked to withdrawal behavior, turnover intentions, and actual turnover. Employees who perceive low support may be more likely to leave the organization (Allen et al., 2003), which is also consistent with contemporary research on voluntary turnover. Low POS is suggested to lead to the increased inclination to leave the organization; however, actually leaving is also affected by the individual's continuance commitment (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

HR practices such as leadership development programs may not directly affect turnover. Still, Wayne et al. (1997) suggest that HR practices signal to the employee to what extent the organization values and cares for them as individuals, which may affect the withdrawal process. It may also signal that the organization seeks to continue the social exchange relationship with the employee and that future support will be provided (Allen et al., 2003). Development opportunities such as career development experience positively correlate to POS (Allen et al., 2003). However, the employee may not always perceive the existence of certain practices in the same way the organization intends it to be perceived (Whitener, 2001). Training and development opportunities can be antecedents to higher POS if they are satisfactory to the employee. Yet, dissatisfactory experiences such as too little training seen as tailored to performance can lead to the employee perceiving that training is undertaken entirely to benefit the organization and thereby lead to lower POS (Whitener, 2001).

Eisenberger et al. (2011) also suggest value congruence such as a match between personal and organizational values also contribute. However, work experiences according to the findings contribute more (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

Person-Organization fit

Ehrhart & Ziegert (2005) investigated why people are attracted to organizations and found that several factors that fit between individuals and

environments contribute to attraction. Person-Organization fit (P-O fit) is essentially about the compatibility between the person and the organizational culture (Cable & Judge, 1995). A good P-O fit requires that the organization meets individuals' needs and expectations. If the employee does not feel that the organization meets their expectations, that they have perceived organizational support, or that the perception the employee has of him or herself matches the organizational culture, commitment is likely to decrease. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate what factors in leadership development programs could affect the employee's perceived organizational support or P-O fit.

Larsson et al. (2020) suggested that leadership training programs can make the participants scrutinize their home organization. Combined with an enhanced individual agency as an outcome of the program, one can assume the participant's expectations towards the organization might change, or thoughts could be triggered about the individual's values in relation to the organization's values. Additionally, People choose activities based on their self-efficacy, meaning what they believe they can accomplish or succeed at. People with higher self-efficacy will be more likely to weigh their subjective perceptions of fit with the organization when judging its attractiveness than people with lower levels of self-efficacy (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005).

Chew & Chan (2008) associate P-O fit with organizational commitment. A good P-O fit requires that individuals' needs are mainly satisfied and expectations met by the organization. If the employees are not content with the deliverables on expectations, they may be less committed to the organization and consider leaving. Regarding training and development, this study showed that employees might not necessarily increase organizational commitment as the provision of training and development increases. This could be, for example, due to a mismatch between the training and development needs of the individual and other factors that could impact the training, such as the attitude of senior management (Chew & Chan, 2008).

Perceived Support for Employee Development

Also, the idea of support for employee development and increasing organizational commitment is widely accepted in research (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). Lee and Bruvold (2003) investigated perceived investment in employee

development about job satisfaction, turnover, and intent to leave in a social exchange theory perspective and discussed the paradox that investment in consequence of the employee will potentially increase chances of retaining the employee as it may increase the perceived cost of leaving the organization (i.e., continuance commitment), however, increasing the competence of the employee may also enable them to find better jobs outside the organization (i.e., mobility capital). Suppose the employees believe the organization values their contribution and cares about their employability. In that case, it will facilitate a more significant obligation towards the organization from the employees by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). However, in terms of normative commitment, an employee is expected to leave when the benefits of leaving the organization are higher than the cost (Lee & Bruvold, 2003).

Ito & Brotheridge (2005) refer to this phenomenon when they discuss how work practices that enhance employee employability and career adaptability may increase voluntary turnover. In their study, they found that investment in career development activities leading to career adaptability is increasing both affective commitment and intentions to leave. Investing in employee development may seem counterintuitive if it means it may increase intentions to leave; however, it may be the price the organization has to pay to hold a flexible workforce. The researchers suggest that increasing information and advice on how to make their investments in knowledge, skills, and abilities consistent with the organization's goals and strategies may help retain employees who have participated in career development activities (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005).

Kraimer et al. (2010) found that the relationship between perceived support for the development and employee retention was moderated by perceived career development opportunities (PCO). Organizational support for development can be defined as "employees' overall perception that the organization provides programs and opportunities that help employees develop their functional skills and managerial capabilities" (Kraimer et al. page. 486), which can include leadership development programs. PCO is defined as "employees' belief that jobs or positions that match their career goals and interests exist within the organization" (Kraimer, p. 486). If the employee does not perceive that there are positions that match their career goal within the organization, meaning that PCO is low, then higher development support is expected to increase turnover (Kraimer, 2010).

This is because there is a low sacrifice of leaving the organization regarding career goal achievement. At the same time, the development support is expected to increase the movement capital of the employee (Trevor, 2001). This is partly due to the signal that the development activity might send to the external labor market regarding the value of the employee, such as through degrees, certificates, and resumes.

Therefore, even though development opportunities are valuable for the employee, it does not necessarily lead to the reciprocity of favors through loyalty. Instead, it leads to the employee believing that the organization has provided them with skills and abilities that increase their mobility capital. Thus, they are more likely to leave the organization.

Lastly, Maurer & Lippstreu (2008) suggest that employees may respond differently to development support and that perceived support for development affects organizational commitment positively if the employee's goals are congruent with the organization's goals and the support from the organization. Organizations are more likely to retain their employees if they perceive "fit" with the organization, consistent with research on P-O fit. Compatibility between the employee's goals and the organization can predict organizational commitment and outcomes such as turnover (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008).

Methodology

This chapter will explain choices regarding the method and research design, in addition to the data collection and analysis process. Further, the quality criteria and ethical considerations will be discussed.

Research method

When choosing a research method, several factors need to be considered, and the method used in the research is mainly determined by the research problem (Gripsrud, Olsson & Silkoset, 2016). Considering the research question in this thesis it aims to explore individual's experiences and figure out why the experiences may lead to the participants decision of leaving their organization. The nature of the research question aims to comprehensively understand the topic (Gripsrud et al., 2016) instead of obtaining an explanation in numbers, which will be the case in quantitative research approach (Tjora, 2017). Based on this, the

thesis will have an exploratory qualitative research approach because we find it most suitable to the research question

Furthermore, qualitative research generally applies constructionist considerations, which means that the way to understand reality is that social actors continually construct social phenomena and their meanings. Concepts and categories such as culture, organizations, and leadership are social products made real by our actions and understandings (Bryman & Bell, 2007). With this constructional ontological view in mind, social phenomena are complex, and it will be fundamental to see nuances in the data collected to understand the problem (Johannessen, Kristoffersen & Tufte, 2004). By using a qualitative method, the research will be able to understand the individual's experiences and provide a picture of the nuances of why the participants decide to leave their organization. If the study had a quantitative approach, the questions would be formulated differently, and the study would, to a greater extent, provide an overview rather than an understanding of the research question (Tjora, 2017).

For our research question, we aim for more descriptive data to highlight the contextual understanding of social behavior. Behavior and values must be understood in the situation in which they arise (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Qualitative research may, in some cases, adopt certain characteristics more commonly associated with quantitative research, such as hypothesis-testing. However, certain methods are related to certain ontological and epistemological commitments, research methods are sometimes more accessible than supposed (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

In this study, we adopt both inductive and deductive elements. On the one hand, we want to collect empirical data with an open mind (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), and let the empirical data determine patterns, discoveries, and topics. Among other things, we use this when coding the empirical data. On the other hand, we will also use elements from the deductive approach because we have ideas based on theory about how this can be linked to the empirical data before starting the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Data collection

To collect data for this research, in-depth interviews will be used.

“The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject’s points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015)

By using interviews, we aim to understand how the participant experiences different situations and figure out how this affects the participant's actions. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) state, by using an interview we may understand how and why the participants react, act and understand the leadership development program. Furthermore, we will use semi-structured interviews since this enables the exploration of the individual’s experiences, attitudes, and perceptions (Thagaard, 2013) within the structure of predetermined themes (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Semi-structured interviews allow us to explore individuals’ experiences within their unique context, but still have a template to follow so we can compare the answers the participant were giving us.

Furthermore, to appear prepared and structured during the interviews, we prepared a well-thought-out interview guide (Appendix A). By using in-depth interviews, we wanted to achieve a fluid, natural conversation, which is essential to get the necessary information from the participants. Using a pre-formulated interview guide can therefore seem unnatural, but with good enough preparation, it will improve the interview quality (Tjora, 2017). By using the interview guide, we can, to a greater extent, structure and guide the interview on all topics that are interesting for answering the research question. The interview guide was designed to include both open-ended questions to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants’ perspectives and more closed questions directly connected to our research question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 160). This method also allows for follow-up questions, which help gain deeper data and achieve flow in the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p.161). In this way, the study includes both inductive and deductive elements.

Sample

We used non-probability sampling when we were going to limit the sample and find participants for the research. Non-probability sampling is a general term that includes forms of sampling that are not random (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Firstly, we started using convenience sampling, according to Bryman and Bell (2011) this means using sampling using what is available to us as researchers.

We strategically targeted individuals that matched our criteria as convenience sampling is described as (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The criteria's we set to find relevant participants were that (1) they had to have participated in a leadership development program, and (2) that they had to have changed jobs within 24 months after the program ended. More detailed description of criteria can be found in the poster used for recruitment that is in Appendix C.

Furthermore, we also used snowball sampling as a strategy to gather participants. Snowball sampling involves using people you already have contact with who can refer you to other relevant people (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When we had made contact with participants, we used the opportunity to ask them if they knew of more people who could be relevant to the study.

Our final sample consists of nine individuals who have formerly participated in a leadership development program. Our main source of data, the former participants of leadership development programs, come from a variety of industries and professions both in the public and private sector in Norway. From this selection we were able to find differences and similarities across different contexts.

Conducting the interviews

The interviews were conducted based on what suited the participants best. Some invited us to their offices, and others wanted to conduct the interviews in a digital meeting. We tried to get a physical or digital interview to create a more natural interview setting. In addition, by completing the interviews where you can see each other, you will to a greater extent, be able to create trust with the participants (Tjora, 2017). This could lead to us getting more honest and open answers from the participants. To get the best possible result, it will be crucial that the participants trust us who conduct the interviews.

Furthermore, the interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were recorded with the approval from the participants. We opened all the interviews by repeating the points from the consent declaration (Appendix B) which the participants had signed before the interview. The interviews were divided into an introduction and three main topics before we summarized the interview. The three main topics included questions about the participants' experience with the leadership development program they had participated in, in the second topic, we asked

questions that made the candidates reflect on what the experiences had led to after the program was completed. Furthermore, we had questions that mapped the participant's intentions and thoughts about changing jobs.

The interview guide (Appendix A) was designed to include open-ended questions to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives and more closed questions directly connected to our research question. This method also allows for follow-up questions, which help gain deeper data and achieve flow in the interview. In this way, the study includes both inductive and deductive elements.

Coding and analysis of data

After conducting the interviews, we used the recordings we had made to transcribe all the interviews, and then we had large amounts of empirical data to process. To filter out the most important information, we had to further code the interviews to include the most important information and to be able to compare the empirical data. Qualitative methods have many ways of coding. One of the most important factors is to find a way that works for the study you are conducting and do this thoroughly (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In this way, it is less likely to lose valuable information (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). We used an inductive strategy to ensure we got all the information and did not draw too quick conclusions. By using an inductive strategy, we wanted to find the most critical points in the empirical data, reduce the amount of empirical data, and get ideas based on the empirical data (Tjora, 2017).

The coding started with choosing an open way of coding, we spent a lot of time on each interview and read carefully through the transcribed documents. We decided to read through all the documents individually and compare notes and discoveries in the empiric. By using this method of coding, we were able to investigate and find patterns in the interviews we might not have found if we had only used systematic coding (Tjora, 2017). Furthermore, we used systematic coding. In this part of the coding, we already had ideas and thoughts about the empirical data we had collected. We used this as a strategy to define the topics in the empirical data better and to ensure that we had not lost connections or patterns (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). From this selection, we were able to find differences and similarities across the data and further decided on what segments and patterns were of particular interest to the research question. The empirical data we were

left with after coding the documents twice, we used to select relevant quotes and excerpts from the interviews to present findings and discussion further in the thesis.

Quality criteria

An essential part of the method is to evaluate the quality of the data in the study, and it is necessary to make sure that the study has quality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Further, we will present the validity and reliability of the study. These two factors will indicate whether the study is of quality or not (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Reliability

“Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable.” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). Reliability measures to which extent the empirical data in the study are reliable and if it is trustworthy. In qualitative research the concept of dependability is often used to describe reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

We have taken measures to improve reliability in each phase of this study. To ensure that we understood the participants correctly, we worked to create trust before and during the interview. The reason was that we wanted them to be open and give honest answers to the questions. Although we made good preparations, it is possible that they withheld information and limited their answers. We also used audio recordings and transcription of the interviews to ensure that we understood the information the participants gave us was as accurate as possible. This will contribute to increasing the transferability.

Internal reliability is discussed by Bryman (2012) as to which extent the researchers in the study have the same perception and interpretation of the empirical data. We have previously described how we systematically worked on comparing our understandings of the empirical evidence in the research. With coding and analyzing the empirical data, we worked separately to compare our interpretations and perceptions further. This may have increased the dependability of the study because we have not been able to influence each other in this process (Tjora, 2017).

When we conducted the interviews, we set a time frame of 60 minutes. Sometimes, we did not finish the interviews within this time but asked the

participants if they had more time. In all the interviews that went over time, the participants had more time than planned, which meant that we did not have to rush through the questions, which may have led to a deeper understanding.

Another challenge is that we have translated the interviews into English because they were conducted in Norwegian. When translating, meanings can be changed. We have been aware of this and had the Norwegian interviews available to ensure that the purpose and content of the empirical data presented did not change.

Validity

Validity in research can be defined as “*Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research.*” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, P 42). The validity says something about the study examining what it is supposed to examine. Are the descriptions accurate, and are there connections where the study presents them.

Validity can be divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity deals with the degree of connection between observations made by the researcher and ideas that develop based on this (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, a study will have good internal validity if the analysis and findings in the research are well connected with the empirical data (Tjora, 2017). We conducted in-depth interviews; therefore, the participants are our primary sources because we received the information and based the findings directly on the interviews (Tjora, 2017). To answer the research question in this study, we see it as applicable to use primary sources so that we as researchers can directly interpret the empirical data. Because we want to gain insight into the participants' experiences, these will be the best to respond to personal experiences and perceptions of leadership development programs. In addition, we have compared theory with our findings to safeguard the internal validity best. We used follow-up questions to ensure that the difference in the responses from each time was reduced. We did this to make sure that we did not misunderstand the answers we received or that the participants had misunderstood the question we asked so that we, as far as possible, could maintain transferability in the study

According to Bryman & Bell (2011), external validity discusses how the findings in the study can be generalized and used in other contexts. In qualitative research this is often referred to as transferability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Our

study is based on experiences and how the participants experience the world around them. Based on this, measuring and generalizing the findings can be difficult. It will not be possible to create statistics based on the findings in the study because the experiences are individual (Tjora, 2017). Also it is difficult to generalize the findings, we have taken steps in order to improve transferability, such as by using a heterogeneous sample not limited to one context or one industry in Norway.

Furthermore, there are many leadership development programs in Norway, and we do not have representatives from all of these. It may affect that the empirical data cannot be generalized given the limited access to candidates. Nevertheless, we have selected candidates from different leadership development programs. When we can find connections across these in nine unique situations, one could argue for an increased transferability to other contexts.

Ethical considerations

It is important to consider and evaluate the ethical perspective when conducting research. Further, in the study we have conducted, we have identified several ethical challenges that we will present.

Ethical considerations regarding how the participants are treated are essential (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We followed guidelines and got approval from the Norwegian Centre of Research Data (NSD) regarding the evaluation of our research. To follow the principle of informed consent, we ensured that participation was voluntary and that the participants had the opportunity to withdraw their data at any time during the study. Before the interviews the participants received consent declaration letters (Appendix B) that informed them about how the study would be conducted, how the data would be used, and their rights as interview candidates. In addition, we asked the candidates to consent to this information at the beginning of the interview.

The issues of confidentiality and anonymity are particularly relevant for qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The data gathered from this study was collected and stored appropriately, ensuring that sensitive information about the individuals would be available to actors outside this research project. Lastly, as this study presents direct quotes, citations, and detailed descriptions from the participants, it has been essential to making alterations to the transcribed interviews to ensure no individuals nor organizations can be recognized based on

the information given. Considering that the scope of our sample is relatively diverse, we perceive it is not likely that individuals or organizations are identifiable after removing the names of the participants and data that can be used to recognize their respective organizations.

Empirical Findings

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) states that there is no standard way of presenting the findings of qualitative interviews. The findings from this study will be presented and discussed according to the topics that emerged through the data collection. The topics are identified based on the broad research question. We have aimed to uncover the reasons why some participants choose to leave their organization after attending a leadership development program. We have intended to present the findings as objectively as possible by presenting direct quotes from the participants. However, some subjective interpretation of the meaning is also introduced in this section. A more detailed discussion about the meaning of the findings of the research question and theory will be carried out in the next section.

Finding 1: Gaining confidence as a leader

Finding 2: Frustration towards the home organization

Finding 3: Career ambitions and desirability of other options

Finding 4: Loyalty to oneself vs. loyalty to the organization

Finding 1: Gaining confidence as a leader

A prominent topic that appeared throughout the data-set was the notion that the participants gained self-confidence from the leadership development training. This self-confidence appeared to stem from confirmation of personal ability, acquiring a language to talk about leadership and the perceived external value of having completed the leadership training and influences the participants esteem in gaining and succeeding in alternative employment options.

Confirmation of personal characteristics and ability

Several participants mentioned that during the leadership development program, they gained confirmation of their thoughts, behaviors, and practices related to leadership. This was related to the theory they learned. It was perceived

as a positive experience when the theory presented in the leadership training reflected or confirmed the participants' understanding of or their “way of doing” leadership.

“I got it confirmed that I had been doing it right all along. And on top of that it (what they did right) had a name. You have been doing something, but previously you did not have something to pin it to, or it has not been obvious enough that this is what you are actually doing (...) So it has done something to me. I have become more calm and I have become more sure about several things. “

Participant 5

“Some things you understand yourself that are obvious. It is very comforting to read some research that puts it in wording. What I have been thinking is correct, it is just that I haven't been able to put it in context but here is a model that someone has made. (...) The field (leadership) is obvious, nothing is surprising when you read the books. Then you become even more sure about yourself. Then you are not doing things because you believe it is what is best, but because someone else has researched it.”

Participant 1

As seen in the excerpts above, participants 1 and 5 mention that this confirmation has led to both of them becoming more sure of themselves in their performance. Additionally, some participants said feedback through various exercises was a memorable part of their experience. By several participants, reaction to feedback was expressed in a way that made it seem like it was both rewarding and challenging. Some participants also mentioned that feedback was an activity that provided them with confidence in their leadership skills, and they experienced a sense of mastery since the feedback they received was presented as more positive than they had previously perceived themselves.

“In the 360 feedback that we talked about, what was shown through it (explains the 360 framework) on all questions is that I had scored myself lower than everybody else had scored me, and by a lot. That was an eye-

opener, and that has an effect on confidence too. Perhaps you have a different expectation to yourself than what others do. And then perhaps you are performing well after all. I experienced much more confidence with what I was doing.”

Participant 5

“It can be challenging because you meet yourself in the door when there are five people around you, evaluating how you talk and having “the tough conversation”. Scary, but you learn a lot and you get a sense of mastery afterwards. I experienced that I had not looked at myself in the way that they described me and that is very interesting. (...) I believe I have become more confident in myself as a leader, that I am good enough. To me, personally, it was a lot about getting feedback that others see that I wish the best for my employees.”

Participant 6

The language of leadership

One topic that emerged from the data concerning what the participants have gained from the leadership development program is learning a language to talk about leadership. Learning about theories, concepts, and principles of leadership was mentioned by the participants to benefit them as individuals in various ways.

“So you bring with you a language in which you can use in many settings”

Participant 5

“It is about how you can use terms that are obviously theoretical. Which is not that bad, it gives a theoretical weight. I feel as though it has become my X-factor. (...) So for my leaders, we get more to talk about after being at these training sessions. I felt more as a sparring partner perhaps.”

Participant 1

“You gain knowledge of certain topics and knowledge gives you better opportunities to argue for certain things. Knowledge is power in a way. We talk a lot about these kinds of topics, and then it is good that everyone has an idea of what it is about.”

Participant 4

From this selection of quotes, learning theoretical terms and a way to speak about leadership was perceived to provide a weight that could lead to positive experiences in the time after the program ended, such as providing opportunities to argue for certain things as mentioned by participant 4.

Perceived external value of the leadership training

When the participants were asked about the value of the leadership development program and their formal competence after the training, several participants mentioned that the leadership training holds a particular value towards other people or actors. Leadership training was perceived valuable for the individual's personal and skill development. However, diplomas and the formality of having completed a leadership development program were mentioned as something that helps to be perceived as more competent and “get to the table”.

“First of all, you make it true because you received a diploma, right? It is like you have the formal part and that will always help you when getting to the table. At least it will help you get to the table.”

Participant 5

It helps a little to have documents that can explain what you have completed. That helps a little.”

Participant 1

As participant 5 and 1 express, it can seem that the formality of having completed a leadership development program adds value to the participants regarding confidence in their competence towards other actors. Furthermore, one participant mentioned how the feedback received during the program could be helpful in the sense that it shows how they as leaders function in daily life at work. This feedback could also validate their leadership skills and be used as evidence of their competence.

“ At the same time you have a lot of feedback that proves that you function (...) For me it is good to have that part with feedback from both other

course participants and surroundings that explain how I function in daily life.”

Participant 5

The overall experience from the leadership development program led to some participants becoming more confident that not only was the leadership role suitable for them, but they also experienced confidence in going for and being selected for other opportunities. This included gaining the opportunity and trust that they would succeed in it, as shown in the excerpt below from participant 6.

“I was offered a top management job in the municipality, which I initially believed was “way out of my league”, but now I am thinking that it would be and that I would do okay. That development part gives you confidence in yourself that makes you understand that “I’ve got this. This is alright.”

Participant 6

Participant 5 used the leadership development program as an argument when applying for a new job for which he was not formally qualified.

“I actively used the fact that I had taken this course when arguing... Why should they pick me and why I believed I was qualified.”

Participant 5

Participant 9 claims that the program did not affect her confidence; she always had a good self-image and would apply for jobs above her league. However, she believes that the program made her a better candidate in the process due to the competence she gained as well as how it affected her references at the current job.

“I have always had a good self-image and faith in myself and thought I was good enough (...) and I’d probably apply for these types of jobs either way, but I might not have done so well in the interview, and my reference might not have said what was necessary for me to get the position.”

Participant 9

Finding 2: Frustration towards the home organization

When investigating why some people decide to leave their home organization after completing a leadership development program, it is highly interesting of high interest to gain insight into the participant's perception and relationship with the home organization and whether this changed during or after the program. Although several participants claim they gained a more positive view of their organization after the program because they enjoyed it and experienced it as a professional, some participants experienced somewhat negative change. The findings suggest that some participants expressed frustration towards the organization based on the program's content. Some participants experienced that the values or attitudes the organization was portraying did not match the reality of what was happening in the organization. Some participants also expressed a lack of follow-up after the program.

Frustration at the home organization based on content

An emerging theme that appeared from the data was that some participants stated a feeling of disappointment or frustration directed towards their home organization due to the content or focus in the program, which influenced the perception of the home organization, as expressed in excerpts from two participants below. Both participants attended leadership development programs facilitated by internal resources in the organization. Participant 8 stated she was disappointed because she hoped the organization would focus more on the employee environment in the program.

"I was disappointed that they didn't focus on the employee environment the way I hoped they would (...) People are, in a way, business. There was too little focus on the work environment and how to meet people and make sure that they actually feel good at work then. Lack of that focus made me disappointed."

Participant 8

Additionally, she explained that there was some focus in the program on becoming stricter as leaders and setting boundaries for the employees, which the participant disagreed with. As seen in the excerpt below, the participant was already aware of the company's culture and poor working environment. This

understanding was confirmed through the focus and attitudes shown during the program.

“This is already a culture (in the company), and there is a problem with poor working environment. When they are sitting there, bringing this up, you get confirmed that this is right. “

Participant 8

It seems that participant 8 might experience the program’s content as a confirmation of the attitudes and culture of the organization she is already not fond of, which has led to feelings of disappointment directed at the organization. Another example is participant 6, who explained that even though the leadership training was good, it was also revealed that the organization was not as forward as she had hoped.

«The leadership development training was very good, but at the same time it was very dry and kinda retro. They are a little bit behind (...) I was expecting that the organization was more forward on certain things, but they were actually not. They presented theories which during my education were presented as very 1990 in a way. So it was weird that they were lagging a bit behind on the educational aspect of leadership.”

Participant 6

During the program, participant 6 also asked critical questions regarding the theories and potential sources of error. She was not satisfied with her answer, as the facilitators were not eager to address the critical questions nor seemed willing to discuss the matter.

“Okay, so I was a little frustrated about that, and that they hadn’t come any further and didn’t have any thoughts about it”.

Participant 6

The content and the attitudes shown by the organization during the training led to frustration as the organization was more “retro” and behind than expected. Therefore, the participant becomes aware of organizational elements that do not

meet her expectations. The participant further stated that this triggered thoughts about where she wanted to work and that she considered jumping from the public to the private sector to work somewhere more innovative.

Realizing the organization isn't practising what they're preaching

For some participants, it was not necessarily the content that led to frustration, but rather that what the organization was practicing did not match the content or attitudes presented. One example is participant 2, which was telling us about a situation where one of the co-workers at the program had explained a specific work situation that could occur and had asked the program facilitators for advice on how to deal with it. She claimed that the facilitator responded with:

“No, that is not good. It cannot be like that, then you should just get away. I would at least get away from that place (the company), because that is not a good place to be.”

Participant 2

It is essential to mention that this participant attended a leadership development program held by internal resources of the company, meaning that the facilitator also worked for the firm. Further, the participants explained that even though her coworker had asked a hypothetical question, it was a camouflaged example of how the culture is in that company.

“Perhaps all of us were sitting there knowing that that's what it's like here. Are you telling us all that we should just quit then? (...) I was aware of the problem from before, what surprised me was that someone answered that clearly that “this is not acceptable, and you shouldn't be in a place like that.”

Participant 2

Participant 2 further states that this made her feel that the leadership development program was superficial and that the company was “decorating the surface” since they did not take the opportunity to take feedback and tackle changes about challenges in the work environment. The participant additionally mentions that things would have been different if there was more openness and a wish to see things for how they were from the company's side. She further states:

“I believe there is no use in initiating a leadership development program on a foundation that is dissolving (...) It doesn't help to spread leadership trainings and believe that things will change.”

Participant 2

By using the phrase “spreading leadership training”, one can interpret that the participant might experience that providing leadership training is something the organization does without a clear intention or hope that it will change certain aspects for the employees but still not change the underlying issues.

Another participant also experienced having an internal coworker as a facilitator at the training: her leader. She experienced that the leadership ideals he was preaching in the program did not match what he was doing in his daily job.

“He was a terribly good course facilitator, but he did nothing of what he said (...) He is teaching a lot of good techniques and other things you learn at these programs. It is very good, and then I see that in reality there is no connection at all, and he can stand there and talk, but then that is a lie. To me, lies are like, no I don't like it and it makes me react.”

Participant 7

The participant states that it was not the fact that he was a lousy leader that was making her react. It was the fact that she became aware of how good he could be considering his teachings in the program. She experienced a mismatch between what he was teaching and what he was doing.

“He wasn't a good leader before I attended the program either, but then I became so conscious that he could be one. He knew everything about how to be a good leader, and then he wasn't one. That was surprising.”

Participant 7

Further, participant 7 explains that she realized that she needed to create a distance toward her leader to not care about his opinions. Before the program, she was not aware that he knew leadership in how he presented it, but the experience

during the program makes it obvious “what could have been”. This makes her disappointed and eventually leads to her creating a distance towards the leader.

Lack of follow-up after the program ended

During the interview, support from the organization was a topic that came up multiple times. The participants were also specifically asked how they perceived support from the organization both during and after the leadership development program. Many participants perceived that they received support in the form of both being awarded or allowed to attend the training and support in the shape of their organization, providing them with honest feedback in the exercises that required this. However, some participants also experienced a lack of support.

“(...) In retrospect, nothing from my leader. Then I got nothing because then I was sort of finished because somehow I did not need anything more then. That's not entirely true, you're not done. It takes some time before you get there. The goal should not be reached only during the course, it should be worked on afterwards as well.”

Participant 7

“There may have been too little conversation about it. There should probably be time set aside to talk about the impressions you are left with (...) The only ones who have done that is the ones who have taken the course before me”

Participant 5

Participant 7 was disappointed she did not get a follow-up from her leader after the program as she needed to further work and training after the program to reach the goal. Participant 5 also expressed a wish to have more conversations with his leader regarding the impressions of the program.

“It was, what shall I say, superficial. No support in the depth of it. But they had a slightly superficial "just come and say if there is something" where they were on the offer side. However, in depth I would not say that there was anything to get.”

Participant 2

Participant 2 expressed that support after the program finished was perceived by her as superficial since the company claimed the participants could ask about anything. However, she did not perceive it as something genuine.

Finding 3 - Career ambitions and desirability of other options

Another finding that contributed to understanding the individual's career decisions in the time after the leadership program was how it affected the participant's future career goals, expectations, and desires. The findings suggest that attending a leadership development program can affect the participants' inspiration for future careers and a desire to try something new, it can create expectations towards what their career post leadership development would look like, and it can lead the participants to evaluate whether their current organization meets the individuals needs for future development.

Inspiration for future career

Getting to know the network within the organization, the network of the leadership development facilitators, or the other participants was reported to be of value to most participants. In the context of expanding their network, some participants explained that they become more aware of interesting job opportunities.

“In the gatherings you meet people from many different workplaces. Nobody has the same job. Then you can realize that even though your own job is interesting, other things could be interesting too. Also within the same organization. Perhaps you should take advantage of these opportunities, try a few different things and not just keep working with the same thing.”

Participant 5

Through leadership development, participant 5 became aware of the organization to a greater extent and all the roles and opportunities that were available. He expresses that through this, he got thoughts of changing position or doing something he had not done before to develop. This may be seen as an

inspiration to want to find another job than you already have because you can experience being stuck in the same position and with the same assignments if you do not open your eyes to new opportunities.

The facilitators and speakers of the leadership training can also become role models for the participants, as mentioned by participant 1. Role models affected her desire to aim for and take on leadership positions like the facilitators held.

“It is a lot about stories in some courses and who those leaders are (...) my mentor and those who held presentations I thought were good people. Kinda like role models. If I take a job like that, then I have to function like these people, who are really good and have good work ethics and all those things.”

Participant 1

She declares that she wants to be like the leaders in the leadership development program. Further, she experienced them as good leaders who were excellent in their job, something she also wants to be and therefore will follow their example as leaders.

Several respondents reported that the leadership development program impacted how they viewed the leadership role and created a desire to work as a leader.

“Understanding their (speaker/practitioner at the training) reasoning on how things are, that it is okay to say that you want power and that can be a reason to become a leader. Nobody says it out loud, but that is a part of the package (...) That was motivation, I recognized myself. I wanna try that. I think I was more influenced by how I viewed the role, not how I view myself. I felt that when I took those courses, that it fits me in a way.”

Participant 1

Participant 1 explained that it was encouraging to hear leaders from the industry speak about why they want to become leaders, and she recognized her motivation in that of the speakers. This may be seen as a validation of the

participant's motivation toward the leadership role, which led to the inspiration to work as a leader and view the leadership role as something that suits her.

Additionally, participant 7 talked about an awareness of wanting to become a leader coming from sensing that it fits her as a person partly because of what she could feel about the people around her and based on scores on tests, leading to her deciding that she wanted to go back to a management role.

“I became 100% sure I wanted to become a leader again and not be so far down in the system. I became fully aware of that both because it fits me as a person, as who I am, but also because I can sense it on the people around me, the tests we are taking and scores I get that as a person, it suits me well and I won't grow tired of it. (...) so I decided that at least I am going to lead a department, build something, and have personnel responsibilities. Because I missed it. That I became aware of during the training, but not right there and then. It wasn't like I had to do it right away, but I knew it was something I wanted to do.»

Participant 7

Another participant (6) mentioned a desire to try out the private sector because she perceived it to be more innovative than the public sector and what her current organization was after learning about leadership, both through leadership training and in other arenas. She expressed a desire to work somewhere she could develop more and use what she had learned to develop employees. Google was an example she gave of what kind of work environment she desired to work in.

“I have been thinking about what it would be like to work in the private sector. Could I have developed in a different way than in “home organization” (...) where there is not focus on the employee as a resource like you learn it in school. That the employee is the most important resource in the organization and in developing an organization of competence and all these big words like change management which are on the agenda these days. So I had been thinking, should I apply for a job in Google or somewhere I could develop myself and seen more concrete results from talking about strategy and change management and develop the employees?”

Participant 6

When the participants were asked how the leadership development training affected their career ambitions, many of the participants pointed out that they already had ambitions before the leadership program. However, some also expressed that ambitions were increased.

I think I had ambitions, but I believe I got even larger ambitions afterwards (...) Now I am thinking that of course I will apply for a “Director”-position within the next 10 years. That coaching and leader development have contributed. Made me think that I will make it happen within that time (...) I also received feedback from experienced people that helped me set direction and to dare. I do not have any issues with daring to set goals, but to allow oneself to be assertive about having ambitions and goals (...) That the goals you previously set were too low, that you can set yourself more and higher goals for your career that you are able to reach. So that acts as a confirmation.”

Participants 9

Participant 9 explained that she had ambitions before the leadership development program. She received confirmation in addition to feedback which told her that she should have higher ambitions and goals than what she herself had set. The participant’s views of herself do not align with what she is capable of. Based on the confirmation and her new ambitions, it can be argued that she got the new inspiration for her future career.

Expectations after completing the training

Although the participants were not explicitly asked about their expectations towards their organization in the time following the leadership training, it emerged as a theme throughout the data analysis that some participants either had or developed certain expectations for what was to follow after completion. Participant 3 specifically mentioned experiencing increased expectations towards his career growth after completing the leadership training, as shown in the quote below.

“Now that we have decided together on the training and development. After I have shown that I can and that I want to. Then I think there should be something more coming (...) I thought there should be something more and more responsibilities than what I had done before (...) I felt kinda like the opportunities should come to me and they should come a lot faster (...) I felt that I got higher expectations that some of my ambitions should be delivered a little faster.”

Participant 3

Other participants spoke about expectations of the organization valuing and using their new competence and knowledge. Our interpretation of the data is that there seems to be an expectation for the participants to come back to the home organization and be able to influence their leaders or the way their organization or department is doing things. However, many participants did not experience this.

“It is more about my closest leaders then, they should follow up more. Or you could be utilized more, if you have taken a course or development training. You could be pushed more and be utilized more internally. They should want to use that knowledge more internally.”

Participant 1

“Hopefully I influenced them (...) You come back, full of inspiration. You want to discuss things and many would benefit from discussing more, and then it doesn't happen. And then it disappears, gets forgotten. Taken this interview for example. If I had sat down and talked about this with my leader and what it can be used for. I think that could increase the consciousness, I could have been more useful to my own leader again.”

Participant 5

Participants 1 and 5 expressed that they hoped they could be used more internally or influence their leaders or organizations more when they returned to work after the program ended. However, they did not experience that their knowledge and competence were utilized in the best way—their expectations of what would happen with their new knowledge after the program were not met. Furthermore, participant 1 expressed an expectation towards her home

organization that they would encourage her to apply to an internal leadership position.

“I was a little disappointed afterwards that I was not offered anything internally. A position was posted, and I wasn’t encouraged to apply. I thought that was odd when they knew I had taken the course (...) When I asked about it they said they didn’t think I was interested. I might have said no, but they should have asked. It was almost a feeling that they didn’t want me there. If you send someone on leadership development, and you have a leadership position, then you should check if this person is interested in it”

Participant 1

As shown in the excerpt, this participant was disappointed after she realized that her organization did not consider her for a leadership position or suggested that she should apply for an open leadership position.

Perception of career opportunities in the current organization

A common similarity for the participants that had changed organization and not just position internally after the leadership development program was that they did not perceive that the current organization held attractive career opportunities for them or that these opportunities were not available for them. The participants were asked, “what could have been different so that you would have stayed with the current organization?” Many responded that relevant career opportunities could have made a difference. Some participants also stated that career opportunities were the main reason they decided to move to a different organization.

“If it is important to make people stay where they are, it is important that they push people to stay and create positions for the people they send on the training, following up and all that. If not, many people take it (the training) and will not use it for anything.”

Participant 1

“It was the organization that was the reason for why I quit. It was. I needed an opportunity that was interesting for me. A task that was

interesting. And then I probably had other expectations towards the leader, I needed something else from my leader. But this had been brewing for some time. They could have saved it if I had a more interesting role, then I could have found my way. But those two things together became two things I could not get over.”

Participant 3

If I received career opportunities where I was which could trump the opportunity I got, but I do not think that was realistic in that place. Those who were in the positions I could be interested in were permanent in a way. Then there had to be an opportunity to development further I guess (...) to me it is more about the development than the safety, or the money.”

Participant 9

Participant 1 expresses the importance of organizations creating positions for the employees they send on training which can make people stay and use their competence internally. Participant 3 and 9 confirms this by stating that they could have remained in the organization if they received interesting positions or development opportunities.

Participant 6, which previously had mentioned considering a shift from the public to the private sector because she wanted to work in a more innovative structure, also said that one thing the organization could have done differently to make her stay was to provide development opportunities for some participants after the program.

“But maybe it had affected me more if I felt that they were like “We are looking for you who has something extra”. “We want to catch you and develop you, and you have a chance to get somewhere”. That would have made it somewhat exciting. That is something “home-organization” could have done (...) They could have handpicked the best leaders in terms of their vision. I feel like they fail a little at that.”

Participant 6

Participant 6 explained that she wished her organization had used the leadership training as a recruiting platform for hand-picking the up-and-coming

leaders. This could have made staying in the organization more interesting. Moreover, Participants 5 and 7 were offered new positions within their organizations after the leadership development program.

“I jumped off a very interesting project when it started to reach the peak. That was a choice I had to take. I didn’t want to jump off the project, but I really wanted the opportunity that appeared. I work in “name of institution” and it is expected that we shall move around in different positions. I have been encouraged to change position too, as mentioned, we should keep moving if we don’t want to get stuck.”

Participant 5

“I initially quit my position when I got hired somewhere else because I had made the decision that I wanted to move on. Because I felt that I was stuck in the same spot. Then they came with a counter-offer I could not refuse, so I stayed, with a little change in terms of role.”

Participant 7

Participant 5 explained that the organizational culture encourages and expects their employees to move around in the organization, which influenced him to apply for and get hired for a position that appeared shortly after he completed the leadership development program. Participant 7 did not apply for a new position in the same company. Still, she explained that she received a new career opportunity after resigning from her original position that was interesting enough for her to stay.

Finding 4 - Loyalty to oneself vs. loyalty to the organization

Considering the current research question, the participants were asked about their perceived loyalty or commitment to the organization after the leadership development program. This topic also appeared in other sections of the interview. The participants often described loyalty as feeling obligated to stay, but some also mentioned an increased want or desire to stay after the program ended. An interesting approach that emerged through the data, however, was the participants' reflections on loyalty to oneself compared to increased loyalty to the company.

Obligation toward the organization

There was a clear division among the participants as to whether they felt an obligation towards the organization after completing the leadership development program. Participants 2 and 6 did not experience increased felt obligation to stay in the organization after the leadership development program. These two participants talk about commitment in the sense of obligation, as a feeling that they “should” stay in the organization.

“I think it didn’t influence it (felt commitment). There was no expectation that when I get this (the training), then you have to work here for a long time. No criteria like that, so I didn’t really think about it”

Participant 2

“I did not feel more committed to “name of organization” really after than before. But if they had sent me on a 200 000 NOK course at BI, then I would have felt committed (...) It might happen that I return back to “name of organization” as a leader in a different department later. So no, I did not feel committed.”

Participant 6

“I might feel more committed now, but then it has given me more opportunities. If you can look at it that way, I feel committed that I got the opportunity. It has provided some new opportunities now, but that is not set in stone. There is a feeling and it is about belonging and loyalty. I’d rather use the word loyalty.”

Participant 4

Participant 2 mentioned she had not thought about commitment, and participant 6 expressed that perhaps she should have felt more committed if the training was more expensive. However, she also reflects on how she might return to the organization later, thereby signaling that the investment might be returned to the organization at a later time, and therefore does not perceive that leaving after the program was something that would affect her obligation towards the organization. Participant 4 also mentions that the future is “not set in stone”, which could indicate that he might also return to the organization later. This participant also

talks about how leadership has led to more substantial commitment; however, it has also provided more opportunities to explore other alternatives.

Participant 3 talks about feeling hooked after the leadership program. He mentioned that it cost a lot of money and thought he should try to give something back, but he explained the feeling as being less eager to quit and that he was staying in the organization because he wanted to.

“I felt I was pretty hooked, that I was deep in it. I think that after the leadership training, I felt more committed. (...) in addition, I knew it cost a lot of money, I was aware it cost a lot of money, so I felt I should try to give something back. (...) I was more committed after being there, less eager to quit.”

Participant 3

Participant 7 mentions an felt obligation as she uses the expression “should stay” to explain how she felt after being awarded the program.

“I felt that now they have invested in me so I should stay here. Then I feel trapped right away, so for me it is not positive. I didn’t get it in my contract that I was bound afterwards, luckily. Several people got bound to three years afterwards, and three years would have cost more than it would have given me. Because I need to be able to choose where I work and when I wanna work there. That is something positive and negative about leadership training. you create a loyalty that is harder to break.”

Participant 7

This feeling led to participant 7 to feeling trapped, and she mentions that the loyalty that appears after attending a leadership development program can be both positive and negative.

“Putting myself in the centre”

Participating in a leadership development program that functions as a separate component of the employees' day-to-day life and duties offers an opportunity to get a “breather” as mentioned by several participants. Several participants have described this break from daily life as a chance to focus on

oneself through self-reflection. Most participants also said that attending the leadership development program led to getting to know oneself better and becoming aware of what you want. Additionally, several participants mentioned that these experiences led to realizing the importance of putting oneself in the center. One example is the excerpt below from participant 5, his reply when asked about what he learned from the program.

“That it is important to put yourself in the centre sometimes. To nurture yourself (...) That might be the most important thing you do in your everyday life. It might sound selfish, but that is how it is like.”

Participant 5

Participant 7 also mentions the value of taking a break and putting yourself first. She also notes that it makes her reflect on where she wants to go.

“I think it is good because you take a break to focus on yourself. There is a coaching-part there too, which is great because you can reflect. Perhaps not about where you are, but where you wanna get. It gives the opportunity of reflection which you do not have in the busy schedule. I think it is important to take a break. That break you take by focusing on yourself, where you put yourself in the first. I carried this with me in terms of my own health.”

Participant 7

Participant 7 explains that the foundation for wanting the job transition to a new organization was present before the leadership training, but what she brought with her was knowing what she wanted to prioritize, where she wanted to go, and what was important in her life. She mentions that these learnings helped her be more assertive in the choice of changing organizations.

“It could have affected it in terms of priorities, self-leadership and knowing what is important to me. But the foundation of wanting to change jobs was there from before. It was not like I attended the course and became aware that now I will change my job. Because I was happy with the environment where I was (...) But the training helped me to be

assertive about it (Norwegian: “stå litt i det”), that this was important to me.”

Participant 7

The participant further explains that this assertiveness led her to ignore the increased loyalty towards the organization and to be more loyal to her priorities instead.

“It created increased loyalty, but I chose to ignore it. I chose to feel that I betrayed instead, because it was important to me. So who are you supposed to be loyal towards? Is it really like you are supposed to be loyal towards an organization, or should you be loyal towards yourself? You have to be loyal towards yourself!”

Participant 7

Discussion

Through our analysis and discussion of the findings, we have found it convenient to discuss the findings in the same structure as the themes presented in the findings.

How leadership development can influence perceived accessibility of other career options

As presented in the findings, several participants gained confidence in their leadership role based on confirmations, gaining theoretical weight, and having a diploma to present. These results strengthen the findings of Hay and Hodgkinson (2008) that leadership development can lead to participants' increased self-esteem and confidence. This confidence seems to translate into the participant perceiving they have better access to other career opportunities. Although increased confidence cannot be linked to a decision in terms of transitioning into a new position, either internally or externally, one can argue that these “gains” the participant’s experience can lead to a higher *mobility capital* (Trevor, 2001)

One reason is the signal that the diploma of leadership development sends to external actors. Kraimer et al. (2010) suggest that a diploma of completed training signals to the external labor market about the value of the employee. Ito

and Brotheridge (2005) also discussed how employee development could increase voluntary turnover as it increases the participants' employability, thereby increasing their chances of finding jobs elsewhere. On the one hand, from the scope of this study, we have no foundation to determine how the external labor market perceives the value of the participants. On the other hand, the findings suggest that participants do perceive that the diploma influenced their opportunities.

Another reason is the belief that the participant is “good enough” for other opportunities. This was mentioned by a participant when explaining that after the leadership development program, she believed she was good enough for a position that previously had been perceived as “way out of her league”. The participants then have improved self-efficacy, meaning they successfully believe they can make the transition of change and thereby experience an increased *readiness for change* (Ng. et al., 2007). Several of the participants seemed to have experienced confirmation of their value and skills as leaders through the course content or through the feedback they received.

These findings are also in line with theory related to continuance commitment. Suppose the participants perceive they have access to other options. In that case, they don't “need” to stay in the company anymore because they have perceived access to alternative possibilities that do not require a substantial loss (Meyer & Allen, 1991). However, we cannot determine what losses the participants might experience by quitting the organization.

As one participant mentioned, he had actively used the completed leadership development training when arguing to get hired for the new position. However, we cannot say anything about whether the leadership training was a relevant factor in terms of him receiving the job offer. Learning theoretical terms was mentioned by another participant as something that provided a better opportunity to argue for certain things. Again, this can translate into increased self-efficacy as the participants believe they can successfully attain new opportunities (Ng. et al., 2007).

From the findings related to this topic, no conclusion can be drawn as to whether the participants did experience better accessibility to new career options or if it affected their decisions to transition into a new position. However, one could argue that the participants experienced higher mobility capital due to the

leadership program. Increased mobility capital contributes to the employee's *ease of movement*, which is known to influence turnover (March & Simon, 1958)

How leadership development can influence the desire to leave the organization

The findings related to the perception of the home organization were the least consistent across the data we collected. Approximately half of the participants experienced no change or a positive change in perception of the home organization. In contrast, to some extent, the other half experienced frustration or disappointment directed toward the organization. Concerning our research question of why some people leave their organization after participating in a leadership development program, the subjective experiences of those experiencing more negative emotions aimed at their home organization have been of particular interest.

The findings suggest that some participants experience frustration or disappointment towards the organization regarding the training content, such as a lack of focus on the work environment and the organization teaching outdated theories on leadership. These frustrations seem to be related to becoming aware of or getting confirmed certain cultural aspects of the organization that do not match the participant's expectations or needs. One example is how participant 8 expressed an expectation that the organization should focus more on the work environment. However, this lack seemed to confirm her perception of the organizational culture not attending to her wants and needs.

Research related to P-O fit, which explains how individuals are attracted to organizations based on the compatibility between them (Cable & Judge, 1995), explains that if the organization does not meet employees' needs and expectations, it might lead to a decrease in commitment and thereby increased chances of turnover. Chew and Chan (2008) suggested that increased development training does not necessarily lead to increased commitment, for example, due to a mismatch between the needs and expectations of the individual and the training content, as well as attitudes of senior management. The participants' reactions of being disappointed and frustrated due to the focus and attitudes of the organizations in training could indicate the participants becoming aware of the mismatch between the fit of the organization's attitudes, values, and goals with that of the individual. If these experiences led to a more extensive awareness of P-

O fit, then there is a possibility that this could have influenced intentions of turnover (Cable & Judge, 1995). As mentioned by participant 6, the impression of the organization being retro had triggered thoughts about moving to the private sector to work somewhere more innovative, which indicates an awareness of perceived low P-O fit.

Some participants also expressed frustration that the organization was teaching or portraying certain ideals of leadership that did not match the reality in the organization. One example is the participant that experienced her leader being a great teacher when it came to leadership but essentially failing in practice. This participant started to create distance from her leader, which is consistent with the findings of Larsson et al. (2020), where some participants of leadership development programs distanced themselves and disengaged with their home organization if they perceived that the ideals presented in the program did not match the organization. Becoming aware of how things could be, makes deficits of the organization more obvious (Larsson et al., 2020).

The perceived intention behind the training is also relevant when discussing the experience some participants had with a mismatch between what the organization was teaching versus what they were doing. As one participant mentioned, the leadership development program was experienced as superficial as the organization seemed to be “decorating the surface” during the program, not accepting how things really were. As mentioned previously, access to training opportunities such as leadership development can lead to Perceived Organizational Support as the employee may feel rewarded and that the organization cares about their contribution (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). However, whether a training opportunity translates into POS also depends on whether the employee perceives the motivation or intention behind the training as sincere (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Dissatisfactory experiences may instead lead to lower POS as the employee perceives that training is undertaken to benefit the organization. As this participant experienced the leadership development program as a superficial implementation, then the expected increase in POS might not happen because the participant perceived the program as something held to benefit the organization and not a sincere favorable treatment of the employee (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), and it might even lead to lower POS.

Another aspect of the participants' experiences that could have influenced POS is how some participants experienced a lack of follow-up from their leaders

and organizations in the time after the program ended. Lack of follow-up, or superficial follow-up mentioned by some, could influence the participant's belief of whether the organization has a genuine interest in the employee's development and wellbeing (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Allen et al. (2003) suggested that development opportunities might signal to employees that the organization wants to continue investing in a social exchange relationship with the employee and that future support will be provided. However, as the participants do not perceive they have sufficient support in the time after the program, it leads to disappointment as their expectations are not met.

In conclusion, these findings were the least consistent amongst the participants. One could interpret that if the participant's expectations or needs towards the organization are not met during the training, it may lead to the participant gaining an increased awareness of low P-O fit. Additionally, suppose the participant experiences a mismatch between the ideals presented and reality, as well as experiencing a lack of genuine support from the organization. In that case, it could lead to a more extensive awareness of deficits in the organization and potentially a decrease in POS. Lower levels of POS are, as mentioned, linked to withdrawal behavior, turnover intentions, and turnover (Allen et al., 2003). Still, we cannot determine how these experiences influenced the participant's decision to leave the organization.

How leadership development can influence desirability of other options

A prominent finding from this study was how several participants seemed to experience an increase in desire and expectations for a future career and development opportunities in the time after the program. The participants stated they were experiencing inspiration in terms of future career prospects by gaining more knowledge of what is out there, becoming inspired to be a leader, and gaining certainty that the leadership role was something they wanted to pursue. The experience of attending a leadership development program seems to have inspired the participants toward their future careers as leaders. As Nicholson and West (1988) suggested, the two reasons behind a transition to a new job are (1) wanting to do something more challenging and fulfilling and (2) wanting to reach career objectives. Attending a leadership development program seems to have motivated some participants to approach the challenge of being a leader and

contribute to even larger career ambitions. Several participants mentioned wanting to approach the challenge of becoming a leader.

The findings show that the participants became more aware of the opportunities in the company and other organizations. Several participants stated that they became aware of the opportunities around them. Participant 5 said that he opened his eyes to new possibilities and development through the leadership development program. Feldman and Ng (2007) point out that if an employee wants to work with something else, develop, or get a more significant challenge and sees the opportunity to do this, there will be a greater desire to make the necessary changes to take this opportunity. If the company does not facilitate the employees' development, there will be a greater chance that the employee will leave the organization in favor of another opportunity in another organization (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Some participants also point out that through leadership development, they could confirm or reinforce why they initially wanted to become leaders, which further led them to want to become leaders at higher levels. This was, for example, due to confirmation that their personality type fits the leader role. One participant also mentioned how the leaders who spoke at the program acted as role models inspiring the participants to aim for the same positions. Employees in an organization want to achieve their career objectives. They will pursue their most desirable career option (London, 1983). It seems that attending a leadership development program influenced some participants to set higher ambitions for their careers, which could also have been influenced by increased self-efficacy in line with previous findings. When goals and career objectives change, this may lead to changes also regarding what the individual perceives as the most desirable career options. This could influence the employees to quit their jobs because they want new opportunities. Nicholason and West (1998) describe that one of the most common reasons why employees leave is to achieve career objectives.

Several of the participants in the study mentioned that they had increased expectations towards their career development and that their new knowledge would be used within the organization in the time after the program. Although there are general expectations of employees today that their careers develop across multiple roles and employers, as described by the concept of The Boundaryless Career (Kraimer et al., 2010), the findings suggest that expectations did increase as a result of the leadership program. Maurer & Lippstreu (2008) suggest that

employees may respond differently to development support depending on whether they perceive their goals are congruent with the organization and whether they receive support from the organization, where negative experiences lead to a decrease in commitment and potential turnover. Some participants had expectations towards their competence being utilized internally or expectations towards further career development in the organization. As these expectations were not met, the participants may become less committed. If employees then receive an opportunity in another organization, they will be more likely to quit because they want to be in a place where expectations are met, according to the concept of P-O fit (Chew & Chan, 2008).

A noteworthy finding in our study was that many participants did not perceive that the current organization held attractive career opportunities or did not have access to them. One example is the participant that mentioned there were opportunities in the organization that could meet her expectations, but that these positions were not available to her, so she decided to move on. Several participants stated that they switched organizations due to wanting to attain their career goals and not experiencing them being present in the organization. In line with career motivation theory (London, 1983), individuals' career decisions are motivated by a desire to reach their own career goals. Some participants suggest that they could have stayed if they had received interesting development opportunities. Some participants switched jobs internally after the program as they found desirable opportunities to apply for or were offered new positions. Kraimer et al. (2010) state that investing in the development of employees may lead to increased turnover if the employees do not experience Perceived Development Opportunities in the organization because the sacrifice of leaving the organization is lower due to increased mobility capital.

One of the participants mentioned that it is essential that the organization creates positions and follows up on the people who attended leadership development if they want them to stay. Ito & Brotheridge (2005) suggest that to retain employees after investing in their competence, the organizations should provide information on how to use the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the employee has within the organization in a way that is congruent with both the employees and organizations goals.

To summarize, the experience of attending a leadership development program seemed to have increased the career ambitions of some participants as

well as provided inspiration and awareness toward career prospects elsewhere. Additionally, the participants expressed expectations towards reaching their career objectives faster and using the competence they had gained in the program to influence the organization. Without finding the opportunities to achieve their career objectives or the organization failing at meeting their expectations for contribution and development in the time after the program, the participant seems to gain an increased desire to look for career opportunities in other organizations that match their needs.

Increased loyalty versus increased agency

An interesting approach to why some people choose to leave their organization after leadership development is to investigate the experience of commitment towards the organization as a result of the program. Especially considering the connection commitment has with turnover through the understanding that people stay if they are committed to their organization and leave if they aren't (Mitchell et al., 2001). As mentioned in the introduction, according to Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) leadership development should lead to increased organizational commitment and reduced turnover (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). It is therefore of interest to investigate whether the participants experience commitment and if this commitment influenced their career choices.

In the interviews, the participants were specifically asked if they perceived their commitment to the organization after attending the program had changed, which allowed for many different personal interpretations of the meaning of commitment. Most participants referred to commitment as an obligation to stay, which is an indication of normative commitment, because one feels that they "ought" to (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Some participants did experience normative commitment in terms of feeling they should be returning the investment made in them. However, many participants did not have this sensation. Several participants reflected that even though they had left the organization, they might return as an employee at a later point. This affected the felt obligation to the organization, as they perceived that the investment might be returned to the organization at a later stage.

Another participant also referred to commitment as being "hooked" on the organization and not wanting to leave, which indicates affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), which has the strongest negative relationship out of the

three factors with turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001). However, the participant still decided to leave the organization. In light of this, it was interesting to connect reflections on commitment towards how several participants mentioned that self-reflections and getting a break from daily life led to an increased understanding of oneself and what one wants.

One participant mentioned that leadership development had also led to increased loyalty to herself, which trumped her loyalty towards the organization after the program. This can be discussed in light of the study by Larsson et al. (2020). They discuss the paradox in leadership development which is about how the program is supposed to enhance individual agency, in which the participants gain a stronger sense of self and develop self-narratives. However, the intended outcomes are often related to organizational effectiveness or unitarist outcomes that benefit the organization. Self-reflection, becoming aware of what one wants and gaining an increased loyalty to oneself as a result of the program enhance the participant's individual agency. Additionally, as mentioned in findings one (1), increased confidence, and as seen in findings three (3), awareness of what one desires, could contribute to this enhancement. The increased agency could be seen as a factor that could decrease continuance commitment as it might affect the participant's sense of whether they "need" to stay in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991) since their efficacy-beliefs increase, and thereby have an effect on their perceived ease at leaving the organization.

In conclusion, findings are divergent in terms of to what extent the participants experience increased commitment after attending a leadership program. The participants experiencing increased affective or normative commitment still decided to leave the organization, suggesting the effect of commitment is somewhat weak. Some pointed out they might return to the organization at a later point, reducing the impact of felt obligation. Some participants also expressed an increased loyalty to themselves that trumped the felt obligation towards the organization.

Overall in this study, we cannot determine whether attending or completing a leadership development program influenced the participants in terms of their decisions to stay or leave their organization within two years after the program ended. However, some indications that attending the program increased the participant's movement capital and increased loyalty to oneself, which may influence the individual's ease of movement. Additionally, certain experiences

such as expectations towards training, follow-up, and development opportunities in the organization after the program could negatively influence POS and P-O fit. Together with awareness of new opportunities and increased inspiration and ambitions for own career, these factors could influence the participant's desire to move. There is a chance that the participants would have made the same career decisions, or had the same reflections and experiences regardless of the attendance in the leadership development program. Furthermore, it is important to reflect on how employees changing jobs doesn't always have to be portrayed as negative. For example, if leadership development acts as a catalyst to becoming aware of low P-O fit, which would eventually lead to turnover or other negative outcomes in the long run, then both parts might be better off if the employee realizes this sooner than later.

Limitations and further research

Firstly, a noteworthy limitation of our study is the sample used to conduct data. By using convenience sampling, the chances are that the participants we gained access to are not representative of a larger population considering the limited availability of candidates. The difficulty in locating and attaining candidates for the study proved challenging, leading to our sample only consisting of nine candidates. Generalization is a common problem in qualitative research, considering the scope of the findings being restricted (Bryman & Bell, 2007), and a larger sample could have improved the generalizability of the findings. Questions could also be posed regarding the characteristics of the candidates we attracted. A prominent finding of the study was that the participants gained confidence from the leadership development program, and one could reflect on whether a participant that experienced a decrease in confidence would be as eager to participate.

Although the heterogeneity of our sample can be of value considering our aim to capture diverse experiences from various contexts, it also means that the participants have attended completely different leadership development programs, making it hard to compare the findings. Additionally, we searched for participants who had changed jobs both internally and externally in the organization to compare experiences. Several of the participants had changed jobs multiple times after completing the leadership development program, and only a few remained in the same organization as before the program. This limitation also led to challenges regarding comparing the candidates' experiences.

Secondly, we aimed to use triangulation by collecting data from leadership development suppliers and other organizations. However, considering the somewhat sensitive and negative nature of our research question, leadership development suppliers and companies seemed reluctant to contribute to our research. If multiple sources of data were used, the data could have been more reliable and valid (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

A third limitation is the study's time frame and timing of data collection. Considering that our data collection was carried out for most participants more than a year after they completed the leadership development program, one could assume this influenced the credibility of the data. Several participants also mentioned that they had challenges remembering past experiences and attitudes at the time. A more appropriate research design could have included a longitudinal component such as following a group of participants before, during, and after a leadership development program.

A fourth limitation considers the nature of qualitative research and specifically qualitative interviewing. The close involvement with the research participants in the interview setting and the framing of interview questions could potentially also affect the participants' responses.

Lastly, considering the broad research question being "*Why do some people decide to leave their organization after completing a leadership development program?*", multiple other factors could contribute to and influence participants' career decisions and experiences related to leadership development programs. Considering the amount of research related to turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000), it is difficult to determine what factors influenced the career decisions of the participants. Investigating outcomes of leadership development is, as mentioned previously, not an elementary process as it considers a highly complex interaction between people and surrounding environments (Day et al. 2014), which makes it hard to determine where the influence stems from.

Despite its limitations, this study provides several practical implications for organizations. The findings could imply that when using leadership development programs to increase the competence of the employees, there are certain aspects to be aware of, such as how the participants might have increased expectations related to career development in the time after the program. It would be beneficial for the organization to provide information on how the participants can align their career goals with the organization's goals, also mentioned by Ito

and Brotheridge (2005) both in terms of reaching their future career goals as well as utilizing the skills and competence they gained from the program.

Additionally, some participants experienced frustration and dissatisfaction towards the organization regarding the content, follow-up, and mismatch between ideals presented and reality in the organization. Organizations could take certain steps to prevent this. Following up the participants in the time after leadership development was something most participants expressed a wish for. It could be of value for organizations that are delivering the leadership development programs internally to reflect on how attitudes and content portrayed in the course could affect the participants. Lastly, ensuring the intention behind providing employees with leadership development is being perceived as genuine is also recommended.

For further research, we suggest gathering data on how widespread the phenomenon is. Although there is some research related to development of employees and turnover, there is a gap in research that focuses on leadership development training and turnover specifically. Our study is not suggested to be generalizable or to suggest anything about the phenomenon's prevalence. We aimed to bring attention to the topic, especially considering how leadership development is a central strategy for many organizations and the amount of resources spent on it.

Additionally, more research is required in general towards unintended consequences of leadership development. As mentioned previously, we suggest a longitudinal design to determine with more credibility how leadership development could affect the participants' confidence, their career goals, and their relationship to and expectations towards the organization. We also suggest examining how participants' personalities and individual attributes influence as variables. Overall, the area requires more research, and it could be of value to carry out more explorative research to uncover even more variables that could shed light on the topic.

Conclusion

Considering the amount of resources organizations spend on leadership development (Ho, 2016) and how common it is to practice it (Yukl, 2013), more research is necessary to investigate the outcomes and ensure the organization's investments are not wasted.

This study contributes to bringing attention to potential unintended and unforeseen consequences of leadership development by providing an

understanding of why some people decide to leave their organization after attending a leadership development program. From the findings and scope of the study, we cannot determine how the leadership development program influenced the final decision on turnover. However, some insights can contribute to understanding participants' career choices post leadership development and specifically what potential factors could influence the participant's desire for and ease of movement.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that the participants experienced increased confidence, self-efficacy, and mobility capital as a result of the program, which seemed to have influenced their perceived ease at leaving the organization.

Additionally, the desire for movement could have increased as the participants experienced increased expectations and inspiration towards their own careers, making alternative employment alternatives more attractive and more visible. This could also be influenced by the perceived lack of career opportunities at the current organization.

Some participants experienced that their needs and expectations were not met during and after the training, influencing POS and awareness of P-O fit. This could have influenced the desire for movement, but the study cannot determine how this influenced the choice of leaving the organization.

Lastly, although attending leadership development led to increased commitment for some participants, this commitment did not determine the participant's choice to stay in the organization. Some participants also reflected on increased loyalty to oneself, overriding the felt obligation to remain in the organization and thereby influencing ease of movement.

Although we cannot determine how widespread the phenomenon of employees leaving after attending a leadership development program is. Still, there is a possibility that leadership development programs could act as a catalyst of the participants leaving their organizations considering our findings, which has provided insight into further research areas and brought attention to the topic.

References

- Allen, D., Shore, L., & Griffeth, R. (2003). The Role of Perceived Organizational Support and Supportive Human Resource Practices in the Turnover Process. *Journal of Management*, 29, 99–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630302900107>
- Amagoh, F. (2009). Leadership development and leadership effectiveness. *Management Decision*, 47(6), 989–999. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740910966695>
- Arnulf, J. K., Glasø, L., Andreassen, A. K. B., & Martinsen, Ø. L. (2016, December 2). *The dark side of leadership development: An exploration of the possible downsides of leadership development*. *Psykologisk.no*. <https://psykologisk.no/sp/2016/12/e18/>
- Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era* [OUP Catalogue]. Oxford University Press. <https://econpapers.repec.org/bookchap/oxpobooks/9780195100143.htm>
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1990). Developing Transformational Leadership: 1992 and Beyond. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 14(5). <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090599010135122>
- Bell, E., & Bryman, A. (2011). *Business research methods*. 3rd edition. Oxford university press.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological inquiry*, 34(2), 193-206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1964.tb00583.x>
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th edition. Oxford university press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2007). *Business Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press Inc.
- Cable, D., & Judge, T. (1995). *The Role of Person-Organization Fit in Organizational Selection Decisions*. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*.
- Chew, J., & Chan, C. C. A. (2008). Human resource practices, organizational commitment and intention to stay. *International Journal of Manpower*, 29(6), 503–522. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720810904194>
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary Review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874.

-
- Day, D. V. (2000). Leadership development: A review in context. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *11*(4), 581–613. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(00\)00061-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(00)00061-8)
- Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E., & McKee, R. A. (2014). Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25 years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *25*(1), 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.11.004>
- Ehrhart, K. H., & Ziegert, J. C. (2005). Why Are Individuals Attracted to Organizations? *Journal of Management*, *31*(6), 901–919. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279759>
- Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. (2001). Reciprocation of Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(1), 42–51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.1.42>
- Eisenberger, R., & Stinglhamber, F. (2011). *Perceived Organizational Support: Fostering Enthusiastic and Productive Employees* (1st ed.). American Psychology Association.
- Feldman, D. C., & Ng, T. W. H. (2007). Careers: Mobility, Embeddedness, and Success. *Journal of Management*, *33*(3), 350–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307300815>
- Front Leadership. (2021). *Lederutvikling hos norske virksomheter—Siste 12 måneder versus neste 12 måneder* (pp. 1–40).
- Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement. *American Sociological Review*, *25*(2), 161–178. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2092623>
- Gipsrud, G., Olsson, U. H., & Silkoset, R. (2016). *Metode og dataanalyse*. Cappelen Damm
- Griffeth, R. W., Hom, P. W., & Gaertner, S. (2000). A Meta-Analysis of Antecedents and Correlates of Employee Turnover: Update, Moderator Tests, and Research Implications for the Next Millennium. *Journal of Management*, *26*(3), 463–488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630002600305>
- Groves, K. (2007). Integrating leadership development and succession planning best practices. *Journal of Management Development*, *26*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710710732146>
- Hay, A., & Hodgkinson, M. (2008). More Success than Meets the Eye—A
-

Challenge to Critiques of the MBA: Possibilities for Critical Management Education? *Management Learning*, 39(1), 21–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507607085170>

Heslin, P. A. (2005). Conceptualizing and evaluating career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 113–136. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.270>

Heskett, J. L., Jones, T. O., Loveman, G. W., W. Earl Sasser, J., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2008, July 1). Putting the Service-Profit Chain to Work. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2008/07/putting-the-service-profit-chain-to-work>

Ho, M. (2016). *Investment in Learning Increases for Fourth Straight Year | ATD*. <https://www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/investment-in-learning-increases-for-fourth-straight-year>

Ito, J. K., & Brotheridge, C. M. (2005). Does supporting employees' career adaptability lead to commitment, turnover, or both? *Human Resource Management*, 44(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20037>

Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C. (2012). How Does Human Resource Management Influence Organizational Outcomes? A Meta-analytic Investigation of Mediating Mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(6), 1264–1294. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0088>

Johannessen, A., Tufte, P. A., Kristoffersen, L., (2004.) *Introduksjon til samfunnsvitenskapelig metode*. 2nd edition. Oslo: Abstrakt Forlag

Kraimer, M., Seibert, S., Wayne, S., Liden, R., & Jesus, B. (2010). Antecedents and Outcomes of Organizational Support for Development: The Critical Role of Career Opportunities. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 485–500. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021452>

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. 3rd edition. Sage.

Lacerenza, C. N., Reyes, D. L., Marlow, S. L., Joseph, D. L., & Salas, E. (2017). Leadership training design, delivery, and implementation: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(12), 1686–1718.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000241>

Larsson, M., Holmberg, R., & Kempster, S. (2020). 'It's the organization that is wrong': Exploring disengagement from organizations through leadership development. *Leadership*, 16(2), 141–162.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715019879306>

-
- Lee, C. H., & Bruvold, N. T. (2003). Creating value for employees: Investment in employee development. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(6), 981–1000.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0958519032000106173>
- London, M. (1983). Toward a Theory of Career Motivation. *The Academy of Management Review*, 8(4), 620–630. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258263>
- March, J. G., & Simon, H. A. (1958). *Organizations* [SSRN Scholarly Paper].
<https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1496194>
- Maurer, T. J., & Lippstreu, M. (2008). Who will be committed to an organization that provides support for employee development? *Journal of Management Development*, 27(3), 328–347.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710810858632>
- McCauley, C., Drath, W. H., Palus, C. J., Patricia M.G., & O'Connor, B. A. B. (2006). *The use of constructive-developmental theory to advance the understanding of leadership*. 17(6), 634–653.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.006>
- McElroy, J. C., & Weng, Q. (2016). The connections between careers and organizations in the new career era: Questions answered, questions raised. *Journal of Career Development*, 43(1), 3–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845315604738>
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822\(91\)90011-Z](https://doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822(91)90011-Z)
- Meyer, J. P., & Herscovitch, L. (2001). Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(3), 299–326.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(00\)00053-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(00)00053-X)
- Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablinski, C. J., & Erez, M. (2001). Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(6), 1102–1121.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3069391>
- Nicholson, H., & Carroll, B. (2013). Identity undoing and power relations in leadership development. *Human Relations*, 66(9), 1225–1248.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712469548>
- Nicholson, N., & West, M. A. (1988). *Managerial job change: Men and women in*
-

transition (pp. xi, 274). Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511522116>

Northouse, Peter. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and Practise* (8th ed.). SAGE publications.

Pattnaik, L., Mishra, S., & Tripathy, S. K. (2020). Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment: Moderating Role of Person–Organization Fit. *Global Business Review*, 0972150920920776.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150920920776>

Price, J. L. (2001). Reflections on the determinants of voluntary turnover. *International Journal of Manpower*, 22(7), 600–624.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM000000006233>

Sousa-Poza, A., & Henneberger, F. (2004). Analyzing Job Mobility with Job Turnover Intentions: An International Comparative Study. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 38(1), 113–137.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2004.11506667>

Staw, B. M. (1980). The Consequences of Turnover. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 1(4), 253–273.

Sullivan, S. E. (1999). The Changing Nature of Careers: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 457–484.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639902500308>

Tett, R. P., Guterman, H. A., Bleier, A., & Murphy, P. J. (2000). Development and
Content Validation of a “Hyperdimensional” Taxonomy of Managerial Competence. *Human Performance*, 13(3), 205–251.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327043HUP1303_1

Thagaard, Tove. 2013. *Systematikk og innlevelse: En innføring i kvalitativ metode*.
4. utgave. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Tjora, A., (2017). *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis*. 3rd edition. Gyldendal.

Trevor, C. O. (2001). Interactions among Actual Ease-of-Movement Determinants and Job Satisfaction in the Prediction of Voluntary Turnover. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 621–638.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3069407>

Wallace, D. M., Torres, E. M., & Zaccaro, S. J. (2021). Just what do we think we

are doing? Learning outcomes of leader and leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32(5), 101494.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2020.101494>

Wayne, S., Shore, L., Bommer, W., & Tetrick, L. (2002). The Role of Fair Treatment and Rewards in Perceptions of Organizational Support and Leader-Member Exchange. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 590–598. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.87.3.590>

Wayne, S., Shore, L., & Liden, R. (1997). Perceived Organizational Support and Leader-Member Exchange: A Social Exchange Perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 82–111. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257021>

Whitener, E. (2001). Do ‘High Commitment’ Human Resource Practices Affect Employee Commitment? A Cross-Level Analysis Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling. *Journal of Management - J MANAGE*, 27, 515–535.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630102700502>

Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in Organization* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Appendix A

Introduksjon:	
<u>Formål:</u>	<u>Spørsmål:</u>
<i>Praktisk informasjon Bygge tillit med informanten</i>	<p>Introduksjon fra oss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentere oss selv• Gå gjennom samtykkeskjema fra NSD<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Informanten vil bli anonymisert○ Informantens rett om å avslutte intervjuet når som helst○ Informantens rett til å trekke seg fra prosjektet på e-post eller per telefon når som helst• Er det ok å ta opptak av samtalen til transkribering?• Hvem er vi og formål med prosjektet• Fortelle hva vi skal gjennom på intervjuet <p>Introduksjon om informanten:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kan du fortelle litt kort om deg selv?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bakgrunn, karriere, utdanning• Kan du fortelle litt kort om din nåværende rolle/arbeidsplass?
Praktiske spørsmål om kriterier for deltakelse	
<i>Oversikt over kandidatens karriere-valg etter lederutvikling</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>intro til å snakke om lederutviklings- programmet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Når byttet du jobb etter lederutviklingen?• Byttet du internt eller byttet du bedrift?• Nå begynte dine tanker om å bytte jobb eller slutte?• Kan du fortelle kort om lederutviklingsprogrammet du deltok på?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ temaer, oppbygning, innhold
Opplevelsen av lederutvikling	
<i>Generelle utfall av lederutvikling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hvilke reaksjoner hadde du på lederutviklingen?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Positive/negative?• Lærte du noe på kurset som du tok i bruk på jobben?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Det du lærte på lederutviklingen, opplevde du det som verdifullt• Følte du at du ble en bedre leder?• Føler du at du sitter på mer kompetanse?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personlig eller objektivt? •
<i>Lederutvikling og effekt på identitet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kan du gi noen eksempler på hvordan programmet endret din forståelse av deg selv? • På hvilken måte endret programmet måten du så på deg selv som leder? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Følte du deg mer som leder etter programmet? ○ Følte du at du ble behandlet annerledes etter deltakelse av dine kollegaer eller ledere?
<i>Opplevd støtte fra bedriften</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan opplevde du støtte fra organisasjonen din når du deltok på lederutvikling? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hva med tiden etterpå? • Opplevde du at ditt syn på bedriften i noen grad ble organisasjonen da du deltok på lederutvikling? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Endret det syn på dine ledere?
Konsekvenser av lederutvikling	
<i>Opplevelser i tiden etter programmet var ferdig</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Når programmet var ferdig og du var tilbake i jobben som normalt, kan du fortelle litt om dette? • I hvilken grad ble din motivasjon påvirket til dine arbeidsoppgaver etter ledertreningen?
<i>Opplevelse av forpliktelse mot organisasjonen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan opplevde du at du følte lojalitet/forpliktelse til organisasjonen din før og etter lederutviklingen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hva førte det du hadde lært på lederutviklingen til? (Nevn spesifikt de eksemplene informantene tok opp)
<i>Sammenheng læring om egen identitet og videre valg om karriere</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hva førte det du hadde lært om din egen identitet og verdier til? • Hvordan påvirket lederutviklingen dine videre ambisjoner for karriere? • Når du lærte om deg selv og utviklet tanker om dine egenskaper, kompetanse

	og identitet. På hvilken måte påvirket denne læringen avgjørelsen din om å skifte jobb?
<i>H3: Continuance commitment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvordan opplevde du forholdet til egen bedrift i tiden etter lederutviklingen? • Opplevde du en økt distanse til bedriften? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Hvis JA? Når og hvordan opplevde du denne?</i> • Har du noen tanker om hva som kunne vært annerledes for at du skulle blitt i jobben du hadde under lederutviklingen? Eller at skulle ha fått mer ut av det? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Fra bedriften eller andre faktorer.</i>
Avslutning	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Er det noe annet du vil legge til, som vi ikke har snakket om? • Repeter konteksten • Spør om det er greit med oppfølgingsspørsmål senere. • Vil informanten ha kopi av det transkriberte intervjuet. • Si TUSEN TAKK!!!

Appendix B

Informasjon om forskningsprosjektet

Masteroppgave om reaksjoner og effekter av lederutvikling

I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for dette forskningsprosjektet og hva prosjektet innebærer for deg.

Formål

Vi er to masterstudenter ved Handelshøyskolen BI som fortiden holder på med et forskningsprosjekt vedrørende vår masteroppgave om temaet lederutvikling. I dette prosjektet ønsker vi å undersøke hvilke reaksjoner deltakere har på lederutviklings-program og konsekvensene av disse reaksjonene. Formålet med prosjektet er å undersøke effekter av lederutvikling og denne innsikten kan bidra til å hjelpe både bedrifter og leverandører av lederutviklingsprogram å få mer ut av lederutvikling.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Masterstudentene Martine Elise Hansen og Helene Uhlen Maurset ved Handelshøyskolen BI er ansvarlig for prosjektet med veiledning fra Øyvind S. Martinsen.

Hvorfor er du inkludert i studien?

Utvalget vi ønsker å bruke i denne studien er ledere som tidligere har deltatt på et åpent lederutviklingsprogram slik som programmet som er fasilitert av Management Synergy. I tillegg ønsker vi helst å komme i kontakt med deltakere som har sluttet i bedriften de tilhørte innen 18 måneder etter deltakelse. Vi vil intervju 6-8 deltakere.

Hva innebærer prosjektet for deg?

Hvis du har lyst til å delta på dette prosjektet, ønsker vi å ha et dybde-intervju med deg. I dette intervjuet vil vi stille deg forskjellige spørsmål som omhandler din deltakelse på lederutviklingsprogram og dine reaksjoner i tiden etterpå.

Intervjuet vil bli holdt av oss (Helene og Martine) og det vil vare ca. 1 time. Vi vil gjøre lydopptak av intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Du kan når som helst protestere mot at du inkluderes i dette forskningsprosjektet, og du trenger ikke å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du velger å protestere.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Vi vil ikke dele informasjon med andre, det vil bare være Helene Uhlen Maurset, Martine Elise Hansen og Øyvind S. Martinsen som har tilgang til informasjonen.

Vi passer på at ingen vil få tak i informasjon om deg ved at vi lagrer all informasjon sikkert, vi sletter lydopptak fra intervjuet når alt er skrevet ned, og vi vil passe på at ingen kan kjenne deg igjen i det ferdige forskningsprosjektet f.eks. ved anonymisering av navn.

Vi følger loven om personvern.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgraden er godkjent, noe som etter planen er 1. oktober 2022.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg fordi forskningsprosjektet er vurdert å være i allmennhetens interesse, men du har anledning til å protestere dersom du ikke ønsker å bli inkludert i prosjektet.

På oppdrag fra Handelshøyskolen BI har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- å protestere
- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer eller å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Handelshøyskolen BI ved Helene Uhlen Maurset (helenemaurset@gmail.com), Martine Elise Hansen (martine.elise.hansen@hotmail.com) eller veileder Øyvind S. Martinsen (oyvind.martinsen@bi.no)
- Vårt personvernombud: NSD (postmottak@sikt.no)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Øyvind S. Martinsen
(veileder)

Helene Uhlen Maurset
(forsker/student)

Martine Elise Hansen
(forsker/stude)

Appendix C

Vil du delta på et forskningsprosjekt om lederutvikling?

Har du deltatt på et lederutviklingsprogram sponset av arbeidsgiver? Har du i tillegg til dette byttet jobb innen 2 år fra du fullførte lederutviklingsprogrammet?

Da er vi veldig interessert i å komme i kontakt med deg!

Hva forsker vi på?

I samarbeid med **Handelshøyskolen BI** og vår **veileder Øyvind S. Martinsen** skriver vi masteroppgave om teamet lederutvikling, hvor vi blant annet undersøker hvilke reaksjoner deltakere har på lederutviklingsprogrammer og hva konsekvensene av disse reaksjonene er.

Hvem ser vi etter?

Det er to kriterier som må oppfylles for å være informant i dette forskningsprosjektet.

1. Du må ha deltatt på et lederutviklingsprogram.

Dette kan både være interne program i bedriften eller program fasilitert av ekstern leverandør.

2. Du må ha sluttet i stillingen du var i da du deltok på lederutviklingsprogrammet innen 2 år etter programmets slutt.

Å slutte i stillingen kan både innebære å bytte stilling innad i organisasjonen eller å ha byttet arbeidsgiver. Det er ikke viktig hvorfor du valgte å slutte i jobben og det trenger heller ikke være en opplevd sammenheng mellom lederutvikling og valget om å bytte jobb.

Hvordan gjennomføres prosjektet?

Vi ønsker å gjennomføre 1-1 intervjuer med personer som matcher kriteriene nevnt ovenfor. Intervjuene vil vare ca. 1 time.

Vi kan garantere at data vil bli behandlet i henhold til regler om personvern. Alt av persondata vil bli anonymisert og virksomheter vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i datamaterialet eller oppgaven. Du kan når som helst trekke deg fra forskningsprosjektet uten å oppgi grunn.

Hvorfor er dette relevant?

Innsikt fra dette prosjektet kan bidra til å kaste lys på uforutsette konsekvenser av lederutvikling som på sikt kan hjelpe leverandører av lederutvikling til å forbedre deres tjenester og det kan hjelpe organisasjoner med å støtte ansatte bedre gjennom prosesser knyttet til lederutvikling.

Hvordan delta?

Meld din interesse ved å sende en uforpliktende mail til helenemaurset@gmail.com eller [martine elise hansen@hotmail.com](mailto:martine.elise.hansen@hotmail.com).

Eller ta kontakt med oss på +47 48177818 (Helene) eller +47 971 14 082 (Martine) dersom du har noen spørsmål.

Vi setter stor pris på alle som ønsker å delta eller som kan bidra til å viderefordre prosjektet!

