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– Master of Science Thesis –

Employees' motivation for taking on leadership positions:

A quantitative study on how Leader-Member relationships (LMX) and job satisfaction influence employees' motivation for upward career transitions into leadership positions

Supervisor:

Émilie Lapointe

Study Program:

Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology

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Halvor Dalen   Victor Andreassen

Oslo, 03.07.23

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Summary

This master thesis looks at employees' motivation for taking on leadership positions. We argue that this is important for leadership recruitment and to ensure effective leadership which again will influence the performance of the organization. We researched this topic by looking at well-known work-related predictors like leader-member relationship (LMX) and job satisfaction, and how these influence different subscales of motivation derived from self-determination theory. To our knowledge, this specific type of motivation (motivation to take on leadership positions) has not previously been explored in the same way as we did. The question we seek to answer in this paper is: *"How does job satisfaction and leader-member relationship affect employees' motivation for upward career transitions into leadership positions?"*

A cross-sectional research design was chosen for this paper. Accordingly, we used a quantitative self-reported survey with respondents from U.K. We found a positive and significant relationship between LMX and intrinsic motivation. In terms of our hypotheses, this was our only significant finding, meaning we did not find support for the remaining 10 hypotheses. However, although not significant, we had other interesting findings which we elaborate on in detail in our discussion. For example, when we looked at job satisfaction and different motivational subscales, we found that job satisfaction followed the hypothesized pattern of Ryan and Deci's (2020) taxonomy of motivation.

We believe the contributing factor is highly present since we explore a specific type of motivation and not just general work motivation. Additionally, we do not use predicting factors that are inherent in the employee, e.g., personality, which often is the case in existing research involving this type of leadership research. This together makes this paper valuable for organizational psychology and especially leadership recruitment. The research presented in this thesis is not without limitations, and important methodological and theoretical limitations are discussed.

1. Introduction

The first idea for our thesis was sparked when we heard in a class that one in six employees in Norway are in leadership positions. Looking further into this statement, we found that Norway had 2,81 million people employed in 2022, and out of these, a little less than 234 thousand were in leadership positions (SSB, 2023). This entails that there was approximately one leadership position per 12 employees on average. These numbers brought about the question: how can this be effective? Furthermore, why do individuals want to become leaders, and what is their motivation for taking on leadership positions?

Research on what motivates employees at work is both important and well researched. The matter of why some employees choose to take on leadership positions and others do not, in addition to what factors serve as predictors of this kind of motivation, has been given less attention among scholars. In this thesis, we will look at Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory and Job Satisfaction as the predictors of motivation to take on leadership positions.

Leader-member exchange theory and job satisfaction have been chosen as predictors since they have been shown to be significant predictors of intrinsic work motivation and both variables are related to a multitude of work-related outcomes (Humphreys & Einstein, 2004; Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2015; Eskildsen, Kristensen, & Westlund, 2004; Lu, 1999; Rode, 2004; Judge & Watanabe, 1993). Since previous research has looked at LMX and job satisfaction as predictors of motivation in general, we wish to explore a new area of motivation where there is little to no previous research, namely motivation to take on leadership positions.

Motivation is related to several important work-related variables, with work performance probably being the most interesting one. Kuvaas et al., (2017), consistently found evidence that intrinsic motivation was positively related to both job performance and organizational commitment. Also, it was negatively related to negative outcomes such as turnover and burnout. However, for extrinsic motivation, they did not find evidence for the same positive relationship. The

positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance is also supported by a meta-analysis from 2014 where the researchers found a medium to strong relationship between the two variables (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014).

We have derived three different frameworks from theoretical and empirical work: self-determination theory, research on job satisfaction and Leader-Member exchange theory. Using validated scales from each framework, we seek to answer the question: *"How does job satisfaction and leader-member relationship affect employees' motivation for upward career transitions into leadership positions?"* In the thesis, we will present relevant theories with different hypotheses, our methodology, our findings, and an analysis of our findings. Lastly, we will attempt to showcase the implications of our findings.

2. Literature review

In order to investigate our research question and gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and leader-member relationships and their relationship to motivation for upward transitions into leadership and management, we review existing literature on career transitions, the leadership role, and motivation through self-determination theory, job satisfaction research and LMX theory.

2.1.1 Leadership and management

Leadership can be defined in endless variations as it has been conceptualized in many ways through the years (Northouse, 2022). One broad definition seemingly covering all important elements can be: "leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2022, p. 6). "Influence" is the most important element in this leadership definition and entails how the leader affects his or her followers. Without influence, leadership is non-existent. From the above, and to target the right respondents in our survey, we use the following definition in this research: "Leadership positions refer to all positions providing role holders with direct influence on a group of individuals aiming to achieve a common goal."

2.1.2 Career transitions into leadership positions

"A career is a sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person's life" (Hall, 2002, p. 12). Most career development theories today stress that people must create their *own* career paths and construct their *own* meaning for their career development. Linear careers are becoming more the exception than the norm and this has implications for success indicators of the "modern career". Objective success indicators (e.g., high pay or promotions) lose terrain, and success indicators like personal meaningfulness and satisfaction are increasingly strived for (Hirschi, Zacher, & Shockley, 2020).

While "career orientation" seems to be a broader term, a "career transition" is much more concrete and concise. Career transitions are defined as "the period during which an individual is either changing roles (taking on a different objective role) or changing orientation to a role already held (altering subjective state)" (Louis, 1980, p. 330). The numbers from SSB (2023) show that a large amount of the total employees in the country will or have transitioned into a leadership position, making career transitions into leadership positions an important topic.

In a paper on leadership transitions, Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008) discuss internal and external leader transitions. They differentiate between an insider, which is a currently employed individual that is promoted into a leadership position, and an outsider, which is an individual coming in from the outside without knowledge of the organization. Both Maderscheid and Ardichvili (2008) and other research seem to focus much on how these transitions can be successfully handled after the transition is done. Based on our literature review, less research seems to be dedicated to mechanisms and the causes of such transitions. To explore this further, we will look into different types of motivation and how these are influenced by key variables such as LMX and job satisfaction.

2.2 Motivation

To be considered motivated one must be activated or energized toward an end. The opposite, being unmotivated, is when a person feels no inspiration or impetus to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Following Ryan and Deci's depiction, Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) write that motivation is some form of internal condition that

aims to activate or energize behavior and provide direction. This internal condition is often referred to as a desire, need, or want.

2.2.1 Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is considered a broad theory of human development and wellness that is formally made up of other mini-theories on topics such as intrinsic motivation, internalization, life goals and aspirations, individual differences in motivation, and motivation in personal relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The theory was formally published in 1985 but it evolved out of research on the effects extrinsic motivation had on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012). SDT focuses on individuals' inherent motivational propensities for growing and learning and assumes individuals are inherently prone to these elements. Because of this focus, growing and learning require a supportive environment. According to SDT, three basic psychological needs are key: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Without these, or with hindering of these needs, motivation and wellness may be damaged (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Before the self-determination theory was introduced, the field of motivation was dominated by behaviorism and behaviorists, e.g., B.F Skinner, where the focus was on external reinforcers to dictate behavior (Ryan, Ryan, & Di Domenico, 2019). Eventually, other theories developed the field further, for instance how "drive theory" introduced the importance of basic psychological needs and how these will reinforce specific behaviors (Hull, 1943; Spence, 1956, cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1). Self-determination theory and earlier behaviorism research serve as the foundation of how we view theories on motivation today. It is also the building block to further divide the different motivational mechanisms and create validated measures of the concept.

2.2.2 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is seen as pivotal due to its relationship to learning and growth. Ryan and Deci (2000) write that it is through our inherent interests we grow and learn, acquiring skills and knowledge. When intrinsically motivated, the activity is done for its inherent satisfactions and not for its separatable consequences. One can argue that intrinsic motivation exists within individuals but also that it exists in the relation between individuals and activities (Ryan and

Deci, 2000). Exploration, play, and curiosity are mentioned as typical intrinsically motivated behaviors because they drive joy and satisfaction without incentives. Intrinsic motivation is said to be responsible for the majority of human learning across a lifespan (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

2.2.3 Extrinsic motivation

Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that although not always that clear, especially from a SDT point of view, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are often seen as the two extremes of the motivational continuum. Extrinsic motivation is referred to as doing an activity for its instrumental value instead of the inherent joy of the activity itself. The number of extrinsically motivated activities carried out by people is said to be decreasing after early childhood. Due to social demands and norms, people are assumed to take more responsibility for tasks that are labeled as non-intrinsically tasks (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.2.4 Types of motivation

An important point in SDT is that intrinsically motivated behaviors are seen as the prototype or ideal form of self-determined behavior. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand is seen as a motivation that varies in the extent to how much self-determination is expressed. Said in other words, the level of autonomy varies. As a relevant example to illustrate this, Ryan & Deci (2000) write about a student who does his homework only because he fears reprimands or sanctions from his parents, and a student who does his homework because he genuinely believes it is valuable for a coming career. It is not done out of interest but for its value. The first example is about compliance with an external control while the second example involves a feeling of choice and personal endorsement. The examples vary in their level of autonomy.

Formerly referred to as a taxonomy of human motivation but today referred to as self-determination theory's taxonomy of motivation includes four types of extrinsic motivation; external regulation, introjection, identification, and integration (Ryan & Deci, 2020).
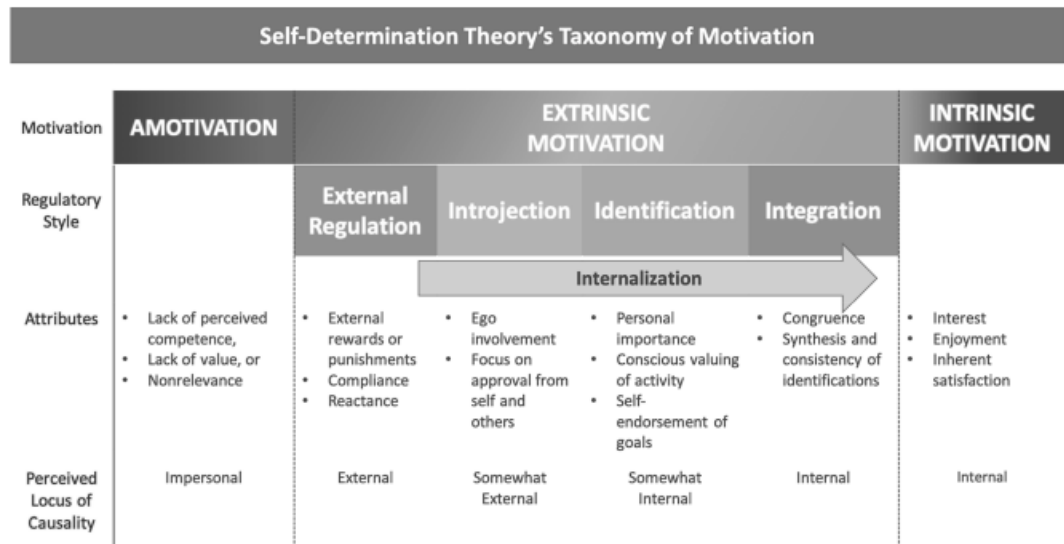
Self-Determination Theory's Taxonomy of Motivation

Motivation	AMOTIVATION	EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION				INTRINSIC MOTIVATION
Regulatory Style		External Regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
		Internalization →				
Attributes	• Lack of perceived competence, • Lack of value, or • Nonrelevance	• External rewards or punishments • Compliance • Reactance	• Ego involvement • Focus on approval from self and others	• Personal importance • Conscious valuing of activity • Self-endorsement of goals	• Congruence • Synthesis and consistency of identifications	• Interest • Enjoyment • Inherent satisfaction
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal

Figure 1: A taxonomy of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020)

The far-right column in Figure 1 describes intrinsic motivation, and to the far left we find amotivation, which describes a state where there is no intention to act (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is called external regulation and is typically when behavior is externally regulated and controlled. The second type is introjection where there still is some element of external control, but behavior is often done to avoid anxiety or guilt. The next form, identification, is more autonomous and is when the individual has identified the importance of a behavior and in this way accepted the behavior as his own. The last and most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is called integration and is closely to intrinsic motivation, since the reasons for a specific behavior are internalized and assimilated into the self. What differentiates this type from intrinsic motivation is that this behavior is still done for its instrumental value concerning some outcome that is separate from the behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Another and perhaps simpler way to differentiate between the two sides is by saying there is autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. These terms do to some extent ignore the internalization process through the subscales we find in the taxonomy, but it can be advantageous to mention since some research uses this distinction. Autonomous motivation refers to intrinsic motivation and well-internalized extrinsic motivation, i.e., integrated extrinsic motivation. Controlled motivation on the other hand, refers to external regulation and introjected extrinsic

motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Within this distinction, identified regulation is not included, neither in autonomous motivation nor controlled motivation. Amotivation excluded, this makes sense as identified regulation is the midst motivation type. However, the authors label identified motivation as relatively autonomous. (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

2.2.5 Research on motivation

Most existing research on motivation looks at the two extremes, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and their relationship. For example, Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik, & Nerstad (2017) write that, because there is a negative correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, incentives that strengthen extrinsic motivation, will at the same undermine intrinsic motivation. This effect is also confirmed by a meta-analytic review that explored extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). However, this influence does not necessarily imply that what is good for intrinsic motivation is equally as bad for extrinsic motivation. Kuvaas et al., (2017) write that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may coexist in given contexts even though they are separate dimensions, but one of the two will likely dominate. Experiencing the two types equally much at the same time is logically incompatible because it creates a cognitive challenge (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

While the most logical and perhaps plausible outcome is that what will lead to an increase in one type will lead to a similar decrease in the other type, this is not the definite truth. However, it is pointed out that there still are uncertainties in the research community about the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Kuvaas et al., 2017). This does influence our confidence level when depicting different predictors and how they influence the two types and their relationship with each other. Also, the fact that we look at specific types of motivation and not just work motivation contributes to a level of uncertainty when predicting predictors and how they will influence intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

We want to look at how LMX and job satisfaction influence motivation for taking on leadership positions. It seems that no or very little research has been devoted to employees' motivation to take on leadership positions. As we see it, there is a gap

in the research literature which means our research can have a contributing impact. To our knowledge, the majority of the existing research on motivation and leadership explores how leaders and their leadership styles affect employee motivation, or how various work-related variables are affected by leadership in general (Naile & Selesho 2014; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Other research articles view and discuss how motivation is a central component of leadership (Schaffer, 2008). None of these explores mechanisms or predictors of motivation, at least not when we are talking about motivation for taking on leadership positions.

However, one paper that does explore predictors of motivation is written by Chan and Drasgow (2001). In their paper, they present a model called motivation to lead (MTL), and, amongst others, they found that affective MTL was related to intrinsic motivation. This means that those that are outgoing, sociable, and confident in their own abilities, are more intrinsically motivated than other types identified in the paper. Unlike what we aim to measure, they focus on individual differences like personality and how people are predisposed to leadership, whereas we want to contribute to the existing research by looking at well-known and relevant work-related variables like LMX and job satisfaction and their influence on *motivation* for leadership positions.

As far as we know, our approach to researching the motivational aspect of taking on leadership positions is different than the above examples, both in terms of which predictors are used, and also in terms of how the motivational factor is used, e.g., independent versus dependent. We hope this will leave a positive mark and that our findings will become a valuable contribution to the existing field of research on motivation within organizational psychology.

2.3 Leader-Member Exchange theory

The Leader-Member exchange theory (LMX) takes a different approach to leadership than more traditional typologies. Instead of looking at the individual characteristics of a person as a predictor of leadership, LMX looks at the dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower. So instead of looking at the characteristics of the leader (e.g., trait approach or behavioral approach) or models that focus on the follower (e.g. empowerment approaches) LMX focuses on the relationship between followers and the leader (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

LMX proposes incorporation of a relationship-based approach to leadership, and at the center of the argument is that an effective leadership process occurs when leaders and followers have a mature relationship. With a mature relationship, the follower gets access to different benefits, such as trust, resources, and influence (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The leader-follower interactions are influential in employees' work performance in terms of effectiveness and well-being (Northouse, 2022).

Byrne, Dik, and Chiaburu (2008) find intrinsic and objective career outcomes of LMX, arguing that subordinates that have a high-quality relationship with their supervisor self-report a higher amount of respect from their peers and the amount of supervisory mentoring received. Sparrowe and Liden (2005) underline that there is mutual dependence and power within a high-quality leader-member relationship. By this, they mean that followers with high LMX have greater influence over other group members because they get access to valuable resources and are looked at as having greater access to the supervisor's expertise, influence, or power. For this thesis, this is particularly interesting since it might be preliminary support of a positive relationship between LMX and employee motivation to take on leadership positions.

Theories such as the Path-Goal theory deduced early on that a leader's behavior has positive motivational effects (House, 1971). In light of this, multiple research papers have been published on the relationship between leader-member relationships and motivation (Humphreys & Einstein, 2004; Martin et al., 2015). Since a prerequisite for all participants in our survey is that they are motivated to take on a leadership role, our research will be looking at LMX itself being the independent variable (predictor) to the dependent variable motivation to take on leadership positions. Therefore, we hypothesize what type of influence, the predictor (LMX) has on the different subscales, as described in Ryan and Deci´s (2020) taxonomy of motivation.

2.3.1 Hypotheses - LMX
As we have argued in the theory section above, a high-quality relationship with one's supervisor can lead to multiple different intrinsic values for employees, e.g.

respect from peers, and an increase in resources such as closer mentoring. We hypothesize that some of the same positive influence can be seen between having a good relationship with your supervisor and being intrinsically motivated. We have theorized above that experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation equally much at the same time is logically impossible. In practice, this means that when something, e.g., a stimulus/variable, leads to higher intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation cannot be experienced equally much, most likely much less. By using this way of thinking, we hypothesize that the predictor LMX will influence motivation in such a way that there will be a (positive) increase in one type of motivation (intrinsic) and therefore a similar (negative) decrease in the other (extrinsic). Since we are looking at all the subscales, we hypothesize that this influence will happen gradually from a positive influence on intrinsic motivation on the one side to a negative influence on external regulation. Aligned with the motivation taxonomy presented by Ryan and Deci (2020), we hypothesize a shift from positive to negative starting with introjected regulation. This is because, in the taxonomy, identified regulation is described as "somewhat internal" and introjected regulation is described as "somewhat external" (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

H1a: A good relationship with one's leader as captured by LMX-MDM, will be positively related to intrinsic motivation measured in WEIMS - motivation scale.

H1b: A good relationship with one's leader as captured by LMX-MDM, will be positively related to integrated regulation measured in WEIMS - motivation scale.

H1c: A good relationship with one's leader as captured by LMX-MDM, will be positively related to identified regulation measured in WEIMS - motivation scale.

H1d: A good relationship with one's leader as captured by LMX-MDM, will be negatively related to introjected regulation measured in WEIMS - motivation scale.

H1e: A good relationship with one's leader as captured by LMX-MDM, will be negatively related to external regulation measured in WEIMS - motivation scale.

2.4 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction concerns one's attitudes toward work and can simply be described as the degree to which individuals like their jobs (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is one of the most studied topics within organizational psychology, most likely because organizations are concerned with their employees' well-being, which is an important factor of business effectiveness. Howard M. Weiss discusses how job satisfaction best can be defined by reviewing literature from early influencing theorists to more recent authors and papers. His unifying definition is that job satisfaction is "a positive or negative evaluative judgment one makes about one's job or job situation (Weiss, 2002, p. 175).

Through reviewing the literature, it has become clear that job satisfaction and motivation primarily have been studied through motivational theories where motivation is viewed as a part of job satisfaction. This can lead to confusion as they can be thought of as synonyms when they are not (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). To our knowledge, the little research that is devoted to assessing the direct relationship of job satisfaction with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation seems to be limited to very specific contexts and general work motivation. This is also in line with how Eskildsen et al. (2004) summarize prior research on job satisfaction and motivation. When Eskildsen et al., (2004) studied job satisfaction and intrinsic work motivation in Nordic countries, they found the two concepts to be highly positively related to each other. In our survey, we gathered data from the United Kingdom, but Eskildsen et al. (2004) say that the data easily can be compared to ours since the UK labor market to a large extent can be compared to the Nordic labor market. This positive relationship is also supported by older research. For example, Lu (1999) found that intrinsic work motivation was positively related to job satisfaction. Although these findings are quite explicit in terms of what they mean, we must keep in mind that our objective is to investigate the motivation for leadership positions. Still, the findings are important indicators for our research.

To further argue for the scope and strength of job satisfaction as a predictor, it is also significantly related to other variables outside of those solely related to the work setting. For example, whereas LMX is found to be related to several work-related variables, job satisfaction is also found to be significantly related to life satisfaction (Rode, 2004; Judge & Watanabe, 1993). This relation says something

about the variable's predictive power, since life satisfaction is in turn related to other negative outcomes, e.g., reduced mental health (Fergusson, McLeod, Horwood, Swain, Chapple, & Poulton, 2015).

Whereas the aforementioned studies confirm a positive correlation between job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, we aim to clarify what predictors predict what within the motivational subscales in the WEIMS motivation scale. Gaki, Kontodimopoulus and Niakas (2013) looked at job satisfaction as a predictor of motivation when they studied different motivational factors in nurses (e.g., job attributes, remuneration, and co-workers). These factors range from pay to job meaningfulness, and can arguably be said to a large extent cover aspects of taxonomy's subscales. Whereas the monetary incentives appeal to extrinsic motivation and the most external types, job meaningfulness speaks to the inherent intrinsic motivation. Results revealed that job satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor, meaning job satisfaction was positively related to all motivational factors. Contrary, Gagne and Deci (2005) look at how autonomous motivation (intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation) leads to job satisfaction. They state that employees that have autonomous motivation will perform better in their job and hence experience higher levels of job satisfaction. However, when people have controlled motivation (external and introjected regulation), people are less likely to report high levels of job satisfaction. It is important to note that in this study they looked at how different motivation types lead to job satisfaction and not the other way around, as we hypothesize. At least, it adds to the literature by confirming there is a relationship between the variables.

In the existing research, there is an overall clear consensus on the positive relationship between job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation (Eskildsen et al, 2004; Lu, 1999). This indicates that the more satisfied employees are at work, the more intrinsically motivated they are. However, as far as we know, none or few studies have explored job satisfaction's relation to the various types of motivation, as presented in SDT's taxonomy of motivation. Adding on to this dimension, we also look at motivation to take on a specific task, namely leadership positions. As with LMX, we already know that our respondents to some degree are motivated to take on a leadership position. We also know that higher job satisfaction indicates higher levels of intrinsic motivation. It is important to emphasize that we do not

posit that employees happy with their job are more motivated for leadership positions in general, but rather that employees happy with their job are more intrinsically motivated to take on leadership positions. We do not measure how motivated one is in general, which would have been a different type of study, rather we seek to measure how our independent variables are related to specific types of motivation through a measure that is based on the motivation taxonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

2.4.1 Hypotheses – job satisfaction

Based on theory and prior findings on the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, it is reasonable to expect a similar tendency between job satisfaction and intrinsic work motivation to take on leadership positions. Similar to our hypotheses using LMX as a predictor of motivation to take on leadership positions, we hypothesize a gradually declining effect in the strength and nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and the different motivational subscales. We hypothesize this based on the taxonomy presented by Ryan & Deci (2020), where we see that external regulation and introjection are external, whereas identification, integration and intrinsic motivation are (to varying degrees) internal. This, combined with the research findings concluding links between job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation is the basis for why we propose the following hypotheses:

H2a: A higher level of job satisfaction, as captured by MOAQ-JSS, will be positively related to intrinsic motivation as captured by WEIMS.

H2b: A higher level of job satisfaction, as captured by MOAQ-JSS, will be positively related to integrated regulation as captured by WEIMS.

H2c: A higher level of job satisfaction, as captured by MOAQ-JSS, will have a positive influence on identified regulation as captured by WEIMS.

H2d: A higher level of job satisfaction, as captured by MOAQ-JSS, will have a negative influence on the introjected regulation as captured by WEIMS.

H2e: A higher level of job satisfaction, as captured by MOAQ-JSS, will have a negative influence on the external regulation as captured by WEIMS.
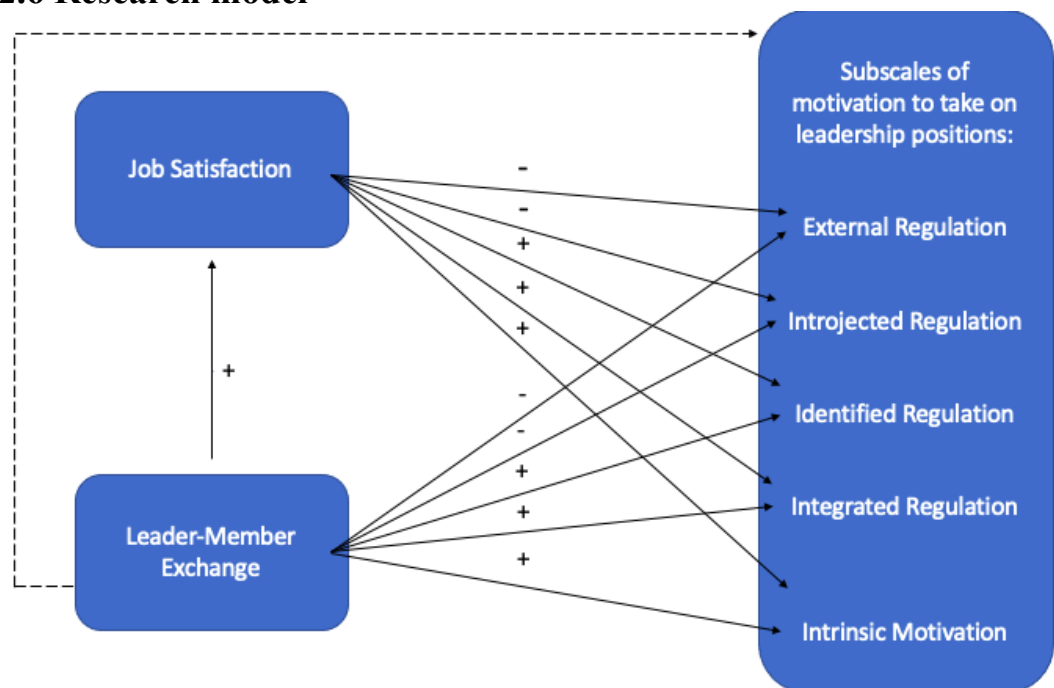

2.5 LMX & Job satisfaction

Looking at job satisfaction as a mediating variable for the relationship between LMX and the different types of motivation makes sense for several reasons. First of all, they are positively correlated as the theory below illustrates. They are no doubt two separate constructs, as used in this thesis, but it should be mentioned that in job satisfaction scales, also in ours which only contains three items and measuring global job satisfaction (Lawler, Cammann, Nadler, & Jenkins, 1975), LMX is part of job satisfaction. In other job satisfaction measures with more items, like in the Job in General Scale (JIG), there are specific items devoted to the employee's supervisor/leader (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989). If an employee has a good leader-member relationship and additionally he or she is satisfied with the job in general, the employee will probably experience an even better leader-member relationship. From this logic, job satisfaction will undoubtedly lead to a better leader-member relationship, which arguably can contribute to explaining the influence LMX has on the motivational subscales.

LMX serves as a valid predictor of several work-related outcomes. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Dulebohn et al. (2012) shows that the quality of the LMX relationship is directly linked to job satisfaction (with a corrected correlation coefficient of .49), turnover intentions, organizational commitment, and empowerment (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, & Brouer, 2012). The relationship between LMX and job satisfaction is also supported by earlier research from Cross (1973). Lastly, a meta-analytic review from 2015 found that LMX is positively linked to objective task performance and negatively correlated to counterproductive work-behavior (Martin et al, 2015). Leader-member relationship is well established as a significant predictor of job satisfaction through a multitude of different reviews and studies (Golden & Veiga, 2008; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Major, Kozlowski, Chao & Gardner, 1995) Studies have also found that managers´ autonomy support has led to satisfaction of the needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy, which we know as antecedents for intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020) which, in turn, leads to more job satisfaction (Baard, Deci & Ryan, 2004; Gagné & Deci, 2005) Therefore, we want

to explore this relationship further, by looking at how job satisfaction might function as a mediator between LMX and the different motivational subscales, to better understand the motivation to take on leadership positions and the process through which LMX leads to motivation.

H3: The relationship between LMX and the different motivational subscales measured by WEIMS, will be mediated by job satisfaction.

2.6 Research model

Based on the theory presented and our hypotheses, we have created the research model presented in Model 1.

Model 1: Research model. The proposed research model summarizes our hypotheses. It shows how job satisfaction and LMX influence the motivational subscales positively or negatively, respectively. It also illustrates the mediating effect job satisfaction has on LMX and the relationship to the subscales through the dotted line.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research design

Given the nature of our theoretical framework and research question, we decided to use a cross-sectional design. Our research fills the "requirements" for a good fit for this design because it looks at multiple variables at approximately the same point in time (Bell et al, 2019). This enables us to look at the variation between the variables through quantifiable data gathered from the participants. Since we want to look at possible correlations between the variables, this design will fit our research (Bell et al, 2019).

3.2 Sample

3.2.1 Data collection software

We will administer our self-completion questionnaire to participants by using our school's preferable web-based tool "Qualtrics". Qualtrics is a powerful software that allows users to create complex surveys in easy and quick ways. We have been given access to the software through BI Norwegian Business School.

We distributed our survey through an online platform software called "Prolific" throughout March of 2023, which is an online platform used for the recruitment of participants for research. The platform is well-known and often used for academic purposes where respondents are paid for their survey submissions. In addition to the demographic questions, we used pre-screening questions in Prolific. First, respondents had to be 18 or older and they had to be fluent in English. Respondents had to have an approval rate of a minimum of 90% or higher in Prolific. They had to have a full-time job, be without supervisory duties, and not currently hold a leadership position. Lastly, they needed to have a supervisor. Most of these pre-screeners are self-explanatory, but the inclusion of having an approval rate of a minimum of 90% coheres with findings saying that it can be wise to recruit respondents with high reputations to overcome dishonest behaviors (Newman, Bavik, Mount, & Shao, 2021).

3.2.2 Collecting the data

In prolific, 121,459 possible respondents were registered in the UK. We had the possibility of collecting data from several countries, but we intentionally collected data from only one country. The more homogeneous data, the less sample

variation. For example, if we had collected data from several countries, sample variation would most likely have been a prominent issue. If we had collected a more heterogenous sample, we would probably have needed a larger sample (Bell et al., 2019). After we added our preliminary screening factors, 5748 possible respondents were left. We aimed for 200 respondents. In total, 256 respondents visited our survey, but we ended up with 185 respondents after two rounds of data gathering and after cleaning the data. The data cleaning consisted primarily of removing respondents due to completion time and attention checks. The 56 "extra" respondents that visited the survey are largely due to a majority returning their submission because they failed our customized screen-out question on motivation.

We determined rejection criteria before the survey was made active. In Qualtrics, we set the answer default option to "required" for all items. This way, we avoided responses with missing values or submissions with skipped/blank items. The inclusion of attention checks is found to be an effective way to assess careless responses without damaging scale validity (Kung, Kwok, & Brown, 2018). Therefore, we removed all submissions with failed attention checks. In total we had five attention checks, and we decided that one failed attention check was enough to be excluded due to it being a relatively short survey with a low number of items. We decided to exclude responses that were abnormally short in completion time and set the cut-off time to three minutes. We decided on this limit since we saw a drop in response quality in terms of almost all of those that failed the attention checks being under this limit. Lastly, we excluded responses where respondents visited the survey more than once. This counted for fifteen responses and was because they first failed the screen-out question on motivation (as in having no motivation for leadership positions) before they decided to change their answer to having some form of motivation. In these cases, we excluded all their submissions to reduce bias.

3.2.3 Final sample with demographic statistics
After we had collected the 200 respondents which had already been approved and paid in Prolific, we discovered some respondents that had visited the study more than once. Almost all had initially answered "no" to the motivation screen-out question. We decided to exclude all these submissions, which tallied to 15 in total.

This resulted in 185 unique responses to our survey. The responders' average age was 34,5 years with a standard deviation (SD) of 9.19. In terms of gender distribution, we saw that 50,3% (93) of our respondents were men, 49,2% (91) were women, and 1 respondent identified as non-binary, accounting for 0.5% (1) of the total amount of respondents (n=185). The average time people had been employed by their current employer was 5,59 years with a SD of 6.22, and on average employers had held their current position for 3,63 years with a SD of 4.33. Respondents were also asked how long they had been working under their current leader, for which the average time was 2,6 years. For tenure with the leader, the SD was 2.71.

3.3 Reliability, replicability, and validity

Since we will be giving a detailed outline of the final methodology used in our thesis and will be using a cross-sectional design with self-completion questionnaires, the replicability, which refers to the ability to repeat the findings, of this study should be sound (Bell et al., 2019).

In terms of reliability, we have used measures that are well-known and well-used in our research field. In our survey, all scales had satisfactory Chronbach's alpha values (i.e., over .70). The fact that we have used Prolific to recruit respondents should not damage the reliability too much. On the contrary, Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling (2011) write that collecting data through such a platform is proved to be at least as reliable compared to data obtained through more traditional methods. We also intentionally made sure to fairly compensate respondents since earlier research state that realistic compensation rates do not affect quality of the data (Buhrmester et al., 2011).

In general, we know that the internal validity of cross-sectional studies can be weak. This is because one cannot establish the causal direction of the gathered data. This is a weak point of this research design and will be further discussed in the limitations section of the thesis. Using Prolific as a recruitment arena may also raise concerns concerning the sample (Newman et al., 2021). This too will be further elaborated on later in the paper. We will therefore be able to make causal inferences, rather than concrete findings from the data gathered (Bell et al., 2019). Ecological validity will also be hurt by using self-completion questionnaires,

because the respondents will not be observed in their "natural habitat" (Bell et al., 2019).

3.4 Research Ethics

To ensure that we follow the ethical guidelines of research we added an item with a descriptive consent form (Appendix 2), informing all participants of the intentions of the research, information about no personal information other than age and gender being gathered, and the fact that we do not collect IP-addresses through Qualtrics, as well as our contact information. Prolific also allows all participants to contact the researchers directly through their webpage, where we did communicate with a few candidates, to explain matters of rejection and removal. Palan and Schitter (2018) also point out that the transparency of Prolific is positive since they divulge the rate at which the respondents get paid, the amount of time it takes, and what is demanded of them for the research.

3.5 Measures

We have used three different scales in our survey. For motivation, we used WEIMS. LMX-MDM was used for measuring the leader-member relationship. To measure job satisfaction, we used MOAQ-JSS. The last two scales were originally published in English, but WEIMS was translated into a shorter English version from French (Tremblay, Blanchard, Taylor, Pelletier, & Villeneuve, 2009). Since we collected data from Prolific, we did not have to go through the process of translating any of the scales. Prolific enabled us to screen respondents in such a way that only fluent English speakers were eligible for the survey. This way, we avoided potential translation pitfalls that can be hard to detect, and which can be a threat to the validity of the findings (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

3.5.1 Motivation

When it comes to measuring intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation, and especially when we want to capture the constructs from STD, "The work extrinsic and intrinsic motivation scale" (WEIMS), is the most used and established scale on motivation (Van den Broeck, Howard, Van Varenbergh, Leroy, & Gagne, 2021). The scale consists of 18 items and existing research findings state that the scale has good applicability, reliability, and construct validity in organizational settings (Tremblay et al., 2009). In total, all six domains of motivation as

illustrated through SDT are compromised in this scale. This includes the subscale of amotivation. As depicted earlier, this is a state where there is no intention to act, meaning there is no form of motivation at all. Because we have a screen-out question specifically dedicated to filtering out those not motivated at all, amotivation was not included in the questionnaire. WEIMS has a 7-point Likert scale where 7 indicates that the behavior corresponds precisely and 1 indicates that the behavior does not correspond at all (Tremblay et al., 2009). When we measured for reliability, we found the Chronbach's alpha score for the whole scale (with all subscales) to be .858, which is well above the recommended cut-off value of .70 (Cooper, 2010). When we assessed the subscales individually, the alpha value gradually declined from intrinsic motivation which was highest at .916. Integrated regulation was .885. Identified regulation was .835, while the alpha value of introjected regulation was .791. Lastly, external regulation had an alpha value of .679.

Because WEIMS is designed to capture motivation at the current job, it needed to be adjusted for us to be able to direct the questions toward the respondents' motivation to take on leadership positions. For example, WEIMS asks the question "Why do you do your work?" followed by 18 items This was changed to "Why do you want a leadership position?". Some of the wording in the following items were changed accordingly to fit the newly formulated question. For example, one item measuring external regulation was originally formulated as "for the income it provides me". This was changed to "for the income it will provide me" (Tremblay et al., 2009).

The subscales can be used separately to analyze their respective individual effects (Gagne et al, 2015). Tremblay et al. (2019) point out that the most favored approach is the multidimensional approach, but the use of one single score, e.g., like in the work self-determination index (W-SDI), is sometimes desirable. Another method of simplifying analysis is to use the relative autonomy index, which is a method proposed by Ryan and Deci themselves (Gagne et al., 2015). In our paper, we will use the multidimensional approach and analyze LMX and job satisfaction's influence on each subscale.

3.5.2 LMX

For our study, we used the multidimensional measure of LMX (LMX-MDM) to measure the leader-member relationship. LMX-MDM is one of the absolute most used and preferred scales for measuring the leader-member relationship. Over the last two decades, as much as 85% of all LMX studies have used one of two scales with LMX-MDM being one and LMX-7 the other (Joseph, Newman, & Sin, 2011). The two scales are very similar as they are found to correlate with each other, indicating they are two forms of the same instrument measuring the same construct (Joseph et al., 2011). Other research has also found them to correlate and to be very similar to each other (Martin et al., 2015). The LMX-MDM consists of 12 items and was constructed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). The scale is scored using a 7-point Likert scale varying from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The LMX-MDM has good support in terms of validity measures and is recommended for use (Joseph et al., 2011). We kept the wording from the original scale, with statements such as "I like my supervisor very much as a person" and "I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description". We found LMX-MDM to be very reliable. The Cronbach's alpha was measured to be .935.

3.5.3 Job satisfaction

The Michigan organizational assessment questionnaire job satisfaction scale (MOAQ-JSS), is a scale measuring job satisfaction that has been used in over 100 published research articles (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). The scale was developed by Lawler et al. (1975), and measures global job satisfaction through only 3 items, which are: *"All in all I am satisfied with my job"*, *"In general, I don't like my job"*, and *"In general, I like working here"*. The original formulation was used for all three items. While other job satisfaction scales measure specific facets, MOAQ-JSS measures global job satisfaction. The global "approach" captures the overall attitude and not attitudes about various facets/aspects, and it is the preferable approach when the goal is to measure job satisfaction's influence on other variables, which is the case of this paper (Spector, 1997). The scale's biggest advantage is its short length, and it has been strongly recommended for use by a large-scale meta-analytic paper. The scale has also been deemed reliable and proved to have good construct validity (Bowling & Hammond, 2008). The scale has been scored in various ways, but most often on a

6-point scale varying from "disagree very much" to "agree very much". This is also the option we went with in our survey. We found the scale to be highly reliable, the Chronbach's alpha was measured to be .933.

3.6 Demographics

Demographics and control variables are interesting because it enables us to describe the respondents contributing to our study by completing our questionnaire. It can also be important from a research perspective because it can provide us with more accurate estimates of the relationship between our two predictors and our dependent variable (Becker, Atinc, Breaugh, Carlson, Edwards, & Spector, 2016). In our survey, we included the demographic questions after the main variables' scales. By doing it this way we hoped it would feel less invasive for the respondents, even though research findings point in the direction that placing these questions first will not affect the participation rate (Teclaw, Price, & Osatuke, 2012).

3.6.1 Relevant research on demographics

It can be interesting to take a closer look at the demographic variables and if and how they are connected to motivation, LMX, and job satisfaction. In terms of motivation, several studies have explored the role of age. Some studies state that age and the aging process influence motivation in general negatively (Kooij, Lang, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2008), meaning the general level of motivation decreases with age. Findings from a more recent study imply that there is a shift in employees' motives rather than a general decline in motivation with age. Older employees were found to be less extrinsically motivated but more motivated by intrinsically rewarding job features (Inceglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012). In terms of gender and motivation, the majority of more modern studies report no significant differences, but there are examples of studies indicating women tend to be more intrinsically motivated than men (Kusnierz, Rogowska, & Pavlova, 2020).

In terms of LMX and demographic variables, newer research point to the fact that when members get to know each other beyond the surface, demographic differences do not play a big role. Findings state that demographic differences in group relations can be largely erased over time when members get to know each

other in meaningful ways (Truxillo & Burlacu, 2016). Looking at job satisfaction, studies are pointing in the direction that overall job satisfaction increases linearly with age (Lee & Wilbur, 1985, Eskildsen et al., 2004), but some studies challenge the idea of this linear relationship and point to evidence that there instead is a U-shaped relationship (Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996)

3.6.2 Our three demographic variables

Age and gender are two out of a total of five control variables we included in the questionnaire. These are basic control variables that almost always are interesting from any research perspective. As shown above, there are indices that age and gender will be of interest in our paper and hence should be controlled for in the hypothesis testing. We considered using categories for age, but because we recruited respondents from Prolific, which contributes to ensuring anonymity, we did not use categories. Instead, participants were asked to state their specific age. As mentioned earlier in the method section, we included three options for gender: male, female, and non-binary.

When looking at the other variables we included in our survey (job tenure, tenure with current leader, and tenure in current position) up against motivation, LMX, and job satisfaction, our experience is that the research is conflicting, limited, and inconsistent. In general, Truxillo and Burlacu (2016) write that demographic variables may show an effect under certain circumstances, but that this entails a high degree of ambiguity.

However, some findings are of interest. For instance, a paper looking at job satisfaction and job tenure through longitudinal data spanning over several decades found that employees became less satisfied as job tenure increased within an organization (Dobrow, Ganzach, & Liu, 2018). Becker et al., (2016) write that one must be cautious about impotent variables (i.e., when a control variable has little or no correlation with the dependent variable), but they also say that correlations between control variables and independent variables, like job tenure and job satisfaction, can affect the results even if the correlation between independent and dependent variable is zero. For this reason and to check for similar findings, we wanted to include and control for job tenure.

When one does not have any strong theoretical reasons, or reasons grounded in previous research findings to include certain control variables, it should be logical and sensemaking to include them. While we could have argued for the logic in also controlling for tenure with their current leader and tenure in their current position, we chose to follow the advice of leaving them out when we were in doubt (Becker et al., 2016). All answers about tenure were measured in years, and we asked respondents to round off to the closest year.

4. Analysis:

We used IBM SPSS statistics V.29 to analyze the data and to test our hypotheses. Because SPSS is not the most suitable program for running confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), we also used MPlus V 8.3. We began analyzing our data by testing all measures' reliability (Cronbach's alpha). Here we also extracted the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and correlations. To test hypotheses H1a-H1e and H2a-H2e, we used hierarchical linear regression analysis. This allowed us to test the relationships between our independent variables and dependent variables, while also controlling for the influence of the demographic variables.

To test hypothesis H3, we used the "PROCESS macro" for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). Through this tool we have also done a "Bootstrap analysis" to measure the possible mediating effect of Job satisfaction (M) on the relationship between LMX (X) and all motivational subscales in the motivational model of WEIMS (Y). This is a regression path analysis modeling tool, which lets us estimate both the direct and the indirect effect of possible mediating variables (Hayes, 2014). CFA was used to evaluate how well our theorized model fits our data and to check if the variables reflect the intended constructs accurately. This involved conducting analyses using the maximum likelihood estimator (Muthén & Muthén, 2019), and by looking at the chi-square difference test ($\chi 2$), and different fit indices; the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR).

5. Results:

5.1 Descriptives:

In Table 1 (Appendix 1), we present the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), correlations, and alpha coefficients for every variable we included in our survey. As we have pointed out earlier in the paper, almost all measures were over the recommended Cronbach's alpha of .70 (Cooper, 2010). The subscale of external regulation was the only measure that was slightly under (.679).

The table shows several significant correlations. Interestingly, we see that intrinsic motivation correlates positively and significantly to all WEIMS subscales besides external regulation: introjected regulation (.276, $p < .01$), identified regulation (.347, $p < .01$), and integrated regulation (.484, $p < .01$). As for the independent variables, MOAQ-JSS and LMX-MDM correlate significantly to each other (.296, $p < .01$). LMX-MDM is also significantly correlated to intrinsic motivation (.226, $p < .01$). The control variables, age, gender, and job tenure, do all have some significant relationships with other variables. Age is significantly correlated to integrated regulation (.149, $p < .05$) and intrinsic motivation (.224, $p < .01$). Both gender (.154, $p < .05$) and job tenure (.153, $p < .05$) are significantly correlated to MOAQ-JSS.

5.2 CFA

We conducted analyses using the maximum likelihood estimator in Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén 2019). Alternative models were assessed using the chi-square ($\chi 2$) test of exact fit the CFI, TLI, RMSEA and SRMR were also examined. Values higher than .90 and .95 on the CFI and TLI, respectively, indicate adequate and excellent model fit, whereas values lower than .10, .08, and .06 on the RMSEA and SRMR, indicate acceptable, good, and excellent fit, respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Hau, & Grayson, 2005).

Our hypothesized 7-factor model gave us results indicating that the model fits the data poorly, χ^2 (384, N=183) = 925.74, p < .001, CFI = .87, TLI = .85, RMSEA = .087, SRMR = .068. The modification indices associated with the model show us that the fit can be improved by adding correlations between the residuals for 3 pairs of items from the LMX-MDM scale. This 7-factor model with correlations

added yielded the following result: χ^2 (381, N=183) = 735.95, p < .001, CFI = .91, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .071, SRMR = .065. This 7-factor model with added correlations revealed a reasonable fit. We see this from the statistically significant Chi-Square test, CFI and TLI above .90, and RMSEA and SRMR both below .08. We have also done comparison tests to see if this model is comparatively more parsimonious (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980).

We compared this model to a 6-factor model merging Job satisfaction and LMX ($D\chi^2$ (6) = 410.61, p < .001), a 6-factor model merging the motivational subscales of External Regulation and Introjected regulation ($D\chi^2$ (6) = 257.10, p < .001), a 6-factor model merging the motivational subscales of Identified Regulation and Integrated Regulation ($D\chi^2$ (6) = 141.461, p < .001) and a 3-factor comparison model merging all motivation variables ($D\chi^2$ (18) = 850.257, p < .001).

Overall, these results provide evidence for the distinctiveness of our study's variables.

5.3 Hypothesis testing:

To test our hypotheses, we used hierarchical regression analysis. We ran regression analyses with one predictor at a time for each motivation variable (external regulation – intrinsic motivation). The findings resulted in two tables, Table 2 and Table 3 (Appendix 1), one for each predictor.

5.3.1 Hypotheses H1a-H1e:

In the first regression analyses, as shown in Table 2 (Appendix 1), we tested the hypotheses H1a-H1e which take on the predictor of leader-member relationship (LMX-MDM). Control variables (age, gender, and job tenure) were entered into Block 1, while LMX-MDM was entered into Block 2. When looking at the contribution of LMX-MDM, there is only one significant beta coefficient. The table shows that LMX-MDM positively and significantly predicts intrinsic motivation (β = .214, p < .01). For intrinsic motivation with LMX-MDM as the predictor, the ΔR^2 is significant (.045, p < .01).

Our first hypothesis, H1a, is supported by our findings from the regression analysis. There is a clear positive and significant relationship between LMX-MDM and intrinsic motivation.

We then tested the next four hypotheses, H1b-H1e. Although there are positive relationships between LMX-MDM and identified regulation, and LMX-MDM and integrated regulation (as hypothesized), the beta coefficients are weaker than in H1a and not significant. For LMX-MDM and introjected regulation, and LMX-MDM and external regulation, we hypothesized negative relationships, which conflicts with our findings showing positive relationships and non-significance. Thus, hypotheses H1b-H1e are not supported.

5.3.2 Hypotheses H2a-H2e:
In the second set of regression analyses, we ran job satisfaction as measured by MOAQ-JSS as the predictor. Here we tested the hypotheses of H2a-H2e. The results can be seen in Table 3 (Appendix 1). Again, control variables were entered into block 1 and MOAQ-JSS into block 2.

As Table 3 reveals, none of the next hypotheses, H2a-H2e, are supported by the findings since none of the beta coefficients are significant. Thus, these hypotheses are not supported.

5.3.3 Hypothesis 3:
To be able to test hypothesis H3, we conducted a bootstrap analysis in SPSS to look at the possibility of the variable job satisfaction (M) being a mediator between the independent variable LMX (X) and the independent variable (Y), which was all the different subscales of the WEIMS motivational scale. In the bootstrap analysis, we also included the three control variables of age, gender, and job tenure.

In the results of the bootstrap analysis, as can be seen in Table 4 (Appendix 1), we found that job satisfaction (M) is not a significant mediator between LMX (X) and any of the motivational subscales (Y). Thus Hypothesis 3 is not supported. What we did find through the bootstrap analysis was that Leader-member exchange (LMX-MDM), does have a significant influence on Job satisfaction (MOAQ-JSS)

(β = .171 p <.001). The bootstrap analysis also showed that LMX has a positive direct influence on the motivational subscale of introjected Regulation (X) (β =.278, p = < .05) as well as a positive significant influence on intrinsic motivation (β =.280, p = <.01). These unexpected findings will be discussed further in the upcoming discussion section of the thesis.

6. Discussion

We have aimed to uncover possible influences from Leader-member relationships (LMX) and job satisfaction on employees' motivation to take on leadership positions. We have introduced and presented the results from our questionnaire consisting of 185 respondents that were asked questions about their job satisfaction, leader-member relationship, and their motivation for taking on leadership positions. This was done by looking at different types of motivation through the subscales of WEIMS (Ryan & Deci, 2020). We found a significant positive relationship between LMX-MDM and intrinsic motivation, but this was the only significant finding. However, despite the majority of the hypotheses not being supported by the results, there are several other interesting findings worthy of mentioning. Non-significant findings, or «null findings», can still be interesting and should be reported as the effect(s) very well may still be there (Mehler, Edelsbrunner, & Matic, 2019). Therefore, in the following section we will discuss our results in a more detailed manner and attempt to draw lines and compare them to previously mentioned theory and research.

6.1 LMX and motivation

We looked at LMX and the different subscales of motivation in hypotheses H1a-H1e. Here we found that LMX-MDM was significantly and positively correlated with intrinsic motivation. Based on our research model, this indicates that LMX has a positive influence on intrinsic motivation to take on leadership positions. This indicated that the better relationship employees have with their leader, the more intrinsically motivated they will be to take on leadership positions. This means that the leader-member relationship successfully predicts intrinsic motivation to take on leadership positions. This tells us that the intrinsic motivation of an employee to take on leadership positions will increase the better relationship they have with their leader.

We did not find LMX-MDM to be significantly correlated to the remaining four subscales of WEIMS. However, although not significant, an interesting observation we can take from the results, is that as we hypothesized, LMX-MDM does have an increasingly positive effect throughout the motivational scale. This entails that LMX-MDM increases in positive effect from external regulation to intrinsic motivation, except for the integrated regulation subscale. Since these results are non-significant, we can only speculate, that having a good relationship with one's leader, increases the strength of motivation associated with intrinsic values, more than it increases the ones associated with extrinsic (external) values. Another interesting takeaway from this is that LMX has no negative effect on any of the motivational subscales. Although most are non-significant, the results indicate that there is a positive effect on all different motivational subscales. This is interesting because we can speculate that, LMX, and by that the relationship between employee and leader, can positively influence all forms of motivations to take on leadership positions. This is contrary to what we hypothesized, but an interesting finding to potentially look further into, as most of the results were not statistically significant, and at this point we are not able to draw any conclusions on this speculation.

Our first set of hypotheses was based on several research papers that have confirmed a relationship between LMX and motivation in general (Humphreys & Einstein, 2004; Martin et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is also evidence of a link between LMX and intrinsic motivation by referring to how high levels of LMX may lead to an increase in intrinsic values (Byrne et al., 2008). Since we are looking into the possible relationship between LMX and specifically motivation to take on leadership positions, our findings are interesting in multiple ways. A significant correlation between LMX and intrinsic motivation to take on leadership positions, indicates that leaders have a significant influence on the intrinsic motivation employees have, to vertically transition within their organization. Since we also know that all the participants in our sample were motivated to take on leadership positions (see: Screen out question, Appendix 2) This entails that the employees of in-groups (LMX), theoretically should be more motivated than employees in out-groups. Since LMX theorizes that the relationship between leaders and employees consists of in-and out-groups (Graen

& Uhl-Bien, 1995), where members of the in-group have greater access to resources from the leader and are more involved in decision-making processes, we can speculate that being a part of the in-group and therefore reporting a better relationship with one's leader, leads to more intrinsic and introjected motivation to take on leadership positions. While members of the out-group do not receive as much attention from their leader and might not be equally involved in different decision-making processes, one could speculate that this leads to a lesser relationship between the employee and their leader, and thereby hinders the same motivation that the in-group members have to take on leadership positions. We cannot conclude with this, and it is a possible interpretation of the results and since much of our results are non-significant, it is hard to draw conclusions, but this indication can and should be further explored since it can be beneficial for leaders, and can further impact the theory on motivation, leadership and LMX.

Another theoretical element that is interesting to go into, is that about the logical incompatibility of experiencing the two extremes, external regulation and intrinsic motivation, equally much at the same time (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Theory only claims they cannot be experienced equally much, implying that theoretically, we could see the horseshoe effect meaning they would be close to each other despite being opposites. We predicted a linear relationship from LMX to the motivational subscales, ranging from a negative correlation with external regulation, and an increasingly positive effect to intrinsic motivation (See Table 1, Appendix 1) (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The results, on the other hand, indicated that there were little differences in the relationships between LMX and the motivational subscales. There was also a stronger positive relationship between LMX and integrated regulation than we expected. The relationship between LMX and integrated regulation is non-significant in the regression analysis we did in SPSS, but in the Bootstrap, we found a significantly positive correlation between the two variables. We cannot find any specific theory to support this correlation, this isn´t the biggest surprise, since the research on motivation to take on leadership positions is almost non-existent. We can speculate, that having a good relationship with one's leader, might lead to some external motivation as well. Seeing as a leader often has more responsibility, a higher salary, and might have a higher status within the organization, one could argue that this is a logical train of thought. Looking at the results, we also see that introjected regulation and

intrinsic motivation, do not exist equally much at the same time. A good leader-member relationship gives a larger increase in intrinsic motivation than in introjected regulation, which is in line with the theory from Kuvaas et al. (2017), where it is stated that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation cannot exist equally much within an individual at the same time. Further speculating on why a good leader-member relationship positively influences introjected regulation, one could argue that the nature of having a good relationship with one's leader can affect how an employee looks at her or himself, as is, to some extent the nature of introjected regulation as a motivational subscale.

The fact that LMX is significantly, and positively correlated with introjected regulation (in the bootstrap), might have to do with the nature of the subscale, the subscale is somewhat external and involves ego, and how the person views themselves, and how they are viewed by others (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The increase in this type of motivation to take on a leadership position would be fairly logical since we know that a high-quality leader-member relationship is also associated with more respect from peers, more resources, and more mentoring from your leader (Byrne et al. 2008)

Since we are researching how LMX can predict motivation to take on leadership positions, a topic that has not been researched previously, our findings can be used as a steppingstone for further research. Even though multiple findings are non-significant, finding that LMX significantly predicts both extrinsic (internal regulation) and intrinsic motivation to take on leadership positions is interesting, and raises further questions about the relationship between LMX and motivation.

6.2 Job satisfaction and motivation

Job satisfaction and the different subscales of motivation were hypothesized through H2a-H2e, where we hypothesized a linear relationship from a negative correlation between job satisfaction and external regulation, to a positive relationship between job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. None of our findings here were significant, meaning none of our hypotheses were supported.

The existing literature on the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation is very consensus-oriented in that there is a positive relationship between job

satisfaction and intrinsic motivation and these findings are significant (Eskildsen et al., 2004; Lu, 1999). Since we focus on motivation to take on leadership positions, previous research on motivation in general or work motivation can act as a reference point, but since the dependent variable is different, and the validated scale (WEIMS) has been slightly changed, the outcome of our research needs to be interpreted independently. Therefore, the variable changes from "motivation" to motivation to take on leadership positions, and therefore might have different predictors from the variable "motivation". So, the change in the validated scale, and variable can be possible explanations as to why our results on job satisfaction as a predictor of motivation to take on leadership positions, do not correspond with previous research and theory on job satisfaction as a predictor of motivation. Since we found no significant relationships between job satisfaction and the motivational subscales, we can only speculate when interpreting their impact, and practical implications.

Job satisfaction had negative relationships (beta coefficients), although non-significant, to the two subscales relating to extrinsic motivation, namely external- and introjected regulation. We can speculate that job satisfaction negatively affects extrinsic motivation to take on leadership positions. This indicates that employees satisfied with their job, are less motivated by extrinsic features, such as monetary incentives, ego, and status.

One finding that we can conclusively draw from our research is that job satisfaction has a non-significant relationship to all motivational subscales, while LMX is significantly positively correlated to introjected regulation and intrinsic motivation. This is interesting since job satisfaction is significantly correlated to work motivation and motivation in previous research (Eskildsen et al, 2004; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Lu, 1999). This can imply that in the case of motivation to take on leadership positions, the relationship an employee has with their leader, is more accurate, and a more important predictor of motivation to take on leadership positions than job satisfaction. We can speculate here, that since taking on a new role at a company, job satisfaction at your current level is not necessarily a logical motivational factor. One can even speculate that it can be the opposite. This is because if you are motivated to change position, this factor is not a significant

contributing factor in predicting your level and type of motivation to take on leadership positions.

The big takeaway from our research on job satisfaction as a predictor of motivation to take on leadership positions is that our findings are non-significant. This is contrary to previous research on the relationship between the variables, and we speculate that this is because of the changes we have made in the WEIMS scale to accommodate for the differentiating in our dependent variable, from pure "motivation" to "motivation to take on leadership positions", and the change in the variable itself, leading to differing predictors. This can therefore be a key take-away for future research on motivation to take on leadership positions.

6.3 LMX and job satisfaction

In our third hypothesis, we looked at job satisfaction as a mediator for LMX and its influence on different WEIMS subscales through a bootstrap analysis. We found job satisfaction to have no significant mediating effect, but we did find that LMX has a significant influence on job satisfaction. Another interesting finding was that introjected regulation, which is the second least autonomous type, was positively and significantly directly influenced by LMX-MDM.

As we have established in our theory section, there is a lot of existing research on these two variables, including meta-analyses (Dulebohn et al., 2012), that confirm their relationship and that they correlate with each other. Hence, we expected to find the same positive relationship in our study. Both the bootstrap analysis and descriptives had significant correlations confirming previously rooted research.

Further, we argued for a mediating effect by pointing out how job satisfaction most likely will lead to an increase in a leader-member relationship, even if there is a good leader-member relationship to begin with. It can be difficult to think of exactly why we did not find the hypothesized effect, but there is a high chance that there are methodological reasons at play, e.g., sample size, like with our other non-significant findings. These will be addressed further in limitations. Theoretically, one explanation is that there could be alternative mediating variables we have not accounted for at play. We chose to use our two independent variables because they both are well-known work-related variables that have been

studied a lot within organizational psychology and proven to be related to several other variables and outcomes, e.g., how LMX is significantly linked to task performance and CWB (Martin et al., 2015). This does not exclude the chance of there being other variables we cannot see at play. The possibility of having "invisible" confounders present, i.e., variables mixing up effects or masking actual associations (Skelly, Dettori, & Brodt, 2012), is likely. For example, in our sample, we have not accounted for what types of jobs or within what type of sector respondents operate. Therefore, we could potentially have a lot of different factors like organizational cultures and job characteristics working against each other, resulting in them possibly moderating the mediating role of job satisfaction.

Another finding worthy of mentioning when we ran the bootstrap analysis, is that LMX was found to correlate positively and significantly with introjected regulation. This finding conflicts with what we found for the same variables in descriptives and regression analyses. Out of all results, this is probably the hardest to provide plausible explanations for and comment on. The easiest one is perhaps the general methodological explanation, that different methods may yield different results (Presser & Blair, 1994). Theoretically, it is more difficult to find good reasons for this anomaly. There are no obvious differences in how Ryan and Deci (2020) differentiate between introjected regulation from the other types. However, there is a "shift" between introjected regulation and identified regulation. Ryan and Deci depict that in introjected regulation there is still some sort of external control in play and the focus is still on approval from others. Furthermore, it is said that this type of behavior is often done to avoid guilt or anxiety. Whereas in identified regulation, they say that the behavior is accepted as one's own. Perhaps LMX correlates positively with introjected regulation because a good leader-member relationship entails that the employee views the leader as a role model and wants to live up to the expectations and ambitions the leader has for his or her employee.

6.4 Control variables

We chose to include and control for three variables in the analyses: age, gender, and job tenure. These were not included in the hypotheses, therefore we have not highlighted and discussed them until now.

The general impression of the existing research on different types of motivation and our control variables, was that there is a lot of conflicting evidence. Out of all five original control variables we included in the questionnaire, age is the one where there is the most consensus between researchers. In our analyses, age had significant positive correlations to intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation, suggesting that one becomes more intrinsically motivated the older one gets. The same tendency was observed when we ran aggression analyses and the bootstrap analysis, although here, age was significantly related to only intrinsic motivation. These findings are expected and very consistent with existing literature stating older people are more intrinsically motivated and less motivated by external incentives and rewards (Inceglu et al., 2012). We did also find negative correlations between age and the more extrinsic types of motivation, suggesting one gets less motivated by external rewards with age, but they were not significant.

Now, what does this mean for motivation to take on leadership positions and not just general work motivation? It does not necessarily imply too much besides the fact that younger people are more concerned with external rewards and that elder people are more concerned with intrinsic rewards. One can speculate that this has its natural explanations, as it is possible to think younger people are not established in adult life the same way elders are. However, it is plausible to speculate that where existing theory confirms that general intrinsic work motivation increases with age and extrinsic motivation decreases, the tendency for age and motivation to take on leadership positions would not be the same. One could imagine that the tendency became "washed" out and overtaken by the wish to become a leader in a way that age became insignificant. Nevertheless, this was not the case for our results. For example, in our regression analyses, when we controlled for age with both LMX and job satisfaction, we saw that age was relatively stable and still predicted the outcome. This tells us that age is still consistent and an important predictor also when we are talking about motivation for taking on leadership positions.

The existing research on gender and motivation is more conflicting and has for obvious reasons such as gender roles varied over the years. While the majority of modern studies including gender and motivation have found no significant

differences, some studies point in the direction that women are more intrinsically motivated than men (Kusnier et al., 2020). To little surprise, we did not have any significant findings, but interestingly enough, our findings showed that gender was (weakly) positively related to the two most intrinsic types of motivation, indicating that women are more intrinsically motivated compared to men. This is in line with the more traditional view on gender with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Where our findings differ from Kusnierz et al. (2020), is that we have the leadership element included. Without being something we have discussed prior, this finding fits with the general development we see for women in academia and work-life, where women are overrepresented in higher education and the general focus on evening out gender inequality in leadership positions in work-life is high.

When looking at job tenure and motivation through the descriptives, the results did not reveal any findings of particular interest. While the two most extrinsic motivation types were negatively correlated and the three most intrinsic ones were positively correlated, the correlations were weak. Also, through regression analyses, we found that job tenure was negatively (non-significantly) predicting intrinsic motivation, which contributed to the impression that job tenure has little to do with motivation to take on leadership positions.

More interesting, and one of the reasons we included job tenure in our analyses, despite the lack of existing research on job tenure and motivation, is how job tenure relates to job satisfaction. Our results revealed a significant positive correlation between job tenure and job satisfaction. This means that as job tenure increases, employees are more satisfied, which on the surface conflicts with theory arguing that as job tenure increases within an organization, employees become less satisfied (Dobrow et al., 2018).

Our conflicting findings above can be due to several reasons. In the study referred to, they might have asked employees over a longer period of time or asked employees that have a certain number of years within the same organization. Our job tenure mean was 5,59 and the mean for the time employees have had their current position was 3,63. It could be that employees become increasingly satisfied up until a certain point or that changes of position within the same

organization might have an effect. Also, our respondents can have been colored by the fact that this was a survey about motivation to take on leadership positions, in which all our respondents said they had to some extent due to our screen-out question in the beginning. It is highly plausible to think that our sample, which only includes employees with some form of motivation to go into leadership positions, values work-life very differently because they are more ambitious than other people. With this thinking, one could argue that our significant finding on job tenure and job satisfaction has a theoretical impact on the field since we have a specific sample consisting of only employees that are motivated for taking on leadership positions.

Another interesting element to our finding on job tenure is that since job satisfaction correlates with life satisfaction (Rode, 2004; Judge & Watanabe, 1993), our finding points in the direction that the more experienced you become, the happier you will be. This again corresponds with the consistent research on the relationship between age and intrinsic motivation (Inceglu et al., 2012).

6.5 Implications and Limitations

As already briefly pointed out in the discussion, there are theoretical and practical implications associated with our findings which affect the relevance of our study. It is important to emphasize that we did find a significant relationship between LMX and motivation which adds to the existing literature and possibly extends the literature in the sense that we looked at motivation for leadership positions and not just general motivation at the workplace. All our findings involving job satisfaction are somewhat limited due to none of them being significant. In terms of the dyadic relationship between job satisfaction and LMX, and the control variables, we have some significant findings that to some extent support existing concepts involving general work motivation, e.g., how age correlates positively with intrinsic motivation (Inceglu et al., 2012). Although we look at another type of motivation, motivation for taking on leadership positions, it is, based on our lack of significant findings, possible to say that we do not provide too much new insight. Hence, the practical impact of our findings is limited. Hopefully, this thesis can serve as inspiration for other similar research in the future.

However, on a broader note, one could argue that there are social implications related to our findings. As we argued earlier in the thesis, the leadership role is pivotal since it entails guiding employees to achieve a common goal. We found a significant and positive relationship between LMX and motivation for taking on leadership positions. This means that an employee's existing leader affects the employee's motivation for vertical advancement into leadership. The fact that we have found employees' relationships (LMX) with their existing leaders to have such an important role in leadership recruitment is both interesting and important. As pointed out earlier, factual numbers from SSB (2023) show that people either will or have transitioned into leadership positions, making this topic very relevant for many people. At the same time, the existing research seems to be narrowed down to focus only on the leadership transition process or processes that occur after the transition (Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008). The research that does take on predicting factors often tends to look at factors inherent in the future leader like individual differences and personality (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Therefore, the social impact of this research may be of importance since we add another "layer" to the existing research. Arguably, very few existing leaders are aware of their influencing power. On a societal level, it is important to ensure good leadership recruitment to maintain an effective workforce, also concerning dealing with challenges like balancing out gender inequality.

Our thesis is not without flaws and weaknesses, and we will try to highlight all relevant limitations starting with the most obvious ones that are often seen in research papers like ours. The cross-sectional research design has several advantages, most related to cost-effectiveness, but it also comes with several limitations. When using this design, it is not possible to draw conclusions about causality due to the absence of temporal information (Bell et al., 2019). We cannot be completely sure of the order in which our variables occur since all of our data was collected at a single point in time. This brings up another limitation, namely common method bias. Although we used different scale types in our survey, we still collected all our data, including both independent and dependent variables, at the same time with the same survey, which could pose a threat by creating a false internal consistency (Chang, Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010).

Furthermore, in our survey, we only used a self-reported questionnaire which arguably can be affected by respondents' environment, mood, or state of energy (Bell et al., 2019). On the other side, although the use of recruited respondents through Prolific raises its own limitations which will be addressed later, one could say that they are trained respondents that seldom get affected by their surroundings and state of mind. Another limitation of the study is the sample size. We ended up with 185 respondents, which is not too many considering we recruited from a large population (U.K). Small samples struggle more to generate statistically significant results unless the effect sizes are large (Lantz, 2012). Unfortunately, the effect sizes in our study were not very large, which makes it difficult for us to generalize our findings.

The use of third-party software like Prolific brings about several potential issues. First of all, using Prolific for sample recruitment as we did, can threaten the validity. Newman et al. (2020) write that it can be dangerous for internal validity, construct validity, and external validity. Especially internal and external validity can be said to be weak in our survey. Our statistical analyses, which primarily consist of non-significant findings, are not too promising for the internal validity. Many of our statistical measures did neither produce values over certain threshold levels one typically would label as acceptable, e.g., our r-squared values (Table 2 and 3, Appendix 1). Also, as already stated, it is questionable to what degree we are able to generalize our findings.

The sample size itself is not the only concern with our sample. Follmer, Sperling, & Suen (2017) write that respondents recruited through software such as Prolific are often skewed in terms of demography. They write that this may entail lower age or income, or less non-white respondents. In our case, we can only control for age, which we found to have an average of 34.5. Ideally, this number should probably have been somewhat higher. There is no doubt a weakness that we cannot control other relevant variables. The term "super workers" is also used for respondents that are very experienced on platforms like Prolific. This can for example involve them being able to better pass attention checks which can harm the overall quality. Also, such respondents may become inattentive, meaning they are not paying attention. As a consequence, they can harm the aforementioned internal validity (Newman et al., 2020).

Perhaps the biggest and most concerning issue associated with the use of Prolific is the use of monetary incentives. One of the main reasons for registering at a site like Prolific is to earn money. Therefore, financial rewards challenge the original idea of altruistic and honest answers (Newman et al, 2020). We tried to counteract careless responses by compensating our test-takers with fair compensation, but there is still a financial transaction at play. For example, we had a customized screen-out question about motivation at the beginning of our survey to exclude those not motivated in any way. There is a chance that some respondents answered untruthfully to earn quick money when the alternative was to be excluded from the survey. We saw glimpses of this under the data cleaning process where a few started the survey but then revisited the survey and answered in another way. This is one of the reasons we used a pre-screening question that having a minimum of 90% approval rate was required.

Summarized, our thesis has limitations through the nature of the research design, but also through the sampling process and how we chose to recruit our respondents.

6.6 Strengths

A big strength of our study comes from the fact that we used already validated and reliable measures. Although we had to make tiny adjustments to the scale measuring motivation (WEIMS), this was not the case for the scales measuring the remaining variables. In the questionnaire, we included a total of six measures, two for each three variables. We did this to ensure that we ended up with reliable measures and to avoid that we ended up with useless data. We then chose the measure with the highest reliability. This resulted in us having high reliability when we tested our own measures and did likely contribute to us finding at least one significant relationship despite our modest sample size. Furthermore, it has arguably affected construct validity positively.

As touched upon several times already, but still important, we argue that another big strength of this thesis is that it explores motivation to take on leadership positions and not only motivation at the current workplace. In such a manner, our survey broadens the existing research on motivation. To our knowledge, this has

not been previously done, at least not with the two independent variables of LMX and job satisfaction. The fact that we in this thesis look at a type of motivation that previously has not been explored, could also serve as an argument for us to not be too harsh when evaluating the significance and impact of our results.

Although we have discussed the potential risks and natural limitations that follow with a sample recruited through Prolific, we do have a gender distribution of 50,3% (M) and 49,2% (F), and a sample with respondents from the U.K. Therefore, it is possible to argue that it is possible to generalize findings. Another limitation that potentially can have a positive side is the fact that trained respondents and monetary incentives can lead to excluding respondents not interested that are "forced" upon yet another survey, which often may be the case when using smaller organizations for data collection.

6.7 Directions for future research

Because one of our biggest disappointments is that we ended up with most of our findings being non-significant, our first recommendation is that future research could benefit from aiming for bigger sample sizes and employing a simple random sample to improve the robustness and significance, the internal validity, and generalizability. A more diverse sample would also be beneficial to avoid skewness in demographic groups, as we have discussed earlier. As stated earlier, we chose the often-favored multidimensional approach, meaning with looked at the predictors' influence on each subscale (Tremblay et al., 2019). One suggestion for future research could be to look at the subscales entirely independently, or at motivational autonomy, like one can by using Ryan and Deci's relative autonomy index (Gagne et al., 2015).

The nature of a cross-sectional research design has its limitations. To overcome biases that occur with self-reports as we had, such as common method bias, future research could benefit from adopting a different approach or different techniques. This can entail administering the questionnaire to two different samples, meaning different sources for different measures, or combining various methods as in a mixed method research design. It could also be interesting to collect survey data from two different time points as in a longitudinal study. This way, one could explore the variables over time and potentially establish causal relationships.

It is important to remind ourselves that there could be theoretical explanations for our non-significant findings. Hence, in terms of our thesis topic, LMX, Job satisfaction, and motivation, there are several directions for future research. First, there is limited research on the different motivational scales. Even less, or no research, has been devoted to researching motivation to take on leadership positions. Therefore, future research could benefit from focusing on motivation to take on leadership alone, or together with LMX and job satisfaction as we have done, but also with other interesting and relevant work-related variables. For example, it could be interesting to look at motivation and the not-too-distant theoretical perspective of goal orientations and how different types of motivation relate to goal-pursuit strategies or outcomes, which has been done with students in academic contexts (Wolters, 2004). Another angle could be to consider other predictors for motivation to take on leadership positions. For example, job performance or academic performance and their relation to the different subscales besides only intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which has been done numerous times before (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Are high performers more ambitious than others? Does this make them more motivated for advancement into leadership positions? This is purely speculation, but still interesting thoughts. Looking at these variables is not something new, but it could be interesting to dissect motivation and explore them on a deeper level together with these variables that are closely related to those in this thesis.

Since our research findings can be said to have a somewhat limited impact on the existing research field, it could also be interesting to dive deeper into the practical implications and how our one significant finding could raise awareness of the importance and influencing power a leader has on leader and leadership recruitment. For example, future research can explore how leader-member relationships can be applied in real-job settings and recruitment policies.

Another possible direction for future research stemming directly from our results is exploring the different subscales in more detail and especially integrated regulation. While Ryan & Deci (2020) explain the different subscales thoroughly, they do not explain how they relate to other key variables or the implications of each subscale. From our results, it would be especially interesting to further

investigate integrated regulation since this subscale acted as a deviant in our hypothesized linear pattern for both LMX and job satisfaction, without there being any obvious reasons.

We had good reasons to hypothesize a mediating effect of job satisfaction on LMX. Not only are they directly linked to each other (Dulebohn et al., 2012), but several studies have confirmed LMX as a predictor of job satisfaction (Golden & Veiga, 2008; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Major et al., 1995). Because of their relationship, we believed the logic behind our thinking was that clear so that we would see a mediating effect from our results. An interesting avenue for further research could therefore be to further explore this relationship and potentially mediating effect, e.g., by improving methodological practices. Although the lack in finding the hypothesized result can be to the fact that there is no mediating effect because we are dealing with another type of motivation, it can still be interesting to investigate further. If no future research supports a mediating effect, it will arguably only strengthen the significance of LMX as a predictor of motivation to take on leadership positions.

We intentionally excluded the subscale referred to as "amotivation", which describes a state where there is no intention to act at all (Ryan & Deci, 2020). We removed this because we wanted to study only those with some level of motivation, which was why had a screen-out question at the beginning of our survey. This made sense due to our research question and approach, but as we have argued in limitations, using respondents from a third-party site, despite cleaning the data carefully, one risks ending up with potentially unmotivated respondents. So not only would future research benefit from more traditional sampling, but it could also be beneficial to include the subscale of amotivation to get an even more truthful picture.

Overall, there are several ways our study can be improved and several directions for future research. If something, this thesis can hopefully function as a door opener to further investigate work-related variables with motivation for career transitions.

7. Conclusion

This study looks at employees' motivation for taking on leadership positions through well-known work-related variables like LMX and job satisfaction. Within organizational psychology, leadership as a phenomenon is one of the most interesting and studied topics. Due to a leader's impact and influence, it is also a very important field to research. Therefore, researching what motivates employees, and what mechanisms and predictors are at play is called for. Specifically, we looked at Leader-member exchange theory and job satisfaction as predictors of motivation to take on leadership positions. Our intention with this deductive thesis was to test and confirm existing research, but also to broaden the field by looking specifically at the motivation for taking on leadership positions.

Going back to our research question, "How does job satisfaction and leader-member relationship affect employees' motivation for upward career transitions into leadership positions?", we only found support for one of our hypotheses. We found that LMX was significantly positively related to intrinsic motivation, which supports the existing theory. In terms of the other hypotheses, findings were non-significant, and the hypotheses were therefore not supported by the results.

This study's findings contribute to the field by supporting existing research, but it also adds to the literature because of the future perspective by looking at motivation for taking on leadership positions and not just motivation in your current job or position. We also believe this study raises awareness of the importance of the influencing power existing leaders have on employees and their thoughts on taking on leadership positions. The study is not without its limitations, both through the research design but also through the recruitment and sampling process. Hopefully, our study can inspire others and future research to further explore mechanisms and predictors for motivation for upward career transitions into leadership positions. Overall, we believe this is a good and interesting first study of a specific type of motivation, namely motivation to take on leadership positions.

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9. Appendix 1

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlations, and Coefficient Alpha reliabilities

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	34.55	9.19	-									
2. Gender	1.50	.51	-.065	-								
3. Job tenure	5.59	6.22	.494**	.007	-							
4. MOAQ-JSS	3.80	.47	.122	.154*	.153*	(.933)						
5. LMX-MDM	3.79	.82	.001	.071	-.089	.296**	(.935)					
6. External regulation	5.37	.91	-.065	-.024	-.037	-.078	.032	(.679)				
7. Introjected regulation	3.65	1.38	-.139	-.015	-.082	-.081	.128	.025	(.791)			
8. Identified regulation	4.28	1.31	.036	-.027	.058	.075	.133	.095	.541**	(.835)		
9. Integrated regulation	3.82	1.41	.149*	.065	.110	.090	.113	-.050	.483**	.597**	(.885)	
10. Intrinsic motivation	5.27	1.17	.224**	.052	.024	.141	.226**	-.083	.276**	.347**	.484**	(.916)

Note: N = 185. For Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Non-binary. Cronbach's alpha values are presented in parenthesis on the diagonal line.

*$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$
Cronbach's alpha α for WEIMS with all five subscales = .858.

Table 2

Hierarchical regression analyses with LMX-MDM as the predictor

Variables	WEIMS									
	External regulation		Introjected regulation		Identified regulation		Integrated regulation		Intrinsic motivation	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.065	-.067	-.132	-.141	.008	-.002	.132	.125	.287***	.273***
Gender	-.028	-.030	-.024	-.034	-.027	-.038	.073	.064	.071	.055
Job tenure	-.005	-.001	-.017	-.001	.054	.072	.044	.058	-.119	-.093
LMX-MDM		.034		.130		.142		.113		.214**
R^2	.005	.006	.020	.037	.004	.024	.029	.042	.065	.110
ΔR^2		.001		.017		.02		.013		.045**

*p < .05; **P < .01; ***P < .001*

F statistics: External regulation $F(4,180) = .28$, $p < .889$, Introjected regulation $F(4,180) = 1.72$, $p < .147$, Identified regulation $F(4,180) = 1.10$, $p < .356$, Integrated regulation $F(4,180) = 1,97$, $p < .101$, Intrinsic motivation $F(4,180) = 5.58$, $p < .001$.

Table 3

Hierarchical regression analyses with MOAQ-JSS as the predictor

Variables	WEIMS									
	External regulation		Introjected regulation		Identified regulation		Integrated regulation		Intrinsic motivation	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Age	-.065	-.060	-.132	-.128	.008	.002	.132	.128	.287***	.278***
Gender	-.028	-.017	-.024	-.014	-.027	-.038	.073	.064	.071	.053
Job tenure	-.005	.003	-.017	-.010	.054	.046	.044	.038	-.119	-.133
MOAQ-JSS		-.069		-.062		.074		.059		.120
R^2	.005	.010	.020	.024	.004	.009	.029	.033	.065	.079
ΔR^2		.005		.004		.005		0.04		0.14

*$p < .05$; **$P < .01$; ***$P < .001$

F statistics: External regulation $F(4,180) = .43$, $p < .784$, Introjected regulation $F(4,180) = 1.10$, $p < .359$, Identified regulation $F(4,180) = .42$, $p < .792$, Integrated regulation $F(4,180) = 1,52$, $p < .200$, Intrinsic motivation $F(4,180) = 3.85$, $p < .005$.

Table 4

Mediation/Bootstrap analysis

	External regulation	Introjected regulation	Identified regulation	Integrated regulation	Intrinsic motivation	MOAQ-JSS
Age	-.006	-.020	-.001	.019	.034*	.003
Gender	-.033	-.040	-.107	.168	.108	.123*
Tenure	.002	.004	.014	.012	.020	.011
LMX	.067	.278*	.211	.182	.280**	.171 ***
MOAQ-JSS	-.170	-.335	.091	.078	.146	
Indirect Effect ****	-.090 to .024	-.149 to .034	-.059 to .108	-.063 to .124	-.034 to .103	

*$P < .05$; **$P < .01$; ***$P < .001$ ****The indirect effect measures the significance of the indirect effect between Job Satisfaction (X) and the different motivational subscales (Y). These are measured in confidence intervals, and not in p-values and are therefore reported differently than the other coefficients. As we can see, there is no significant indirect effect between X and Y.*

11. Appendix 2

Participant information sheet

Purpose of the project: The current research project aims to explore how job satisfaction and the relationship between employees and their current leader affect the employees' motivation to take upward career transitions into leadership positions. The project also looks at possible differences in gender, tenure at the organization, and tenure under the current leadership.

Who is responsible for the research project? BI Norwegian Business School is the institution responsible for the project.

What does participation involve for you? If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve you filling in an online survey. It will take approximately 10 minutes. The survey includes questions about your job satisfaction, what motivates you, and about your relationship to your current leader. Your answers will be recorded electronically. Participation is voluntary. If you choose to start filling in the survey, you always have the right to stop. All information will be anonymous and used for research purposes only.

What will happen to the data at the end of the research project? The anonymous data for this project will be used for generating original scientific research, follow-up studies, and archiving for future research.

Where can I find out more? If you have questions about the project, please contact us via the Prolific platform or by email: Halvor Dalen (halvordalen93@gmail.com) or Victor Andreassen (victor.andreassen@hotmail.com)

Consent form I have received and understood the information about the project "Job satisfaction and Leader-member relationship as predictors for motivation to take on leadership positions" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. By checking the box "Yes" below i consent to partake in the survey.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

⊙

Prolific ID What is your prolific ID? *Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID*

_____

Q1 Do you have motivation to take on leadership positions?

Definitions:
Leadership positions refer to all positions providing role holders with direct influence on a group of individuals aiming to achieve a common goal. This typically refers to positions with personnel responsibilities but may also be more general (e.g., project leader or program leader without personnel responsibilities).

Motivation is defined as a desire, need, or want to be activated or energized toward an end.

○ I am very motivated to take on a leadership position (1)

○ I am motivated to take on a leadership position (2)

○ I am somewhat motivated to take on a leadership position (3)

○ I am **not** at all motivated to take on a leadership position (4)

Q2 Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent each of the following items correspond to the reason why you want a leadership position.

Why do you want a leadership position?

	Does not correspond at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Corresponds moderately (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Corresponds exactly (7)
For the income it will provide me (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because it allows me to earn money (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because this type of position provides me security (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because this is an attention check, select "corresponds exactly' (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q3 **Why do you want a leadership position?**

	Does not correspond at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Corresponds moderately (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Corresponds exactly (7)
Because I want to succeed at this job, if **not** I would be very ashamed of myself (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise I would be very disappointed (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I want to be a "winner" in life (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4 **Why do you want a leadership position?**

	Does not correspond at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Corresponds moderately (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Corresponds exactly (7)
Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I chose this type of work to attain mye career goals (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 **Why do you want a leadership position?**

	Does not correspond at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Corresponds moderately (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Corresponds exactly (7)
Because this type of work is a fundamental part of who I am (1)	○	◯	◯	○	◯	◯	○
Because it is part of the way in which I choose to live my life (2)	○	◯	◯	○	◯	◯	○
Because I see this job as a part of my life (3)	○	◯	◯	○	◯	◯	○

Q6 **Why do you want a leadership position?**

	Does not correspond at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Corresponds moderately (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Corresponds exactly (7)
Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent each of the following items corresponds to the reasons you would put effort into taking on a leadership position

Why would you put effort into taking on leadership positions?

	Not at all (1)	Very little (2)	A little (3)	Moderately (4)	Strongly (5)	Very strongly (6)	Completely (7)
To get other's approval (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients...) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because others will respect me more (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients...) (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To avoid being criticized by others (e.g., supervisor, colleagues, family, clients...) (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 Why would you put effort into taking on leadership positions?

	Not at all (1)	Very little (2)	A little (3)	Moderately (4)	Strongly (5)	Very strongly (6)	Completely (7)
Because others will reward me financially only if I put enough effort into getting such a position (e.g., employer, supervisor...) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because others offer me greater job security if I put enough effort into getting such a position (e.g., employer, supervisor...) (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because we need to ensure validity, we would like you to answer "Strongly" here. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I risk losing my opportunity if I **don't** put enough effort in to getting such a position (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q9 Why would you put effort into taking on leadership positions?

	Not at all (1)	Very little (2)	A little (3)	Moderately (4)	Strongly (5)	Very strongly (6)	Completely (7)
Because I have to prove to myself that I can (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because it makes me feel proud of myself (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because otherwise I will feel ashamed of myself (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q10 Why would you put effort into taking on leadership positions?

	Not at all (1)	Very little (2)	A little (3)	Moderately (4)	Strongly (5)	Very strongly (6)	Completely (7)
Because I personally consider it important to put efforts into pursuing such a position (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because putting efforts into pursuing such a position aligns with mye personal values (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because putting efforts into pursuing such a position has personal significance to me (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 Why would you put effort into taking on a leadership positions?

	Not at all (1)	Very little (2)	A little (3)	Moderately (4)	Strongly (5)	Very strongly (6)	Completely (7)
Because I would find it fun to work in such a position (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I would find it exciting to work in such a position (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I would find it interesting to work in such a position (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 How do you feel about your **current job**?

	Disagree very much (1)	Disagree moderately (2)	Disagree slightly (3)	Agree slightly (4)	Agree moderately (5)	Agree very much (6)
In general, i **don't** like my job (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
All in all, I am satisfied with my job (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
In general, i like working here (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 Rate these statements about your **current job**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Don't know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agreee (5)
I receive recognition for a job well done (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel close to the people at work (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I fell good about working in this company (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel secure about my job (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I believe management is concerned about me (5)	○	○	○	○	○
On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I am happy to answer "Strongly agree" to this question (11)	○	○	○	○	○
My wages are good (7)	○	○	○	○	○
All my talents and skills are used at work (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I get along with my supervisors (9)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel good about my job (10)	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 Do you know where you stand with your leader and do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?

○ Rarely (1)

○ Occasionally (2)

○ Sometimes (3)

○ Fairly often (4)

○ Very often (5)

Q15 How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?

○ Not a bit (1)

○ A little (2)

○ A fair amount (3)

○ Quite a bit (4)

○ A great deal (5)

Q16 How well does your leader recognise your potential?

○ Not at all (1)

○ A little (2)

○ Moderately (3)

○ Mostly (4)

○ Fully (5)

Q17 Regardless of how much formal authority your leader has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader would use is hor her power to help you solve problems in your work?

○ None (1)

○ Small (2)

○ Moderate (3)

○ High (4)

○ Very high (5)

Q18 Regardless of the formulation of this question, we would like you to answer "Neither" to this question.

○ Strongly agree (1)

○ Agree (2)

○ Disagree (3)

○ Strongly disagree (4)

○ Neither (5)

Q19 Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he or she "bail you out" at his or her expense?

○ None (1)

○ Small (2)

○ Moderate (3)

○ High (4)

○ Very high (5)

Q20 I have enough confidence in my leader that i would defend and justify his or her decision is he or she were not present to do so.

○ Strongly disagree (1)

○ Disagree (2)

○ Neutral (3)

○ Agree (4)

○ Strongly agree (5)

Q21 How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?

○ Extremely ineffective (1)

○ Worse than average (2)

○ Average (3)

○ Better than average (4)

○ Extremely effective (5)

End of Block: LMX - LMX7

Start of Block: LMX - LMX-MDM

Q22 Rate these statements about your relationship to your leader

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I like my supervisor very much as a person (1)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend (2)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with (3)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question (4)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My supervisor would come to my defense if I were "attacked" by others (5)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake (6)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description (7)	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to meet my supervisor's work goals (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job (9)	○	○	○	○	○
I will answer "Somewhat agree" to this question. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
I respect my supervisor's knowledge of and competence on the job (10)	○	○	○	○	○
I admire my supervisor's professional skills (11)	○	○	○	○	○
I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor (12)	○	○	○	○	○

Q23 The following demographic questions are important because it enables us to describe the participants, and from a research point of view it is important to explore how demographic differences are connected to the variables presented in this study.

What is your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Non-binary (3)

Q24 What is your age?

_____

Q25 How long have you been with your current employer? Please answer in years and round it off to the closest year.

_____

Q26 How long have you been working for your current leader? Please answer in years and round it off to the closest year.

_____

Q27 How long have you been in your current position? Please answer in years and round it off to the closest year.

_____