



SCHOOL OF  
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# Why employees (don't) become managers

**Employees' desires and motivations behind  
succession to managerial positions in retail  
store environments**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores what desires and motivations lay behind employees' succession to managerial positions in a store environment. Previous research focuses on how to develop good leaders, rather than how to make people want to become leaders, which is why this is an important topic. The method used is a qualitative case study at IKEA in Sweden, where a combination of qualitative questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect empirical findings. The conclusion of this thesis revealed that a desire to develop oneself and a genuine interest in the job are reasons behind employees' succession to managerial positions. In turn, these desires have the ability to generate internal motivation, which is the most sustainable type of motivation. However, the context in which the employee operates has a big effect on if the employees become motivated. There needs to be facilitating motivators present, such as support from the organization and a confidence in one's own ability, in order for the motivation to actually be created. Further, other factors can create reluctance to become a manager, such as if the position comes with an unmanageable workload. If the reluctance is stronger than the motivation, succession to managerial positions will likely not occur, even though primary desires and motivation exist. There is a constant interplay between employees' desires, motivation and reasons for reluctance, which are all influenced by the environment around them. Succession to managerial positions is most likely to happen when desires and motivators create an internal motivation which is stronger than and thereby outweighs the reluctance factors.

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/Johanna Törnfeldt and Emilia Fisal

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# 1. Introduction

Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor company, supposedly once said that "the only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay" (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2018). These are issues that organizations have to deal with on a daily basis. They need to figure out a way to both develop their employees in a desired direction and to find ways to make them want to stay and practice their new skills in the organization. This thesis will look deeper into these issues, with a focus on leadership development.

To plan for succession and future leadership requires both time and planning (Kesner & Sebora, 1994; Rothwell, 2005). To create a strategic plan to fill those positions and to implement programs that attract and retain qualified talents, may have a result in organizational continuity and longevity. It may also create a great internal and external confidence in the organisation. An overview of Harvard Business Review (Conger & Fulmer, 2003) states that if the hire rate internally is less than 75-80% in an organization, it is considered as not successful. Even for the best-practice organizations, establishing tools for the succession process and tracking different metrics to match the right people, at the right time into the right job, represent a crucial provocation to the company's long-term development.

Many business professionals argue that leaders are the ones who develop new leaders. Business executive Jack Welch and business journalist Suzy Welch believe that "before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others" (Welch & Welch, 2005, p. 61). Similarly, strategy and leadership consultant Finn Jackson (2018) argues for today's importance of a famous quote by business executive Tom Peters; "true leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders" (p.393). But the question of how is still rather undiscovered. One can argue that a good leader is a role model for the people they lead by motivating them, keeping them informed, supporting them, providing valuable feedback and inspiring them (Juneja, n.d.). However, what are the reasons behind people even wanting to become leaders? If managers do not understand their employees, they cannot inspire them to become the next generation of leaders. Thereby, this thesis looks deeper into the reasons behind why employees decide to become managers.

## 1.1. Problematization

Leadership has long been a subject of interest in many fields of research (Yukl, 2013). However, existing leadership research takes people as managers for granted and focuses solely on how to lead rather than how to make people want to lead. Thereby, research fails to acknowledge how employees become attracted and motivated to take on managerial positions. Even though an employee has high leadership potential, they may believe there are risks in leading (Zhang et al., 2020). If this is the reality it creates problems for organizations, as they cannot fill the positions they need to keep their businesses running.

This type of potential problem is also related to employer branding research, as it concerns attracting people to new roles. However, employer branding research also fails to recognize this subject, as employer branding research has a focus on the external attraction into the organization (Lim, Foster, & Punjaisri, 2010). There is a need to fully understand potential reluctance and how organizations can attract competent employees to managerial positions. These subjects will be discussed in this thesis, with a focus on employees' desires and motivations towards managerial positions.

## 1.2. Purpose and research question

The purpose of this paper is to understand what desires and motivations make employees on a low hierarchical level move to managerial positions in retail store environments. Through this, our aim is to contribute to leadership and employer branding research. The topic of analysis is desire and motivation to become a manager. The perspective taken and the unit of analysis are the thoughts of employees in the form of floor employees (referred to as co-workers) and the lowest level of managers (referred to as middle managers). The analysis will mainly focus on both these groups as employees, rather than managers, but a managerial perspective will also be considered among the middle managers. Understanding the managerial perspective will provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization in regards to leadership, which will facilitate the understanding of employees' answers.

A case study at the Swedish home furnishing retailer IKEA was conducted for the purpose of this thesis. IKEA has a strong employer brand and is ranked high in many crucial factors, including strong leadership (Randstad, 2020; 2021). Yet, they express difficulty in attracting people to managerial and succession positions in parts of their organization. To understand this phenomenon, we need to explore this reluctance as well as what it would take for employees to desire and be motivated to take on managerial positions.

Research question:

- What are the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions?

### 1.2.1. Delimitations

As this research aims to explore employees' desires and motivations for moving to managerial positions, the question of whether they are suited to become managers will not be considered. As the case organization has expressed that they have a workforce with competent leaders, the assumption is that anyone in the organization is a potential future manager. As the area of focus is employees' desires and motivations, which education, training and skills are needed to become a good leader and manager is not directly studied. With that being said, the employees' perceived ability and knowledge is considered in connection to the research question.



This research will only examine development of leaders and managers internally in organization. External sourcing of employees to managerial positions will not be considered in this particular study. Internal hires are more likely to be committed and it is less costly than hiring externally (Bidwell, 2011). Further, hiring external managers will create different mindsets (Hambrick & Mason, 1984) while internal succession confere more consistency (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019). When focusing on internal hires, it is typical that middle managers are considered to higher managerial roles before other employees, such as co-workers (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). However, a more comprehensive view on the phenomenon has a focus on investing in lower-level employees, to which many companies across different industries have been hesitant (Chen, Chang & Yeh, 2004; Cordero, DiTomaso & Farris, 1994; Ferratt et al., 2005).

Among the internal employees, only employees on a low hierarchical level, in the form of floor-employees (referred to as co-workers) and the lowest level of managers (referred to as middle managers), will be studied. Further, the development and direction of desired growth is in a vertical direction. Thereby, horizontal movement in the organization will be excluded. Vertical development means that the employees move on to job opportunities which offer more opportunities or/and better wages (Van Ommeren, Rietveld & Nijkamp, 2010), which in the case of this research is a managerial position on a higher level than the employee is currently at.

As this is a qualitative case study, only one situation is examined. The geographical area studied is limited to the country of Sweden. Because of the qualitative nature of this study, the results are not statistically generalizable. Instead, this research aims to provide an analytical generalizability, meaning that general principles can be used in an analytical sense (Yin, 2018). We will elaborate more on this in the method of this thesis.

### 1.2.2. Aimed contributions

By exploring the research purpose this thesis will provide a theoretical contribution to leadership and employer branding research, as this is an understudied research topic within both fields. Previous leadership research has a focus on how to develop good leaders, rather than how to make people want to lead, and employer branding research has a focus on external branding rather than internal. Thereby, this thesis will contribute to, as well as bridge, these two areas of research. The research will also provide a practical contribution though managerial implications. Through exploring employees' attraction for and views on leadership, this research will gain a deeper understanding of situations where organizations find it difficult to attract employees to managerial positions, and what they can do about it.

## 2. Literature review

This literature review covers previous research and theory which are central to the research question. Firstly, 2.1. *Leadership development* is presented to explain and clarify different views and practices on how to develop leaders in organizations. Following, 2.2. *Employer branding* and 2.3. *Leadership branding* are presented in order to gain an understanding of the concepts' influence and how the leadership role could potentially be portrayed to employees. 2.4. *Reluctance to become a manager* brings up subjects which may influence a person's desire to become a manager negatively and 2.5. *Fostering employee growth* discusses organizational mindsets and leadership practices which have proven to foster a desire to grow in the organization. Lastly, the theoretical foundation of this paper is presented through an adaptation of the self-determination theory with the added element of desire. The theoretical foundation is provided to frame the empirical study and not to test the theory. Throughout all sections, the relevance and use of the information in the thesis is discussed.

### 2.1. Leadership development

In order to understand leadership development, there is a need to clarify the difference between leadership and management. Yukl (2013) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 23). Leadership is a mindset and an act which a person engages in, and it is practiced as it is developed (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Thereby, one can be a leader without being a manager and one can be a manager without being a leader (Yukl, 2013). Although there is a consensus that leadership and management are different, there is great controversy of how much they overlap. Some researchers argue that being a leader and a manager are completely separate things (e.g. Zaleznik, 2004), while others argue that leaders and managers do not have to be all that different even though the roles and processes are distinct (e.g. Kotter, 1988). This thesis applies the distinction which Rost (1991) makes out. He explains that there is an overlap, but while leadership focuses on a multidirectional influential leader-follower relationship, management focuses on an authoritarian manager-subordinate relationship. Thereby, ‘a manager’ is in this research paper viewed as an authoritarian position rather than the practice of leading. However, there will still be an emphasis on leadership, as it is a facilitating practice in management which is needed for managers to reach success in modern organizations (Yukl, 2013).

There are different approaches to developing leaders. Organizations can view leadership potential as something permanent and recruit employees who have great potential to become future leaders (e.g. Bonaiuto, De Dominicis, Illia, Rodríguez-Cánovas & Lizzani, 2013), or they can view leadership as something which is developed through social interactions between people (e.g. Karp & Helgø, 2009). There is research arguing for both cases. This study is based on the belief that everyone has the ability to become a leader, but research in the other direction should not be dismissed. As people come into organizations with prior social experiences, they may have leadership potential which is already developed. Therefore,

it is beneficial to consider research arguing for how to develop new leaders as well as how to attract potential leaders.

Some researchers (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Karp & Helgø, 2009) argue that being recognized as a leader and recognizing oneself as a leader will lead to leadership behaviour. Along this, one needs the credibility necessary to also perform as a leader (Karp & Helgø, 2009). DeRue and Ashford (2010) propose that individuals may develop leadership identities both through individual projection of an image and by others confirming, or not confirming, the image as a legitimate part of their identity. It occurs as a person claims and other people grant them the leadership role. Grants may come in different forms from different people. It can be done both directly and indirectly. The grants do not necessarily have to come from followers, or even direct co-workers. A person can for example be endorsed by someone from a different department, or even a manager. Karp and Helgø (2009) also underline the role personality, self-esteem, individuation and self-image plays in leadership identity construction. They argue that interaction between the potential leader and other humans is strongly linked to how these aspects are developed.

Researchers who view leadership potential as something more permanent have a big focus on employer branding. Bonaiuto et al. (2013) explain that organizations who want to attract potential leaders need to assess their brand in regards to attributes which are attractive for talented people. Their research showed that attractive organizations are those who engage in CSR efforts, innovate, have an open climate, offer different paths of career and value knowledge and capabilities. The last three were shown to be of particular importance. Their research also showed that young, potential future leaders show a tendency of idealizing a workplace before they join it, regardless of if it lives up to the prescribed attributes in reality.

Despite which approach the organization takes to leadership, there needs to be a plan for how they work with development and succession. A study (Groves, 2007) found that best practice organizations do this through established, but flexible, succession plans where high potential employees have the ability to develop through mentorship, learning experiences, workshops and organization-wide forums. The study pinpoints the importance of current managers' involvement and support as well as the importance of establishing an organizational culture which supports development. The top manager or the CEO plays a big role in this as well. In order for the strategies to be effective, there also needs to be constant evaluation of what works and what does not, what weaknesses and strengths that can be identified among people and groups and if the training is aligned with the business strategy (Schwartz, 2011). With that being said, there is no one-size-fits-all in leadership development. There needs to be strategies set in place, but then they need to be assessed and re-worked according to organizational needs.

This thesis is written with the constructivist belief that anyone could potentially become a manager. We will further motivate our constructivist approach in the method chapter. As this approach is taken, how well the social environment of the studied department supports leadership development will be highly considered. However, as people enter the organization

with prior experiences, attributes which may attract leadership personalities will also be considered. Along with this, the organizations' approach and plans to develop leaders is highly considered, as it lays the ground for discussing what is working and what is not in motivating employees to become managers.

## 2.2. Employer branding

Scholars suggest that by developing an employer brand, organizations can improve their ability to attract the right employees (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). The founders of the term, Amber and Barrow (1996), define the employer brand as the psychological, economic and functional benefits which the employment provides and which are associated with the company. It can also be defined as the psychological contract between the employee and the employer (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Foster, Punjaisri and Cheng (2010) explain that the employer brand is closely related to the internal and corporate brand, and argue for the importance of aligning these three. Further, internal branding and employer branding have great potential to support corporate brand initiatives. Likewise, the corporate brand can facilitate in recruiting and retaining valuable employees (Balmer & Gray, 2003).

In one study (Lim, Foster, & Punjaisri, 2010), interrelations between employer branding and internal branding were analyzed. In the study, they suggest that employer branding has an external focus, targeting potential employees, while internal branding has an internal focus, targeting customer-facing staff. They further suggest a research gap, where research on the link between internal branding and employer branding is needed. Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng (2010) argue that employer branding and internal branding needs to be brought closer together, and that this can be achieved through qualitative case studies. This research contributes to this gap and creates a connection. However, the main objective is to challenge the belief that employer branding is only external by examining an internal setting in connection to leadership. Since the employer brand is not only about attracting new employees, but also about retaining current employees (Balmer & Gray, 2003; Maurya & Agarwal, 2018), there are aspects which need to be considered for the research purpose.

Moroko and Uncles (2008) suggest that the employees will likely be loyal and engaged when the employer lives up to their employer brand. Likewise, they are likely to be less productive and engaged if the employer does not live up to the employer brand, which may impact staff turnover. Therefore, it is important to communicate an accurate image of the organization's culture, values and identity to potential employees. This will make it easier to deliver the employer brand promise (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). As organizations who do not live up to their employer brand promise are likely to have employees which are not engaged and loyal, this is an essential consideration in exploring employees' attraction for leadership positions. It is likely that disloyalty and disengagement may reduce employees' willingness to develop within the organization. Therefore, this must be taken into consideration in order to gain a full understanding of situations where employees do not want to become managers.

When looking at the employer brand internally, internal communication is of great importance. A recent study (Tkalac Verčič, 2021) criticises current research for not focusing enough on the connection between employer branding and internal communication. Their findings revealed that internal communication has significant, positive relationships with employee engagement, perceived organizational support and the employer brand. They argue that unsatisfactory or insufficient communication is the most common problem in organizations, and highlights that internal communication needs to be seen as an umbrella which affects many aspects. Hoppe (2018) also recognizes the importance of communicating internally by saying that employees should be seen as a target group for corporate info that may facilitate a positive evaluation of the organization as an employer. Examples of this is communicating CSR actions or giving credit to out-groups when communicating achievements in the organization.

According to Maurya and Agarwal (2018), organizational talent management (the process of managing and developing personnel to reach positive organizational outcomes) also affects how the employer brand is perceived by current employees. Their study found that attraction and recruitment of talents as well as the management of work-life balance were found to be the two most crucial factors in influencing employees' further attraction for their employer. They argue that focusing on strengthening the employer brand internally is crucial in retaining talent. Another aspect to highlight is that the perceived employer brand image has a direct effect on if employees will behave in ways which are in line with the corporate brand values, which also strengthens the corporate brand (Hoppe, 2018).

Conclusions from previous employer branding research will underline this thesis, as managerial implication from this research can be used for employer branding purposes. Although it is under discussion in research, the literature shows that the employer brand does have a role internally as it affects further engagement as well as attraction and loyalty for the current employee. As the internal employer brand is studied, it is crucial to look at how internal communication, work-life balance and talent management is perceived in the organization.

### 2.3. Leadership branding

According to Hodges & Martin (2012) leadership branding is a natural extension to reputation management and employer branding. The concept became well discussed in the 2000s after Smallwood and Ulrich (2007; 2008) introduced the topic in popular practitioner publications. Although their statements in these publications were criticized for their lack of support, researchers agreed that there is a need for leadership teams to develop a positive image and to give employees honest signals (Hodges & Martin, 2012). The approach thereby was further studied, although research is still very limited.

The word *Brand* is complex on its own and has endless definitions. A literature review (Maurya & Mishra, 2012) aimed to provide an overview of existing literature on branding defines brands as intangible, legal and conditional assets which deliver perceived value to

stakeholders. The perceived value is created over time through interactions between stakeholders and the company. The brand is never created, it is simply something that exists, but organizations have the challenge to align their identity and the perception of it. Thereby, this study is built on the idea that the studied leadership group already has a brand, an image, whether they work with leadership branding or not.

Leadership branding is an approach focusing on the collective leadership skills an organization has, as well as what impact they have on the customer (Mirza, 2012). This view of leadership branding is quite narrow, as it focuses solely on the customer. In human resource management (HRM) research (Hodges & Martin, 2012) it has been identified that leadership branding can be used for multiple purposes, including employee attraction, organizational identification, work engagement and overall climate governance. By focusing on employee attraction, and thereby linking leadership branding with employer branding, there is an opportunity to expand both research fields. Leadership brands reflect on the organization's ability to develop talented leaders (Situmorang & Salamah, 2018). They can assist leaders in creating an image of themselves which they are known by, both by customers and their employees (Mirza, 2012). To utilize this image to its full extent it should be used for multiple purposes, as HRM research implies. By viewing employees as a target group of the leadership brand, it could potentially attract more people to take on leadership positions.

When working with and researching leadership brands, it is important to know that the concept stems from practitioner publications and has limited research. However, research that does exist on the topic indicates that it may be a relevant concept. Following a case study on leadership branding in multinational enterprises, Hodges and Martin (2012) concluded that working with leadership branding has potential benefits, especially if there is a contextual need to work with it. They explain that leadership branding is a type of identity work which can influence individual, relational and collective perceptions of the leadership group. This can for example facilitate integration and responsiveness. However, they note that leadership brands are challenging to establish and maintain over time. Further, they highlight the importance of being tolerant of geographical and personal differences between leaders in the branding process. If this tolerance does not exist, companies risk deterring organizational change and innovation due to burnout, over-identification, lack of diversity, lack of bridges between social networks and group-think.

In this research the concept of a leadership brand will be used to a limited extent as research on the concept is still limited. However, we find it of interest to look at the current brand of the leadership group in order to understand how the leaders are viewed by the employees.

## 2.4. Reluctance to become a manager

Personal risk perception in becoming a manager is an understudied area of research. Leadership is usually portrayed as something needed, rewarded and worthy, and research fails to acknowledge that individuals may view leadership as a risk filled endeavor (Zhang et al., 2020). However, studies have provided some aspects which may influence these attitudes.

Some research highlights the perceived risks in taking part in leadership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Zhang et al., 2020). Although this research does not study partaking in formal management, there are key aspects which are of importance to keep in mind as leadership is studied. According to Zhang et al. (2020) employees may worry that taking part in leadership will influence their image and their relationships at work. Further, they may worry about getting blamed for group failure. The study showed that the perceived risk is connected to the person's leadership contributions to the team overall. The perceived risk was found to generally decrease over time, although a social context which fosters high levels of relationship conflict is likely to make it decrease less. Therefore they suggest that managers create a facilitating context which minimizes risks associated with leadership behaviour.

There may also be perceived risks relating to taking on a new role and new tasks. This can be challenging, especially for employees who do not believe in their abilities to manage the effort (Blackwell, Trzeźniewski & Dweck, 2007). Murphy and Reeves (2019) argue that executing new tasks and adopting new roles can come with a fear of revealing a lack of ability, which may impact their reputation or make them look weak. This fear can be one of the reasons that people refuse to become managers. Furthermore, critical feedback from others may be taken to be about them personally rather than about the work they do (Murphy & Reeves, 2019), which can make people defensive (Nussbaum & Dweck, 2008; Trope & Neter, 1994). In contrast, Murphy and Reeves (2019) explain that others may react positively to critical evaluations and use the critics to learn from others and to improve. These people understand the importance of identifying the weaknesses in order to perform better. They also see the well meaning of colleagues who work with one's ability to grow, learn and improve, while still wishing to preserve self-esteem and feelings.

Practical aspects related to change may also influence reluctance to become a manager. Murphy and Reeves (2019) explain that moving to a new division, location or team requires high effort, more time and energy than typical work. Physical relocation may make some potential successors reluctant, whereas others are tempted by the challenge and see the opportunity as a personal and professional development. According to Van Ommeren, Rietveld and Nijkamp (2010) the mobility of a person depends on if the gain of the move is worth more than what their current locational offer is. There are many factors that play into this, such as cost of moving and what people's current life status is. However, they argue that age is the most prominent factor as young people in general go through more life changes, and are therefore more open to relocating.

Lastly, research has discovered that level of transparency in management succession can influence employee attitudes. Employees' intentions and motivation may be influenced by the organisation's options for advancement, and by reducing or using an untransparent succession plan, a decreased interest for long-term implication is highly possible to occur (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019). At the same time, a succession plan which is too transparent may lead to demotivation and low self-esteem among employees who are viewed as having low potential, which can result in lack of effort among those employees (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). Along

with this, companies are exposed to a risk by creating a large differentiation between entry-level employees capabilities and those in leadership roles (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019). The different arguments among transparency in succession planning indicates that there needs to be a balance. Organizations should make it clear how employees can grow in the company, but they should be careful with making decisions about who has potential and who does not. Organizations who do not give their employees equal opportunity to grow, will likely have a negative effect on the team spirit as well as employees who are not current front runners for managerial positions.

In order to understand how to attract employees to managerial positions, it is of importance to understand the employees as individuals. Thereby, this thesis considers if the participants in the research would consider a managerial position and why. To do so, it is of importance to consider different aspects which may influence one's willingness to become a manager, including workplace relationships, knowledge, practical aspects and organizational transparency. Through this, themes may potentially be identified.

## 2.5. Fostering employee growth

In order for employees to develop and grow, organizations must create a context which fosters growth. Employee motivation and performance may be affected by various factors. For example, managing staff of different generations is a highly demanding process, and motivating each generation requires knowledge about specific features, needs, values and behavioural understanding (Dwivedula & Singh, 2020). Moreover, multicultural settings comes with many challenges (Eskildsen & Nussler, 2000) and as globalization is making organizations more diverse (Sogancilar & Ors, 2018) it effects all organizations.

A recent organizational study (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019) showed that work atmosphere, good work team and basic salary, followed by communication in the workplace, job security and workload, are the most important motivational factors in the workplace. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that in addition to job satisfaction aspects such as salary, workload and job security, the environment in which employees operate is of great importance to foster motivated employees. Thereby, organizations should not dismiss the importance of organizational culture and leadership.

Murphy and Reeves (2019) argue that growth is most likely to occur when organizations have internalized a mindset which focuses on efforts and attitudes, rather than abilities and achievements. People's mindset beliefs can influence employees' motivation, performance and engagement (Murphy & Reeves, 2019) as well as their confidence in their own leadership abilities (Hoyt, Burnette & Innella, 2012). Therefore, organizations should foster employees who want to challenge themselves, view failure as lessons and see inspiration in other's success (Murphy & Reeves, 2019).

While it should not be desired, organizations who express a focus on abilities as something negative may foster employees who suppress this mindset in interactions, assessments and



surveys in order to avoid potential consequences (Murphy & Dweck, 2010). As a result, managers or researchers will be unable to understand the roots of employees goals, needs or motivations (Murphy & Reeves, 2019). Instead, Murphy and Dweck (2010) explain that organizations need to demonstrate and internalize the aspired mindset. The mindset of the organization affects people's behaviour and beliefs, which influences the policies and practices in the organization. The organizational mindset and culture is communicated through leadership messages, practices, norms and policies, and can have an effect on employee's workplace outcomes (Murphy & Reeves, 2019).

The type of leadership which is performed in organizations plays a role in fostering growth, as leadership perceptions affect motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Gagné et al., 2020). Gagné et al. (2020) explain that organizational context may influence the correlation between leadership perceptions and subordinates' motivations. To understand managerial perceptions and their motivation for work, leadership researchers often use the Full Range model of leadership, which includes transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership is an active form of leadership which is centered around respect, ethical behaviour, inspiration, coaching, mentoring and encouragement for creativity and inspiration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transactional leadership is a way of leading through exchange (Gagné et al., 2020), which means that the leader provides clear directives and gives rewards for efforts made as well as reacts when things go wrong (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Lastly, laissez-faire leadership means that there is a lack of leadership behaviour (Gagné et al., 2020).

Deci and Ryan (1985) explain that a passive management style may make employees feel under-resourced and unsupported, burdened, anxious and misguided. Feelings like these are typically associated with helplessness, which in turn has an association with lack of motivation. Research has also shown that an active management is likely to foster higher levels of motivation, than a passive or laissez-faire management (Gagné et al., 2020).

As this thesis is about creating an attraction for managerial positions, topics related to fostering employee growth are of utmost importance. Creating a fostering climate is complicated, and the organizational context as well as the leadership performed need to be highly considered. Thereby, we ask questions regarding the current work situation in the data collection process. To understand in which ways organizations facilitate a want for growth and how leadership is currently performed is a part of understanding the desirability of and motivation to work towards higher hierarchical roles.

## 2.6. Theoretical foundation

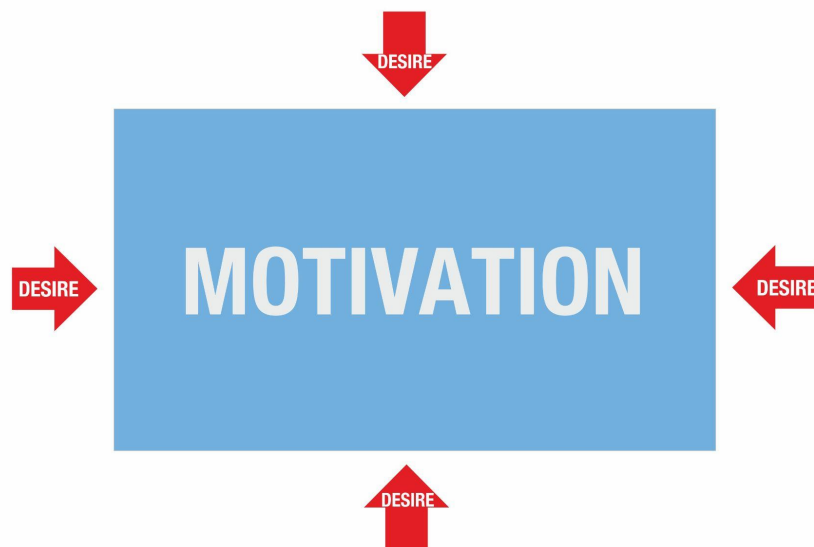
This research is based on the idea that anyone can become a leader and a manager, as the identity of a person is built on social interaction (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). With that being said, one can identify as a leader without wanting to become a formal manager (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000). Thereby, there is a need for an individual desire and motivation to develop in the organization and take on a managerial position. Through

conceptually defining motivation as well as the connection between motivation and desires, this section will frame the concepts. The theory will not be tested, but rather work as a facilitating model in the analysis process.

### 2.6.1. Desire

To desire something is a state of mind which portrays itself in different ways, with the commonality that a person is wanting something (Schroeder, 2015). Feeling a desire can be explained by the idea that attaining the desire will bring intrinsic goodness, such as more pleasure or less suffering (Goldstein, 1980). Schroeder (2006) explains that following a desire, a person will normally gain the motivation to obtain what is desired. In other words, the desire is a want to obtain something, while the motivation is the fuel to perform an action to obtain it. The relationship between desire and motivation is visualised in Figure 1.

Although desire as a concept is well rooted and discussed in philosophical and psychological theory (Schroeder, 2015), it is not established which specific desires influence people to take certain actions. Thereby, this thesis will provide inductive reasoning around the desires behind employees' succession to managerial positions. It is of importance to note that along with desire, there are many arguments in literature as to what influences motivation, such as imagination and beliefs (Currie, 2002). However, this thesis is limited to looking at desires, as it is a topic which is also of interest on its own. Desires are of relevance, in addition to motivation, because it adds to the understanding of why employees move to managerial positions. By only looking at motivation, the factual reasons behind the motives are dismissed and limits the practical implications of the research. Thereby, by viewing both desires and motivations as influences, a more comprehensive view on what makes employees move to managerial positions is presented.



*Figure 1: The relationship between desire and motivation*

## 2.6.2. The self-determination theory

People are most innovative and resourceful when their motivation stems from interest, satisfaction and challenges of the work itself, rather than by external incentives or pressure (Ankli & Palliam, 2012). With that in mind, the views on motivation is in this research based on the *self-determination theory* (SDT) (visualised in Figure 2), as it has strong academic support across cultures and backgrounds (Gagné, Forest, Vansteenkiste, Crevier-Braud, van den Broeck, Aspeli, Bellerose, Benabou, Chemolli, Güntert, Halvari, Indiyastuti, Johnson, Molstad, Naudin, Ndao, Olafsen, Roussel, Wang & Westbye, 2015). The SDT represents a framework where human motivation can be studied, specifically through viewing an interplay between internal and external motivators that drive someone to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory stems from social constructivism, and the social context is viewed as having a great impact on behavioural self regulation as well as personality (Ryan, Kuhl & Deci, 1997). Social constructivism is a philosophical outlook on the world, which believes that meaning and knowledge is created through social interactions (Theys, 2017). Our philosophical approach will be further discussion in the method chapter of this thesis.

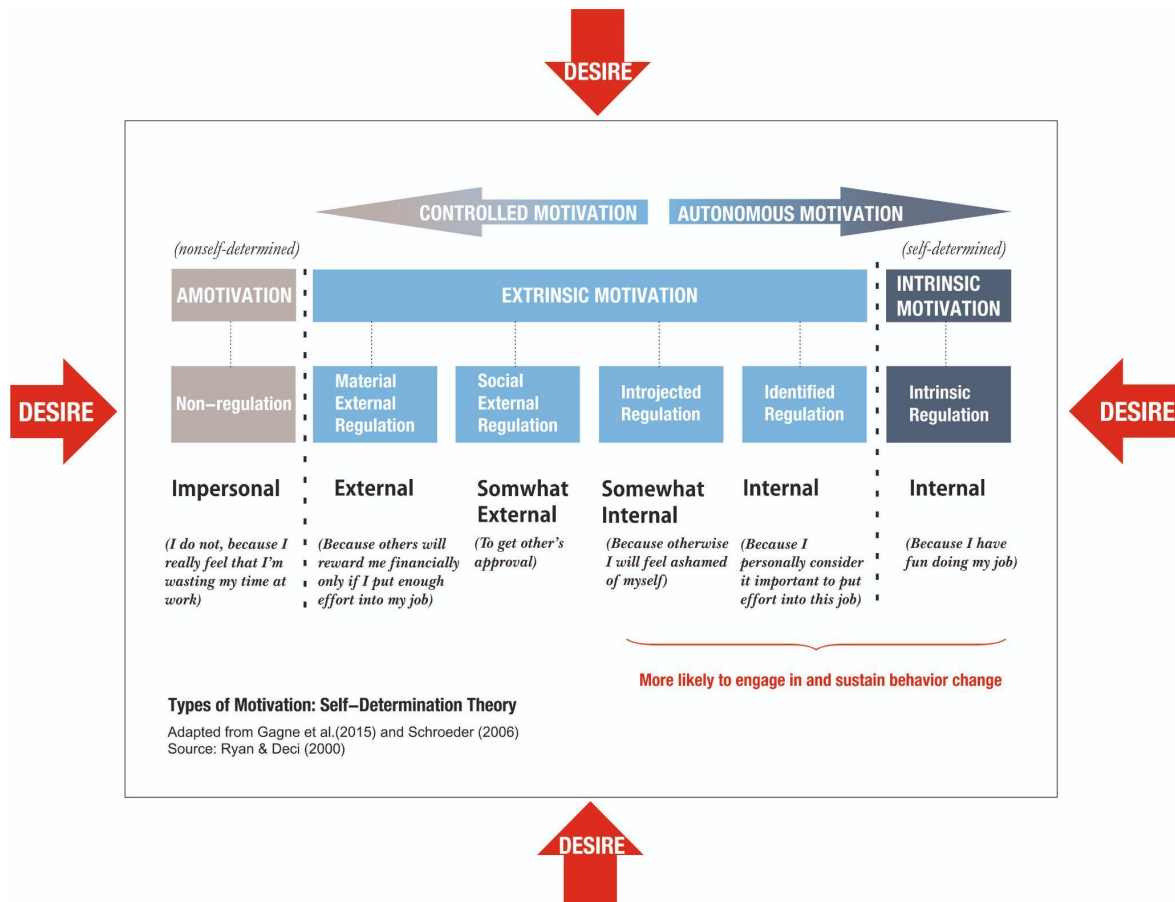


Figure 2: The Self-Determination Theory

The SDT theory is presented through three types of motivation; *Autonomous motivation* - doing something because of interest or/and meaning, *Controlled motivation* - doing something because of external rewards/punishments or ego-involvement and *Amotivation* - not having any reason to do something (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Further, SDT research on subordinates' work motivation shows six findings based on the efforts that they are allocated

to the jobs, ranging from *amotivation* to *intrinsic motivation* (Gagné, 2014). These are specified and visualised in Figure 2. They are presented from least self-determined to most self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000). An addition to the original model is the influence of desire is added, as it is a central topic in this thesis.

Researchers have observed that internal self-motivation leads to better performance and well-being than external motivation or amotivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Thereby, in the workplace, autonomous motivations are of far greater importance than controlled forms of motivations (Howard, Gagné, Morin & Van den Broeck, 2016). As an example, internal motivation has been associated with effort increasement, change embracing, affective organizational devotion and a well state of mind (Gagné, 2014). The quality of the motivation has been found to be of greater importance than the quantity (Howard et al., 2016).

Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that three psychological needs have to be met in order to reach self-motivation; relatedness, competence and autonomy. Relatedness is about a feeling of belonging and connection with other people. Competence is about a feeling of confidence in one's ability to do something. Lastly, autonomy refers to one's feeling of being in control of the happening of events. Competence and autonomy especially underline intrinsic motivation, as people have a need to feel both autonomous and competent to uphold their motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Organizations that facilitate the satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness activates employee self-motivation, encourages initiatives, conveys confidence in subordinates' abilities and provides positive feedback (Deci et al., 2001; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Gagne, Koestner & Zuckerman, 2000). Organizations need to work with these aspects consistently, or the motivation may fluctuate over time (da Motta Veiga & Gabriel, 2016).

In this research, the SDT will be used to frame the empirical study by acting as a tool which will facilitate in knowing what to look for. It will thereby be used to understand motivational processes among employees. It will facilitate in understanding what type of motivation, if any, the employees have to work towards leadership behaviour and vertical career development. Through this, it will also be possible to assume how sustainable the different types of motives to become a manager are among employees who would consider a managerial position. The model will not be tested in any way, but simply provide ground for analysis of the responses we receive. The thesis will instead foremost provide inductive conclusions of what motivations that influence employees to become managers.

This section has conceptualized and explained the connection between desires and motivation and provided a model which will be used to facilitate what to look for in the analysis process. The different parts play a role in understanding desire and motivation to become a manager among employees. However, the categorization of the motivations is of greater importance than the six individual types of motivation themselves, as the goal is to understand the answers rather than sort the answers into boxes. What desires and motivations employees have that makes them consider, or not consider, becoming a manager will be key in understanding the research question.

### **3. Methodology**

This thesis aims to gain an understanding of what desires and motivations drive employees to take on managerial positions in retail store environments. To fulfil this purpose a qualitative case study was conducted at IKEA in Sweden. The process of conducting this study, and why it was done this way, will be explained in this chapter.

#### **3.1. Philosophical approach**

A constructivist approach is applied in this research, meaning that the actors in this world create the reality we exist in as well as knowledge about it (Bryman, 2016). This view on information is well suited for the research purpose, as the perspective of others is of central importance in understanding their behaviour. Desires and motivations are highly individual states of mind and must therefore be examined through the perception of others. The experience of the employees will be defined by their view on reasons to take on managerial positions, which will be explored through data collection. The data will thereby create explanations for what desire and motivation create the want to take on managerial positions. Further, the constructivist approach is well aligned with the theoretical foundation of this paper, as the self-determination theory has social constructivist roots. As the theory is applied, the social constructivist perspective is taken, as the employees' perception of their environment is core to the study. The theory will not be tested, but will act as a facilitating tool in understanding the information in the analysis process.

#### **3.2. Research design**

The results of this study are built on a qualitative single case study, which is when one single case is studied and makes up the unit of analysis (Bryman, 2016). This type of research design is suitable when the researchers study a phenomenon while it is happening (Yin, 2018). A single case study, rather than a multiple case study, is typical for constructionist or constructivist approaches (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), which suits our constructivist position. In this case study we are able to draw conclusions about the complexity of the studied phenomenon, which are the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions.

In the studied case, the Swedish home furnishing retailer IKEA is experiencing difficulty with succession within one of their departments. IKEA presented the problem they are experiencing to us as an area they wanted to improve in, and we saw this as a research opportunity to look into what desires and motivations are behind employee's succession to managerial positions. Further, professors at Lund University have previously conducted many successful case studies at IKEA, which strengthened our confidence in IKEA as a case company. We look into IKEA's situation by investigating why they are having the difficulties they are experiencing. Further, we investigate what desires and motivations drive and/or would drive employees to wanting managerial positions. The unit of analysis is, as discussed

in the research purpose, the thoughts of employees in the form of co-workers and middle managers. The topic of analysis is desires and motivation to take on managerial roles.

The studied department is a part of IKEA Retail, which is the organization responsible for the IKEA stores and the customer meeting points. Thereby, the studied department exists across all 20 IKEA stores in Sweden as well as representation at the central office which facilitates and coordinates the stores (which is referred to as Service Office). The research does only study the employees who work in the store environment, excluding the service office, as looking at a retail store environment is the purpose of this thesis. Working in a retail store environment means that the employees work in, or in connection to, the physical stores where products are sold. The fact that the studied department exists nationwide was seen as an advantage as it would provide different experiences, rather than if all employees had been located in the same place.

This is a mostly inductive research study, as it is a qualitative research study which aims to generate new theories on desires and motivation. An inductive study is one which generates new theory from empirical findings, rather than testing existing theory (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In this thesis, it has been observed that organizations may have difficulty with employees not feeling the desire and motivation to take on managerial roles, even though they have competent employees in the organization. It has also been observed that this is seen as a problem in organizations. There is a lack of theory specifically on employees' desire and motivation to take on managerial positions. Thereby, existing theory on desire and motivation will not be tested in this thesis, but rather work as a guide in knowing what to look for. The self-determination theory will, as explained in the literature review, be the framework used to frame this study. Through exploring employee experiences, this thesis will expand existing research within leadership by contributing with further conclusions and general principles. It will also connect leadership research with employer branding as we explore what attracts employees to a higher level in the organization.

Yin (2018) explains that case study designs do not generate statistical generalizability, and can thereby not be viewed as absolute facts. Instead, an analytical generalizability is provided, where the general principles can be used in an analytical sense. Therefore, the aim with this research is not to find a definite answer, but rather to create a theoretical explanation of employees' desires and motivation to become managers.

### 3.3. Sampling and data collection

To fulfil the purpose of the study, there was a need to gather information about employees' thoughts and perceptions on desires and motivations to become managers. Specifically, it was of importance to gain data about what the employees find important in order to consider a managerial role. To do so, it was of interest to discover what made the roles desirable already, what made them not desirable and what the organization could do to make them more desirable. Further, it was of importance to understand what motivation, if any, employees experienced towards wanting to become a manager and how they would feel more motivated.

Through this, it was possible to draw conclusions about what desires and motivations are behind employees' succession to managerial positions. As the theory used in this thesis considers desires to influence motivation, the topics of analysis are viewed as interrelated. In addition to this, they are also studied independently.

As this is a case study, the population from which this data could be delivered consist of floor-employees (which in this study will be referred to as co-workers) as well as the lowest managerial level (which in this study is referred to as the middle management) within the studied department at IKEA (~350 people). The IKEA management provided a full contact list of the department including names, work roles and emails. The top management does not have much development opportunity in the department and is therefore not a part of the studied population. The middle management has the opportunity to develop further, and can also contribute with experiences in a leadership role that works closely with the co-workers. Thereby, they can contribute with valuable experiences from two perspectives, the co-worker perspective and the managerial perspective, which can help us understand the big picture. By providing a managerial perspective, they can share valuable insights which may help understand the co-workers' answers further. Thereby, through understanding the employee and the manager perspective, it will be possible to draw conclusions about what desires and motivations make employees want to become managers.

### 3.3.1. Questionnaires

The data collection was divided into two stages. In the first stage, questionnaires of qualitative nature were sent out to all the co-workers (see Appendix 1) and the middle management (see Appendix 2). After about a week, a reminder was sent out. 80 co-workers and 31 middle managers responded to the questionnaires, which is a response rate of about 32%. The questionnaire was mainly sent out for saturation purposes, which means that all information needed to get a full understanding had been collected (Bryman, 2016). While it did not provide us with in-depth information, it did give us a broad picture of the situation and insights which may have been undiscovered otherwise. That way it was possible to assume that we had covered all topics of interest at the end of the research process.

Two different questionnaires were sent out via email, as there was a need to alter the questions to fit either co-workers or middle managers. However, they were very similar. The questions were based on the research purpose and the literature review. The questionnaires consisted of three yes/no questions regarding if they knew how to grow in IKEA, and if they wanted to. Following this, questions with written answers were asked. These questions concerned the managerial role at IKEA, how IKEA could make managerial roles more attractive, what it is like working at IKEA and the current leadership. In addition to this, the middle managers were asked if they encourage their employees to take part in leadership and how. All of these questions were, as previously mentioned, asked to get an overview of the situation and to understand some main themes which may be of importance when conducting the interviews. The goal was thereby mainly to facilitate future data collection and qualitative analysis as well as to ensure saturation. With that being said, the answers were also used in

the analysis and as a part of the results to the extent which was beneficial to answer the research question.

### 3.3.2. Interviews

In the second stage of data collection, nine in-depth interviews were held. Each interview took about one hour. Five of the participants were co-workers and four were middle managers. The interviews were held to gain qualitative knowledge on a deeper level than the questionnaires could provide alone. The topics discussed were of the same nature as the questionnaires, but in this stage it was possible to gain a deeper understanding of what desires and motivations are behind employees' succession to managerial positions.

The sampling was done through dividing the whole population into store location and work role category. There were four types of work role categories including the group of middle managers. The interviewees who contributed in the study are all from different locations and the co-workers are distributed between the different work role categories. The sample was, within the two strata, chosen at random and the people were requested to partake in an interview via email. This sampling method can be referred to as stratified random sampling (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) and was used as the two strata were the only knowledge we had about the employees which we found could influence the answers. We received some rejections, in which cases we chose another person at random who was asked to partake in an interview. We did not know who any of the interviewees were prior to the interview. For anonymization purposes the interviewees are not referred to by their real names, but by pseudonyms. The amount of interviews conducted was based on when we could identify recurring themes between the interviews and when we recognized that new information was unlikely to be provided in future interviews.

The interviews were of a guided but open nature, which can be defined as a semi structured interview (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). This type of interview has the advantage of structure, but allows a casual environment that accommodates the social interaction between interviewee and interviewers (Bryman, 2016). Further, it allows for laddering, a technique which obtains elaboration of information through follow-up questions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

The interview questions were formulated with support of the questionnaire answers as well as the literature review. An interview guide was followed in the interviews to keep a semi-structure (see Appendix 3). The interview guide was divided into four sections. The last section was questions aimed only at the middle managers, and were therefore not asked to the co-workers. All other questions were aimed to suit all interviewees. The last section was added to the guide in order to get a managerial view on how the organization works with developing and motivating their employees. This facilitated in understanding the organization as a whole, which in turn helped us understand the co-workers' answers.



The first four sections of the interview guide were designed to suit both co-workers and middle managers. The first section concerned the managerial role at IKEA and included questions regarding becoming a formal manager. The second section touched upon leadership and the practices of managing. The purpose of these questions was to understand how the interviewees view themselves in connection to leadership, as well as their views on performing leadership tasks. The third section concerned what it is like working at IKEA, and was aimed towards understanding the context and the work practices. This was to understand if the context was facilitating employee motivation towards growth and what the internal employer brand was like. Lastly, the fourth section included questions about the current management. These questions were designed to facilitate understanding of the current leadership style as well as the leadership brand. Further, they were included to contribute to understanding how facilitating the managers are towards motivating employee growth.

All interview questions were asked with the intent to understand employees' desires and motivations towards becoming managers. The literature review and the self-determination theory were used as an outline for these questions, not with the intent of testing the theories but to facilitate in what to look for. Employees' desires and motivations to take on managerial roles was the main focus. As the case organization had expressed difficulty in attracting employees to managerial roles, it also opened up for an opportunity to explore what employees were missing in the managerial job offering. By looking into these topics, it was possible to draw conclusions about what desires and motivations influence employees' succession to managerial positions.

The virus Covid-19 affected the data collection, as it limited how the interviews could be conducted. To ensure the safety of all participants we were not able to meet in person. Instead, they were held via the video call tool Zoom. Video call allowed for the ability to see each other, which made it a good substitute for in person interviews. The interviews were, with permission, recorded in order to facilitate the transcription and analysis of the material.

### 3.4. Analysis of data

The data analysis was done through sorting, reducing and arguing as described by Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018). This is a thematic way of handling qualitative material. Before the analysis, all the interviews were transcribed. The questionnaire answers were directly delivered to us through writing. We then read through the material in order to familiarize ourselves with the material we were working with before starting the analysis.

In line with Rennstam and Wästerfors' (2018) method of analysis, the analysis started by sorting the material into what people were talking about and how they talked about it, which in practice meant to reduce the transcripts to themes and sentences. These words and sentences were then divided into frequently talked about categories as we discovered relationships between different themes. The material was re-visited multiple times in order to get to know the material on a deep level and to catch details of importance. This also made it possible to re-sort material when needed. To emphasize how the themes were discussed,

central quotes were picked out. The themes were also sorted into an order that made logical sense for understanding the analysis, starting with the least complex to the most complex themes.

After the material was sorted, we reduced the themes to a manageable amount. The material collected was very rich, and all aspects discovered could not be included in the thesis. No themes were deleted, but stored away in case there was a need to revisit them. The themes kept in the thesis are the ones highlighting this study, as they were found to be of central importance in answering the research question. After this, we argued for the analyzed material, which is what is presented in the analysis of this thesis.

### 3.5. Quality criteria

Throughout the research process we evaluated the quality of our work. This was done to ensure trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. Through a constant evaluation of the work, the quality of the study was secured and our own biases were avoided to the highest extent possible.

The literature used in this study was evaluated carefully. The research relies on previous research which is previously cited, peer-reviewed and published in trustworthy publications. Research which did not live up to these criteria was carefully evaluated and used to a limited extent. If we did not have previous knowledge of the publication in which the research was published, we used the tool NSD to ensure that the publications were of high quality. NSD is an official Norwegian register over research publications (NSD, n.d.). The search tools Scopus and LubSerach by Lund University were used to research new articles. Both of the search engines were previously recommended by the university.

Some books and practitioner publications were also used in the literature review process. These were chosen with great carefullity. Books used were evaluated to be of high standard as they relied on and drew conclusions from previous research. The books were mainly used for definitions and theoretical support. Practitioner articles were used to a limited extent. These were used to bring light to discussions which were limited in research. Further, when necessary, it is clarified in the text which information that comes from such publications.

The quality of the work was further evaluated as the study was designed. The design is the foundation of the research and must therefore be suitable for the research purpose. As the research took place in Sweden, there was a language barrier to consider in order to keep high quality. One of the authors of this thesis is native Swedish and one is not. The participants from IKEA are mostly Swedish, but with some exceptions. For the questionnaires we opted for providing the questions in both Swedish and English. The respondents were then able to choose which language to answer in. In order for things to not get lost in translation, the Swedish author held the main responsibility for analysis of the Swedish answers and translation to English. The English answers were directly analyzed in English. The interviews were all conducted and analyzed in English, as this it was considered important that both

authors fully understood the language spoken. This was of greater importance for the interviews, as it is the main body of information which is used in the analysis. However, the interviewees were informed that one person understood Swedish and that they were able to get assistance with the language if they struggled in any way. This way, the potential language barrier was eliminated to the greatest extent possible.

As the research was conducted we put an emphasis on having a reflexive approach, meaning that we constantly evaluated how we as researchers could potentially influence the thesis (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley, 2008). This way, it was possible to reflect on our own biases. This approach puts the responses and collected material in focus, resulting in conclusions which are authentic and reliable.

Lastly, there was a constant evaluation that there was an alignment between the purpose of the study and other written parts. By evaluating that the introduction, literature review, theoretical foundation, interview/questionnaire questions, empirical findings, analysis and conclusions were aligned with the research purpose, we were able to assume that the end results were valid.

### 3.6. Ethical considerations

Good ethics are of great importance in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Thereby, an endeavor towards ethical approaches was continuously held. The reason for this was to protect both the integrity of the research community as well as the research participants and IKEA. We evaluate the study to be of a medium-high ethical risk, as the subject may be considered to be of sensitive nature. Thus, in order to conduct responsible research, this was a high priority. It was considered sensitive as it could possibly affect people's work situation. If sensitive information leaked, it could both affect people's work opportunities and their work relationships. Further, if we acted in an inappropriate manner, it could reflect badly on IKEA as a brand as the research was to be presented to IKEA management.

We had consent from Lund University to conduct this research as a part of our master education. We also had permission from IKEA to explore their business. The people who participated in the questionnaires were informed about what the participation meant in the beginning of the question form (see Appendix 1 and 2). It was specified that they agreed to the terms by filling out the form. The people who participated in the interviews all signed a consent form (see Appendix 4) before the interviews were held. Both the questionnaire text and the consent form were written in a simple way to ensure understandability and transparency. It included the purpose of the study, information about the research procedure, terms of anonymity and voluntary participation. They were also informed that they had the right to not answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time. Lastly, they were informed that the information was to be used for research purposes only, but that the final product was to be shared with IKEA. This information was also repeated verbally at the start of the interview.

In order to ensure anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms are used throughout the research. The used pseudonyms are Taylor, Morgan, Charlie, Alex, Robin, Kim, Jordan, Billie and Quinn. As gender is not of importance in this thesis, the names are gender neutral and the pronouns they/them are used instead of he and she. The quotes selected for the research result were carefully evaluated not to give away details that could directly tie them to the identity of a person.

### 3.7. Method discussion

By applying the method of this study, the data needed for the research purpose was successfully delivered. The quality criteria which were adapted were taken into consideration and found valuable as they contributed to a successful process. In other words, the research was successfully conducted in accordance with the described method.

The biggest risk of this study is the influence IKEA as a company may have had on the research. As we studied IKEA specifically, with their people and culture department and the management as contact people, employees' answers may have been affected. There may have been a worry that their answers were going to affect their work. We made it a top priority to work with our ethical considerations and to ensure the employees' anonymity. However, despite our efforts, there was no way to ensure that the employees found us trustworthy enough to be completely honest in their answers. In spite of this, the data collection was assessed to be successful and rich answers were provided both in the questionnaires and the interviews. Thereby, with the risks considered, the final conclusions are most likely true to reality.

The connection with IKEA also limited our freedom to ask questions to some degree. For example, questions about private life and children may have come off as inappropriate. This is particularly important as we operate in a Swedish culture, where there are many social rules (Jakobsen & Käck, 2019) and even laws (SFS, 2008:567) concerning how much an employer can consider one's private and family life in employment. Therefore, we opted for not asking such questions directly. If we had, people may have felt attacked, which was a situation we wanted to avoid. Instead, we asked more open questions, where the interviewee had the ability to lead the conversation in such directions if desired. Had we instead done this study independently, and not in connection with a particular organization, it would have provided us with more freedom to ask questions as some questions would have been less inappropriate in such a situation.

The fact that this is a single case study also needs to be considered as an influence on the research findings. Case studies are frequently accused of lack of rigour, as well as for being context-dependent and biased (Yin, 1984). Eisenhard (1991) argues for using a multiple-case study method instead. She argues that multiple case studies offer more rigor, which leads to the researcher confirming, disconfirming or building upon existing theories by better capturing the complexity of phenomena and making them more generalizable than single

cases could. However, Dyer and Wilkins (1991) criticises this approach, by stating that single cases are superior to multiple cases in creating high-quality theory. Multiple-case methods focus on general constructs, and not on the context. This results in a focus on the surface rather than on the deep social dynamics. Flyvbjerg (2006) supports Dyer and Wilkins' point of view by claiming that many arguments against single cases are misconceptions. Furthermore, Yin (1984) argues that the single case study is conducted in the context of its use, which does not only tell good stories that have theoretical importance, but go deeper into the dynamics of a research study, becoming much more credible, coherent and memorable.

Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that social science of quality is driven by the problem, rather than the methodology. Thereby, it employs the methods that best help answer the problem at hand. This thesis examines a complex problem which had not yet been explored. It was also not possible to conduct this study among any group, as it may not have reflected on the reasons why people do not become managers, which is an important dimension in understanding why people do. Thereby, we found the single-case study to be most suitable. By acquiring in depth insights, it was possible to generate new theories which can be further researched with a variety of research methods. The biggest challenge of using a single-case study design was that the information collected was very rich. It was therefore important to constantly evaluate which information was relevant for the research purpose. To not let our own biases influence the conclusions, the reflexive approach and the constant evaluation of the quality was of central importance. In the end, the single-case study design was found to be an appropriate method, as it made it possible to understand the case organization as a whole on a deep level, which resulted in a deeper understanding of the collected material.

The method of using questionnaires for saturation purposes was also found to be a successful strategy. Although the interviews provided good insights on their own, the questionnaires provided assurance in ending the data collection process. Further, it provided insights which were useful in the presentation of the result.

Zoom was found to be a suitable option instead of meeting in person. In general it worked very well, as we were able to see each other on video. As Covid-19 had been affecting society for over a year at the time of data collection, people were used to and seemed comfortable with video calls. There was one instance where technical problems occurred. Unfortunately this took away time from the interview, but in combination with the other interviews it was still a valuable interview which provided new insights. Other than limiting the ability to meet in person, the spread of Covid-19 had very little effect on this research. However, we had to be careful in making sure that the information provided in interviews and questionnaires was not influenced by the outbreak of the virus. As it is seen as a special time for all of society, we recognized the risk in Covid-19 influencing answers. We handled this by asking if explained situations and opinions were the same before Covid-19 and if it was likely to be the same after. Some even brought this up on their own. In the presented result, information directly connected to Covid-19 is excluded.

## 4. Empirical findings

In this chapter the findings of the data collection will be presented. Initially this analysis focuses on aspects of IKEA's succession strategy which employees brought up in connection to their desires and motivations to become a manager, as the succession plan plays a vital part in the success of organizational succession (Groves, 2007). Following, the core of the research problem is presented; the desires and motivations behind wanting to become a manager. However, we also discovered factors which can make people reluctant and/or unmotivated to become managers, unless the managerial role aligns with these factors. These are presented under *4.4. Factors leading to reluctance and amotivation*.

### 4.1 The leadership development process

In the literature reviewed it was discussed that successful succession requires an established, but flexible, plan (Groves, 2007) which is aligned with the business strategy (Schwartz, 2011). Thereby, this part of the analysis will highlight aspects of IKEA's succession strategy and talent management which employees brought up in connection to their desires and motivations to become a manager.

#### 4.1.1. Would you consider becoming a manager?

Multiple interviewees and questionnaire respondents expressed that IKEA is having difficulty with succession because few co-workers would consider becoming a manager. Middle manager Robin expressed that "they don't want to take more responsibility. 'I like my job, I want to stay here '". Likewise, Kim expressed that "some of them, or the majority of them are... They're not interested in taking part in leadership practices".

In spite of these perceptions, 30,0% of co-workers would according to the questionnaire consider taking on a managerial position within a year, and 58,8% would consider it in 1-5 years (see Appendix 5). Furthermore, 41,9% of middle managers would consider taking on a higher managerial position within a year, and 77,4% would consider it in 1-5 years (see Appendix 6). Reflecting these numbers, multiple interviewed co-workers expressed an interest in managerial positions, one of them being Jordan. They express that there are several people who want to become managers, but that it rarely happens.

Very few people that I've worked with have been moved up so therefore there are no discussions because you're talking about what are their pluses or minuses. We don't talk about this because nobody is ever moved up, really. (...) There are several that want to be moved up there, but it's not really happening. Usually if they are moved up, it's when they apply for another store.

This shows that the problem the case organization is having in attracting employees to managerial positions does not stem from a group of people not wanting to become managers, as some respondents suggested.

#### 4.1.2. An emphasis on values

According to the IKEA website (IKEA, n.d.), the values of IKEA emphasises togetherness, inclusion and the belief that everyone has something to offer. They also believe in strengthening people through responsibility, trust, positivity and inspiration. Leadership is viewed as a way of working, rather than a management role, and values are of greater importance than competence and experience. Once in the organization, there is a constant strive towards development.

Morgan, who is a co-worker, indicated that IKEA works with leadership according to their values by saying that “I really think they are always striving to find new leaders everywhere. And they are seeing the potential leaders very early in... when people are here they can. They can be potential leaders within a couple of years”. Middle manager Robin added to this way of working by explaining that they as a manager always give employees a chance to try out their leadership abilities, regardless if they see leadership potential in the person or not. They explain that “if someone thinks they can do more and grow, we are open to listen, try and we never say no just because I think you are not good. It is something we have to discover together”.

#### 4.1.3. When values and practices do not align

When established IKEA values are not followed in connection to leadership development the employees may find themselves demotivated. Talking about the IKEA management Charlie said that “they're really people driven in the sense that they are... They really care about people, but I would not say that they're people driven in the sense of taking the time to develop people”. What Charlie experiences does not align with the IKEA values, as a part of their values is to constantly develop (IKEA, n.d.).

Along with too little employee development, employees may be expected to take on a leadership role within a short time once they are involved in any type of leadership development. They may even be expected to do so within a different part of IKEA. This can be demotivating as they do not feel like they can explore leadership without expectations to move somewhere they may not want to go. One questionnaire respondent explained that “When I applied to [a leadership program] the first time I got to hear that I had to be prepared to go to [another department] within a year in order to get accepted”.

#### 4.1.4. “All of your development is only depending on your closest manager”

Within IKEA, the closest manager carries the responsibility of developing employees. According to Jordan, “all your development is only depending on your closest manager ... If they want to work with it or not. So you have to have a personal connection to this manager, otherwise you're pretty blocked”. Although this is, middle managers do not get much support in developing people. Middle manager Taylor argued that “we are thinking a lot and learning a lot about the business, but not so much about how to lead and develop people”. This has

resulted in a very mixed view on the management, and the development of new managers, across respondents.

If a manager does not actively work with development, employees have to take responsibility for their own development. Co-worker Quinn experiences this with their manager, which has created an environment where people who “scream” for managerial positions will likely get them. Along with this, the organization is missing out on competent employees with high potential who are not as vocal about wanting to develop. Quinn has also experienced being laughed at for expressing that they would consider becoming a manager, as they were not viewed as a person who would become a manager. In contrast, middle manager Billie argued that co-workers need to be responsible for their own growth. However, they also argued that the manager needs to support them in their efforts.

[The managers] are opening the door for you to think about what you want to... but it's your ambition in the future, we always have that in our development that we have the opportunity to grow, but it's also a lot about you that you need to push your way through it.

#### 4.1.5. “You hire your friends sort of and people that look like you”

Along with being in charge of leadership development, managers at IKEA are also responsible for recruiting the new managers. Quinn explains that how involved the People and Culture/Human Resource department is depends on the store, and explained that HR are involved “a little, depending on who's in People and Culture and how strong the vision is at the store at the time”.

In the questionnaire, one answer read that “the diversity is extremely poor, and many have the same type of background, education etc. Many managerial positions are recruited with people who are the same as the last”. In turn, this affects employees’ views on the management as well as their motivation for becoming a manager. One questionnaire respondent expressed that the management “feels more like a friends club than the right competence in the right place”, which indicates that becoming a manager is more about being accepted as a part of a social group rather than an effort towards performing a job.

## 4.2. Desires to become a manager

In this section, the findings concerning the desires behind employees’ succession to managerial positions will be presented.

### 4.2.1. Self-development

A desire for self-development can lay behind employees’ succession to managerial positions. Robin argues that what attracts them to a managerial role is what the position can bring them in terms of self-improvement, rather than a higher salary.



It has to be the position that attracts me. If the position is really interesting and I understand, and like... If I can bring my experience, my knowledge and do my part in this position for me, that's the best improvement for going this direction. It is not the money.

Co-worker Morgan is not interested in becoming a manager today, but would consider it in the future. They argue that they like their job today, but may want to develop themselves in the future. At the same time, they can see themselves working for IKEA for a long time. If they end up doing so, they may want to develop their career and become a manager. Morgan expressed that “I like to work with IKEA, and if I want to develop all my skills and knowledge within the company, if I want to work here for many, many years, maybe that's like (...) a working force”.

#### 4.2.2. “I have a passion for people”

Co-worker Charlie explains that one of the reasons behind them wanting to become a manager is “being a mentor and [sharing] my competence and knowledge with the whole team and not just people that I work with in the project in that particular time”. Co-worker Alex expressed similar thoughts, referring to their team as lovely.

Also it's a really lovely team we're having so being able to be a part of that group and making them so like their job and moving forward together, I think there's some things that you want to do.

#### 4.2.3. Involvement in strategic business

Besides developing oneself and working with people, the strategic business aspect of the managerial job is desirable. Middle manager Kim argued that “I think it's attractive that the manager at IKEA gets a lot of both the responsibility and also a lot of freedom”.

Middle manager Billie believes that by improving the business further, the managerial roles can become even more desirable. They argued that “I think it's a lot about time management and managers' sharing the task in the store. And if you do it in a good way, and get more organized, I think we can wake up that interest even more”.

Along with being in charge of business questions comes power to make change and decisions, which can be an attractive attribute for employees. Co-worker Charlie explained that they feel like they do not have the ability to influence change in the organization as a co-worker, even though they have a strong desire to do so. Thereby, by becoming a manager, they would be able to influence.

I think for me, it's being able to, as we, as we just talked about to actually feel like I could influence change, like I find that really disappointing that a coworker that's motivated to change the way that people work, and make things more efficient and has good ideas, doesn't feel like they can make a positive impact.

Co-worker Alex also has a desire to change things, but they are interested in changing the managerial role itself. They believe that the way that they are working right now is not sustainable, and they have a desire to change it.

That's the way we're thinking that you know shouldn't, shouldn't be [talking about stress among managers], but I think it doesn't have to be that way (...) Yeah, so I think it's interesting because it's it's I don't think it has to be that way. It will also depend on who's running the show.

### 4.3. Motivations to become a manager

In this section, the findings concerning the motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions will be presented.

#### 4.3.1. "It's more about motivating people to take the next step"

That the organization puts resources into supporting leadership development can contribute to motivation. Billie argued that although there are great opportunities to develop and become a manager in the studied department, the organization does not motivate the employees enough.

We have a really good development for becoming a leader in the company for sure. But it's more about motivating people and that they want to take it... it's more about that. I think what is struggling today is that people are a bit afraid to take the next step.

Further, Billie argued that the resources they provide for development are much more limited than when they became a manager. They explained that different factors, including but not limited to Covid-19, have contributed to budget cuts which have affected leadership development. Thereby, the support which motivated Billie to become a manager does not exist today.

I think when I became a leader, I had a lot of support, I had a lot of support from the store, both in budget and support and training. And, and yeah, I guess, good. I had a good way. But I think it's more limited today.

#### 4.3.2. "I love my work"

When asked what motivates you to develop, middle manager Taylor answered "I mean I love my work". Further, middle manager Kim argued that liking the company was a motivation factor for them. They believe IKEA's culture is something to be proud of.

I think a big part of working for IKEA is the culture and how we have it, and how we are acting towards each other. It's a supportive work environment and we have a lot of fun. I'm really... I'm proud of the company and I have a lot of similar kinds of values with the company.

### 4.3.3. “I could do well in the leadership role”

Robin argued that they feel motivated “if I can bring my experience, my knowledge and do my part in this position”. This shows the need to feel capable in the new challenge. Co-worker Alex explained that they had been offered an informal leadership opportunity once, which changed their perspective on leadership. This made them interested in the leadership role. Now they see themselves becoming a manager in the future.

I think my manager saw that that I could do well in the leadership role and I thought that was interesting and I did this training to find out you know what kind of leadership style I have and how do I talk and you know, everyone is so different 'cause I thought like a leader, a boss you know it's the one like the old man working at the bank with a costume on and you know like this so, but it's also very IKEA, they still preferably not that type of leader that should be.

These answers show two aspects that need to be present in order to feel confident in one's ability to become a manager; having the right knowledge and being a leadership type. Both of these should be considered, as they both are viewed as motivating states of mind.

### 4.3.4. Feeling important to the company

Jordan argued that “I think the motivation would be to be heard”. This reflects a feeling of being listened to and feeling important in the company. Similarly, Robin finds that feeling important and appreciated is what motivates them to develop.

I have to feel a part of the project or feel I'm important for the company, and they trust and appreciate what I do for them. This is really important because if you don't feel appreciated or considered by the company... your motivation goes down early.

Charlie explained that although they feel empowered to take initiatives, they find that their ideas are not heard and used. This is something which they find demotivating.

IKEA has a culture of empowering people and making you feel like you have a voice. And I felt empowered to be able to say things, but I don't feel like any of my desires for change or input was used in those particular instances.

This shows the importance of listening to and implementing employees' efforts and ideas in order to make them feel truly heard.

## 4.4. Factors leading to reluctance and amotivation

Even though employees have strong desires and motivations to become managers, there may still be other factors present which makes people reluctant and/or unmotivated to work towards these positions. Thus, people have desires which need to be aligned with the managerial position in order to uphold the desires and motivations to become a manager among employees.

#### 4.4.1. “Everybody does so much more than is written on paper”

The first factor uncovered, which may lead to reluctance and amotivation unless aligned with the managerial position, is when the job is not corresponding to the managerial job description. A job description is a document which covers what the person who fills a position is expected to do and be responsible for, as well as which knowledge, characteristics and skills are required (BDC, n.d.). Co-worker Alex said that “if I see the role description the manager roles it sounds more fun [than it seems in reality]”.

If the job performed differs from the job description, it may create a reluctance towards the managerial role. Jordan argued that the role description could be updated with clear expectations which include all the assignments and responsibilities that are performed in the workplace.

We've had discussions about that because it's one part that is written, but everybody does so much more and has more responsibilities that are written on paper (...) I think that whenever you get some additional responsibility, it should be written in the contract.

Co-workers Alex and Charlie both argued that although they understand that managers sometimes have to help with store business, it is frustrating that time is taken away from the team and the department in order to make things work. Alex also argues that it is strange that managers, the people with the highest paycheck, are the ones doing certain tasks.

The manager could be out all day just packing in product for the customers and we should of course do it, but in my point of view, I think we should just, it's frustrating that we can't really hire people, but I think we should just if we need people to do this type of service we should just hire people to do that, so not the managers being the ones with the absolute highest paycheck do work that you know anyone could

In the questionnaire, one co-worker answered that whatever is in the job description should be the primary job in order for the managerial positions to become more desirable.

Let the role description's work tasks be the primary work. In periods managers will run and do so many extra tasks such as unpacking bags, putting up signs, doing tasks we don't have the hours to put co-workers to do which makes that the most expensive people needed to make the rest of the personnel to feel good and to make the functions work aren't available for the group.

Another co-worker answered that in order for the managerial role to be more desirable, the organization needs to be more honest in the recruitment of managers. They argued that “to work as a manager in a warehouse is a much tougher job than you make it out to be”. Likewise, Taylor reflects on the necessity of a clear job description in recruitment. They argue that it is necessary in order to avoid feeling pressured as well as getting extra work that comes along with the role and activities that are not exemplified in the job description.

It needs to be clear what kind of expectations you have when you are recruiting, it doesn't matter matter if it's a coworker, if it's a manager or if it's a [department] manager and the expectations could be clear what really is expected of you in this role and what kind of working hours and what kind of a general store support is expected of you.

#### 4.4.2. "It's not okay that we have so many managers being stressed..."

This case study uncovered that employees will likely not feel like the new role is desirable if it comes with an unmanageable workload and/or too much stress, even though other aspects of the job are interesting to them. Alex argued that the workload and stress are the sole reasons not to want to become a manager.

I think it's kind of a hard pressure coming from above and so I think absolutely that's the reason why you don't want to do the manager role, because it's a lot of things that it doesn't feel like it's so much fun and it's being stressful and you have to do more weekends and and doing this other work, things that aren't connected to the (...) work description.

Morgan had similar arguments and said that a managerial job with a lot of stress takes away the fun of the job.

I see that my manager has a lot of work, anything I, I can see that maybe it doesn't get any smaller, it just becomes more and more responsibility. Maybe that there has to be some kind of stop, where a person maybe can't take more responsibility. Because we're only humans, everybody. So I mean, it has to be a human... The responsibility you take, I think that you need to have fun at work and if you're drowning in the job, it may not be as fun anymore.

In the questionnaires, one co-worker argued that the workload of the group as a whole also plays a role in the desirability of the managerial position. As the manager has the responsibility for the people in the group, they believe this to affect them as well.

I experience that a lot of employees are stressed foremost because of high workload. In other words too high workload between too few co-workers (generally). This is for me a point that makes a managerial position less attractive as I experience that I would have to perform magic with my knees to keep a group in a good mood.

Middle manager Kim argued that they believe that managers who do work weekends signal to the other managers that they need to work as much as them. Along with this, Kim explained that it is up to themselves that they keep a good balance between private life and work life.

It's a lot up to, to me, myself, that I have this balance. Because since we're open all the time, and you're working some weekends and evenings and stuff, you really need to make sure that you are taking your days off and when I'm working evenings, I'm not here early in the morning those days.

Although it is up to each person to keep their own work-life balance, co-worker Quinn argues that it is possible to keep a work-life balance at IKEA, as the organization respects employees' private life. They say that "there can be a heavy, heavy workload, but it's still very respected that you have a private life and all that". However, the lack of support can still affect the loyalty to the organization, as employees may experience that they are not cared for. In the questionnaire one manager argued that "the support ... can look good on the outside but many are individualist still. I guess IKEA will only bring in a new one, once you hit the wall..?". As feeling important for the organization was one of the main findings that affected motivation to become a manager, a feeling that the employer does not care for one's well-being could potentially lead to amotivation.

#### 4.4.3. Fair pay for the job done

The interview and questionnaire answers indicate that the salary provided for the managers within the studied department may not live up to a basic salary according to the employees. In the questionnaires, one middle manager answered that "Salary is something we seldom talk about at IKEA but it is absolutely a contributing factor, especially when co-workers sometimes earn as much or sometimes more than managers counting in *inconvenient working hours*". Inconvenient working hours refers to hours where co-workers get paid extra for their overtime. Managers are on a different contract than co-workers, which does not allow for paid overtime.

The salary in comparison to the workload and responsibility is a common comparison in the interview and questionnaire answers. Quinn argued that "it's more work than getting paid". Other answers indicated that this makes them question becoming a manager. Some, including managers, also compared it to other parts of IKEA. One questionnaire answer argued that the salary is comical in comparison to other IKEA departments.

The compensation (the salary) in a warehouse is comical in comparison to other departments in IKEA. I have in the last year been offered to a job on the same level as my co-workers' jobs (in other words one without responsibility for personnel or a leadership role at all) in another part of IKEA (not retail) with about 20.000[SEK] more a month than I have today as a manager in a warehouse.

#### 4.4.4. Better opportunities than being a manager in a store

Charlie provided an all rounded insight where they believed the comparison to other parts of IKEA may be the reason the department is having trouble attracting and retaining managers. They find that IKEA in Sweden offers many leadership opportunities which have better salary, better working hours and less stress than the managerial role within the store. Thereby, they find that people who are interested in leadership probably are more likely to choose another leadership position where people's desires regarding these aspects better align with the working conditions.

There are so many more opportunities in Sweden, the country... To sort of bypass being a store manager than in any other country in the IKEA world, because there are so many other places where you can get this leadership feeling or position without having to do it in store, like the Service Office, there's Stockholm, there's Älmhult... Like there's so many other parts of IKEA to even work at, so I think that's also probably part of why they're like, oh, we can't get managers in Sweden. It's really hard for turnover in the store... It's because there are so many other places that people with potential that want to develop themselves can like to move into instead of having to like being a store manager.

#### 4.4.5. Relocation

If a managerial role requires relocation, it may create reluctance among employees. However, most of the interviewees were open to the idea of relocating at the right time for the right job. Charlie said that “I would have to have that conversation with my spouse (...), but I’m open to relocation in general”. Quinn argued that possibility for relocation would depend on the life situation. They said that “it depends on where in life you are and how my life was at that time so... It’s life and you'll get a family and children”. Similarly, Kim argued that practicalities and the family had to be considered

It's a lot of practical things that need to be in place as well. I have a family and kids and stuff. So it's not... It's not that I don't want to take a relocation, but some might be possible.

Alex argued that another store in Sweden would not be able to offer a better life than their current location, as they have their friends living closeby today. They would however consider moving to the service office or to another country, as that sounds like an exciting opportunity to them.

Uh, not really! Could be the Service Office... if it's a role there that sounds exciting, of course. I'm more interested in trying out, you know, something really, really different, because working in [different cities] is not that exciting. I could as well just live in [my current city] then because I have my friends here in and in [one other city] it's not that different but in another country you get, you know, to learn so much more and how they live there.

#### 4.4.6. “I don’t think maybe I sell the job as too fun”

In the questionnaire, one co-worker expressed that “the managers are under a very heavy workload and don’t feel super well which isn’t good marketing for upcoming managers either”. Many others expressed similar statements, including middle manager Taylor who expressed that “I don't think maybe I sell the job as too fun”. This seems to be the reason as to why many do not want to become a manager within the studied case; they see their manager in their daily work and do not desire to be in their shoes. In other words, even though employees have the desire and motivation to become a manager in theory, they may question themselves if their managers portrays the role as something which does not align with their idea of what a manager is.

When an employee's manager portrays their role as something which is different from how an employee would imagine it, it creates a reluctance to become a manager. Morgan, who would consider a managerial position, expressed this.

I can see that my manager is drowning in work. So that is one reason that I shouldn't want to become a leader ... I think that is a lot of pressure. So I think that the pressure and a lot of work can make me want to just stay as a co-worker.

The stress is the biggest thing negatively affecting the image of the leadership group at IKEA. Along with this comes, as previously discussed, a distance from the co-workers and a lot of time in meetings and running store business. According to Alex, "if you look at the calendar [the manager] could have like 3 meetings at 8:00 o'clock and [they're] one person". The respondents expressed a desire to do the job as it is portrayed in the job description, which includes more time coaching and working with co-workers than most managers do in reality. Further, employees have noticed that managers get less and less power to make decisions. One questionnaire respondent said that "you get stuck between co-workers and higher managers". As decision power is one of the most driving desires among employees, this change threatens the want to become a manager further.



## 5. Analysis

The empirical findings revealed desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions. Further, a number of factors were found to create reluctance to become a manager, despite desires and motivation being present. While some findings are purely inductive, and thereby a new contribution to theory, other findings have support in previous research. These findings will be further discussed in this analysis.

### 5.1. Inductive findings and literature support

The findings of this thesis, and whether they have support in previous literature or not, are presented in the table below. They are presented in three categories; desires, motivators and reluctance factors. The findings stated are based on the empirical findings.

	Inductive findings	Support in literature
Desires	Self-development	
	Develop others	
	Strategic role in the work	
	Develop/change business	
	Develop/change leadership role	
Motivators	Who is responsible for talent management	Leadership perception ( <i>e.g. Gagné et al., 2020</i> )
	Support form organization	Recruitment process ( <i>Maurya &amp; Agarwal, 2018; Moroko and Uncles, 2008</i> )
	Feeling important to the organization	Organizational mindset ( <i>Murphy &amp; Reeves, 2019</i> )
		Encouragement to take initiatives ( <i>Ryan &amp; Deci, 2000</i> )
		Confidence in own skills ( <i>Ryan &amp; Deci, 2000</i> )
		Confidence in leadership identity ( <i>e.g. Karp &amp; Helgø, 2009</i> )
		Autonomy of situation ( <i>Ryan &amp; Deci, 2000</i> )
		Enjoys the work/workplace ( <i>Griffith, Baur &amp; Buckley, 2019</i> )
Reluctance factors	Job not corresponding with job description	Unmanageable workload ( <i>Griffith, Baur &amp; Buckley, 2019</i> )

	Similar but better opportunities available	Poor work-life balance (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019)
	Bad image of the role (including employer brand and leadership brand)	Poor salary (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019)
		Relocation (Van Ommeren, Rietveld & Nijkamp, 2010)

As presented above, the findings on desire are purely inductive. As there is a lack of research on specific desires behind actions, and especially on desires behind succession to managerial positions, this is not surprising.

Many of the motivators behind succession to managerial positions have support in previous literature. Although there is no research on motivation to become a manager specifically, there is much existing research on motivation in the workplace in general. This thesis found that much of the existing research is applicable to this research question as well. Further, in addition to the findings which have support in previous literature, three motivators are presented which are new findings on motivations to become a manager. The reason the findings are presented as ‘motivators’, rather than ‘motivations’, is because the presented aspects are what makes people motivated, rather than the motivation itself. The actual motivation takes the form of autonomous motivation, controlled motivation or amotivation, as explained in the theoretical framework (see 2.6.2. *The self-determination theory*).

The reluctance factors are different from the desires and motivation, as they were not an initial part of the research purpose. However, they are of great importance as they were found to affect employees’ actions greatly, despite desires and motivation to become a manager being present. Thereby, it is not possible to study desires and motivations behind succession to managerial positions without considering reluctance factors. Half of the reluctance factors presented have support in previous research. As presented in the literature review, under 2.4. *Reluctance to become a manager*, previous research has not proven that these factors have an influence on employees’ succession to managerial positions specifically. Instead, the previous research considers closely related topics such as leadership and changing jobs. Similarly to previous research on motivation, this thesis proves that the reluctance factors which are presented above are also applicable to our research question. The thesis also contributes with additional findings which have not been discovered in previous research.

The rest of this analysis will focus on key takeaways from the study. First, we will look closer into what role IKEA’s succession strategy has in this particular case. Following, some key takeaways of the desires, motivations and reluctance factors will be discussed further. Lastly, we will look at the bigger picture of our findings as well as present a new framework, as a developed and more holistic alternative to the self-determination theory. Holistic means to treat or deal with something as a whole, rather than just a part of it (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021).

## 5.2. The effects of IKEA's succession strategy

How organizations implement their succession strategy (Groves, 2007) and how aligned it is with their business strategy (Schwartz, 2011) affects how successful they are in their succession. The conclusion that can be drawn from the empirical findings is that the studied department does not have a well rooted strategy for leadership development across the different stores. Some respondents as well as the IKEA values indicate that IKEA has an organizational mindset which facilitates motivation towards growth, as it focuses on efforts and attitudes rather than abilities and achievements. However, even though everyone can become a leader, employees experience that they do not work to develop their people. One could argue that they instead work to attract people who already have developed leadership traits, as some researchers advocate for (e.g. Bonaiuto et al., 2013), but this does not align with IKEA's values and practises either. Thereby, in this section, we look deeper into how the case organization works with succession.

### 5.2.1. Who has responsibility for talent management?

One of the inductive findings of this thesis was that who is responsible for talent management in the organization affects the motivation to become a manager. In the case of IKEA the individual managers are responsible, which has resulted in mixed opinions on organizational talent management.

The empirical findings showed that some managers do not find interest in developing their employees, and that the employees find these situations demotivating. This type of leadership would according to Gagné et al. (2020) be classified as transactional leadership or even a lack of leadership. One employee expressed that they had even been laughed at for expressing an interest in a managerial position. According to previous research, this could be deteriorating to the employee's motivation for a variety of reasons, including lack of leadership (Gagné et al., 2020), perceived threat to their image (Zhang et al., 2020) and potential negative comments which could come along with wanting to take on a new role (Murphy & Reeves, 2019). Previous research (Gagné et al., 2020) would argue for a more active leadership style, where managers inspire all employees. The findings of this thesis also indicate that leaders need to take an active role in developing their employees, especially when responsible for talent management.

Connected to this, we found that managers may expect employees to take on a managerial position within another department after having taken part in leadership development. This could potentially deteriorate employee motivation as it puts a pressure on the employee which could negatively influence their autonomy of the situation. Previous research argues for the importance of autonomy in order to uphold motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Confirming previous research, one questionnaire respondent expressed these expectations as something negative in motivating them. The leadership culture at IKEA portrays a big focus on return of investment. Although the business aspect of investments has to be kept in mind, too much emphasis on this could become deteriorating in the long term. First off, it could

deteriorate employees' motivation because of loss of autonomy, but it could also lead to employees not trying out leadership at all. This could in turn lead to people not becoming interested in leadership, which could result in difficulty with succession.

In these examples, employees argue for how their specific manager handles talent management. However, other answers were more positive than the ones provided above. The answers were very mixed, and employees have varied perceptions of how succession is handled in the organization. This provides grounds to assume that who is responsible for talent management and that the support the employee receives from the organization does influence the employees motivation to become a manager. Previous research argues that the organization needs to have a supportive culture (Groves, 2007), but it is also important that employees feel supported by the organization. If they do not feel like they have support from the people responsible, it will likely lead to amotivation.

### 5.2.2. Recruitment process for managers

The recruitment process for managers was also found to affect employees' motivation to become a manager. In the studied department at IKEA, the managers are responsible for recruiting new managers in addition to managing them. Further, the managers receive little organizational support in this process. The fact that managers are recruiting each other could be a concern and should be highly considered in regards to succession, as recruitment is one of the most crucial factors in affecting the perceived employer brand among current employees (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). If the employer brand is not positive among current employees, the employees will not feel loyal and engaged. The organization will struggle to retain employees, and even more to motivate them to develop in the organization.

As presented in the empirical findings, respondents expressed that the diversity among managers is extremely poor. This is not surprising, as people, including top managers, are likely to hire people who are similar to themselves (Stafsudd, 2006). Further, the managers are recruiting their own colleagues, which makes it more likely that they are recruiting people they like personally. According to the self-determination theory this can become very problematic, as it may deteriorate employees' feeling of relatedness if they do not feel belonging with the managerial group socially (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Further, working towards social acceptance requires an external motivation, which is not sustainable long term (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Howard et al., 2016). All in all, the situation is according to previous research not facilitating employee motivation, especially not internal motivation.

Although there is previous research arguing for the importance of an established succession plan (Groves, 2007), this thesis brings light to what happens when it does not exist. Having the managers develop and recruit other managers is not inherently wrong, but there needs to be thought and strategy behind it. Most importantly, organizations need to internalise strong leadership practices and mindsets which support employee growth. This is lacking in the studied department at IKEA, which has contributed to reluctant and demotivated employees. With this being said, this does not mean that current managers are not capable of developing

and recruiting new managers. There are even positive examples in the case organization. However, the managers receive little organizational support in leadership development, which creates a situation where much of the responsibility is put on the manager. Through the employees' perception this can be demotivating as they feel like the only way they can grow is through their manager. If they do not have a strong connection with their manager, they will likely feel like they cannot become a manager themselves.

### 5.3. Desires and motivations behind succession

In this section, key takeaways concerning desires and motivations behind employees' succession to a managerial position will be further discussed.

#### 5.3.1. How desires and motivation is created

This thesis has brought light to five desires behind employees' succession to managerial positions. These include a want for self development, as well as interest in different aspects of the job. In theory, these desires will influence people to gain the desire to perform an action (Schroeder, 2006). However, motivation is more complex than research on desire often makes it out to be. As shown in the self-determination theory, there are different types of motivation, ranging from least self-determined to most self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The types of desires found to be behind employees' succession to managerial positions indicates that an internal, self-determined motivation would be behind it. However, there are other aspects to consider as well in order for employees to become motivated.

Although the right types of desires for internal motivation are behind employees' succession, it does not automatically mean people are motivated. There is also a need for a facilitating social environment and state of mind. The aspects found to facilitate motivation are in this thesis presented as motivators. By motivators being present, along with desires, the person is likely to become motivated. A lack of desires or a lack of motivators could both result in amotivation.

Which motivator is most important was found to be highly individual. For example, co-worker Jordan put a big emphasis on the recruitment process and who is responsible for talent management as influences on their motivation. Robin, on the other hand, put a big emphasis on confidence in their own skills. This indicates that organizations need to focus on a variety of motivators in order to create a facilitating environment. Leaders need to understand their employees and be flexible in their approach to employee development.

#### 5.3.2. A desire to develop others

As presented in the beginning of the analysis, a desire to develop others is one of the desires behind employees' succession to managerial positions. Having a workforce with a desire to practice leadership could be very beneficial for organizations, as previous research has shown leadership perception to affect motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Gagné et al., 2020) and an active management style to affect motivation positively (Gagné et al., 2020). Having a

managerial group which is passionate about inspiring could set off a chain reaction, where the managers facilitate motivation among the co-workers, which are the next generation of managers. Thereby, a desire to practice leadership among employees is something which organizations should value highly. Middle manager Billie strengthens this theory by saying that their manager was the reason they wanted to become a manager. Now they want to inspire others in the same way.

We don't really have the time to spend enough time with our co-workers. And, if you have that, of course, we are a good example for them and the influence on what a good leader is and motivates them to also become one. Because that is how I wanted to become a leader and manager. It was because of my managers I had when I started in the company.

### 5.3.3. Leadership development to improve skills and identity perception

Two types of confidence in ability were shown to affect employees' motivation to become a manager; confidence in skills and confidence in leadership identity. Believing in one's knowledge can come from one's self-confidence as well as training. Organizations can support this confidence, both through empowering them to work with their current abilities and by developing them further.

Claiming a leadership identity on the other hand requires a construction of identity, which is majorly influenced by the social environment in which the potential leader operates (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Karp & Helgø, 2009). Interviewee Alex is a great example of why organizations need to invest in leadership development in order to develop leadership identities, as they found an interest in the leadership role first after having taken part in training. Their explanation of why they found an interest in the managerial role portrays the difference training can make in changing people's perspective of a job in regards to themselves. Before, Alex thought the role was more about being a stereotypical "boss", but during the training they found that a manager can be something different which in turn motivated them to work in that direction. Therefore, putting the employees through training may not only create confidence in skills, but it may also change employees' perception of what a leader can be into something which is better aligned with how they view themselves.

### 5.3.4. Encouraging employees to take initiatives is not enough

One of the inductive findings which was found to motivate employees was the feeling of being important to the organization, by having their ideas be taken seriously. This also relates to confidence in the sense that when employees see that they can make a difference, it creates confidence in one's ability to do so. Although IKEA encourages employees to come with ideas, the managers might not listen, which affects the motivation negatively. Previous research has shown that in order to facilitate the satisfaction of the psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, which in turn facilitates self-motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), organizations need to encourage employee self-motivation, encourage initiatives, convey confidence in subordinates' abilities and provide positive feedback (Deci et al., 2001; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Gagne, Koestner & Zuckerman, 2000). These

aspects may generate feelings of importance, but there still needs to be actions which show that employees' abilities and initiatives are making a difference and are taken seriously. This can be done by involving them in strategic projects as well as implementing their ideas.

## 5.4. Reluctance factors

In this case study, it was early discovered that many employees have strong desires as well as internal motivations to become a manager. However, the organization is still experiencing difficulty in attracting employees to managerial roles. What we found was that there are other factors influencing peoples' decision to take action and actually become a manager. These are referred to as reluctance factors

### 5.4.1. What creates reluctance?

As previously established, we discovered that the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions is greatly affected by what we call reluctance factors. Reluctance factors are based on the idea that even though employees find leadership interesting, and they feel motivated to become a manager, there may still be other factors which influence their will to actually become a manager. These factors do not necessarily have to be connected to the managerial role itself, but it could be general concerns which could also be applicable to other situations. For example, if employees consider another role in general, they may become reluctant if it comes with an unmanageable workload or if there are other similar, but better, opportunities available.

There is a great possibility that there are more reluctance factors influencing succession to managerial positions than presented in this thesis. Although there is no research on the topic specifically, research in other areas (see 2.4. *Reluctance to become a manager*) indicates that is the case. As this is a case study, there may be aspects that are not an issue at IKEA, which resulted in employees not bringing it up in this study. There were even fluctuations in how prominent the presented factors were within the studied department. For example, relocation did not create as much reluctance as an unmanageable workload, as many participants in the study would consider relocating for the right job.

What this thesis has done is to introduce the concept of reluctance factors as a dimension which needs to be considered in employees' succession to managerial roles. Why employees want to, or do not want to, take on managerial roles is an area of research which is yet quite undiscovered. Therefore, it is not possible to assume that we know all aspects which creates reluctance. However, this thesis has contributed seven aspects which are potential reluctance facts that should be considered in future research on the subject.

### 5.4.2. Workload, work-life balance and salary

In addition to relocation, three more reluctance factors were found, which have support in previous research. The first is unmanageable workload. Employees expressed that the whole department, and especially the managers, are under a lot of stress, which makes them

reluctant to become managers. This stems from a high workload, where things such as meetings and supporting store business takes away from leading the department. Secondly, managers have a harder time managing the work-life balance in some warehouses, where they work many evenings and weekends. One employee expressed that the top managers often do not take time off to make up for overtime, which in turn sends signals to the other managers that they are expected to do the same. Although these signals could create a harmful work environment on their own, they can also harm the employer brand internally as work-life balance is one of the most crucial factors in employees' further attraction for the employer (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). Lastly, a poor salary is a reluctance factor with support in previous research. While monetary compensation is a controlled form of motivation (Gagné, 2014), a basic salary is also one of the most important motivational aspects of a workplace (Griffith, Baur & Buckley, 2019). The empirical findings indicate that employees do not believe the salary lives up to a basic salary.

In connection to the three reluctance factors presented above, we found that if there is another similar job opportunity which is better in terms of the workload, work-life balance and salary, the employee will likely choose that opportunity instead. This is in many ways self-explanatory, but it is important for organizations to consider. If the workplace cannot provide a basic salary and good working conditions, they will not be able to retain their talents in a competitive job market. Instead, they will lose their talents to other organizations.

#### 5.4.3. A balance between the job description and primary desires

Gaps in the job description, or an unclear presentation of the job-specific key tasks, are other factors that are indirectly influencing employees' desire and motivation in becoming a manager. The perception of unpaid extra activities can be eliminated through a clear definition of the job, with a job-task description that shows the work requirement and expectations from the beginning. This can in turn reduce employees' reluctance towards becoming a manager.

However, if the job description does not leave room for leadership tasks, the desire to become a manager may still be affected negatively as it may reduce the primary desirability of the role. For example, if the changes in the job description makes it so that there is no room for business development and strategic work, employees' primary desire to become a manager may not exist anymore. Thereby, they may not want to become a manager any longer, even though the job description is aligned with the role.

#### 5.4.4. How the image of the role may create reluctance

The last reluctance factor found was a bad image of the role. A big reason as to why IKEA is having a hard time attracting employees to managerial positions within the studied department is because of the image these roles have. This portrays a negative leadership brand, where the leadership group is viewed as stressed, pressured and distant. It is also an example of how the employer brand can be bad for a specific group, even though it is positive for the organization as a whole. What the employer offers the leadership group is not seen as



satisfactory, so people decide to stay in their current position or move on to another opportunity. With this being said, the image of the leadership group stems from reality. As can be seen in other aspects of the empirical findings and this analysis, the reality is the same as the image. In order to change the image to align with employee desires, there is a need to change the way the managers work from the bottom up.

Although the concept of leadership branding should be used with care, as discussed under 2.3. *Leadership branding*, this indicates that the concept is worth investigating further in research. In a research article by Hodges and Martin (2012), they argued that working with leadership branding has potential benefits, especially if there is a contextual need to work with it. Although it is not possible to assume that implementing leadership branding would be beneficial in this case study, the empirical findings indicate that the image of the leadership group does influence employees not to become managers.

## 5.5. The bigger picture

In this section we create a holistic view on the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions. After having looked into the concepts of desires, motivation/motivators and reluctance factors individually and in detail, we present an all rounded view of the concepts and how they interplay with each other.

### 5.5.1. Sustainable motivation is not everything

In this thesis, the motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions are discussed. The main discovery in connection to previous literature is that the motivation behind becoming a manager is almost exclusively internal, which is the most sustainable motivation according to the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Respondents have stated that motivators behind their motivation to become managers include enjoying their work, feeling important in the organization and feeling competent to do the job. Further, looking at the desires which were discovered, the desires influencing the motivation stem from a want to develop oneself and from an interest in the job. As, according to the self-determination theory, internal motivation is created when people consider something important for themselves or when they enjoy doing something (Gagné et al., 2015), it is possible to assume that the motivation portrayed in the case organization is mostly internal.

Even though the employees express the desire and internal motivation to become a manager, IKEA is still experiencing difficulties in attracting employees to managerial roles. This is of particular interest, because while the employees have the right type of motivation, middle manager Billie argued that the organization does not motivate the employees enough. Along with this, most of the reluctance factors presented in the table are present. Previous research argues that the quality of the motivation is of greater importance than the quantity (Howard et al., 2016), but as shown here this may not be the case if there are strong reluctance factors present. What IKEA is experiencing may be a portrayal of how motivation can fluctuate over time, as da Motta Veiga and Gabriel (2016) argues it can do if organizations do not

consistently facilitate motivation. However, it still shows that even with desires and the right type of motivation to do something, there may still be factors influencing people to become unmotivated. Thereby, more motivation would be required to overcome the reluctance.

### 5.5.2. The growth determination scale

As an alternative to the self-determination theory we have created the *growth determination scale* (see Figure 3), which can be used to understand employees' succession to managerial positions from the employee perspective. It views employees' attraction to managerial roles in a holistic way, including desires, motivators, motivation and reluctance. The framework is visualised as a scale, where one side represents the reluctance factors, and one side represents the motivation. The motivation is, as visualised, influenced by desires and motivators. The heavier the motivation weighs in comparison to the reluctance factors, the more likely the person is to take action.

The framework also captures how motivation is not linear, but that the distance from autonomous motivation to amotivation is the same as between controlled motivation and amotivation. Autonomous motivation and amotivation may for example be closely related when there are desires of an internal nature present, but there are no motivators. By displaying the three categories of motivation in a triangular way, it also considers that although the existing motivation is autonomous, too little amount of motivation in regards to other factors may lead to amotivation. When a person is in an amotivated state, the reluctance factors are likely to carry the heaviest weight.

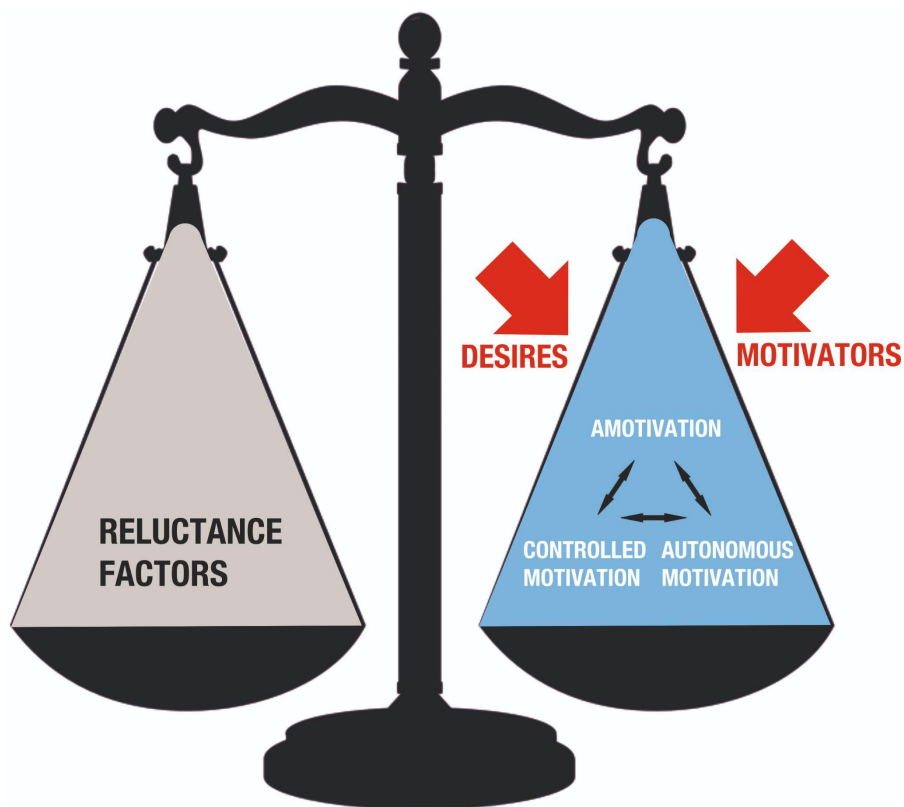


Figure 3: The Growth Determination scale

As in the self-determination theory, the concepts of amotivation, controlled motivation and autonomous motivation are included in the growth determination scale. However, as this model has a holistic focus, rather than a focus on motivation only, it only includes the categories of motivation, rather than the breakdown of every single type of motivation on the spectrum. Likewise the adapted version of the self-determination theory presented under 2.6. *Theoretical framework*, it also includes the influence of desires on motivation, as well as the addition of motivators. In addition to this, there is the counterweight of reluctance factors which has a major influence on how the desires and motivations take shape.

### 5.5.3. The interplay between desires, motivations and reluctance

Although desires, motivations and reluctance can be viewed as stand alone concepts, it is important to remember that there is a constant interplay between them. By focusing on one concept alone, the way that they affect each other will be lost. The growth determination scale provides a holistic view of these three concepts, in which all are considered as a whole.

It is of importance to remember that the presented framework is not existing free of its surroundings. As a person operates in a context which influences their perceptions, each part of the framework will be affected. For example, a person will not feel reluctance unless there is a contextual reason to do so. Likewise, they will not feel the desire to do something unless there is an existing context where they find that achieving something, such as becoming a manager, will bring them more pleasure or less suffering than they have in their current state. Further, the context needs to provide facilitating motivators which support the person's motivation.

In order for a person to uphold an autonomous motivation, the person needs to have desires which lay the ground for working towards a behaviour, such as an interest in leadership practices. Further, motivational aspects need to be fulfilled, such as a confidence in one's ability, support from the organization and a perceived fair recruitment process. However, even if these things are fulfilled, reluctance factors can act as a pull counterweight, and create a negative effect on the desires and motivation. Likewise, even if a persons' motivational needs are fulfilled, they will not take action unless they have the desire to do something. The desire creates the "why" and the motivation creates the fuel to do it, while the reluctance represents a contra-reaction or an impassive attitude as a result of an external influence. If the reluctance factors are removed on the other hand, they will not hinder the person from performing an action when desires and motivators are present.

## 6. Conclusion

In order to understand the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions, multiple aspects have to be considered. Firstly, there needs to be a desire to become a manager. This study discovered that succession to managerial positions stem from both a desire to develop oneself and a desire to perform leadership tasks. Secondly, the employee needs the motivation to become a manager. As per prior research on motivation argues (Deci & Ryan, 2008), the most sustainable type of motivation occurs when the motivation stems from a genuine interest in the task performed. The desires behind succession to managerial positions suggest that this is the type of motivation behind employees becoming managers. However, it was discovered that even with these desires present, it does not automatically mean that the person will obtain the motivation. Motivation also requires a context with facilitating motivators. In the context of an organization, examples of aspects influencing motivation include the organizational succession strategy, organizational support and leadership, the perception of the workplace and leadership role as well as confidence in one's own ability to perform as a manager. What best facilitates motivation is highly individual, but without motivators the motivation will be non-existent.

In contrast to previous research on the self-determination theory (Howard et al., 2016), the analysis showed that although there are desires and internal motivation behind employees' consideration of a managerial role, they may still lack an amount of motivation. It was discovered that several factors may create reluctance to become a manager, even though they are not directly related to the managerial job. Examples of factors that can negatively influence employees' succession to managerial positions are an unmanageable workload, poor salary and a job which is unaligned with the job description.

Employees require both desires to become a manager and the motivation to work towards it. Without a facilitating environment, these will not be fulfilled. Further, the motivation needs to be stronger than the reluctance factors influencing the person to doubt becoming a manager. There is a constant interplay between the desires, motivation and reluctance factors influencing employees' succession to managerial positions. Succession to managerial positions is most likely to occur when the employee has desires originating from a genuine interest in becoming a manager and when they operate in a context which facilitates a strong motivation. There is also a need for an absence of reluctance factors, or a motivation which is stronger than the reluctance created from the existing factors. Otherwise, the reluctance factors will outweigh the motivation, and the employee will not be motivated enough to work towards becoming a manager.

### 6.1. Managerial implications

This thesis provides new insights on what is behind employees' succession to managerial positions. By understanding the desires and motivations behind employees' succession to managerial positions, it is possible for organizations to adapt their talent management strategy to better attract employees to managerial roles.

Through looking at the table presented under *5.1. Inductive findings and literature support*, organizations can see which desires and motivators that can drive employees to take on managerial positions. By supporting employees in these areas, organizations can strengthen their internal employer brand for the specific group where they want to attract more people. Further, by looking at the table, organizations can gain an understanding for which reluctance factors that may influence employee succession. Along with working with the presented desires and motivations, these need to be avoided in order to attract employees to the positions.

This thesis also brings a holistic view on managerial development from the employee perspective. Although it is important to work with each individual desire, motivation and reluctance factor, organizations also need to look at the big picture. Likewise the case organization, there may be situations where the organization is thriving within some areas, but lacking in another. For example, there may be strong desires and autonomous motivation present, but there are secondary factors, such as a high workload and leadership roles with a bad image, which influence employees to not become a manager. When each part of the growth determination scale (presented under *5.6.2. The growth determination scale*) is considered, organizations are more likely to reach success in their succession planning.

It is likely that the findings in this paper are applicable to organizations outside of a retail store environment, as well as to groups that are not managerial groups. However, to establish that would require more research.

## 6.2. Theoretical implications

By changing the outlook on the self-determination theory, and presenting the growth determination scale, this thesis opens up the discussion of how reluctance factors and amount of motivation can bring the difference between autonomous motivation and amotivation closer together. Prior to this research, motivation has been viewed as a linear concept. Instead, we provide a triangular outlook which considers that different influences can affect motivation in different ways. Further, the framework presents a more holistic view on why people become motivated to take certain actions. As per prior research, desires are viewed as an influence on motivation. In addition to this, reluctance factors are presented as a concept which influences people's actions, even though desires and motivation are present.

In addition to the growth determination scale, this thesis brings up the discussion of which desires and motivators are behind employees' succession to managerial positions. Further, it presents reluctance factors that may influence this decision. In relation to becoming a manager, none of these topics have been researched previously, although some have support in closely related areas of research. However, within each concept this thesis provides new insights which have not been discussed in prior research.

Along with these insights, this thesis introduces the topic of how a part of a large organization can have a different employer brand than the rest of the organization, especially internally. There is a strong need to discuss this further, especially in relation to managerial groups, as employer branding today is viewed as something that covers the whole organization. In order to understand this further, there is a need for research like this, which is looking to understand willingness to change positions and teams within the organization from the employees' perspective.

### 6.3. Further research

By focusing only on how to lead, rather than attracting people to leadership roles, researchers assume that there are leaders available. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more research on when and why people want to become leaders and managers. We suggest conducting more case studies in a similar direction as this one, as well as to conduct deductive studies on the topic for statistically generalizable knowledge.

It would be of great interest to do a follow-up study with IKEA if and when they have implemented changes following this research. That way, possible changes in opinions and perceptions could be evaluated. It would also be beneficial to interview top managers, in order to understand why they became managers, as it may differ from the co-worker perspective. Going in a different direction, it would be of interest to study organizations who have been successful in their internal succession plan, to see which practices they implement in order to attract employees to managerial positions. As this thesis takes the perspective of employees in an organization who are struggling with succession, the suggested study would provide a new perspective.

Lastly, it would be of great interest to do more research on the self-determination theory in regards to how quality and quantity of motivation affects people's actions. In contrast to previous research (Howard et al., 2016), this thesis indicates that although the quality of motivation is high, the amount of motivation may still not be enough. The triangular relation between autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation, as displayed in the growth determination scale, is a new contribution to theory which needs to be studied further. Most importantly, there is a need to look at the bridge between autonomous motivation and amotivation, as they have previously been viewed as two ends of a spectrum.

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# Appendix 1: Questionnaire - Co-worker

(English bellow)

Hej,

Vi heter Johanna och Emilia och vi skriver för närvarande vår magisteruppsats. Syftet med denna forskning är att bidra med en djupare förståelse för när chefspositioner är attraktiva för medarbetare. Vi uppskattar att du tar dig tiden till att hjälpa oss nå vårt forskningsmål!

Dina svar är anonyma och kommer endast användas för forskningsändamål. Den färdiga produkten kommer publiceras och presenteras för IKEA. De fulla original-svaren kommer endast att ses av oss (Johanna och Emilia). De kommer sedan genomarbetas och analyseras i forskningsprocessen, innan den färdiga produkten publiceras och delas. Du är fri att avbryta denna enkät när som, och du har möjlighet att hoppa över frågor om du önskar. Om du har några frågor är du välkommen att kontakta oss via e-mailen där du fick denna enkät.

Genom att svara på denna enkät så ger du medgivande till din medverkan enligt beskrivningen ovan. Du är välkommen att svara på svenska eller engelska och vi önskar dina svar senast fredagen den 16/4.

Hello!

Our names are Johanna and Emilia and we are currently writing our master thesis. The purpose of this research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of when managerial roles are attractive to employees. We appreciate that you are taking the time to help us reach our research aim!

Your answers are anonymous and will only be used for research purposes. The finished product will be published and presented to IKEA. The full, original answers will only be seen by us (Johanna and Emilia). They will then be processed and analyzed in the research process, before the final report is published and shared. You are free to withdraw from answering this questionnaire at any time, and you may skip questions if you wish. If you have any questions you are welcome to contact us via the email through which you received this questionnaire.

By answering this questionnaire you consent to your participation according to the description above. You are welcome to answer in swedish or english and we wish for your answers Friday 16/4 at the latest.

## **Yes/No questions:**

- Är du medveten om hur du kan bli chef hos IKEA?  
Are you aware of how you can become a manager at IKEA?
- Skulle du överväga att ta en chefsposition inom det kommande året?  
Would you consider taking on a managerial role within the next year?

- Skulle du överväga att ta en chefsposition inom 1-5 år?  
Would you consider taking on a managerial role in 1-5 years?

**Open answer questions:**

- Förklara anledningarna varför du skulle överväga att ta en chefsposition hos IKEA.  
Explain why you would consider taking on a managerial position at IKEA.
- Förklara anledningarna varför du skulle INTE överväga att ta en chefsposition hos IKEA.  
Explain why you would NOT consider taking on a managerial position at IKEA.
- Kan du beskriva hur du tror det är att vara chef hos IKEA?  
Can you describe what you think it's like being a manager at IKEA?
- Tror du att du skulle vara en bra ledare om du hade en chefsposition? Förklara varför.  
Do you believe you would be a good leader if you had a managerial position? Explain why.
- Finns det något IKEA skulle kunna ändra på för att göra deras chefspositioner mer attraktiva?  
Is there anything IKEA could change in order to make their managerial roles more attractive?
- Kan du förklara hur det är att jobba på IKEA i din nuvarande roll?  
Can you describe what it is like working at IKEA in your current role?
- Finns det något du anser att IKEA skulle kunna göra annorlunda för att förbättra din arbetsupplevelse?  
Is there anything you think IKEA could do differently in order to improve your work experience?
- Kan du beskriva den nuvarande ledningsgruppen inom din enhet?  
Can you describe the current management in your department?

Tack för din medverkan!

Thank you for your participation!

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire - Middle managers

(English bellow)

Hej,

Vi heter Johanna och Emilia och vi skriver för närvarande vår magisteruppsats. Syftet med denna forskning är att bidra med en djupare förståelse för när chefspositioner är attraktiva för medarbetare. Vi uppskattar att du tar dig tiden till att hjälpa oss nå vårt forskningsmål!

Dina svar är anonyma och kommer endast användas för forskningsändamål. Den färdiga produkten kommer publiceras och presenteras för IKEA. De fulla original-svaren kommer endast att ses av oss (Johanna och Emilia). De kommer sedan genomarbetas och analyseras i forskningsprocessen, innan den färdiga produkten publiceras och delas. Du är fri att avbryta denna enkät när som, och du har möjlighet att hoppa över frågor om du önskar. Om du har några frågor är du välkommen att kontakta oss via e-mailen där du fick denna enkät.

Genom att svara på denna enkät så ger du medgivande till din medverkan enligt beskrivningen ovan. Du är välkommen att svara på svenska eller engelska och vi önskar dina svar senast fredagen den 16/4.

Hello!

Our names are Johanna and Emilia and we are currently writing our master thesis. The purpose of this research is to contribute to a deeper understanding of when managerial roles are attractive to employees. We appreciate that you are taking the time to help us reach our research aim!

Your answers are anonymous and will only be used for research purposes. The finished product will be published and presented to IKEA. The full, original answers will only be seen by us (Johanna and Emilia). They will then be processed and analyzed in the research process, before the final report is published and shared. You are free to withdraw from answering this questionnaire at any time, and you may skip questions if you wish. If you have any questions you are welcome to contact us via the email through which you received this questionnaire.

By answering this questionnaire you consent to your participation according to the description above. You are welcome to answer in swedish or english and we wish for your answers Friday 16/4 at the latest.

### **Yes/No questions:**

- Är du medveten om hur du kan bli en högre chef hos IKEA?  
Are you aware of how you can become a higher manager at IKEA?
- Skulle du överväga att ta en högre chefsposition inom det kommande året?  
Would you consider taking on a higher managerial role within the next year?

- Skulle du överväga att ta en högre chefsposition inom 1-5 år?  
Would you consider taking on a higher managerial role in 1-5 years?

**Open answer questions:**

- Förklara anledningarna till varför du skulle överväga att ta en högre chefsposition hos IKEA.  
Explain the reasons why you would consider taking on a higher managerial position at IKEA.
- Förklara anledningarna till varför du INTE skulle överväga att ta en högre chefsposition hos IKEA.  
Explain the reasons why you would NOT consider taking on a higher managerial position at IKEA.
- Finns det något IKEA skulle kunna ändra på för att göra deras chefspositioner mer attraktiva?  
Is there anything IKEA could change in order to make their managerial roles more attractive?
- Kan du beskriva hur du tror det är att vara Com&In chef hos IKEA?  
Can you describe what you think it's like being a Com&In manager at IKEA?
- Anser du att du är en bra ledare? Förklara varför.  
Do you think that you are a good leader? Explain why.
- Kan du förklara hur det är att jobba på IKEA i din nuvarande roll?  
Can you describe what it is like working at IKEA in your current role?
- Finns det något du anser att IKEA skulle kunna göra annorlunda för att förbättra din arbetsupplevelse?  
Is there anything you think IKEA could do differently in order to improve your work experience?
- Kan du förklara den nuvarande ledningsgruppen och vilken typ av ledarskap ni utför inom din enhet?  
Can you describe the current management and what type of leadership you practice in your department?
- Uppmuntrar du dina medarbetare att själva delta i ledarskap? Hur?  
Do you encourage your employees to engage in leadership behaviour themselves? How?

Tack för din medverkan!

Thank you for your participation!



## Appendix 3: Interview guide

### \*Small talk\*

Thank you for joining us! Remember that everything you say is anonymous and that it won't be seen by any of your colleagues, your managers or anyone else outside of this zoom room. You are free to not answer questions if you don't feel comfortable, and you can decide to withdraw at any time. We also want to remind you that we will record this interview, but it will only be seen by us.

We will start by asking you about the manager role, before moving on to talk about leadership. Then, we will discuss what it's like working at IKEA, before finishing up with some questions about the current management. (Middle managers: Lastly, we have some additional questions about your current role as a manager). Do you have any questions before we start?

### The manager role (open questions)

- Do you know how you can grow at IKEA?
  - Do you know how you can become a manager?
    - Explain
  - Can you describe the succession plan in your department?
  - Do you know when managerial positions are vacant? How?
  - Do you participate in talent week?
    - Can you tell us about it?
- Would you consider taking on a (higher) managerial position?
  - Why?
  - Subject to discuss: College reactions, Responsibility, Taking on a new challenge, Practical aspects, Relocation, Self-esteem
  - What motivates you to work towards this?
- *Yes*: What is it that you find attractive in what IKEA offers to managers?
  - Is there something you find less attractive?
- *No*: What would IKEA need to offer in order for you to accept a managerial position?
  - Why would this be an attractive offer?

### Leadership

- When you work in groups at work, do you take on the leader role?
  - Why?
- Would friends and colleagues describe you as a leader?
  - Has anyone ever referred to you as a good leader?
    - Who?
- Do you consider yourself a leader?
- Have you ever been offered an opportunity to take part in leadership, formal or informal, at IKEA?
  - Have you ever taken part in a program, course or similar to develop leadership skills?

### Working at IKEA

- According to you, what are the most important attributes of an organization which you consider working for?
- Can you describe the culture within your department at IKEA.
  - We hear a lot about how IKEA is like a family. Would you say that this is true?

- Before you got a job at IKEA, what did you think it would be like working here?
  - Was the reality as you expected?
    - Why?
- What do you think of the internal communication at IKEA?
- Do you find that you get credit for projects or work which you have been involved in when IKEA communicates these efforts?
- What do you think about IKEAs ways of recruiting colleges to the organization?
- Do you find that there is a good balance between work and private life in your role?
  - Do you think it is the same for other people in your department?
- What motivates you to grow and develop in your profession?

### **Current management**

- Do you think IKEA has competent leaders in the organization?
- What are some characteristics you think of when you think about the leaders within your organization?
- Can you describe the management within your department?
- Can you describe what you believe the manager's work looks like on a normal day?
  - What type of work?
  - Workload?
  - We have gotten the understanding that managers can get called in on weekends and evenings. Can you explain more about this?
  - Do you believe the managers get paid enough for the work they do?
- What is your opinion on your closet manager?
  - How do you find their leadership practices?
    - Does it differ from other managers?
  - Do you feel like your manager listens to your opinions?
    - Do you feel respected?
  - What does your manager's job seem like to you?
    - Do you think they are happy with their job?
    - What do you think your life would be like if you had your managers' job?
- What is your opinion on the top management as a whole?
  - How do you find their leadership practices?
  - What do their jobs seem like to you?
    - Do you think they are happy with their job?
    - What do you think your life would be like if you were a (highest level) manager?
    - What do you think your life would be like if you were the top manager of the department?

### **Only for middle management**

- What does a normal day look like for you?
  - Can you explain more about working during the evening and weekend?
  - Do you believe you get a salary which is suitable for the type of work you do?
- Can you describe how you work with your employees today?
- Do you think you're a good manager?
- Do you encourage your employees to take part in leadership practices?

## Appendix 4: Consent form for interviewees

Hello!

Thank you for participating in our study on how to make managerial positions attractive to employees!

We will meet you...

Date:

Time:

Zoom-link:

Us that are going to interview you are Johanna Törnfeldt and Emilia Faisal. We're currently in our last semester of our master program in International marketing and Brand management at Lund University. This research will contribute to our master thesis.

The interview is expected to take up to one hour. It is voluntary and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time. You can also abstain from answering one or several questions if you wish. The interview will be recorded to facilitate the analysis of our discussions. The given answers, as well as the recordings, will be protected until the research is finished. It will then be deleted. Your anonymity is of highest priority and your name will never be used during the research process, in the paper or after the paper is finished. We will not reveal who was in the study to your management or anyone else at IKEA. The transcribed material may be shared between us (Johanna and Emilia) and our supervisor at Lund University, Veronika Tarnovskaya. The finished paper will be published as well as shared with IKEA.

If you have any questions, you are free to contact us!

Please sign below if you agree to participate according to the terms above. This signed paper will only be seen by us (Johanna and Emilia).

---

Signature

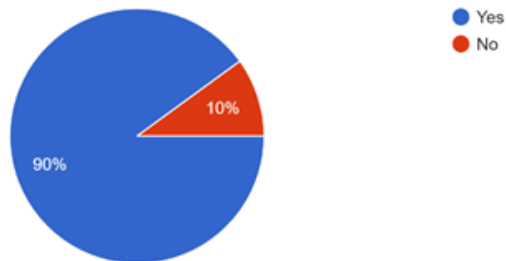
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Name

## Appendix 5: Questionnaire responses - co-workers

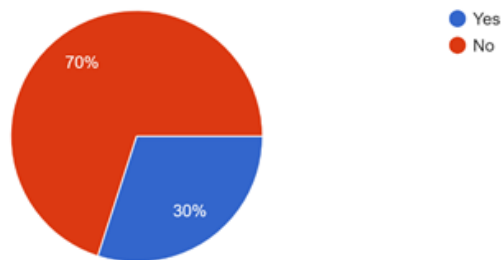
Är du medveten om hur du kan bli chef hos IKEA? (Are you aware of how you can become a manager at IKEA?)

80 responses



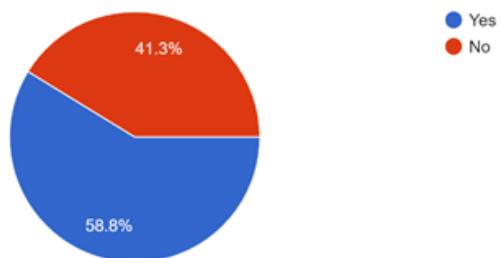
Skulle du överväga att ta en chefsposition inom det kommande året? (Would you consider taking on a managerial role within the next year?)

80 responses



Skulle du överväga att ta en chefsposition inom 1-5 år? (Would you consider taking on a managerial role in 1-5 years?)

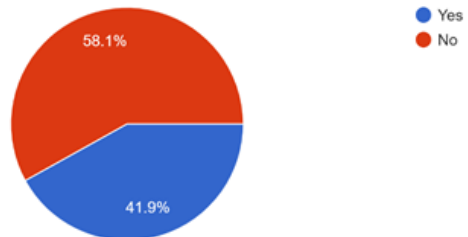
80 responses



## Appendix 6: Questionnaire responses - middle managers

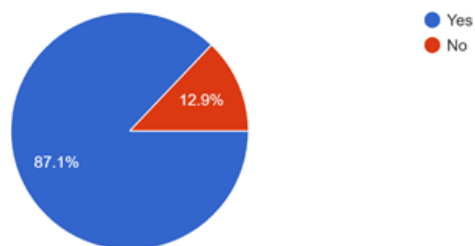
Skulle du överväga att ta en högre chefsposition inom det kommande året? (Would you consider taking on a higher managerial role within the next year?)

31 responses



Är du medveten om hur du kan bli en högre chef hos IKEA? (Are you aware of how you can become a higher manager at IKEA?)

31 responses



Skulle du överväga att ta en högre chefsposition inom 1-5 år? (Would you consider taking on a higher managerial role in 1-5 years?)

31 responses

