# edamba
## JOURNAL

# Thesis Competition

2024

Thesis Competition 2024

Editor Dániel Havran

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# FOREWORD

The awards distinguish high-quality doctoral theses that achieve a significant contribution to new knowledge in business studies and management research across all research areas.

The European Doctoral Programmes Association in Management and Business Administration (EDAMBA) offers and operates a network aimed at exchanging information, disseminating best practice and enhancing the quality of doctoral education among its members in Europe and beyond. For more than a quarter of a century, EDAMBA has been assisting its members to enhance the quality of their doctoral programmes and to create an environment of excellence with a European perspective, while striving for diversity.

2024 was the 22st edition of the thesis competition. We received many high quality submissions, demonstrating the strength of our research community. The awards distinguish high quality doctoral theses that achieve a significant contribution to new knowledge in business and management research across all research areas.

The first, second and third prizes were selected from the peer-reviewed abstracts and are published in the EDAMBA journal. With this publication, we hope to contribute to the dissemination of the research of young scholars studied in the institutions of our network in Europe and worldwide.

**Dimitris ASSIMAKOPOULOS**
EDAMBA President

# OVERVIEW OF 2024

Candidates submitted a 5,000-word synopsis of their dissertation, which was judged on its ability to present research clearly, rigorously and concisely to a diverse management research audience.

The Thesis Competition was open to candidates who defended their thesis in the previous academic year (1st September 2022– 31st August 2023) at an EDAMBA member institution. Submissions were received from a quarter of the eligible institutions in fourteen countries across two continents.

The Thesis Competition has its own reviewer team which this year included 53 committed reviewers. Each paper was reviewed (double blindly) by two reviewers. Based on the reviewers' scores and, in addition, in case of disagreement, on the Committee's re-readings, the Committee came up with the final selection of the best papers. All the authors confirmed their participation in Annual Meeting and presented to the members at the General Assembly online on September 3, 2024.

Geographical diversity
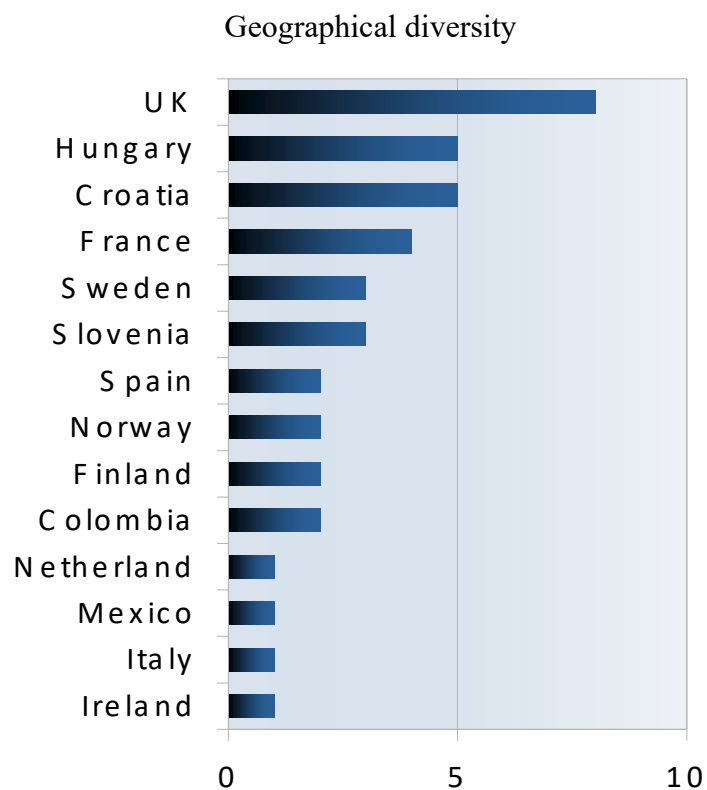


Submissions were received from 14 countries and 23 institutions.

# REVIEWERS

EDAMBA acknowledges the expertise, time and effort in the important review process of the 2024 EDAMBA Thesis Competition

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# FIRST AWARD

**Debajyoti Biswas**
ESSEC Business School

*Four Essays in Healthcare analytics, Insurance pricing and Home services optimisation*

SUMMARY

In this dissertation, we develop novel solutions for real-world business and policymaking problems, with a focus on sustainability. In Essay 1, we develop an epidemic optimisation model for scheduling non-pharmaceutical intervention sequences for controlling COVID-19, balancing loss of human life and economic loss. In Essay 2, we implement a game-theoretic model to evaluate how insurers can incentivise the purchase of smart products to reduce household hazards. In Essays 3 and 4, we develop optimisation models for surge pricing and for managing the operations of on-demand home services from the triple bottom line perspective combining emissions, professional earnings and customer satisfaction.

Co-authors: LAURENT ALFANDARI, SARA REZAEE VESSAL, CLAUDIA ARCHETTI

# Introduction

Operations Management (OM) and Operations Research (OR) are quantitative disciplines that encompass a rich array of mathematical and analytical techniques for aiding decision-making for diverse business problems. While both fields have a distinct DNA in terms of methods and problems that they address, both are strongly interconnected and have evolved steadily over the last few decades, shaping decision-making at strategic, tactical, and operational levels for organisations globally.

In this doctoral dissertation, we explore the versatility of OM and OR in addressing decision- making at strategic, tactical, and operational levels for contemporary global problems spanning healthcare, insurance, and on-demand services industries. We have witnessed tectonic shifts and jolts across the entire spectrum during the last few years due to the turbulent and volatile environment globally, reinforcing the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) nature of the world order - a pandemic, a war, climate change, technological disruption by industry 4.0 and the rise of the online economy. In my pursuit of novelty and scientific rigor, my interest has been piqued by issues around subjects that I really care about - people, environment, and technology. Whether it is devising control strategies for managing a pandemic, analysing discounting strategies for the adoption of smart home insurance to reduce household hazards, or evaluating the impact of sustainability on the operations of on-demand services, for each of these contexts, I have been a curious customer or a concerned citizen who was affected at a grass-root level by issues revolving around them. Broadly speaking, the real connective tissue between the essays in this dissertation is the application of analytical techniques and methods of OM and OR for solving managerial problems that involve decision-making at *different levels* as indicated in Figure 1.
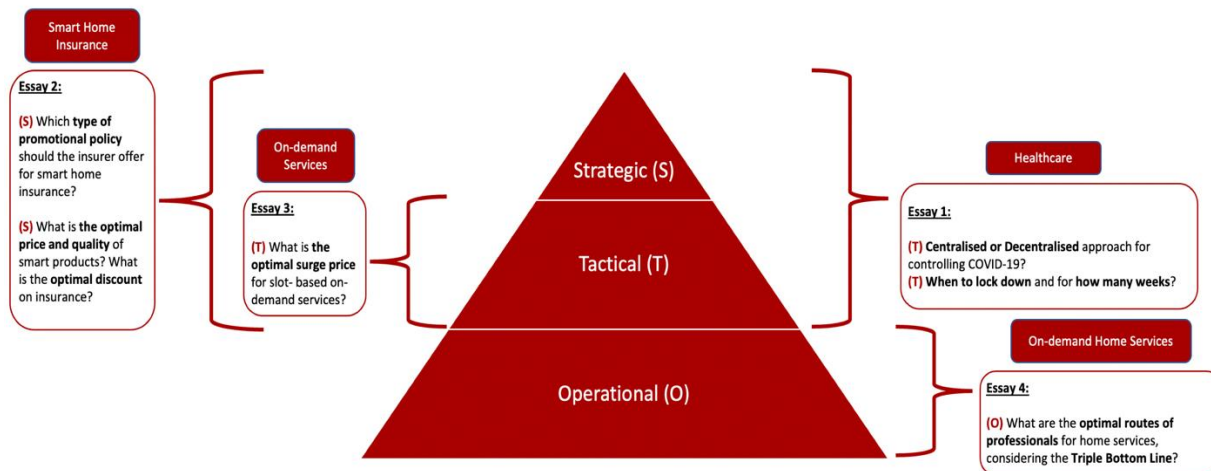


Figure 1: Schematic representation of different levels of decision-making covered in the Dissertation Essays
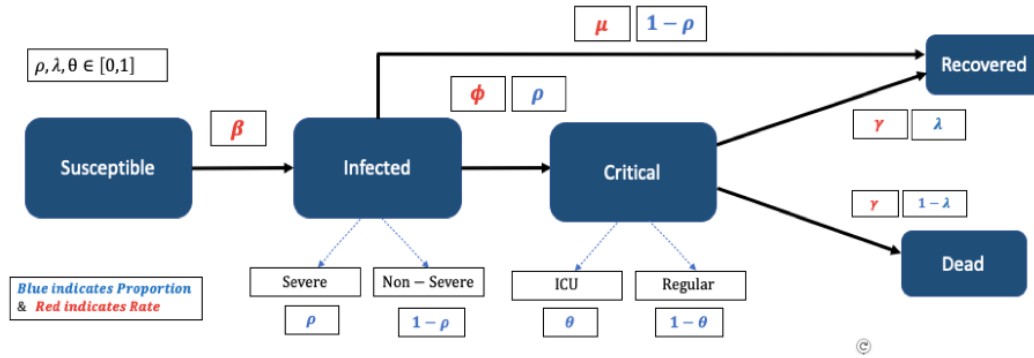
Figure 2: Epidemic Compartmental Model for COVID-19

## Essay 1: Designing an optimal sequence of non-pharmaceutical interventions for controlling COVID-19

### Problem Context

COVID-19 was a disruptive event on a global scale, occurring after hundred years since the devastating Spanish flu pandemic in 1918. Frequent lockdowns, large-scale healthcare crises, and constant uncertainty impacted economies and human lives across the world. This forms the genesis of Essay 1 where we develop a decision support model for the policymaker for managing the healthcare crisis caused by a pandemic. The critical question at hand for most countries during the pandemic was the dilemma between *'saving lives versus livelihoods'*. This was evidently a complex decision, as allowing the infection to spread would lead to an overwhelming situation for hospitals and an eventual breakdown of the healthcare system. Whereas, taking stringent measures to flatten the curve of the epidemic would come at the cost of jobs, shutting down businesses and economic activity for long periods of time. Neither was desirable and the trade-off was extremely expensive. Another conundrum which puzzled policymakers, governments and political leaders globally was the choice between applying these stringent interventions like lockdowns, business closures at a national level or at a more localised level differentiated by regions, districts or cities, intended to isolate critical locations while mobilising the economy in lesser affected ones. Our research stems from these two questions that were at the heart of the global crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Methodology

In order to characterise the problem, we develop an epidemic optimization model using a mixed-integer programming approach. We implement the Susceptible-Infected-Recovered (SIR) framework (Refer to

Figure 2) introduced by Kermack & McKendrick (1932) and adapt it to COVID-19, making some necessary modifications. We consider the healthcare resources of hospital beds and doctors which patients afflicted with COVID-19 can seek for relief (in the absence of a vaccine). For hospital beds, we take into account normal beds for less severe cases and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds for critical cases which require close monitoring and oxygen support for breathing difficulties. The OR and OM literature in the field of epidemics is considerably big, given that we have had epidemics like SARS, MERS, Ebola in the recent past. With the onset of COVID-19, there has been a plethora of work in mathematical modelling for aiding pandemic management, scenario-based analysis, health- care resource optimization (See Acemoglu et al. 2020, Ouardighi et al. 2020, Caulkins et al. 2021, Yin et al. 2021, Yin & Büyüktahtakın 2022, Charpentier et al. 2020). Unlike previous work, we incorporate the infections and deaths of healthcare personnel due to exposure to infected patients. We define different non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) as discrete measures that can be imposed on a weekly basis ranging from school closures, travel bans to lockdowns. We also consider the possibility of continuous and intermittent lockdowns with cooling phases interspersed in between. In our context, the policy maker has to decide the sequence of these interventions and duration of each for an eight-week planning horizon, post which there is course correction and assessment of the epidemic situation. We integrate the impact of these decisions on both the healthcare system and the economy based on loss of productivity. We compare decision-making at a centralised level (decisions are homogeneous for all regions of the country) and decentralised level (decisions differentiated at a regional level). We discover some important insights, backed by analytical results, which can aid policy making not only for COVID-19 but any other epidemic in the future, although the hope would be that the situation never arises. We propose several extensions, incorporating a two-dose vaccine, compliance of the population to NPIs, migration of population before lockdowns to further investigate the impact of control strategies.

**Main Contributions**

Based on the output of the optimization model, we deduce some key takeaways for policymaker:

- The first key finding is with respect to the optimal sequence of NPIs. For both the decentralised and centralised strategies, the NPIs follow a pattern of decreasing severity across the planning horizon. This indicates that the policymaker needs to impose heavier restrictions in the beginning, in order to check the transmission in the population and utilise that time to ramp up healthcare capacity to prevent a health crisis. Initially, a few countries like UK had contemplated implementing the herd immunity strategy (Titheradge & Kirkland 2020) which would allow a sizeable proportion (around 70%) of the population to be infected and develop antibodies against it. However, the sharp increase in hospitalizations and overwhelming of healthcare capacity did not allow them to go ahead with it. Hence, the optimal strategy for controlling COVID-19 would be to put heavier NPIs in the beginning followed by less severe ones, for minimizing infections or deaths within a given budget constraint.

- The second takeaway is the benefit of a decentralised strategy (without considering logistics aspects and for a given level of compliance of the population) for a given mean budget of severity. Based on our numerical analysis of the French regions, we observe that the decentralised strategy yields better results for all instances, with up to 20% lesser infections and 15% lesser deaths. It is natural that the objective value improves when giving more flexibility to the model, but the gain appears to be quite substantial here. This is an important consideration for policymaking in a pandemic, where vaccine development takes time and NPIs need to be sustained over a longer horizon to keep the infection transmission at a manageable level. Exhaustive confinement and lockdowns at a national level leads to social fatigue and is eco- nomically unsustainable. Given these limitations, it is pragmatic for the policymaker to follow a more customised strategy at a regional/ state/ city/ district level, considering the demographics, healthcare capacity and the transmission dynamics observed initially. We conclude that a decentralised strategy not only results in better performance in terms of epidemic control but also aids in mobilising the economy wherever feasible. Of course, with a severity constraint in terms of mean budget, the price to pay is the discrepancy of severity across individuals and regions, as hinted in the introduction. This geographical differentiation has already been implemented in France (in Ile-de-France region, the city of Nice, the "département" of Moselle, to cite a few examples), and in other countries.
- Finally, a very crucial aspect of pandemic management is to identify capacity risks and bottle- necks and take proactive measures. Through our numerical experiments we show that regions which have a relatively higher population density and lower healthcare resource availability per unit population are at greater risk than other. Since we know that a higher population density leads to higher infection transmission (Gerritse 2020), the pressure on the healthcare system is evidently higher. This necessitates stricter measures in order to prevent shortages in healthcare resources and a consequent spike in infections and deaths. Hence, with the help of such scenario analyses the policymaker can foresee which regions need to be prioritised based on their available capacity and potential case load and take measures in advance. Our analysis of the decentralised and centralised strategies considering shortages in ICU beds, reveals how the former leads to a better allocation of NPIs, resulting in lesser shortages (up to 60%) and consequently lesser deaths. This policymaking tool allows the policy think tank to identify capacity risks based on various scenarios and increase capacities accordingly to avoid an unfortunate overwhelming of the healthcare system.

## Essay 2: Smart Home Insurance: Collaboration and Pricing

**Problem context**

Reflecting on the recent evolution of tech-based products, smart products have been a great boon, making life more convenient and hassle-free for us on the domestic front. The 'smart' attribute stems from the ability of these products to connect to the Internet and transmit and respond to data. Smart home products specifically designed for enhancing security and protection like water leakage sensors,

smart smoke alarms, smart door locks not only have advanced sensors for detecting impending hazards at home, they also transmit this information on time to the customer for preventing a mishap. While this can provide great peace of mind and utility to the customer, it immensely benefits another stakeholder - the home insurance firm. No hazard means no expensive claim pay-outs for the insurance firm, strengthening their path to profitability. In Essay 2, we explore different discounting policies that insurance firms offer to incentivise customers for buying smart home (security and protection-based) products along with home insurance. After observing policies implemented by several firms like AllState, Liberty Mutual, Hippo, Notion, Nest, Luko (Walpole et al. 2017, McIlquham et al. 2019, Newswire 2021, Ben-Hutta 2020, Institute 2021, Allstate 2018, Vivint 2012, De Brye 2020), we found two types of promotional offers given by insurance firms - discount on insurance premium with and without a free smart product. To the best of our knowledge, smart home insurance is a greenfield area in OM, although the method and the study of contracts is not new, the problem setting is very unique. This is a rare case of the quality of one player's product impacting the cost of both the players along with revenue, motivating their pricing decisions respectively.

**Methodology**

We characterise the interactions between the home insurance firm and the smart product manufacturer (SPM) in a game-theoretic framework considering their respective decisions of pricing along with the SPM's decision of the design or quality of the product. We investigate the preferences of the two players when they have no contract and when they adopt a wholesale-price contract in two separate models (Refer to Figure 3). As an extension, we explore the dynamics of power, comparing cases when both players have equal power (Nash model) and when the SPM is dominant (Stackelberg model). We offer analytical insights about the strategies of the insurance firm and the SPM in different settings along with some numerical experiments to corroborate our findings.
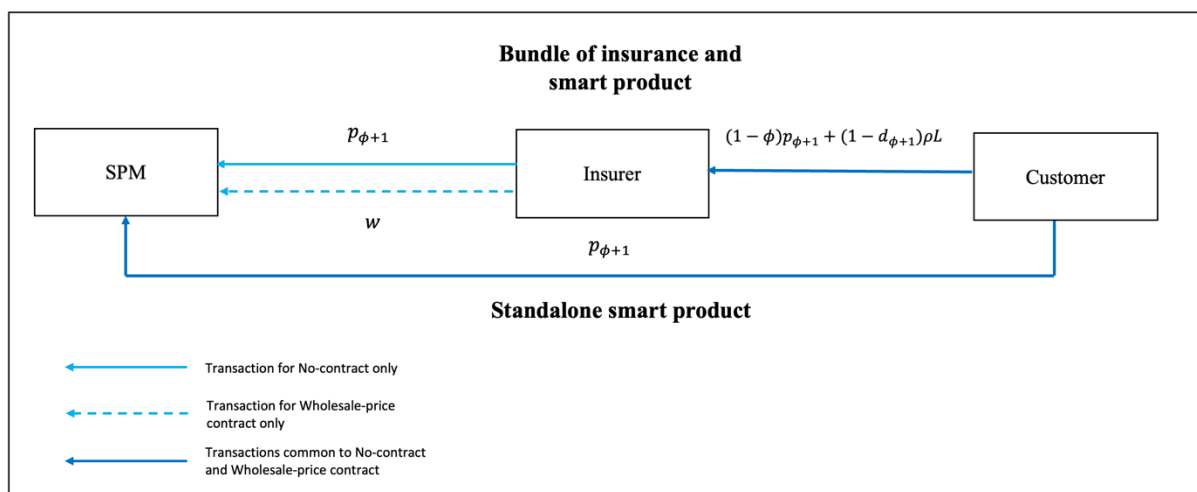


Figure 3: Interactions between the smart product manufacturer and the insurer

**Main Contributions**

Because this market is a relatively new and fast-growing one for insurance firms, we offer some guidelines—mainly for insurance companies—about how their policies can be adjusted to increase the adoption of smart products by attracting potential customers and encouraging advancements in technology and product design. Our analysis provides some valuable managerial insights into choosing the best promotional offer and pricing policy based on the insurer's type of interaction with a smart product manufacturer and the parties' relative market power.

- We find that, when insurers and manufacturers decide simultaneously, the insurer's preference between the two promotional policies differs based on the type of interaction. In particular: when the two players operate independently without any contract, if the product development cost coefficient is high then the insurer is better-off with the discount-only offer; as the design cost falls, the free product offer becomes favoured. When the players partner with each other through a wholesale-price contract, the insurer always prefers the free smart product offer.
- In terms of the SPM's preferences, she is better-off with the free smart product offer under a wholesale-price contract, whereas in the no-contract setting she prefers this offer only if the product development cost coefficient is neither too low nor too high. Thus the wholesale-price contract mitigates the SPM–insurer misalignment in preferences for promotional offers. A key insight is that, under the wholesale-price contract, the free smart product policy (unlike the discount- only policy) benefits all stakeholders: SPM, insurer, and customers.
- In addition, we show that the players' sequence of decision making (which in some cases can be interpreted as their relative power in the market) plays a crucial role in their decisions and profits. In markets where the SPM is the leader, the insurer is indifferent between the two promotional policies in the no-contract setting or under a wholesale-price contract with exogenous wholesale price. We may therefore conclude that the insurer can adopt whichever policy makes him better-off.

## Essay 3: A static surge pricing optimization model for slot-based on-demand services

**Problem context**

The 'Uber for X' phenomenon has taken over our lives in the last few years where asset-light online platforms match freelance service providers to customers seeking services. Among these platform-based services, the marketplace model for home services like plumbing, cleaning, repair etc. has gained huge traction in the recent past. While booking service professionals one can observe 'surge pricing', which is more commonly associated with ride-hailing services like Uber, is recently being implemented by home services platforms to balance demand and supply for high-demand time slots. However, this

price does not fluctuate dynamically during the day, or even across days, unlike fares for Uber rides, which could change in a blink of an eye. In Essay 3, we set out to address the problem of 'static' surge pricing, where the price is not set in real-time, but based on estimated demand and supply a priori.

**Methodology**

We develop a quadratic programming model to solve the pricing problem only for slots which have high demand and need surge pricing. The goal is to set the price in such a way that it maximises the number of orders and the resultant revenue from it. The price not only determines demand but also supply. The on-demand services or online marketplace model matches independent service providers to customers seeking service for a price which both mutually agree on. As these service professionals are not employees on a payroll with a fixed salary, their presence is flexible and subject to the fee they get for each task. Thus, the platform plays the balancing act by setting a price which aligns with the 'willingness-to-pay'(WTP) of customers and 'expectation-to-be-paid'(ETP) for professionals. We consider two separate cases where the surge price - (i) stays the same for all high-demand slots (homogeneous), (ii) varies across time slots (heterogeneous). In order to reflect actual business practises we model the surge price as a static, offline decision which is done based on forecasted estimates of customer WTP values.

**Main Contributions**

We analytically arrive at an interesting theoretical property for the optimal solution. We show that the optimal price inclusive of surge price necessarily belongs to the set of WTP values of customers, irrespective of the surge price being heterogeneous or homogeneous across slots. This obviates the need for any optimization model as the optimal surge price can be obtained by full enumeration. We find that for heterogeneous pricing, we can enumerate a restricted set of WTP values for which orders are non-increasing, instead of enumerating the full set of WTP values for computing the optimal price. We consider a special case of heterogeneous pricing, which closely resembles actual business scenarios in practice, where the number of customers agreeing is concave-decreasing with price and show that a dichotomic search can be performed on the restricted set of WTP values for obtaining the optimal price. However, for the homogeneous surge pricing case, we observe that a full enumeration of all WTP values for customers is required as we cannot characterise a subset of the set of WTP values which is guaranteed to contain the optimal price. Our theoretical proposition for the optimal price is independent of any distribution type for customer WTP and professional ETP, implying that this principle would be applicable for online marketplaces across geographies, with heterogeneous customer behaviour and socio-economic factors.
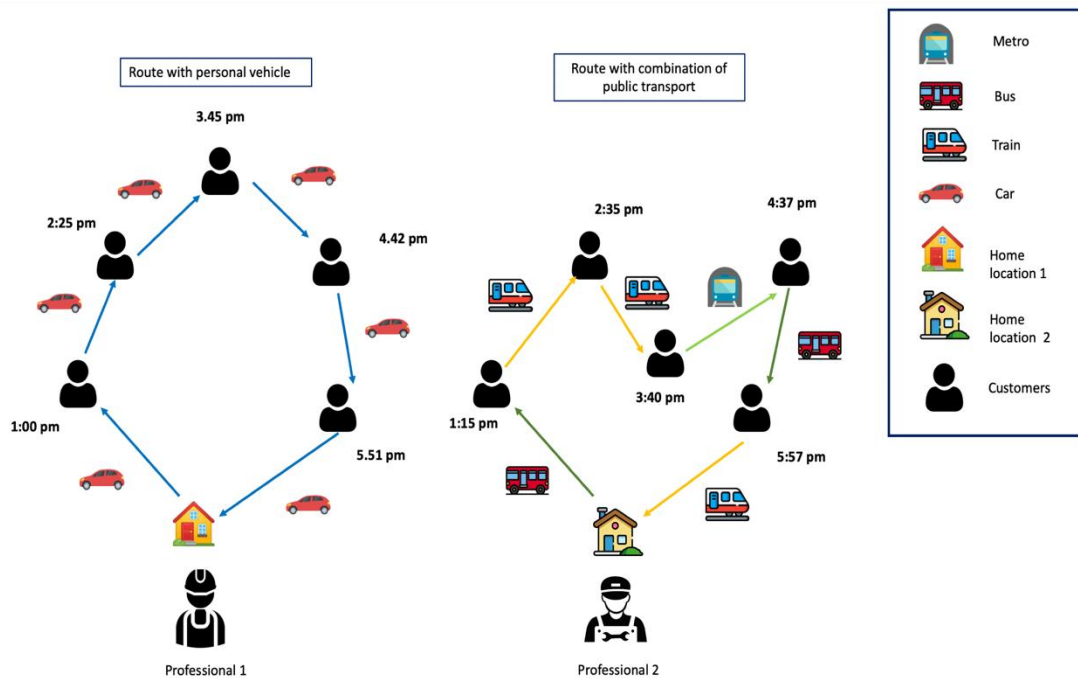
Figure 4: Schematic representation of multi-modal routing for on-demand home services

## Essay 4: A Triple Bottom Line optimization model for assignment and routing of on-demand home services

**Problem context**

Essay 4 is a natural progression from Essay 3, where we zoom in to the operational aspects of a home services platform for deciding the routes of professionals for visiting customers. In the discipline of OR, routing and optimization of travel is one of the core problems. For on-demand services, service professional are often not reimbursed for travel and it becomes a pain point based on the extent and cost of travel required to serve customers. The other issue is that the assignment of professionals to customers is often driven by ratings, customer preferences, leading to great asymmetry in workload and subsequent earnings for different professionals. Also, with the rise in demand for such requests, frequent trips to serve customers is necessary, where service professionals mostly use their own vehicles. This has a significant impact on the carbon footprint of platforms' operations.

Thus there is much more to the management of home service operations beyond routing and assignment. In Essay 4, we approach the operational aspects of a home service platform from the triple bottom line (TBL) lens by combining economic, social and environmental perspectives. The term 'triple bottom line' was introduced by Elkington (1997, 2001) arguing that firms need to account for

non-financial measures like social and environmental performance in order to provide a more holistic picture of their overall business performance. On reviewing the extant literature on home services or home health care (HHC), we found that recent studies in OR like Cappanera et al. (2018), Fathollahi-Fard et al. (2018, 2020), Cappanera & Scutellà (2022), Fathollahi-Fard et al. (2022), Ziya-Gorabi et al. (2022) consider the impact of logistics on the environment or the equity of work allocation among professionals, considering different aspects of the TBL in the context of routing for services. However, papers that combine all the three aspects of the TBL in routing for home-based services is rare (only one paper so far for home health care specifically - Fathollahi-Fard et al. (2022)). We incorporate the TBL metrics planning the operations of an on-demand home services platform. In order to address the environmental impact of transportation (Refer to Figure 5), we factor in the possibility of using different modes of public transport to reduce the carbon footprint of logistics. There has been a lot of hue and cry about independent or gig workers not getting sufficient pay from these platforms, and denied several benefits like social security, pension, holidays which are associated with a job of permanent nature (Roose 2014, Sharma 2020, Sehgal & Yatharth 2022). In order to address these pain points we incorporate equity in earnings to cater to the social performance of the platform. Unlike home health care, for on-demand home services, the earning of service professionals is not fixed per shift, their logistics expenses are individual and not optimised by the platform, customer ratings and reviews and subscription to services impact assignments of professionals. We combine all this issues to formulate an optimisation model which accounts for the economic, environmental and social aspects of the operations of the on-demand home services platform.
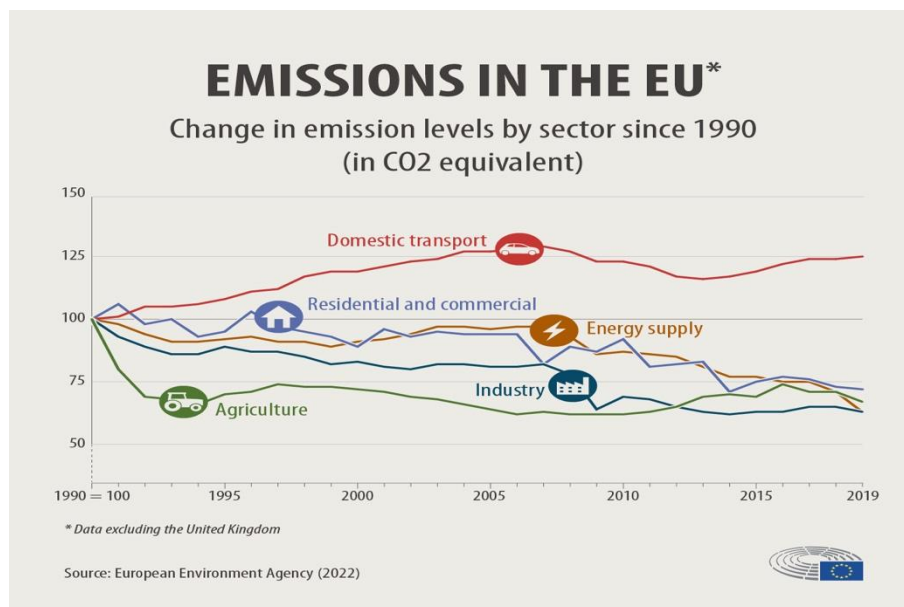


Figure 5: Emission contributors in the EU

**Methodology**

We develop an optimization model for the assignment and routing of on-demand home services which addresses all three pillars of the TBL. For evaluating the economic, environ- mental and social pillars, we consider penalty costs of time window violations and un-served customers in the objective function as (primary) economic criteria and additionally impose constraints for assignment of professionals based on customer ratings as (secondary) economic criteria, reducing emissions from the travel of service professionals as environmental criteria and equity between service professionals in terms of net earnings as social criteria (a new feature that we consider). As the problem is NP-hard, we develop and implement a Hybrid Genetic Search (HGS) algorithm (Vidal et al. 2012, Vidal 2022) for solving larger instances in a computationally efficient way and adapt it to our problem setting. We implement different heuristics for the initial solution generation phase to cater to the different TBL criteria. We also apply local search operators along with genetic operators for efficiently navigating neighbourhoods of candidate solutions. By implementing the HGS, we are able to find solutions with a better objective function value compared to the MILP within a given cut-off time for a pseudo-real data set based on the city of Paris.

**Main Contributions**

The main contributions of this paper which distinguishes it from previous work in this area are the following:

- We define a separate net revenue function for service professionals including total revenue based on the service fee from each customer visit and transportation and parking costs for each visit based on the vehicle type and customer location and ensure a minimum net earnings for each professional.
- For customer satisfaction and retention, we use historical service rating of professionals. Product or service rating has been considered as a proxy for customer satisfaction in the marketing literature (Engler et al. 2015). We give higher priority to subscribed customers in assigning top-rated professionals (compared to non-subscribed customers).
- We model the choice of transport mode for service professionals with the provision of combining different forms of public transport in the same route (or using one's personal vehicle throughout the route) with a focus on controlling emissions across all professionals' tours (Refer to Figure 4).
- We develop novel heuristics for the HGS algorithm for generating initial solutions for all the TBL criteria using a greedy approach, along with a refinement operator.
- Based on numerical experiments, we observe that imposing steep emission caps can however lead to lesser customers being served, adversely impacting the primary economic performance of the platform, indicating that there is a trade-off between the two. We also observe that allowing the flexibility of combining public transport and personal vehicles can reduce the overall emissions as compared to the case where only personal vehicles are allowed, without hampering the economic performance. For the social criteria, the minimum earning threshold for professionals needs to be defined carefully by the platform as it may not be feasible to ensure a very high earning to every

professional. Based on our tests we also find that ensuring fairness in terms of professional earning may not negatively impact the economic performance. Finally, we find instances where the additional environmental, social and (customer satisfaction-based) economic criteria can be improved without worsening the primary economic objective, when we impose constraints based on the TBL (comparing it to the case without any TBL constraints). Thus, we establish that home services platforms can implement operational solutions which can be efficient from the overall TBL perspective.

**Conclusion**

In this doctoral dissertation, we presented four essays encompassing contemporary applications of OM and OR spanning healthcare analytics for epidemic control, discounting strategies for smart home insurance, static surge pricing and routing for on-demand home services platforms with a focus on sustainability. The thesis highlights the versatility of OM and OR for solving problems involving decision-making at strategic, tactical and operational levels, providing novel theoretical contributions and managerial insights based on rigorous analysis. Moreover, this thesis covers different methodologies like game-theoretic modelling, mixed-integer linear programming, quadratic programming along with metaheuristic approaches for addressing the problems.

Summing up, given the intense disruption that businesses are experiencing worldwide and the level of competition in various industries, firms need to make quicker, smarter decisions, in order to survive, let alone thrive. Sustainability holds the key to enduring growth for firms in order to ensure that the progress with novel technologies does not come at the cost of the well-being of people and the environment at large. Whether it is tackling unforeseen global shocks like a pandemic or managing online marketplace models for matching independent service providers with customers, multiple perspectives need to be analysed and compared to arrive at well-rounded, scalable solutions which balance the needs of the main stakeholders. Through this dissertation we hope to provide value to both academics and practitioners who are key stakeholders in offering thought leadership for managing global shocks, climate change and technological disruption.

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# SECOND AWARD

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*The terms of inclusion: How migrant professionals negotiate inclusion in organizations*

## SUMMARY

How do migrant professionals engage with inclusion in organizations? In this thesis, I examine what happens when people, who are seen as different from the dominant social norm, join an organization. Using the case of migrant professionals, I investigate how the conditions laid out by an inclusive organization are both disputed and restored. The findings contribute to inclusion research and critical diversity management showing how inclusion can be studied as engagement with the terms laid-out by those who 'do' the including. I answer the opening question by showing that inclusion is first and foremost a negotiated process.

# Introduction and problem

Inclusion in organizations increasingly counts as a responsible practice, and one of the ways in which organizations can contribute to a sustainable society. A commitment to leaving no one behind (United Nations, 2015) has become a mantra in corporate jargon and in organizational life. However, a closer examination of inclusion processes suggests that to-be-included minorities often experience exclusion (Dobusch et al., 2021; Ortlieb et al., 2021).

This paradox has been addressed in different ways. 'Mainstream' inclusion research sees inclusion as a tool that organizations use to improve workers' performance while fulfilling their ethical commitments (Ferdman, 2014; Mor-Barak, 2015), such as by correcting asymmetries between majorities and minorities. Inclusion does not occur in a vacuum; there are certain conditions and frameworks for inclusion. For example, everyone is expected to speak the working language of the organization. This is referred here to as the 'terms of inclusion' or the conditions that must be fulfilled to belong to the whole. This mainstream understanding of terms of inclusion means that majorities and minorities agree on what inclusion is and what it takes to be included. Minorities can mobilize their capacities (skills, competencies, ethnic identity) when they are hosted by inclusive environments where everyone feels accepted (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Ferdman, 2014; Roberson, 2006; Shore et al.,2018).

From a 'critical' perspective, inclusion is seen somewhat different. Inclusion involves the existence of inequality from the outset: inclusion itself constitutes an asymmetrical relation between majorities that include and minorities that are being included (Schinkel, 2018). Thisstandpoint stresses that organizational efforts to include often do not live up to what they promise (Ortlieb et al., 2021; Thomas, 2018) and minorities may not be able to be included despite well-intentioned efforts (Dobusch et al., 2021; Priola et al., 2018). From a critical perspective, it is argued that efforts to include are not sufficient to reverse exclusion since inequality is the norm (Zanoni et al., 2010). Despite organizations taking actions to be inclusive, the root cause of inequality such as economic disparity, racism, and genderism (Holvino, 2010), or the ultimate interest being profitability (Tyler & Vachhani, 2021; Zanoni, 2011), remains unaddressed. In this asymmetrical relation minorities occupy a position of subordination. From a critical perspective, regardless of the minorities' individual capacities,full inclusion cannot be achieved.

Both mainstream and critical approaches lead to a common point: inclusion ultimately takes place under conditions laid out by a dominant group. The minorities who are to-be-included need to fit with the conditions decided by a dominant group. However, it is also well-known that minorities can mobilize agency to question the surrounding organizational structures (Ghorashi & Ponzoni, 2013; Pio & Essers, 2014). For example, several works have emphasized minority micro-resistance (Van Laer & Janssens, 2017; Zanoni & Janssens, 2007). This shows that minorities are reflective and can continuously monitor their actions (Giddens, 1986). Inclusion can therefore never be an imposition, but it must be coordinated and consented.

This clash between agency and forces that constrain it, suggests that inclusion is characterized by conditionality where majorities include minorities under certain dynamic terms; for example, terms that classify minorities in certain work placements and identities (Ortlieb et al., 2021; Tyler, 2019). One such example is the establishment of categories such as 'low skilled' or 'highly skilled' migrants. I further examine how organizational norms maintain inclusion under certain conditions. To do so, I investigate the inclusion of migrant professionals in an organization self-defined as inclusive.

I argue that inclusion should be examined by focusing on the conditions that frame minority group agency. I build on previous work using agency to better understand the power-laden relations in inclusion processes. Taking a critical perspective, the thesis aims to answer the broad research question: How may migrant professionals engage with the terms of their inclusion?
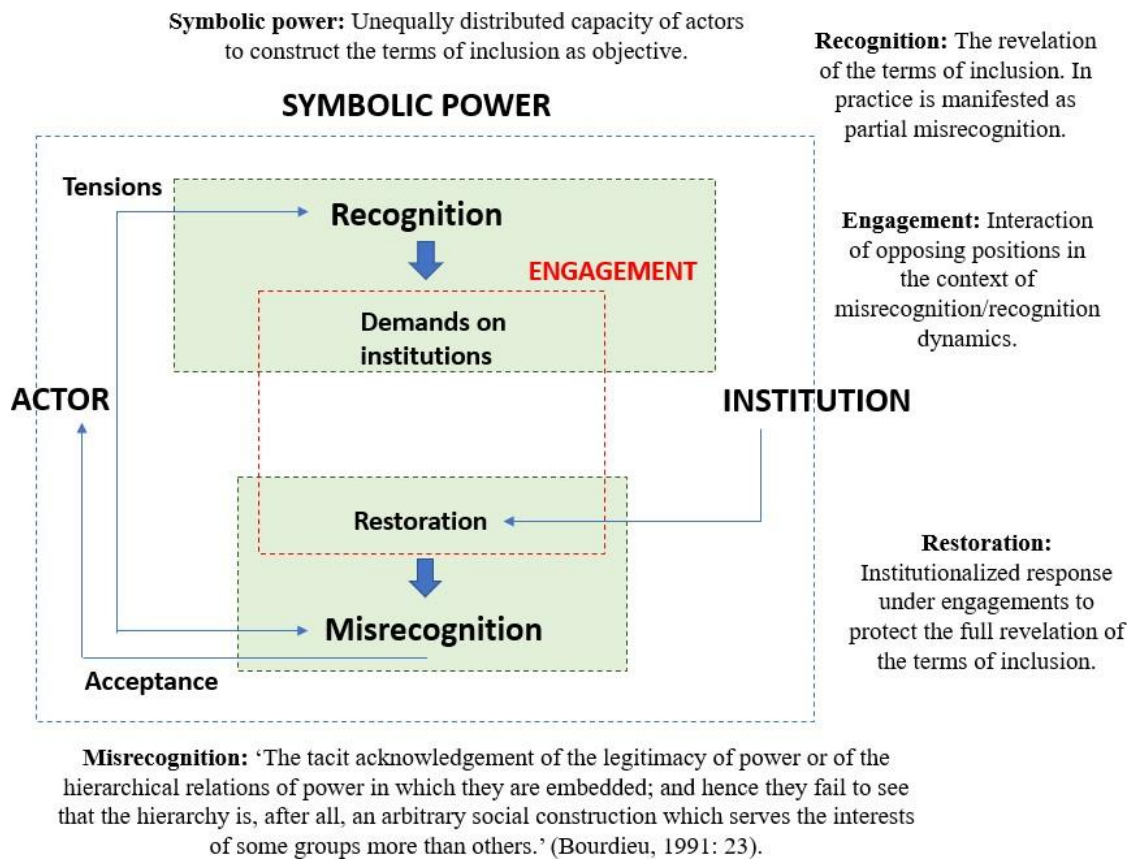
## Theoretical approach

Organizational inclusion is embedded into a broader logic of inequality, which predominantly affects minoritized groups (Leong, 2021; Tatlı et al., 2015). Accordingly, I adopt a Bourdieusian approach to further examine agency struggles and sources of tension, complementing this with insights from French Pragmatic Sociology (FPS) (Boltanski, 2011; Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). FPS allows me to focus on the 'critical capacity' of migrant professionals in everyday life situations (Boltanski, 2011: 43). The approach captures sources of tension and demands specific of migrant professionals, and how organizations respond to these demands. To do that, the theoretical framework articulates together the concepts of 'symbolic power', 'misrecognition', 'recognition', and 'restoration' (Boltanski, 2011; Bourdieu, 1979, 1980, 2000).

Symbolic power is the power to impose principles of construction of reality that naturalize social domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Inclusion is characterized by asymmetrical power relations between social groups (Schinkel, 2018), which is constituted by actors' tacit agreements (Bourdieu, 1990). When symbolic power is effective, people coincide 'without leaving room for doubt or criticism' (Weiß, 2010: 43). As example, symbolic power is what gives legitimacy to social norms, for example, doctors' square caps (Bourdieu, 2000). The belief in the authority of the square caps has the effect of naturalizing the social gap that separates doctors from other people.

In turn, the conditionality of inclusion is an exercise of symbolic power: there appears to be a capacity of powerful actors to lay out conditions for others e.g., migrants. When this happened, the asymmetrical social relation that constitute inclusion becomes misrecognized. This is, symbolic power is misrecognized when there is a collective failure to recognize the

arbitrariness of power. A collective misrecognition of the conditions of inclusion makes possible the reproduction of the social hierarchy that keeps migrants in subordinated social positions (Ponzoni et al., 2017; Zanoni, 2011). Misrecognition then hides the domination of migrants, objectifying the conditionality that shapes their everyday practices (Samaluk, 2015).

Against that background, FPS emphasizes the centrality of the actor and how the actor engage with the terms of inclusion. Actors can pose demands on institutions – i.e., on the terms of inclusion – unveiling their arbitrariness. For example, in situations where migrant professionals may 'struggle for social change and against structural inequalities' (Van Laer & Janssens, 2017: 213) exposing the terms of inclusion as 'arbitrary' or 'hypocritical' (Boltanski, 2011: 59). When migrant professionals pose demands, they engage with the terms of inclusion, the terms in a way that can create tensions. For instance, 'unmasking contradictions' or revealing reality as unequal or unfair (Boltanski, 2011: 105). This leads to the exposition of the terms of inclusion and opens the possibility to propose new power arrangements. Restoration appears then as an institutionalized response that prevents the revelation of the unequal social relations underpinning inclusion.



Theoretical approach: engagement with the terms of inclusion

Engagement is produced by the encounter of migrant professionals whom, from their subject position, may attempt to question the terms of their inclusion. Yet, symbolic power is unequally distributed; the includers are expected to be in a stronger social position to define the specific terms of inclusion (Hallett, 2003). E.g., managers doing inclusion have more capacity to shape those terms. Engagement is then structured around terms of inclusion that largely reflect the symbolic power of the includers.

## Methodology

*A critical ethnographic approach*

Ontologically, I situate the thesis in the critical research tradition in organization studies (Clegg, 2009; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). My premise is that social reality instead of being 'objective', is socially constructed and 'shaped by social, political, cultural, economicand gender structures, values and meanings' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 109). This ontology shapes the research method: critical ethnography.

In the field, the latent possibilities of disrupting power asymmetries and the barriers that maydeny these possibilities are stressed (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Madison, 2022). The generation of the empirical material draws on my dialogue with research participants.
Therefore, the empirical material represents constant reflections of the difference between the'what is' from the 'what could be' (Madison, 2022: 5) within the limits set by organizations and society.

Consistent with an emphasis on agency, the migrant professional's possibilities to understandand modify their most immediate situation becomes the focus. Accordingly, I am attentive to moments of rupture that could reveal the existing power relations at play (Bourdieu, 2000). Iset this approach in the lived experience of managers and migrant professionals 'doing inclusion' or 'being included' in the context of power asymmetries in an organization.

*Case organization*

The ethnographic fieldwork took place in Servall (the anonymized case organization) and theProgram (a 6-month unpaid internship for migrant professionals). Servall is a Swedish-basedservice provider organization of about 14,000 employees. Servall inclusion work has been awarded several prizes and connects with both public (e.g. ministries, public agencies, anti- discrimination networks) and private actors (e.g. large businesses) in Sweden. The organization and the Program are characterized by an optimistic discourse, highlighting inclusion as a win-win situation.
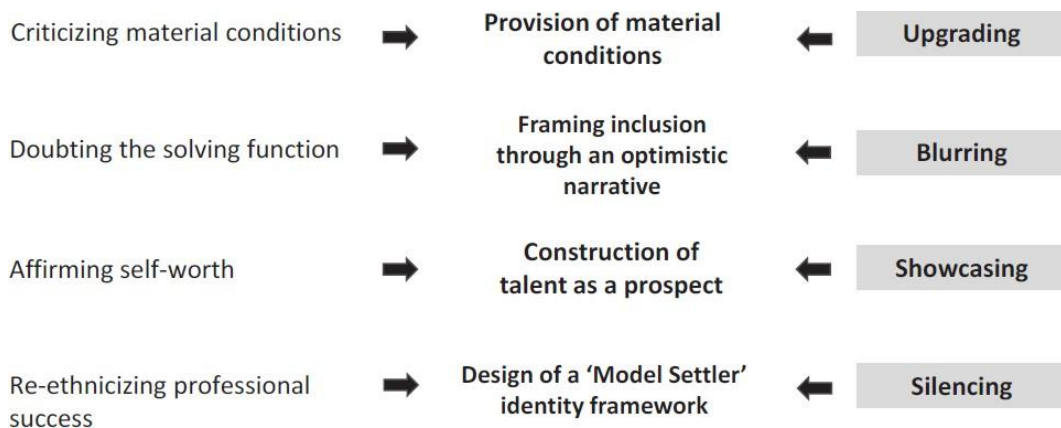
Within the Program, my ethnographic lens allowed to explore the 'minutiae of experience, the cultural texture of social relations, and the remote structural forces that bear on them' (Yin, 2016: 69). The

Program proposes an inclusion that exemplifies the situation of migrantprofessionals in Sweden, where the professional skills intersect with unemployment (Statistics Sweden, 2019), and ethno-cultural and class barriers (Hunger et al., 2021; Povrzanović Frykman & Öhlander, 2018). Therefore, the Program allows me to explore the migrants capacity to question the terms of inclusion under a relative subordinate power position (enduring an unpaid internship), making a significant case to answer the research question (Wieviorka, 1992).

*Generation of empirical material and analysis*

Interviewing was the main technique for the generation of the empirical material. I conducted51 interviews with migrant professionals (n=30) and Managers (n=19) participating in the Program, the responsible person for maintenance of Servall's historical archives (n=1), and anEmployment Office-EO Recruitment Manager (n=1) who acted as conduit between EO and Servall. The interviews were both semi-structured and unstructured. The interviews were complemented with the analysis of field notes, corporate documents, workshop presentations,and audiovisual material from Servall.

The Gioia methodology was used for analyzing empirical material. This methodology allowsfor the use of multiple 'data sources' besides interviews (see Gioia et al., 2013: 19 and Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991: 437). Two data structures (Gioia et al., 2013) were built. One centeredon Managers ('Managers use of symbolic power') and the other on migrant professionals demands ('Migrant professionals' agency under conditionality'). High-ranked Managers' voices were used to construct the terms of inclusion, since their views were most likely to reflect the official position of the organization, and the production of official material is monitored by them. The inductive coding generated the four terms of inclusion, which are used to organize the analysis and a form of restoration is attached to each.

| Migrant professionals' demands | | Terms of inclusion | | Restoration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Criticizing material conditions | ➡ | Provision of material conditions | ⬅ | Upgrading |
| Doubting the solving function | ➡ | Framing inclusion through an optimistic narrative | ⬅ | Blurring |
| Affirming self-worth | ➡ | Construction of talent as a prospect | ⬅ | Showcasing |
| Re-ethnicizing professional success | ➡ | Design of a 'Model Settler' identity framework | ⬅ | Silencing |

Migrant professionals' demands    Terms of inclusion    Restoration

# Key findings

The findings address three issues:
(1)      what are the terms of inclusion at play in Servall?;
(2)      how is the agency of migrant professionals like?; and
(3)      how do migrant professionals engage with the terms of inclusion?.

I unfold the analysis by using the concepts of recognition/misrecognition, and restoration.

(1)      The terms of inclusion identified describe what needs to be accepted for inclusion to be possible. These are conditions that the Program managers (mostly the CEO and highly ranked managers) value and which the migrant professionals are requested to accept in order to be included. There are four terms prospective migrant professionals are invited to accept: material conditions, optimistic story, prospective talent, and the image of the model migrant.
The first term is provided by the Program's configuration: the material conditions of the Program. Applicants are expected to accept a 6-month internship without payment in exchange for an assessment that could lead to employment either at Servall or elsewhere.

The second term relates to the optimistic discourse. Migrant professionals are invited to accept that the Program is solving the migrant integration challenge in society– a group which migrant professionals are part of.

The third term relates to the image of migrant professionals as prospective talent. Unlike other targeted groups, migrant professionals are constructed as having skills and competencies that have great potential, seen as talent that needs full recognition to be included.

The fourth term is the image of the model migrant, in that migrant professionals are invited to fit into an identity framework which depicts them as successful *despite* their ethno-cultural origin.

(2)      With an agency-centered approach, three ideal types of migrant professional experiences are showcased. In these ideal types, migrant professionals attempt to make sense of their path to inclusion. I inquired on how migrant professionals see inclusion and their everyday demands.

I present three 'ideal types' that depict how migrant professionals strive to attain inclusion, called: 'Sky is the limit', 'Hardwork as salvation', and 'Speaking up to the rules'.

In 'Sky is the limit', migrant professionals relate inclusion with the necessity to adapt to a new country (Sweden) and a new organization (Servall). They highlight the necessity to stick to the employers demands and show loyalty. Under the blueprint of adaptation, these migrant professionals strive to demonstrate talent. They do not consider that there is migration challenge in Sweden. They considered

the barriers they experienced in the labor market as circumstantial and which can be overcome through individual drive.

In 'Hardwork as salvation', migrant professionals characterize inclusion in society as challenging. They experience discrimination, substantiating the existence of a structural problem. Once, they are part of the Program, they accept and justify the material conditions. They tend to align with Servall's idea that there is a migration challenge in Sweden. They arefocused on constructing themselves as hard workers, as hard work seems to pave the way towards inclusion. Hard work led some migrant professionals to move to a permanent position at Servall and occupy higher power positions.

In 'Speaking up to the rules', migrant professionals characterize inclusion as discrimination that takes place despite their power positioning such as through their social status, ethnicity, or religion. They experience inclusion as disempowering; they do not push to act as potentialtalent in Servall. They already see themselves as skilled and talented. Neither does this groupbelieve that Servall's Program solves the root cause of the migration challenge in society.
Instead, migrant disadvantages in the labor market also take place in Servall. The material conditions (unpaid internship) is construed as one of these disadvantages within Servall. Against these material conditions, these migrant professionals disagree and aspire to changethem.

(3) An analysis of the interactions between migrant professionals and the terms of inclusion suggests the existence of four forms of restoration: upgrading, blurring, showcasing, silencing. Through restoration, organizations protect the status quo, and this could lead to aresponse by migrant professionals.

To unveils the forms of restoration, I shadowed four migrant professionals (Carmen, Henriette, Yasmin, and Ivette) engaging with institutionalized actors (interested in preservingthe status quo). I shows how, when the terms of inclusion are misrecognized by demands posed by the migrant professionals, a response emerges. In the case of Carmen and Henriette,their demands are met with a response that reinstates the terms of inclusion. Yasmin opts for silence being aware of her inability to change the terms of inclusion. Yet, in one case (Ivette),negotiates her situation and manages to break away from her subordinate position. Ivette faces her boss during her unpaid internship, negotiate her contract and secures a paid positionat Servall.

This table depicts the migrant professionals' engagement with the terms of inclusion.

| Terms of inclusion | Demand | Restoration | Institutionaliz edactors involved and response | Outcome of engagement | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Material conditions | Criticizing material conditions: Job upgrade request | Upgrading | Boss upgrading Ivette after her asking for clarifying contractual situation | Ivette getting a promotion | Recognition |
| Optimistic story | Doubting the solving function: Question on migrant unemployment | Blurring | Minister answer to Carmen in a public event | Carmen believing the words of the institutionalize d actor | Further misrecognition after restoration |
| Prospective talent | Affirming self-worth: Through ethnicized professionalism | Showcasing | Managers frequent showcasing of migrant professionals as future talent | Henriette accepts her incompleteness | Further misrecognition after restoration |
| Model migrant | Exposing ethnocultural conflictivity | Silencing | Managers and colleagues kept anonymity and made the tension vanish | Yasmin opting for accepting silence and conflict avoidance | Coexistence of recognition and misrecognition |

In sum, the findings unveil how inclusion is a *negotiated process*. In this negotiation, the picture is mixed: some migrant professionals misrecognize the terms of inclusion and therefore demonstrate limited engagement. Misrecognition among migrant professionals israther dominant, which means that Servall eventually imposes the terms of inclusion.

Inclusion at Servall does not imply collective misrecognition. The course of migrant professional demands is met with responses that tackle the possibility of change. In one particular negotiation, one migrant professional is able to negotiate a term i.e., recognizing the arbitrariness of inclusion at Servall. This migrant professional then manages to turn the response on her individual favor, this shows that the terms of inclusion are resilient but coulebe changed.

With this thesis, I advance that inclusion should not be taken for granted but should be understood as fragile, in constant negotiation.

## Contributions and practical implications

The dissertation provides three main contributions to organizational inclusion and critical diversity management literature.

First, it re-directs the scholarly discussion on inclusion from 'inclusive environments' (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Ferdman, 2014; Roberson, 2006; Shore et al., 2018) towards conditionality. It argues for a new perspective in researching inclusion, keeping the terms of inclusion as central. By situating the analysis under a specific set of terms of inclusion, I show how organizational power could play a central role in shaping inclusion. Conditionality counteracts the assumption of an even playfield for all actors, where attaining inclusion is a product of the minority individual capacity to include oneself (Ferdman, 2017). Inclusive environments cannot be used a one-size fits-all approach; it is hardly only about minority willingness to include (Shore et al., 2018). Instead, the thesis demonstrates that conditionality will pervade any attempt to create inclusive environments.

Situating the terms of inclusion can allow us to construct a common ground from which to compare inclusion experiences. Methodologically, this can facilitate a better way of capturing inclusion and, overall, theory-building associated with inclusion. Therefore, it could show, in the specificity of each organization, what the desired courses of action of 'those including' are and the boundaries that should not be crossed.

Second, it shows how inclusion is a negotiated process. Focusing on negotiations, the thesis highlights processes of dispute and closure in organizations, advancing the idea that the dynamics of misrecognition/recognition play an important role in the negotiated order. In this thesis, I show that power asymmetries need to be recognized as such before they can be "negotiated". The findings demonstrate a mixed picture, where misrecognition/recognition coexist under inclusion processes. A focus on the co-occurrence of misrecognition and recognition informs future studies on different inclusion routes within the same minority group.

Negotiation involves more than creating alternatives to dominant notions of 'otherness' (Pio & Essers, 2014: 258). Negotiations in this thesis invoke the principles of construction (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) of power in organizations. The suggestion here is to pay close attention to everyday disputes over the hegemonic conditions at play (Boltanski, 2011).

Framing inclusion as a negotiated process could help better grasp the roots of domination underlying practices of diversity and inclusion in organizations. Therefore, I propose and epistemological shift to study inclusion as a negotiation of conditions.

Third, it re-signifies minority agency by highlighting the capacity of migrant professionals to question power in organizations. The thesis advances the possibility that minorities can fully resist and considers the prospect of full resistance (and not only micro-resistance) to the terms of inclusion.

In this thesis, I discuss how full resistance might be possible and its potential effects, involving restoration. It reveals what happens when inclusive organizations face demands from migrant professionals, that can challenge the fundamental rules. However, if full resistance is achieved, it could result in emancipation (Zanoni and Janssens, 2007) that goes beyond personal interests. Future research should follow tensions such as Ivette's negotiation with the goal of advancing knowledge on resistance.

I suggest considering the incorporation of full resistance as a valid analytical concept. Full resistance could serve as a standard against which to read demands by incorporating the latent possibility of disrupting conditionality. Moving from micro-resistance to full resistance is relevant because it can potentially move beyond the realm of infra- or micro- power (Scott, 1990) and expand the scope from which to look at agentic possibilities. The contention is that minorities should be studied as a group able to negotiate the roots of the power that aims to dominate them.

As for practical implications, this thesis suggests that more equitable conditions from the outset could facilitate inclusion The global mobility of skilled workers and the 'acceptance to difference' need to be harmonized with equality for inclusion to truly be effective. This could be achieved by creating professional insertion options for migrant professionals more commensurate with skills and prior experience. Designing acceptable conditions for migrant professionals could help prevent the reproduction of inequality at the societal level. This thesis showed how inclusive organizations can think carefully on their proposed conditions, before launching inclusion initiatives. It is argued that only through a close reflection of the conditions, organizations can get close to genuine win-win situations.

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# THIRD AWARD (1)

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*Empowering women through femvertising*

SUMMARY

This dissertation explores femvertising as a strategy to reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination in society through three distinct studies. A Systematic Literature Review, assesses 21st-century literature on female stereotypes and empowerment in advertising from a feminist perspective, proposing a future research agenda. The second study is qualitative research that delves into the concept of femvertising across different cultures. The third study investigates how feminist self-identification and support for women's rights influence brand-related effects, and how consumers from countries with different gender equality levels respond to femvertising campaigns. These studies reveal femvertising's transformative impact on advertising and societal gender perceptions.

## Introduction

Female empowerment and the accurate portrayal of women have become an increasingly prevalent theme in advertising (e.g., Åkestam et al., 2017; Champlin et al., 2019; Varghese& Kumar, 2020). These fundamental elements of feminist principles aim to achieve gender equality (Skey, 2015). Seven years have passed since the #MeToo hashtag went viral. Since then, with an increase in the use of new social media platforms (e.g., reels in TikTok), feminist ideals have been influencing female consumer's behaviors. (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Celebrity endorsements and popular social media trends have made this phenomenon more evident (Banet-Weiser, 2018). Furthermore, prominent events like Rihanna's historic pregnancy announcement during the male-dominated Super Bowl halftime show in 2023 and Beyoncé's legendary 2014 MTV Video Music Awards performance, featuring the word feminist as a backdrop serve as a remarkable example of feminism's uplifting and empowering influence on women (Hesse, 2023). Successful and well-recognized women have become public advocates for the cause: (e.g., Sheryl Sandberg from Facebook, Emma Watson from Hollywood). Luxury fashion brands are also noted as campaigners (e.g., designer Christian Dior created a $719 T-shirt with the legend 'We should all be feminist'). There is no doubt that feminism has become a trend, and it seems that it is here to stay.

Gender equality, however, has not advanced at the same rate. Not every country may sustain gender equality rights. Younger generations of women are raising and disseminating their voices on social media to demand gender equality and women's rights (e.g., in Iran, following the death of a young woman in custody, many women tore off and burned their hijab to protest the law, and posted to social media with the hashtag # Mahsaamini; Tabrizy & Willis, 2022). This social activism has expanded into the consumer behavior context. It cannot be denied that many female consumers today value feminism (Banet-Weiser, 2018). With an increasing purchasing power, female consumers have become highly conscious of the brands they choose to purchase, pushing the industry to have a more accurate portrayal in their advertising (Maclaran et al., 2013). Accordingly, brands have responded to consumers' demands. They have adopted femvertising, defined as a combination of feminism and advertising, turning into a radical shift in women's representation in more equal roles and responsibilities (Åkestam et al., 2017).

Femvertising primary objective is to avoid gender stereotypes (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). It encourages female empowerment, resonating positively with consumers (Elhajjar, 2021; Teng et al., 2020). Additionally, it might improve the brand's attitude (Åkestam et al., 2017) and increase purchase intention (Drake, 2017). Consequently, the number of companies in female empowerment social initiatives is gaining momentum. Examples include Lane Bryant's # I'm No Angel, Nissan's #SheDrives, and Always #Like a Girl (Champlin et al., 2019). Nevertheless, what are the implications of this trend for brand managers and advertisers in terms of fulfilling social responsibility? Recent research suggests that despite some progress, female stereotypes are still prevalent in advertising (Atkinson et al., 2022; Ho & Tanaka, 2022; Shinoda et al., 2020). Previous studies have

called for further research to explore the dimension of female empowerment in this context (Eisend, 2010; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Mager & Helgeson, 2011). Additionally, some studies have highlighted the potential positive impact of advertising on women's development (Slak Valek & Picherit-Duthler, 2021).

In response, this doctoral dissertation conducts three different studies to explore femvertising as a strategy to reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination in society. First, a Systematic Literature Review, which already published in *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* assesses 21st-century literature on female stereotypes and empowerment in advertising from a feminist perspective, proposing a future research agenda. The second study, which already published in *Feminist Media Studies* is a qualitative research that delves into the concept of femvertising across different cultures. The third study, which is under review process in *Feminist Media Studies* investigates how feminist self-identification and support for women's rights influence brand-related effects, and how consumers from countries with different gender equality levels respond to femvertising campaigns. These studies reveal femvertising's transformative impact on advertising and societal gender perceptions.
The remaining part of this dissertation summary is organized in the following manner: Section 2 will give a brief overview of the primary concepts that have been used in the dissertation. In Section 3, the key gaps addressed, and research questions will be discussed. Section 4 will provide a summary of the studies and the methodologies employed. Finally, Section 5 will present conclusions, along with theoretical, societal and managerial implications.

## Theoretical background and main concepts

This study assumes that the increasing influence of feminism in advertising stems from the recognition that gender stereotypes limit consumers' self-image, affecting their behavior, opportunities, and decision-making. According to Parker (2017), the Chief Executive of the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK regulator of ads in all media, gender stereotypes are prevalent and as such, this dissertation incorporates the concept of gender stereotypes. *Gender stereotypes* affect consumer values and society, which can have both positive and negative effects, particularly for female consumers (Eisend et al., 2014).

Likewise, *Female or women empowerment* is conceptualized the following way, in accordance with Török et al. (2023, p.12): "Female empowerment is culturally bounded, and one's perception and experience of it vary depending on each individual's attitude. It may also include free decision-making, control over income, freedom of mobility, self-esteem, time management, leadership in the community and sorority".

Furthermore, in this dissertation, the term *feminism* is used to describe a movement that aims to fight against sexism, exploitation, and oppression, and promotes equality, inclusivity, and freedom of choice. Hooks (2000) outlines the different stages of feminist eras, which reflect progress towards gender

equality and the breakdown of patriarchal power structures. Social and historical factors such as the role of women in the labor force and family structures have influenced this evolution (Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Given the intricate interdependencies between these multifaceted concepts, Table 1 offers comprehensive definitions aimed at facilitating precise identification and differentiation.

Table 1: Summary of main concepts

| Concept | Definition | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Gender stereotypes | Beliefs of differentiating women and men regarding certain characteristics, attributes, behaviors and occupations | Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981. Eisend, 2010 |
| Feminism | A movement against sexism, exploitation, and oppression, promoting equality, inclusion, and freedom of choice | Hook, 2000 |
| Evolution of the feminist eras | In feminism, evolution denotes the continuous advancement towards gender equality and the dismantling of patriarchal systems of power and oppression | Hooks, 2000 |
| Eras of feminism | The evolution of feminism theory over time, comprising four movments: prefeminism, first wave, secon wave, third wave, postfeminim, and fourth wave feminism | Mager & Helgeson, 2011 |
| Female empowerment | The capability to live the life one wishes. it is defined by decision-making, control over income, freedom of mobility, self-esteem, psychological well-being, leadership in the community and time management. | Mahmud et al., 2012 |
| Femvertising | Advertising that challenges traditional female advertising stereotypes. | Åkestam et al., 2017 |
| Gender equality index | The current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health, and political empowerment). | World Economic Forum, 2022 |
| Brand-related effects | Includes all the consumer behavior toward the brand, including purchase intention (the situation where consumers tend to buy a specific product in certain conditions, attitude toward advertising (an indicator of advertising effectiveness), and attitudes toward the brand. | Metha, 2000 |

Source: own edition based on Gomez et.al, 2024.

## Problem statement and research questions

This doctoral dissertation endeavors to bridge several critical gaps identified in the existing body of research. Firstly, it builds upon prior studies that have examined gender stereotypes within advertising over various periods (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Eisend, 2010; Mager & Helgeson, 2011), which highlighted the significance of female empowerment and underscored the need for further exploration in this area (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Nevertheless, these studies have not fully integrated the concept of multiple feminist periods into their analysis.

Secondly, the dissertation offers an in-depth examination of femvertising, considering both consumer and brand perspectives. From a consumer standpoint, it delves into previously unexplored dimensions of female empowerment in the context of femvertising, such as decision-making and control over income (Knudsen & Wærness, 2008; Alkire et al., 2013). On the brand side, it addresses the notable gap in research concerning the impact of femvertising on brand-related outcomes, including attitudes towards the advertising and brand, as well as purchase intentions (Åkestam et al., 2017; Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2019).

Thirdly, the dissertation identifies a need for more cross-cultural research on the effects of femvertising. While some studies have called for such research (Champlin et al., 2019; Teng et al., 2021), there remains a scarcity of investigations into femvertising within various cultural contexts, especially outside high-gender-equality countries. Notably, most existing studies have focused on countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, South Korea, and New Zealand (Statista, 2020), which are known for their higher levels of gender equality. This leaves a significant research gap in lower-gender-equality countries, particularly in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Southern Europe. To address this, Mexico, Hungary, and Spain have been selected as representative regions to explore issues of gender inequality more comprehensively.

Based on the aforementioned analysis, the following unresolved research questions have been formulated for this doctoral dissertation, structured through three distinct lenses:

- What are the main trends in women consumer research and femvertising from a feminist perspective – and what are its implications to gender stereotypes and women empowerment?
- What does female empowerment mean? How does femvertising empower women? What is the attitude of women toward advertisements that use traditional local stereotypes versus their attitude toward femvertising?
- How do brands can benefit from incorporating femvertising in their communication strategy? Do consumers, especially those who support women's rights, identify as self-feminist and trust in ads, like/dislike femvertising?

## Summary of the studies and the methodologies employed

Three studies were designed to address the research questions outlined in Section 3. This section provides a comprehensive overview of each study, including the methodologies utilized, all of which are summarized in Table 2.

The first study aims to answer the question What are the main trends in women consumer research and femvertising from a feminist perspective – and what are its implications to gender stereotypes and women empowerment? To this aim a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was built. This study employs a systematic, transparent, and rigorously structured review framework alongside a comprehensive 4Ws1H (What, Where, Why, and How) analysis. This study makes three significant contributions to the field. First, it introduces an innovative conceptual framework for analyzing female stereotypes and empowerment in advertising. This framework organizes literature from the 21st century according to the four evolutionary eras of feminism: prefeminism, feminism, postfeminism, and the fourth wave of feminism. Second, the SLR uncovers current research trends, dominant methodologies, the geographical regions and industries that have been the focus of existing studies, and outlines avenues for future research. This provides a clear roadmap for scholars interested in furthering the understanding of these dynamics and their implications for advertising practice. Third, the review highlights the significant influence of femvertising in the context of the fourth wave of feminism, emphasizing its role in meeting consumer demands for diversity and inclusion. This encompasses a broader representation that includes disabilities, ethnicity, age, and gender identity, thereby contributing to a more inclusive advertising narrative.

The primary research trends identified through this review include the exploration of female stereotypes, the sexualization of women in advertising, brand-related attitudes, and the various dimensions of female empowerment. Qualitative research methods have been predominant in the literature, with a focus primarily on countries recognized for their high gender equality. Industries such as fashion, luxury apparel, beauty, and personal care, which traditionally target women in their marketing efforts, are at the forefront of existing studies. These insights encourage further research that diverges from these trends, advocating for studies in regions with lower levels of gender equality and in industries that are either gender-neutral or traditionally male-dominated. This direction not only broadens the scope of research but also deepens the understanding of feminism and diversity in advertising across diverse contexts and sectors.
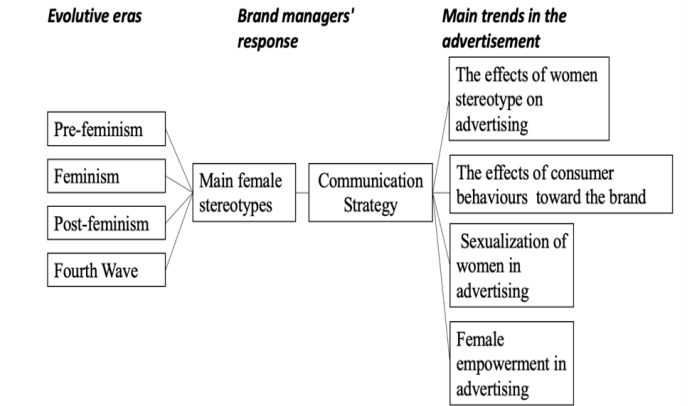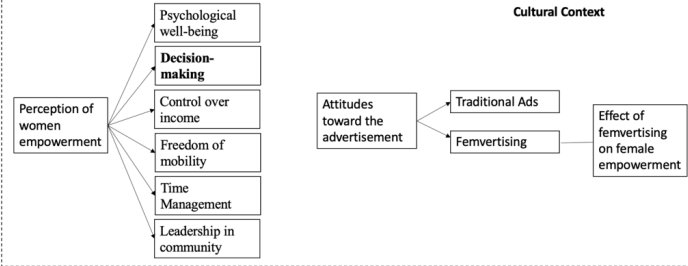
The second empirical study aims to unravel the concept of femvertising through a cross-cultural analysis in countries previously overlooked by research. Twenty semi-structured in-depth interviews with women from Mexico and Hungary were analyzed employing thematic content analysis, unveiling culturally specific dimensions of femvertising and broadening the definition of female empowerment. Contrary to initial assumptions, it was discovered that countries with lower gender equality, but different cultural backgrounds exhibit similar perceptions of female empowerment. A notable

distinction emerged: Mexican respondents emphasized the significance of sorority as a facet of empowerment, while Hungarians prioritized individuality. Mexican participants acknowledged a positive impact of femvertising on their perceptions, whereas Hungarian participants believed femvertising had a greater influence on others than on themselves. This study highlights the importance for academics and practitioners to account for cultural variances, as attitudes towards femvertising in both contexts revealed a spectrum of both positive and negative viewpoints. Additionally, this investigation uncovers critical insights into femvertising's reliance on gender stereotypes, such as traditional male-associated gender roles, suggesting an implicit message that empowerment for women involves emulating male behaviors.

The third empirical study aims to understand in a cross-cultural setting how feminist-self-identification and support for women's rights, which are at the core of femvertising purpose, moderate brand-related effects of femvertising and how consumers from different countries with varying gender gaps respond to femvertising. A survey was conducted to provide evidence from two countries: Mexico, a country with lower gender equality index representing Latin America, and Spain, with a higher-gender-equality index, representing Southern Europe. Two relevant contributions emerged from results, first the effects of femvertising might be extrapolated to different nations. Second, feminist consumers from countries with lower gender equality negatively moderate the attitude toward femvertising, so a boundary condition was uncovered for both support for women rights and self-identification feminist. The practical implication of the study suggests that brands must use diverse representation of their female consumers including, roles, race, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, and body diversity. The study also recommends that brands committed to female empowerment should create their communication strategy with an interdisciplinary team that includes not only marketing experts but gender equality experts.

Table 2: Research objectives of the doctoral thesis

| Study | Research gaps | Objectives | Methodology | Main concepts | Conceptual framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctoral thesis | 1.Although recent articles have recommend conducting cross-cultural studies on the effect of femvertising. No research has been conducted under such conditions<br><br>2.Most studies regarding femvertising and female stereotypes are set in high-gender-equality countries<br><br>3. Most of the brand related effects of femvertising have been tested on female consumers | 1.To scrutinize the concept of women empowerment in a multicultural setting<br><br>2.To provide empirical evidence in a cross-cultural context, in lower-gender-equality countries located in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Southern Europe (e.g., Mexico, Hungary and Spain)<br><br>3.To analyze how consumers from different genders perceive, interpretate, and use femvertising | Systematic Literature Review (SLR),<br><br>Interviews<br><br>Projective Techniques | Femvertising<br><br>Gender stereotypes<br><br>Purchase intention<br><br>Attitudes toward the advertising<br><br>Attitudes toward the brand |  |

| Study | Problem | Objectives | Method | Key concepts | Framework |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Study 1: Evaluating femvertising: Consumer research on women empowerment and gender stereotypes | 1.Current research on gender stereotypes in advertising and femvertising lacks a framework incorporating the theory of multiple feminist periods | 1. To identify the main trends in gender stereotypes in advertising and female empowerment | Systematic Literature Review (SLR) | Pre-feminism\n\nFeminism\n\nPost-feminism\n\nFourth Wave\n\nCommunication strategy\n\nMain trends |  |
| Study 2: Are female stereotypes evolving through femvertising? Evidence from Hungary and Mexico | 1.The variables of decision-making and control over income of female empowerment have not yet been studied alongside femvertising.\n\n2. Few studies on femvertising have explored the phenomenon with qualitative interviews | 1.To investigate what does female empowerment means to female consumers\n\n2.To analyze how femvertising empowers women\n\n3.To provide empirical evidence on the attitude of female consumers toward advertisements that use traditional local stereotypes versus their attitude toward femvertising | Interviews\n\nProjective Techniques | Femvertising\n\nWomen empowerment\n\nTraditional stereotypes in the advertising\n\nAttitudes toward the advertising |  |

| Study 3: A cross-cultural study of the consumer responses towards femvertising: Evidence from Mexico and Spain | 1.Brand managers and researchers should understand how antecedents and consequences of femvertising vary across countries<br><br>2. Scarce research has investigated with limited results on how consumers perceive, interpret, and use femvertising<br><br>3. Most of the brand-related effects of femvertising has been tested on female consumers | 1.To understand how consumers from different countries with different gender gaps index respond to femvertising<br><br>2. How feminist self-identification, support for women's rights, and trust in ads moderate the brand-related effects of femvertising | Survey | Attitudes toward femvertising<br><br>Support for women rights<br><br>Feminist self-identification<br><br>Reaction toward the femvertising message<br><br>Attitudes toward the brand<br><br>Purchase intention |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Source: own edition

# Conclusions, theoretical, societal and managerial implications

The research developed in this doctoral thesis set out to develop a comprehensive understanding of the femvertising effects on consumer behavior. A summary of the theoretical and managerial contributions of each study is presented is table 5. A more detailed discussion of these contributions can be found in the following publication: Gomez et.al (2024), Török, et al. (2023).

The first empirical study aimed to analyze the evolution of gender stereotypes in advertising and female empowerment. This study is unique, as no prior literature review so far distinguishes gender stereotypes and women's empowerment over the four periods of feminism. Furthermore, the study also distinguishes the communication strategies over time. The implication of this research is essential to understand gaps in the literature and to provide direction for the additional two studies presented in this doctoral dissertation. Overall, the study provides evidence for brand managers to acknowledge that feminism is permeating the everyday life of consumers and is here to stay. Therefore, new communication strategies need to be built authentically. It also suggests that by changing the representation of women and all marginalized groups, brands might help resolve global social challenges.

The second empirical study aims to understand the meaning of female empowerment for consumers and to analyze how femvertising empowers female consumers. It also scrutinized the perception and evaluation of the attitudes of female consumers toward advertising that use traditional stereotypes versus femvertising. The study proves three clear theoretical contributions. First, it proposes an extended definition of female empowerment and recognizes that the meaning of female empowerment is culturally bounded. Second, it provided evidence that traditional advertising stereotypes are still acceptable in various cultures. Nevertheless, as women become increasingly aware of the lack of gender equality, the reaction to the representation of traditional stereotypes will become increasingly rejected. Furthermore, the study recognized that femvertising still encourages gender stereotypes by using roles associated mainly with men. This raises the question of whether empowered women need to behave like men. Finally, the managerial contributions suggest that marketers accurately portray women and girls in advertising by identifying them just the way they are. They should refrain from forcing them to become and act like men to be successful.

The third study aims to understand how consumers from different countries with different gender gaps index respond to femvertising. It also analyzes how feminist self-identification, support for women's rights, and trust in ads moderate the brand-related effects of femvertising. The research provides different theoretical contributions. First, it developed a framework with the main femvertising research themes. Second, it recognizes that gender is not binary and that femvertising is not only a concern to female consumers. Third, it also creates a model to evaluate the brand-related effects moderated by feminist psychographic factors, extending the conversation on brand-related effects. The study confirms that femvertising affects the reaction toward the femvertising message and the attitudes

toward the brand and has a positive effect on purchase intention. Finally, the study recognizes that the brand-related effects of femvertising might be generalized within different nations. Therefore, results encourage universality. However, results acknowledge that feminist consumers are more critical of female empowerment advertising in countries with weak gender equality policies and popular feminist activism. On the managerial side, the study offers evidence that Female empowerment ads provide multiple benefits for the brand, and these positive effects may be extrapolated to different nations. It also suggests that Brands that commit to advocating for gender equality and female empowerment should work with an interdisciplinary team when creating a communication strategy, including a marketer specialist and an expert on gender equality.

In conclusion this doctoral dissertation gives hope to girls and women that they are not alone in their unease fight for gender equality. In today's world, popular feminism, evidenced by milestones like Miley Cyrus's empowering song "Flowers" (Trust, 2023), significantly influences consumer behavior. With a growing number of educated and financially empowered female consumers, there is a heightened discernment in their brand choices, as highlighted by McKinsey's recent research (Burns et al., 2022).

This study emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural analysis in understanding the impact of femvertising, advocating for brands to embrace diverse representations in their advertising. Collaboration with interdisciplinary teams, including gender equality experts, is recommended to develop effective communication strategies tailored to specific cultural contexts.
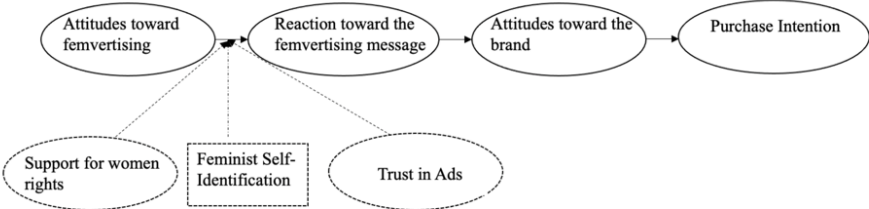
Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an opportunity for radical action to address inequalities in various aspects of women's lives. Governments and stakeholders, including brands, must prioritize women and girls' inclusion in pandemic recovery efforts to achieve sustainable development (UN Women, 2020).

Table 3: Overview of theoretical contribution and managerial implications

| Study | Objectives | Conceptual framework | Theoretical Contribution | Managerial Contributions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctoral thesis | To scrutinize the concept of women empowerment<br><br>To provide empirical evidence in a cross-cultural context, in lower-gender-equality countries located in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Southern Europe<br><br>To analyze how consumers from different genders perceive, interpretate, and use femvertising |  | 1.Investigate diverse cultural backgrounds that had not been studied previously in the femvertising context<br><br>2.Gauge perception and evaluation of femvertising and predict consumer behavior in different countries with different gender gaps | 1.Provide recommendations to develop new communication tactics concerning gender stereotypes and female empowerment.<br><br>2.Marketers should portray women and girls in their adds in diverse ways, including different ages, shapes, marital statuses, sexual orientations, and different roles.<br><br>Suggest brand managers to consider monitoring gender bias in different cultural settings. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Study 1: Evaluating femvertising: Consumer research on women empowerment and gender stereotypes | Objective 1:<br><br>a) To analyze the evolution of gender stereotypes in advertising and female empowerment. |  | 3.Pioneer in building a conceptual framework for the evolution of gender stereotypes in advertising and women's empowerment over the four periods of feminism<br><br>4.Distinguish the communication strategies over the four periods of feminism | 3.Provide evidence for brand managers to acknowledge that feminism happens in various ways, including advertising, media and social media. Therefore, new communication strategies need to be built authentically.<br><br>4.Provide evidence that by changing the representation of women and all marginalized groups, brands might help in resolving global social challenges |
| Study 2: Are female stereotypes evolving through femvertising? Evidence from Hungary and Mexico | Objective 2:<br><br>a)To investigate what does female empowerment means to female consumers<br><br>b) To analyze how femvertising empowers women<br><br>c)To provide empirical evidence on the attitude of female consumers toward advertisements that use traditional local stereotypes versus their |  | 5.Propose an extended definition of female empowerment recognizing that it is culturally bounded<br><br>6.Provide evidence that traditional stereotypes in advertising might still be acceptable in various cultures.<br><br>7.Evidencing that femvertising still encourages gender stereotypes by using roles that are associated mainly with men | 5.Marketers should accurately portray women in advertising by identifying them; they should refrain from forcing them to become and act like men to be successful |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | attitude toward femvertising | | | |
| Study 3: A cross-cultural study of the consumer responses towards femvertising: Evidence from Mexico and Spain | Objective 3:<br><br>a) To understand how consumers from different countries with different gender gaps index respond to femvertising<br><br>b) How feminist self-identification, support for women's rights, and trust in ads moderate the brand-related effects of femvertising |  | 8.Novelty in building a framework with the main femvertising research themes<br><br>9.Recognize that gender is not binary and that femvertising is not only concern to female consumers<br><br>10.Create a model to evaluate the brand-related effects moderated by feminist psychographics factors<br><br>11.Recognizing that feminist consumers are more critical to femvertising | 6.Provide evidence that female empowerment ads provide multiple benefits for the brand, including a positive attitude toward the brand and purchase intention<br><br>7.Providing direction to brand managers to listening their feminist consumers and create genuine femvertising<br><br>8. Brands who commit to be an advocate for gender equality and female empowerment, should work with an interdisciplinary team |

Source: Own edition

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# THIRD AWARD (2)

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*Be(com)ing other-oriented: The value of mindfulness for leaders and leadership development*

SUMMARY

The main aim of this doctoral thesis is to investigate how mindfulness helps leaders develop their other-orientation. It qualitatively examines the experiences of 62 leaders who participated in a mindfulness training program. Materials for analysis comprise 62 written pre-intervention assessments and 62 post-intervention interviews. This thesis clarifies leader mindfulness as an interpersonal phenomenon and value-based developmental practice. The empirical findings build an understanding of how mindfulness learning develops leaders' social awareness, show how mindfulness-trained leaders engage in servant leadership behaviors, and demonstrate how mindfulness training helps leaders continuously develop themselves through a combination of a formal program and continuous self-development.

# Introduction

## *Background and purpose*

> *Mindfulness wasn't really heard of years ago, and suddenly, you know, there's all these things to help people, employers, employees. And everything seems to be geared up these days for the employee, to help them…*

> (Anonymous leader interviewee, 2019)

Recent management literature recognizes the significance of *mindfulness*, "the state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present" (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 822) for good leadership. A leader's presence and awareness in social situations is critical for the individual leader's capacity to be an effective leader. For instance, learning to be fully present to others can help leaders better understand their followers' needs, and thus support their followers' well-being, performance, and growth (Schuh et al., 2019).

Amongst the 20000 mental health apps that exist today, two of the most popular ones focus on mindfulness and meditation (Deloitte Insights, 2022). Up to 95 percent of employers globally include emotional and mental health programs in their well-being platforms (Fidelity and Business Group on Health, 2020). Employee stress reduction has long been the primary driver of offering mindfulness education in organizations. Lately, researchers and practitioners have come to acknowledge that workplace mindfulness has a collective dimension (Badham & King, 2021). The focus of "mindfulness at work" is shifting from the individual to the community. Mindfulness is then viewed as an interpersonal phenomenon and value-based practice that is cultivated in relationships, such as between leaders and followers.

The growing interest worldwide in the improvement of work life has led to modern organizations using *mindfulness-based interventions* (MBIs; Kabat-Zinn, 2003) with their leaders, managers, and supervisors. Mindfulness-based interventions are developmentally focused activities, such as training, that contain meditation and awareness practices, and psychoeducational content. Their purpose is to enhance the individual, team, and organizational functionality.

Leadership and leader development efforts aim to expand the leader's capacity to be effective in a leadership role individually (internally, with a focus on *leader development*), and in the context of others (externally, with a focus on *leadership development*; Day et al., 2021). Good leaders are increasingly expected to relate to and influence others in both effective and ethical ways (Newstead et al., 2021). This involves an individual leader's commitment to developing a greater awareness of one's inner life and their willingness to serve others (Fry & Kriger, 2009). How interconnectedness, purposeful collaborative action, ethics-oriented organization, and leadership could be enhanced with mindfulness have been posed as potentially significant questions (Badham & King, 2021).

So far, research on social and relational aspects of mindfulness in the context of organizational leadership has been limited. The prospect of strengthening leaders' *other-orientation*—a willingness to prioritize others' needs and interests—through mindfulness necessitates a thorough exploration (e.g., Pircher-Verdorfer, 2016), which is the focus of this doctoral thesis.

*Research questions and main aims*

The main objective of this doctoral thesis is to understand how mindfulness can support organizational leaders in their role of leading others. Aligned with this objective, four research questions were formulated:

**RQ1:** What are the implications of mindfulness interventions and practices for leaders based on prior literature?

RQ1 highlights the importance of understanding mindfulness in the context of leadership. Paper 1 aims to answer RQ1 through a systematic literature review that synthesizes the findings of prior empirical studies. Paper 1 sets the stage for the empirical part of this thesis. It emphasizes the inter-individual nature of leader mindfulness, which Papers 2 and 3 empirically explore.

**RQ2:** How does mindfulness training contribute to the development of leaders' social awareness?

RQ2 is addressed in Paper 2. RQ2 builds on interpersonal conceptualizations of mindfulness (e.g., Badham & King, 2021). *Social awareness* means an other-oriented form of awareness; awareness of others' feelings, and one's impact on others (Carden et al., 2021). Paper 2 focuses on how mindfulness learning develops leaders' social awareness on the levels of other-oriented thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

**RQ3:** How can mindfulness training support servant leadership?

RQ3 was inspired by the initial finding that many mindfulness-trained leaders were keen to bring their newly-acquired mindfulness learning into their teams, so that their followers could benefit. *Servant leadership* is an "other-oriented approach to leadership" focused on prioritizing of follower needs and interests (Eva et al., 2019, p. 114). Drawing on a theorized linkage (e.g., Pircher-Verdorfer, 2016), Paper 3 investigates if and how mindfulness-trained leaders engage in servant leadership behaviors.

**RQ4:** What kind of developmental pathways have the potential to build leaders' capacity for other-oriented leadership?

RQ4 draws attention to the continuous nature of mindfulness-based leadership development recognized in Paper 1. Papers 2 and 3 explain how mindfulness training may help leaders become more other-oriented in the long-term.

## Research methods

### *Philosophical background*

The field of business and management draws from multiple theoretical bases, which has resulted in the coexistence of multiple research philosophies, paradigms, and methodologies. Defining one's research philosophy, designing a research project, and being able to justify the methodological choices require awareness and reflexivity (Saunders et al., 2019). Aligned with the philosophy of *critical realism*, this doctoral thesis seeks to understand the world by studying people's subjective experiences. The ontological position of the current research suggests that there may be multiple realities. The epistemological position of this research is at the anti-positivist end. Instead of viewing only measurable facts and numbers as the acceptable form of knowledge or data, this doctoral thesis rather hones the individual interviewees' experiences and opinions.

### *Chosen methods*

This doctoral research utilizes qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Qualitative analysis is appropriate in business research when the aim is to interpret and gain a holistic understanding of the issues studied (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The focus is on the accounts of mindfulness-trained leaders of their experiences of mindfulness. This thesis approaches the research task both conceptually and empirically.

### *Conceptual research: Systematic literature review*

*Research strategy and design.*   The conceptual part of this doctoral thesis is a systematic literature review. The findings of the review are reported in Paper 1. The primary objective of the conceptual study was to qualitatively review the available empirical literature on the topic—leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices—and offer a comprehensive analysis of the current state of knowledge, and priorities for future research. Guidelines proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003) for a systematic literature review were followed.

*Data collection.*   Obtaining the data for analysis involved designing the data search. Searches across five databases were conducted. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to identify relevant studies fitting the review scope. Finally, 30 empirical studies were included in the review sample. The search was reported using a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta

Analyses) diagram (Booth et al., 2012). It shows the different stages of the systematic review and indicates the number of studies excluded at each stage.

*Data analysis.*    The analysis of the review material was guided by a data extraction form recommended by Tranfield et al. (2003). It was created in the beginning of the review process and developed throughout to guide the meaningful synthesis of information. To support rigorous analysis and the presentation of findings in a transparent manner, the reported outcomes of leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices were organized into a thematic data structure recommended by Gioia et al. (2012).

## Empirical research: Qualitative intervention research

*Research strategy and design.*    The empirical part of this thesis is a qualitative pre-post intervention research. The empirical findings are reported in Papers 2 and 3. The research process commenced in Spring 2017 with writing a research plan. Then, the intervention research design with multiple data collection points was defined. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an open exploration of multiple other-oriented dimensions and expressions of mindfulness perceived by the leaders.

*Intervention.*    A partnership was set up with a professional mindfulness training company that delivers mindfulness interventions for organizations. Their role was to deliver mindfulness interventions for the current research. To obtain the intervention data, five eight-week mindfulness training programs were organized in 2019, one for each participating organization. Each consisted of six 90-minute live group sessions delivered at a 1.5-week interval. Participants received guidance for independent practice and had access to a mobile application featuring mindfulness meditation recordings.

*Sample.*    The sample of this study consists of 62 leaders (56 female, 6 male) who participated in an intervention offered to them by their organizations. They submitted the written pre-task before the program start, were interviewed after the program, and gave their informed consent to help this research comply with research ethics.

*Data collection.*    Data collection took place between January and November 2019. Multiple data types—written pre-tasks and semi-structured post-intervention interviews—were collected at two time-points. The interviews aimed to prompt participants to discuss significant aspects of their mindfulness experiences. The purpose of the pre-tasks was to provide context and get a richer understanding of participants' journeys before and after the intervention.

*Data analysis.*    The analyzed data consisted of 62 written pre-intervention tasks and 62 semi-structured post-intervention interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Materials were downloaded into the NVivo software. Thematic analysis was used as the analytical approach. The goal

was to create representative themes that accurately reflect the meaning of what is in the data (Patton, 2014).

### *Evaluation of qualitative research*

Trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is a key principle in establishing qualitative rigor and especially important when dealing with large qualitative data sets (White et al., 2012). In this research, rigor was established through the systematic organization of the research project throughout the design, intervention delivery, data collection, data analysis, and reporting phases.

# Key findings

### *Paper 1: A review on leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices*

> *A single-authored article published (2022) in a peer-reviewed management journal (AJG level 3)*

Paper 1 is systematic literature review that investigates the implications of mindfulness interventions and practices for leaders by synthesizing the findings of prior empirical studies. The reviewed empirical articles (*n*=30) published in 2009-2020 were focused on assessing the effects of leaders' mindfulness practices.

The results of the analysis reveal that leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices can benefit leaders in multiple ways. The findings comprise 28 outcomes which were categorized into four thematic clusters according to areas of impact (personal well-being, work productivity, relationships, and inner growth) across two dimensions (essential and transformative). The review revealed outcomes that seemed to be equally important yet critically distinct. On one dimension (essential), research participants' experience of mindfulness practice was seen as a helpful technique for stressful work situations affecting leader well-being and work productivity. The other dimension (transformative) reflects how mindfulness practice may have a more profound role in helping leaders to reflect on their inner life and facilitating their interaction with other people. Reflecting these aspects, a conceptual framework (Figure 1) was created that facilitates looking beyond well-being—the main focus of prior research—to other aspects of leadership more broadly.

To conclude, leaders' mindfulness practice may bring about the desired development of transformative leadership capabilities such as self-awareness, social/contextual awareness, and ethical leadership behavior that can support leaders' relationships and inner growth.

| Overarching concept | Dimensions | Areas of impact | Outcomes reported by prior studies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leader-specific mindfulness interventions and practices affecting individual leadership capacity | Essential | Personal wellbeing | Stress management/perceived stress<br>Job satisfaction<br>Resilience<br>Psychological wellbeing<br>Physical health<br>Sleep quality<br>Self-compassion<br>Self-care behavior |
| | | Work productivity | Information processing<br>Creativity<br>Present-moment oriented working styles<br>Openness toward work-related issues<br>Job performance<br>Ethical decision-making |
| | Transformative | Relationships | Social/contextual awareness<br>Perspective-taking<br>Positive affect toward others<br>Engaging/interacting with others<br>Helping behavior<br>Ethical leadership behavior<br>Transformational leadership behavior<br>Authentic leadership behavior |
| | | Inner growth | Self-awareness/awareness of experience<br>Self-reflection<br>Self-regulation of emotion/behavior<br>Adapting to change/flexibility<br>Spiritual growth<br>Moral development |

Figure 1: Impact of mindfulness interventions and practices on leaders

## Paper 2: Development of leaders' social awareness through mindfulness training

*A first-authored article published (2022) in a peer-reviewed management journal (AJG level 3)*

Paper 2 is an empirical study that focuses on examining whether and how mindfulness training contributes to the development of leaders' social awareness. Experiences of 62 leaders who participated in an eight-week-long mindfulness training program were studied.
First, the analysis of the leaders' pre-intervention expectations of mindfulness training illuminates the context in which the leaders worked, and their leadership and leader development priorities. The leaders hoped that mindfulness training could improve the overall well-being of themselves and the entire team, their focusing abilities and work performance, connecting with others, and personal leader development.

Second, the analysis of the post-intervention interview findings detects expressions of the leaders' social awareness across three related yet distinct dimensions—other-oriented thought, other-oriented emotion, and other-oriented behavior. The category of other-oriented thought captures how mindfulness

influenced the leaders' present-moment orientation and perspective-taking, and redefining 'self' as a leader. The category of other-oriented emotion reveals how the leaders learned to manage their feelings through emotional awareness, emotional self-regulation, and cultivating positive emotions. The category of other-oriented behavior captures the leaders' experiences in the behavioral domain through learnings related to thoughtful communication, facilitating mindful work environment, and sharing. Finally, the findings reveal how the leaders viewed the eight-week training only as the beginning of a longer development process. The positive experiences during the training program motivated the leaders to consider mindfulness as a practice they would like to engage in on long-term.

Overall, the leaders viewed the development of self-views and awareness to be a unique feature of leader mindfulness training. The leaders found that mindfulness helped them to positively influence their followers, which could be seen in the leaders' enhanced presence for and awareness of others.

### Paper 3: Leadership practices of mindfulness-trained leaders intending to serve the team

> *A first-authored manuscript re-submitted (2024, second review round) to a peer-reviewed management journal (AJG level 3)*

Paper 3 is an empirical study that focuses on exploring if and how mindfulness interventions and practices aimed at leaders might foster servant leadership development. Experiences of 62 leaders who participated in an eight-week-long mindfulness training program were studied.

This study shows how mindfulness and the other-orientation characteristic of servant leadership interact, and how mindfulness can support those who want to serve others. The findings on pre-intervention leadership challenges reveal that the leaders predominantly experienced struggles with demanding workloads, difficult relationships with followers, and challenges with team functioning, all of which influenced how they engaged in leadership. Many of the leaders had a motivation to serve their followers, but workable strategies and tools to engage in servant leadership were missing.

The findings on post-intervention servant leadership practices focus on the self, the follower, and the team. The analysis of the post-intervention interviews identified 23 servant leadership behaviors across six themes. Leaders reported engaging in newly acquired servant leader behaviors while integrating mindfulness into their leadership work. This benefited themselves (self-awareness and self-care), their followers (relationship building, follower development, and follower well-being), and their teams (team culture).

In sum, despite facing several barriers to implementing an other-oriented leadership approach, it was found that the leaders keenly brought their newly acquired mindfulness learnings and practices to followers in one form or another.

# Scientific contributions

*Mindfulness can strengthen leaders' other-orientation*

As its main research objective, this doctoral thesis set out to better understand how mindfulness can support organizational leaders in their role of leading others. This is an emerging area of scholarly attention within research on leadership development and mindfulness in organizations. Despite the recognition that other-orientation and taking an interest in the needs of others may be seen as a key aspect of mindfulness in leadership, prior research on mindfulness for social relations has been largely theoretical. A thorough investigation has been lacking into how mindfulness may help leaders tap into their other-orientation (e.g., Pircher Verdorfer, 2016). This thesis draws from the interpersonal and collective conceptualizations of mindfulness (e.g., Badham & King, 2021), the application of mindfulness in leadership (e.g., Schuh et al., 2019), the concepts of self- and social awareness and servant leadership (e.g., Eva et al., 2019), and leadership development (e.g., Day et al., 2021). This doctoral thesis, and the three papers in it, offer novel empirical and theoretical insight into how mindfulness interventions and practices can strengthen leaders' other-orientation in the context of leading followers.

*Leader mindfulness is an interpersonal phenomenon and developmental practice*

This doctoral thesis clarifies mindfulness as an interpersonal phenomenon and value-based developmental practice that is embedded in the individual leader development process (Paper 1). Emphasis is placed on the social relations aspect of leadership and leadership development through mindfulness.

Advancing research on mindfulness in the leadership context necessitated a review that would thoroughly discuss the added-value of mindfulness training as a potentially effective method that can help leaders develop the core capabilities required to manage job responsibilities and people effectively. Paper 1 is the first systematic literature review published with a primary focus on leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices. It addresses the need for a more nuanced discussion on the leadership concepts, and positioning research on leaders' mindfulness interventions and practices within leadership development (e.g., Day & Dragoni, 2015). Specifically, this thesis looks at leaders' mindfulness practice through the lens of leader self-development (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). Paper 1 proposes that leader-specific mindfulness practice is a holistic leader self-development approach in which a leader engages in raising present-moment awareness of their experience as a leader with the intention to improve the lives of not only themselves but others too.

A conceptual framework (Figure 1) based on prior findings is provided. It not only synthesizes the key themes and outcomes in a consistent way, but also provides a resource for designing future studies and deriving implications for the application of mindfulness in leader development programs.

Paper 1 proposes a comprehensive future research agenda. It recommends looking beyond the 'essential' well-being and work productivity outcomes and exploring the 'transformative' outcomes of mindfulness intervention, connected to leadership criteria such as ethical decision-making, adapting to change, and leadership relationships. Through reviewing prior literature, this thesis also highlights the need to focus on understanding the experiential processes induced by mindfulness through which leaders learn and develop to become better leaders, instead of measurable outcomes alone.

### *Mindfulness enhances leaders' social awareness across other-oriented thought, emotion, and behavior*

The contribution of Paper 1 is further expanded by the empirical findings. This doctoral thesis challenges the predominant emphasis of prior works on the stress-reduction and attention-enhancement outcomes of workplace mindfulness research and practice. The empirical findings build an understanding of how mindfulness learning fosters the development of leaders' social awareness across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of human functioning. This highlights the significance of mindfulness for social leadership capacity (Paper 2).

The findings reported in Paper 2 support the argument that mindfulness is not merely an intra-individual phenomenon, but also an inter-individual one expressed in the dynamic everyday interactions that occur between people (e.g., Donald et al., 2019). Importantly, this thesis reveals that the leader practitioners do not view mindfulness as a value-neutral cognitive technique (or personal 'pocket tool') only to aid staying calm and focused (e.g. King & Badham, 2021). Instead, the leaders viewed the mindfulness practice as facilitating an ongoing transformative personal development process closely linked to motivation and the intention to improve the relational leadership processes that they are key contributors to.

### *Mindfulness-trained leaders engage in mindfulness to serve the entire team*

This thesis advances the understanding of how mindfulness-trained leaders engage in servant leadership behaviors. By integrating mindfulness knowledge and learnings into their leadership, leaders make servant leadership work for themselves, their followers, and their teams (Paper 3).

Paper 3 draws from the recognition made in previous literature that mindfulness and servant leadership may be inherently linked (e.g., Pircher Verdorfer, 2016). Paper 3 builds a theoretical, empirical, and practical bridge between mindfulness and servant leadership development. Paper 3 contributes to the currently under-researched area of servant leader development (Eva et al., 2019) by showing how mindfulness training seems to strengthen the leader's awareness of their motivations and behaviors, and those around them.

The findings add to the limited understanding of the potential of mindfulness to support leadership development, i.e., the capacity of leaders to influence the collective leadership development through their practices and social interactions (e.g., Day et al., 2021). Scholars agree that leaders influence employees and organizational outcomes on multiple levels (Leroy et al., 2018). However, how leader mindfulness training could potentially lead to the supportive, servant form of leadership on multiple organizational levels has not been closely examined by prior research. This thesis offers new knowledge by analyzing the multi-level leadership practices of mindfulness-trained leaders in the context of leading a team of followers.

### *Mindfulness-based development is a combination of a formal program and continuous leader self-development*

Taken together, all three papers in this doctoral thesis provide an understanding of how mindfulness helps leaders build their capacity for other-oriented leadership. This is a holistic process that happens across multiple domains of human experience, and through a combination of a formal program and leader self-development.

This research demonstrates that instead of providing training in specific skills through competency-based frameworks (a common practice within leadership development: Day et al., 2021), mindfulness knowledge and learning can be integrated into leader and leadership development to grow the leader holistically. The empirical part of the thesis substantiates the remarks made in Paper 1 about the role and nature of leader mindfulness interventions and practices as part of organizational leader and leadership development efforts. Especially, the holistic development of one's attitudes and thinking, emotional skills, and purposeful action concerning both oneself (*leader* development) and others (*leadership* development) is corroborated by Papers 2 and 3.

Adding an important layer of insight, this research explicates how mindfulness supports the development of leaders' other-orientation through a combination of a formal program and leader self-development. It is imperative that the individual leader proactively engages in self-development behavior such as self-reflection on leadership experiences (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). As a key insight from the current research, this research indicates that engaging in the practice can guide leaders to understand that an eight-week-long training program may be only the beginning of a continuous developmental process toward improved (work) life, enhanced self-awareness, and becoming a more other-oriented leader.

Figure 2 illustrates that the application of mindfulness for leaders may be embedded in the leadership development process. Overall, this research shapes how mindfulness training is understood and defined as a method for holistic leader and leadership development that can enhance leaders' other-orientation.
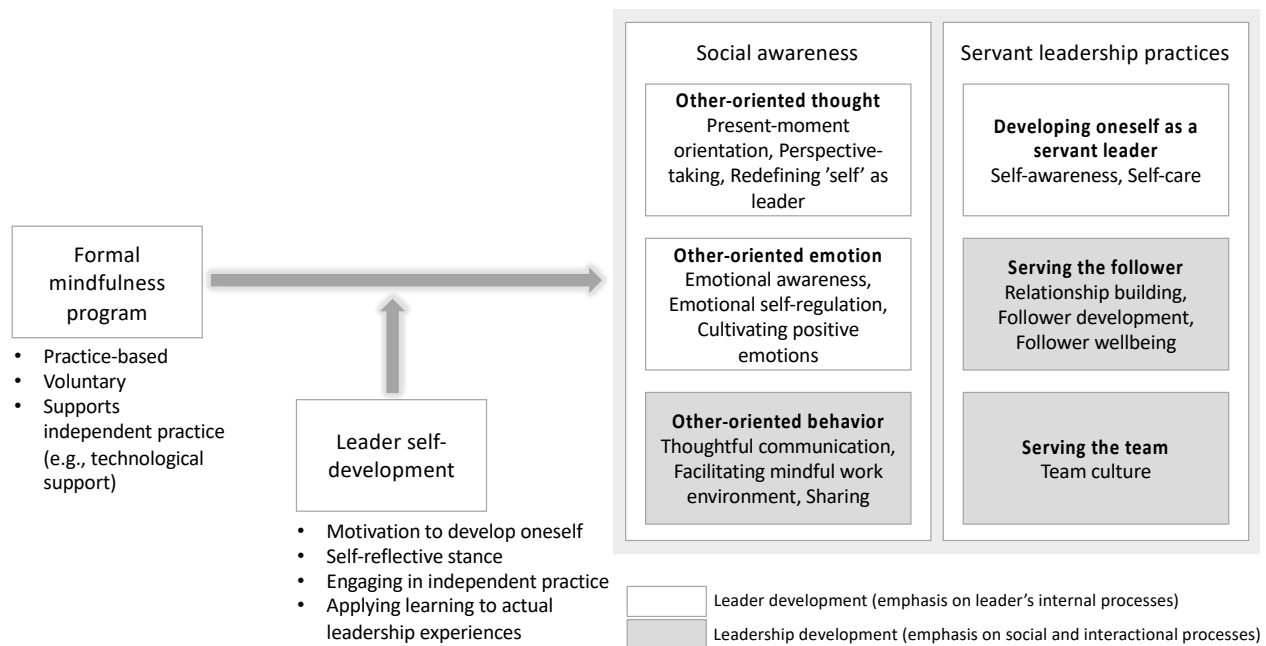
Figure 2: Mindfulness-based leadership development process and aspects of leader other-orientation

## Societal and management implications

*The more high technology around us, the more need for human touch.*

(John Naisbitt, 1982)

Today's global environment is marked by major transformations and crises that threaten people's well-being, functioning and sense of safety, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic and war. Technology offers limitless opportunities that change the environment, work life, and ways to communicate. Still, what people really need to develop as human beings are meaningful ways to connect with each other and finding balance in changes. As Rudolph et al. (2021) note, in times of uncertainty followers rely on their supervisors' support more than ever, and the improvement of leaders' well-being-related attitudes, values and behaviors have been listed as key focus areas to be integrated into future leadership development programs. The findings of this doctoral thesis confirm that mindfulness knowledge and practice can strengthen leaders' prosocial intentions and behavior in relation to employees. Therefore, this research bears important societal and managerial significance.

Understanding mindfulness as an inter-individual leadership phenomenon is significant for the practice of leadership globally, as leadership is relational and takes place in interactions between people. This

doctoral thesis illustrates the development of a positive form of leadership that places top priority on the legitimate well-being and growth needs of the employees. As opposed to leadership that is based on carrot-and-stick type of external control, other-oriented leadership relies on thoughtful interaction and participation. This thesis underlines the value of leadership that builds on leader self- and social awareness and self-development, and which aims to provide employees with resources for autonomous and fulfilling work.

The findings of this thesis are particularly useful for HR managers and development professionals who evaluate and select leader and leadership development interventions. By investing in mindfulness training for leaders, they invest in their entire organization. Mindfulness can be helpful for leaders who are interested in mindfulness and motivated to develop themselves and their teams. As demonstrated in the findings of this thesis, mindfulness training creates a trickle-down effect, where leaders actively engage their followers in mindfulness practice. To make the most of what mindfulness has to offer for leadership, awareness should be raised in organizations.

This thesis also has implications for mindfulness and leadership coaches. There is a need for mindfulness training that is designed to strengthen leaders' abilities to support their followers. Such training should contain self-reflection practices that strengthen the capacity for introspection, develop personal and relational skills, and help cultivate workplace attitudes such as acceptance and kindness. This kind of training should be a forum to discuss leadership intentions, personal leadership philosophies, and be an incubator for positive leadership practices. In addition, leadership coaches need to integrate mindfulness into their coaching training and practice (Hall, 2015).

Finally, this thesis has implications for the individual leader. It can positively influence their well-being, work productivity, inner growth, and relationships. Practitioners should see a formal mindfulness training program as a starting point, and establish regular, independent mindfulness practice beyond the formal intervention context. For leaders, it is important to engage in mindful practices. There is now an abundance of apps (e.g., Insight Timer, UCLA Mindful) and websites (e.g., mindful.org) to assist with the process.

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# Top listed papers

**Den Outer Birgit**

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*Delivering more than security service: narratives of professional identity in the UK private security industry*

SUMMARY

Situated in an Organisational Studies perspective, this research investigates narratives of professional identity in the UK private security industry. Contested yet increasingly legitimised, the security industry is under-researched as a site of meaning in professional lives. Using a situational analysis approach that link macro and micro resources, the thesis presents analyses of curated stakeholder texts and collected accounts security workers give of themselves to make sense of their working environments. It is proposed that precaritising conditions that organise much of private security work offer fertile ground for the development of alternative narrations of self and hence understandings of what it means to be a professional.

# Research purpose

The relationship between macro- level performances of industries and professions on the one hand and micro identities processes of participants on the other was identified as 'largely a mystery' (Brown 2018, p. 11), particularly in domains that are contested, under-defined or in transformation (e.g. Brown 2015). In response to this, this research aimed to make a contribution to demystifying the macro-micro relationship for a particular, contested domain: the UK private security industry (PSI). Adopting the notion of identity as analytical bridge between self and sociality (Ybema 2020), I set out to explore at different levels of analysis the relationship between broader discourses of security and professionalization processes and the development of professional selves.

Private security offers a unique research site. Contested yet increasingly legitimised, the UK PSI is under-researched as a site of meaning in professional lives. Seemingly on a trajectory of professionalization, processes of professionalization have been expedited by the introduction of the Private Security Act (2001) and the founding of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) in 2003. Reporting to the Home Office, this non-departmental public body via a licensing scheme is tasked with 'ensuring only fit and proper people and organisations deliver regulated private security services' (SIA 2019). There are numerous stakeholder perspectives that in a fabric of connections inform what might constitute 'fit and proper'. Although the PSI continues to grow, diversify, and claiming some of the regulatory security space, challenges to a professionalised industry seem numerous and often acknowledged by the industry itself. In a recent, industry-sponsored research (Gill, Howell and McGreer 2020), which surveyed (n. 376) and interviewed (n. 46) mostly 'senior professionals' in the sector, 83% of the respondents believed that security is thought of as an 'industry' rather than a 'profession'. Respondents agreed that the security sector is bad at selling itself, and felt there is an unjustified public perception of private security roles as unskilled, poorly paid, and associated with violence. Regulation of the industry, therefore, does not (yet) lead to becoming a profession, or not necessarily. With 90% of the workforce as estimated to be male (BSIA 2022), the PSI provides mostly insecure jobs on low wages for frontline security staff, disproportionally recruiting from immigrant populations (SIA 2022), with limited career opportunities. Sector stigma seems hard to shed and mainstream media regularly report negative storylines in relation to private security organisations, for instance, on breaches of human rights and bad behaviour by frontline staff in detention centres (e.g. see Liberty's dossier on G4S, 2016). Of note in this regard, is a YouGov poll, commissioned by the British Security Industry Association during the pandemic, which saw the essential role of private security officers as ranked just 'slightly ahead of traffic wardens' (BSIA 2020). There are multiple discourses as to what counts as security expertise (e.g. Lund 2013; Berndtsson 2012), with fuzzy boundaries in the configuration of security and insecurity (e.g. Bigo and McCluskey 2017), and 'security' itself referred to as an elusive notion (e.g. Kirsch 2016; Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014). There are a number of perspectives in and outside the industry on how the industry ought to be professionalised further; however, these perspectives are often opaque, ambivalent or ephemeral.

## Main literatures

The interdisciplinary research is conducted in the nexus of three scholarly domains: security and International Relations, professionalization and Sociology of Work, and identity in Organisation Studies. Research on security and professional identity appears to have been mainly developed in international relations (IR) and the sociology of work literatures based on concepts of 'hypermasculinity' (Stachowitsch 2014), 'stigmatisation' (e.g. Johnston and Hodge 2014) and 'dirty work' (e.g. Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016), although often in acknowledgement of the possibilities for agentic action. Most research, notably in IR, puts forward particular understandings and articulations of masculinities developed in conflict zones (e.g. Higate 2012; Brewis and Godfrey 2018). This focus leaves a gap for research located in civil, private security domains that explores what has changed in modern, UK-based security landscapes following the founding of the SIA in 2003.

Identity in my thesis is seen as a process, an 'ongoing project of revision, negotiation, retreat and (re)invention' (Mallett and Wapshott 2011, p. 273), i.e. where there is no end-goal, perhaps only a temporary fit with milieux of work. Most of the organisational identity literature is predicated on the view that people's identity work is motivated by a desire for positive meaning and social validation to avoid anomie and alienation (see Brown 2020a for a summary of drivers for identity work). Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) talk about identity work as fashioning a 'culturally appropriate self' (p. 136) during times of change in organisations or occupations to sustain feelings of authenticity, 'complete with stories deemed appropriate by a new professional group or community' (ibid). They advocate that more insights are needed into how actors 'story' their role transitions and speculate that individuals draw from personal narrative repertoires to accomplish identity goals that are part of the micro/macro role process. Successful repertoires - those that are recognised as having validity by their target audience and that generate feelings of authenticity in individuals - are those that are held on to for future use. Those that are less successful are discarded or alternatives sought.

The review of the identity literatures, notably of identity work (Brown 2015, Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010), identified a need for a better understanding of how individuals story identity goals as part of the micro/macro role process, as well as the exact nature of the drivers of identity work in negotiating selves and sociality. With professionalization construed as identity work at the macro level, I understood professionalization processes in neoliberal economies as increasingly taking place *outside* the profession – 'from above' and at a distance, rather than 'from within' the occupational group - diminishing the possibilities of development of professional expertise and requiring a professionalism which draws on a range of cultural and social resources not necessarily appertaining to the occupation (e.g. Evetts 2013). Furthermore, therefore, the thesis draws on Judith Butler's *giving an account of oneself* (2005) to explore these resources. Building on psychoanalytic thought, Butler contends that people give an account of who they are, not necessarily for fear of punishment or a desire to be rewarded but to elicit recognition, our most basic desire. As a 'social theory of recognition' (p. 30), the act of narration is in acknowledgment that individuals have agency and for the effect (good or bad) our

actions have on others, we need to give account in order to become an ethical and viable subject, i.e. a human being with a liveable life. In distinguishing telling stories about ourselves and giving an account, the latter has a performative function that is both a reflection of a struggle of coming into being through a narrative endeavour, as well as in acknowledgement of a response to being called to, or in Butler's terms 'hailed to', a particular direction.

## Methodology

Broadly located in an interpretivist paradigm, the thesis is informed by situational analysis (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), a postmodern version of grounded theory. Situational analysis explicitly includes a wide range of human and non-human elements, where the 'situation'- 'a somewhat enduring arrangement of relations among many different kinds and categories of elements that has its own ecology' (ibid. p. 17) - is the key unit of analysis. Situational analysis uses maps to depict what is of consequence in the research at hand at the macro (the situation), the meso (social worlds), and the micro level (positions in discursive fields). My research, therefore, draws on extant discursive materials, as well as observations and interactional data acquired via semi-structured interviews with individuals employed in the sector, with an emphasis on everyday, frontline security roles. Extant materials were curated as 'programmatic texts' (borrowed from Foucault in Clarke et al. 2018), i.e. texts with a particular vision for professionalization and professional identity produced by five key programmatic sources at the macro level: the Security Industry Authority, British Security Industry Association (BSIA), Security Institute, International Professional Security Association and two trade magazines. Texts included a draft code of conduct (Gov UK 2020) and BSIA campaigns, such as the 'Hidden Workforce: Resetting the Perceptions' (BSIA 2020) and were supplemented by images and observations. Qualitative data were collected from 28 interviewees, 20 of whom are women, who occupied a variety of roles. Career histories include government, law enforcement, journalism, and training; however, 19 participants are frontline security staff or have frontline experience. Interview participants were asked to talk about their experiences of private security work, issues of professionalization, and their perspectives of (in)security more broadly.

The thesis adopted five methodological principles: 1) a lens of the everyday 2) an ontology of multiplicity and materiality that combines human and non-human elements, 3) a multi-perspectival epistemology taking into account multiple perspectives of private security identity, 4) a democratising approach to empirical data collection and extant discursive materials making visible under-represented voices, and finally, 5) a text analysis focus on identity and narrative. The empirical objectives were a) to curate materials at the macro level to identify visions for professionalization and professional identity in private security work and b) to collect qualitative data at the micro level via semi-structured interviews with individuals working in the sector. The research was guided by one main research question:
*In the modern UK private security sector, a contested domain, how are macro and micro processes of identity formation configured to create conditions for professional selves?*
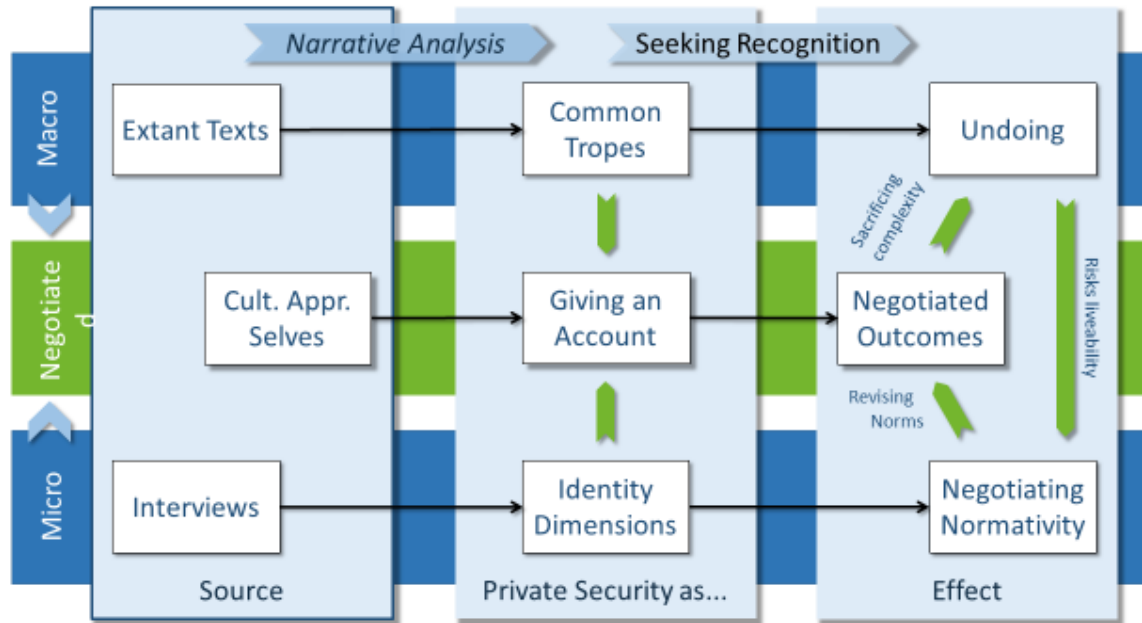
Diagram 1: Professionality in the PSI: seeking recognition under vexing conditions

Three sub-questions were formulated as
1. At the macro level, how does the PSI present itself narratively to internal and external audiences?
2. At the micro level, how do private security workers talk about themselves in relation to 'others' (e.g. other private or state security workers, other organisations), times (e.g. pre-SIA vs post SIA), and locations (e.g. types of organisation and role)?
3. At the negotiated macro/micro level, which professional selves seem culturally appropriate in modern private security landscapes?

## Findings

The findings were presented in three distinct sections, here illustrated by Diagram 1 where each row represents one section, each addressing one sub-question to meet aims of presenting narratives at different levels of analysis. Findings section 1 is summarised as five *common tropes* of private security: (1) ordinary, everyday, and anti-heroic (2) customer services-oriented offering a human touch (3) for everyone; culturally diverse (4) lacking in distinct character/what *not* to be and (5) underdog: unloved and unseen by a range of audiences. The findings in this section were based on analyses of extant narrative discourse materials, i.e. materials that are already in the situation of enquiry curated but not produced by the researcher. Narratives documented a shift in vision of frontline security as a, by and large, masculine, unregulated, physical role toward security roles imagined as regulated, intrinsically social, mostly anti-heroic and mundane, culturally and gender diverse, servicing the needs of customers

and, emboldened by the pandemic, with a human touch. However, the industry continues to think of itself as stigmatised in the security space - unloved, un-appreciated, undervalued by the public at large, and seemingly only just about accepted by the state. The quest for legitimacy as a bonafide security provider is therefore ongoing, and the notion of security professionalism, that which distinguishes the profession from other security providers, is difficult to define. The directives for professional selves were framed, at worst, as what *not* to be – i.e. 'don't be a criminal' (SIA) or as 'blending in' in customer services type roles at best (BSIA).

Findings section 2 presented *identity dimensions* at the micro level largely informed by identity talk in interactional data collected via 28 semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals employed in the sector in a range of roles and with variety in backgrounds. However, the majority of participants were women and most participants were working in/had experience of the frontline, with a view to explore everyday security roles and issues of continuity and change. Five identity dimensions were used to organise the data: (1) belonging versus "not forever"; (2) serving customers versus 'dirty' work; (3) uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence; (4) being invisible versus standing out; and (5) professional selves versus cowboy others.

In combining analyses from Findings section 1 and 2, the third section presented sedimented narratives as culturally appropriate selves (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010), i.e. those that navigate, more or less successfully, the private security work landscape. Three narratives were identified, in order of prevalence: (1) private security as the new helping profession; (2) private security as a feminist project; and (3) private security as global safe keeping. These accounts are presented as *professionality*, a process as quest for professional recognition with particular audiences, where individuals give an account of themselves in vexing conditions. Particularly, the helping narrative is intriguing. In FSOs' accounts, helping others is a prevalent under-current, a master narrative that incorporates tropes of belonging, serving customers, standing out, and being an everyday hero. It ties in both the uneventful, i.e. the absence of threat, as well as the possibility for the encounter of violence. The more formally recognised label of security work as 'just' customer services is not quite resisted but being given more weight by a more profound notion of helping people in need. The 'customer' is rarely the client organisation. It is ordinary members of the public visiting client venues – university students, clubbers, museum visitors - or walking around in boundaried, public spaces, for instance town centres. In frontline stories, it is a knife guy in a shopping precinct, vulnerable girls in a nightclub, troubled youngsters with anxiety issues in a bar, drunken fighters in a town's square, lost students - both geographically and mentally - on a university campus. It is about offering a listening ear to customers or members of the public – people who feel lonely, depressed or anxious – and preventing people from harming themselves, becoming victims of crime, and even from committing crimes themselves. The helping narrative offers an opportunity, not just to serve customers, but to meet adversity with courage, to shine in everyday 'heroic' acts. It is a call of character.

Diagram 1 presents the flows in professionalization processes that link the macro (row 1) and micro (row 3) in the development of professional selves (row 2). The three accounts as part of the middle row

read against the grain to various degrees; in Butler's terms (2004) they have revised norms in negotiated outcomes. They revised – challenged, resisted, pushed, negated - the boundaries of an old(er) normativity and existing private security identities as relying on (too) narrow, or (too) coherent ideas of masculinity, and anti-heroic, customer-service-oriented security work and directions for what not to be, which risks undoing. The three accounts as negotiated outcomes make individuals intelligible to particular audiences allowing them to be recognised and live liveable lives. For instance, if the public mistrusts you because it considers security the remit of the state, a feminist project narrative mitigates the negative effects of becoming undone. If the state wants to regulate you to ensure you are not a criminal, or if the PSI prefers you to be 'just' a customer services agent who blends in and is anti-heroic, you risk becoming undone. A helping or global safe-keeping narrative can give you the discursive tools to chisel a liveable life.

However, the demand of/for narrative coherence by authorities –institutions, organisations, managers – comes at a cost. What is there to speculate with regard to the alternative narratives' potential for longevity and live-ability? The global safe keeping narrative has probably most potential in convincing the public at large of the value of private security services: it taps into wider discourses of the need for safety and reproduces rather than strongly subverts dominant narrative modes of security. The feminist project is subversive in that it can account for selves that had to become viable in a man's world, although in this particular study feminist selves provided legitimation for making a transition from respected state security to the less respected PSI. Although it is still predominantly a man's world, especially at the frontline, as Eichler (2016) points out gender is seen as good for business; it can make security look more everyday, diverse, less 'dirty' and 'hypermasculine', altogether more legitimate. Paradoxically therefore, with the likely increase of women uptake of security roles, the 'feminist project' may lose its ability to build liveable lives. The helping narrative, as perhaps the most subversive account, may tap into the 'human touch', softer side of security – less masculine, more customer-oriented, communication skills foregrounding, diversity-aware - seemingly increasingly marketable especially acquiring further ground swell during the pandemic. Taken together, the three narratives may offer resilient responses to threats to identity, at least for the time being. The three alternative accounts suggest that 'hypermasculine', 'dirty' and 'stigmatised', or customer services and anti-heroic narratives are not the only professional identities in town.

Professional identity imagined in this way is no longer inextricably linked to occupational values and esoteric knowledge; rather *professionality* becomes a quest for recognition where the development of professional selves is about negotiating ever-shifting elements in the precarious landscapes appertaining to occupation - of policy and regulation, security discourses, and other cultural and social resources. Professionality, imagined in this way, is a professional identity construction process in precarious worlds of work, in but also outside organisational or sector domains, to fill a void, a way to be against the odds, to *a*-void becoming undone.

# Contributions to knowledge: 'professionality'

'Professionality' is the theorising element of the thesis, i.e. an argument, based on looking at something and an immersion in the topic that reduces complexity in ways that appeal to a particular academic family (Hansen and Madsen 2019). Professionality differs from *seeking to be a professional*. In referring to a set of processes, professionality is an altogether more profound notion. With the organisation of the findings as described above, I aimed to show how professionalization processes in extant, discursive materials at the macro level and professional identity processes at the micro level are interconnected, and co-constitutive of the development of professional selves with material effects. In concurring with the need for the study of identities to be conducted at 'multiple levels of analysis', to see 'how identities framed at different levels interconnect and inform each other' (Brown 2020b, p. 897), the concept of 'professionality' theorises these relationships in contested domains in precaritising worlds of work. I argue that co-constitutive elements and interconnections can also relate to discursive, resource *deficiencies* or even sites of silence (Clarke et al. 2018) that risk recognition. When there are limited discursive resources to draw on – for instance, because these are bland, counterproductive, or even negative and empty – alternative accounts offer possibilities for professional identity. These alternative accounts are very much self-created, and in ways that chime with particular audiences in particular times.

In the case of the helping narrative in the PSI, giving an account is a response to a breakdown of recognition by inadequate (customer services), infelicitous (hyper-masculine), and empty ('not-criminal') identities of a previous horizon of normativity. Alternative accounts developed by individuals in this research do not necessarily address industry audiences - as part-creators of precaritising conditions they may offer only limited recognition in the first place - but to ethical selves, in recognition of others' vulnerability, and to live liveable lives. Alternative accounts mitigate risks of non-recognition, secure recognition with particular audiences in precaritising worlds of work, and make it possible to be someone against the odds. Therefore, alternative accounts have a self-constitutive function; with Butler (2005), I suggest that this dynamic of giving an account that chimes with audiences creates the self. In other words, to have a story about who you are is to exist.

Such an alternative conceptualisation of what constitutes professionalism makes a contribution to ways in which in a new professionalism (Evetts 2013) - in the absence of a shared professional ethic developed 'from within' and formal differentiators to signal professional security work - practitioners turn to discourses found in broader societal shifts. In the case of the PSI, a contested space, dominant discourses of customer services and regulation have an uneasy relationship with, or are even antithetical to professional selves. In processes of professionality, drawing on a diverse set of cultural resources, workers craft alternative professional selves in order to be recognised and live liveable lives.

## Contributions to knowledge: expanding the identity work concept

Identity work has been mainly developed in the field of Organisation Studies. As one of its core concepts, it considers how organisations or organisational practices shape identity, and the leverage individuals have to influence their milieux in which they live their lives (e.g. Watson 2008). Motivations for identity work are broadly provided as a desire for positive meaning and social validation to avoid anomie and alienation (see Brown 2020a). Drawing on Butler (2005), this thesis proposes that these motivations could be further construed as seeking recognition, via giving an (alternative) account of who we are, to address particular audiences. The need to address particular audiences seems pertinent in domains where workers' lives are precaritised in particular ways. Individuals need to create alternative accounts for themselves when resources are limited or not recognised as suitable for identity purposes. This thesis therefore posits that to deepen an understanding of identity formation processes we must understand what these precaritising conditions entail – leading to a breakdown of recognition – *in order to make sense of what comes after*, i.e. these are particular narrations of professional selves that negotiate the breakdown of norms and the development of new ones. Butler refers to these processes as 'undoing' (e.g. 2004) – hitherto mostly used in relation to gender. Risking becoming undone is what gives rise to subversive (in the sense of troubling norms), alternative narration of identity. My research located in the private security sector – a deeply contested and precaritising domain with identity struggles of its own – has given particularly insights into what these undoing processes look like. It considered their particular identity effects - discursive and material - that construe alternative narrations of professional selves.

Professionality processes therefore offer further explanations of the purpose of identity work via the notion of 'giving an account' - cycles of undoing, negotiating normativity, and negotiated outcomes - as drivers of identity work, see Diagram 2. Individuals in precarious worlds of work, such as frontline security workers, are no one without a story about who they are. The macro undoing element of the cycle hails individuals, who have become particularly 'undone', towards stronger (to various degrees) narratives. Based on the above, giving an account provides a more satisfying explanation as driver for identity work, advancing understanding of motivations that go beyond socialization and validation by communities.

Diagram 2: Professionality as cycles of negotiating normativity in precaritising worlds of work

Professionality processes therefore offer further explanations of the purpose of identity work via the notion of 'giving an account' - cycles of undoing, negotiating normativity, and negotiated outcomes - as drivers of identity work, see Diagram 2. Individuals in precarious worlds of work, such as frontline security workers, are no one without a story about who they are. The macro undoing element of the cycle hails individuals, who have become particularly 'undone', towards stronger (to various degrees) narratives. Based on the above, giving an account provides a more satisfying explanation as driver for identity work, advancing understanding of motivations that go beyond socialization and validation by communities.
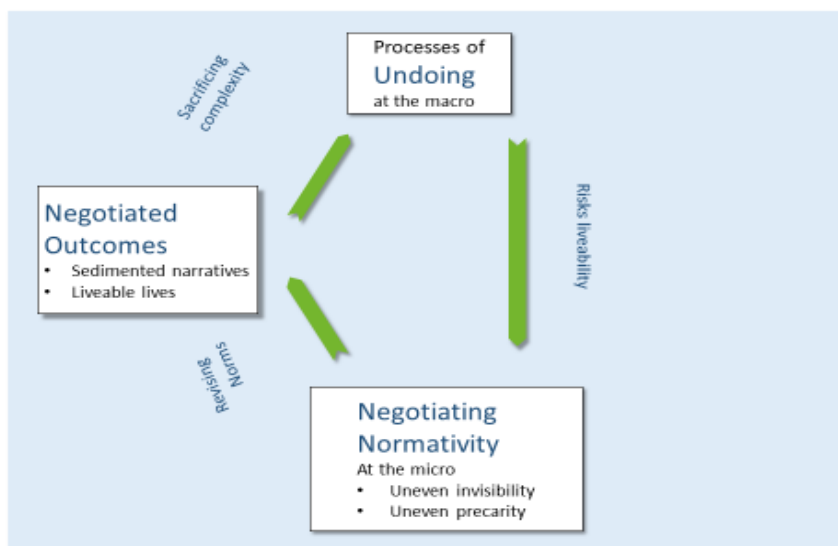
One imagines that the negotiation cycles as described above are particularly prevalent and oft-recurring in precaritising worlds of work, where agile identities, identities that in their response to fast-changing working environments and demands in the 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007 in Coupland and Spedale 2020), risk a loss of self 'more disempowering than traditional alienation' (p. 844.). Giving an account protects individuals to some extent from agility demands. In addition, given modern workplaces as increasingly precaritising, identification with organisations may become less important or less possible, requiring a consideration of external foci in the development of professional selves (see also Ashforth, Moser, and Bubenzer 2020). Nevertheless, this thesis supports the notion (e.g. Kondo 1990) that inequalities are not merely oppressive - for instance in professional worlds where precarity is unevenly distributed - but in professionality processes they can give rise to professional selves via accounts that facilitate liveable lives (Butler 2015).

Security identities grounded in discourses of masculinities, stigmatisation and dirty work are expanded by the offer of a more nuanced space where individuals employed in the modern, UK-based civil PSI can derive meaning and self-validation out of their working lives, even if worlds of work are

precarious. Because discursive resources at the macro level are not actively taken up, or taken up only to a limited extent in accounts at the micro level – their salience is diminished and they become less hegemonic. An effect can therefore be that discourses at the macro level become less powerful – have their power undone – which shows the upward trajectory of undoing processes, i.e. from the micro to the macro, in the development of professional identity.

By giving an account, individuals diminish the power of macro discourses. The private security industry seemed an obvious contender to study those processes in issues of identity in relation to professionalism and professionalization at different levels of analysis. With its rapid growth, insecure workings conditions, and contested nature - with professionalization increasingly organised 'from above' - it is exemplary of an industry in neoliberal economies, in which understandings of what it means to be a professional is changing.

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## *Sensemaking processes generated by human-HR chatbot interaction in the organization*

SUMMARY

The use of chatbots for automating internal organizational communication is becoming increasingly widespread. While numerous studies have delved into general users' perceptions of chatbots, less attention was dedicated to employees' perspectives. The dissertation aims to discover the sensemaking processes generated by human-chatbot interaction in the organization. Empirical data was gathered from the Hungarian organizations of a multinational company using semi-structured interviews and analyzed through interpretative phenomenological analysis. The results contribute to the sensemaking literature through the exploration of nine meanings given to chatbots, and the human-chatbot interaction field by focusing on the HR professionals' perspective on HR chatbots.

## Extended abstract

The use of chatbots to automate internal organizational communication is becoming increasingly widespread. While numerous studies have examined general users' perceptions of chatbots, less attention was dedicated to employees' perspectives. The dissertation aimed to discover the sensemaking processes generated by human-chatbot interaction in the organization through the following research questions: (1) *What sensemaking processes does the interaction between the individual and the HR chatbot generate in the organization?* (1.1) *What sense do individuals make of the HR chatbot used in their organization?* (1.2) *How does the sensemaking of the HR chatbot affect the behavior of individuals towards the HR chatbot itself?*

The empirical research was conducted in the Hungarian organizations of a multinational company that introduced a rule-based HR chatbot in 2019. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The sample consisted of three homogenous groups including the HR professionals (n=6) who are responsible for the chatbot's regular update, the employees (n=10), and the management (n=4) who were involved in the HR chatbot's introduction. Web content and document analysis were performed with inductive coding for secondary data analysis.

As a result of the analysis, I have enriched the sensemaking literature with 1) the exploration of nine meanings made of chatbots, and 2) the identification of actions shaped by these meanings. So far, only a few studies have examined organizational members' perspectives on chatbots. My findings contribute to human-chatbot interaction literature with 1) the examination of HR professionals' perspectives on the HR chatbot, and 2) the investigation of employees' perspectives on the HR chatbot.

The practical goal of the research was to explore whether a gap could be identified between the organization's chatbot-related objectives and employees' behavior towards the chatbot and how this gap could be narrowed or eliminated. The findings have shown that the actions of HR professionals and employees did not completely coincide with the organizational goals, which were due to the following: 1) the HR professionals need to interact with employees because this way they can feel that employees count on them, which is an important pillar of their professional identity, 2) employees prefer to contact HR because of their social needs, 3) organizational users find easier to call HR rather than learn the features of the HR chatbot.

My results provide practical insights for the experts of the examined organization to facilitate the organizational acceptance and the daily use of the HR chatbot, and they may also help HR professionals by revealing the challenges of automating internal organizational communication

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*From grieving to career change: How personal, grief-inducing events affect professional life*

## SUMMARY

Grief is an inherent part of people's lives. However, organizational scholarship acknowledged that we know very little about grieving employees: What role does work play when an employee faces grief, and whether and how such personal experiences affect professional life? My dissertation aims at answering those questions. In particular, my first essay finds that people can turn their work into a refuge for them to cope with personal grief-inducing experiences. My second essay shows that such experiences humanize employees' work identity and make them alter aspects of their professional life in a long term. My third essay explores the factors affecting whether grieving employees cope with personal grief at work via getting distracted by work versus via sharing the event with the colleagues and processing it at work.

Grief is an inherent part of people's lives. People lose family members, partners, and close friends. Such events are considered among the most stressful in life—the breakup of a committed relationship often rates as even more stressful than the loss of a close family member or a close friend (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Scully, Tosi, & Banning, 2000)— and everyone is likely to experience such events at least once (Ventura & Denton, 2021). Such experiences break settled life routines, bring the variety of emotions, and make people vulnerable. Thus, psychological scholarship has been putting grief in the center of scholarship attention for decades trying to understand the different aspects of this complex experience. However, organizational scholarship acknowledged that while we know so much about grieving people, we know very little about grieving employees (Freidin, Toker, & Turgeman-Lupo, 2020: Petriglieri & Maitlis, 2019). What role does work play when an employee faces grief? Whether and how such personal experiences affect professional life? What affects the way people cope with personal grief at work? Those are the questions that motivated my dissertation that brings personal grief into organizational context and explores the phenomenon of a grieving employee.

In my first qualitative essay, that I built on 64 in-depth interviews, I explore the short- term impact of grief-inducing events on the work domain. In particular, the essay investigates how people use their work in order to cope with grief-inducing events, as well as what consequences such coping leads to. While organizational scholarship tends to represents alteration of job aspects by employees (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In particular, people suggested that they were spending extra time at work, initiating or asking for additional tasks, learning new work-related skills, increasing the number of interactions at work, engaging in more social events with coworkers, opening up and sharing more personal information with colleagues, and deepening the quality of interactions at work. Such changes in their work behavior allowed them to transform their work into refuge in different forms: cognition-based, emotion-based, and support-based form. The cognition-based refuge allowed people to take a mental break from constant thinking about the event and instead keep their mind in present focusing on the work task. The emotion-based refuge allowed people to balance emotional state via experiencing positive emotions at work. The support-based refuge made people receive compassion and feel accepted that it is ok not to be their best selves at that time (see Table 1 and Figure 1 for illustration). People tended to engaged in job crafting behavior for the length of up to three months, however, for some people such change in their work behavior lasted longer. As the result of such coping, people suggested they experienced different kinds of consequences in both work and life domains. People tend to see positive consequences such as avoidance of worsening depression and of substance abuse, expanded friendship network, professional and personal growth, and increase in organizational commitment; however, those who worked significantly harder (one and a half to twice as hard) for a long period of time (more than three months) also said that they experienced a high level of fatigue as well as health deterioration. People used work-as-refuge to a different extent, the data analysis showed that what facilitated the process of seeing work as a refuge was positive experiences at work people had before the event.

From the theoretical standpoint, this essay contributes to the literature on grief in organizations, compassion, and job crafting. In particular, the study extends prior research on grief in organizations by showing that work can be not only an inopportune obligation for people facing grief (e.g., Freidin et al., 2020; Hazen, 2008; Wilson et al., 2020), but also can become a refuge in different forms. It also reveals facilitators of the process of seeing work as a refuge, such as positive experiences at work before the event. Consequently, my study contributes to the literature on compassion by empirically revealing the active role a grieving employee can play (such as actively seeking compassion via sharing the event in the workplace), upending the predominant assumption that the recipient of compassion is passive (Dutton, Workman & Hardin, 2014). Furthermore, these findings introduce grief-inducing events to the literature on job crafting. Most importantly, first essay enriches our understanding of job crafting by illuminating its antecedents outside of the work domain (see Zhang & Parker (2019) for a review on antecedents), such that job crafting can be initiated by events not related to work. Additionally, by outlining possible negative consequences of job crafting, the essay advances job crafting scholarship by adding needed balance – alongside the predominantly positive side of promotion-oriented job crafting behavior (Zhang & Parker, 2019; Weisman et al., 2022; for an exception, see Demerouti, Bakker, & Halbesleben, 2015), its negative side is also considered.

From the practical standpoint, this essay provides grieving employees with understanding how they can use their work to help them cope with personal grief as well as prevents them from using work as a refuge in a harmful way. Furthermore, managers who understand the phenomenon of work-as-refuge can better help employees overcome challenging circumstances in several ways. The first involves creating conditions that facilitate the experience of work-as- refuge when an employee experiences grief. My study shows that positive experiences at work prior to the event would facilitate using work as a refuge. Therefore, creating such conditions in the workplace lays the foundation for using work-as-refuge when needed thus, creating potential for transforming negative experiences into positive or even beneficial situations for both an employee and their workplace. The second way involves ensuring that an employee has agency over their job so that they can engage in job crafting behavior when feel such a need. The third way involves preventing the potentially harmful impacts of too intense and lengthy immersion in work. Furthermore, this study reveals that enormous efforts at work can signal to managers that an employee is experiencing pain and difficulty in their personal life and needs help.

In my second qualitative essay, I investigate the long-term effect of grief-inducing events on professional life and, in particular, on work identity. The spillover theory (Crouter, 1984; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) suggests as well as my first essay shows that negative emotions experienced in the life domain, including grief, spill over into the work domain and make a person experience grief-related emotions at their desk. However, scholarship does not go beyond exploring the immediate or short-term effect that such events and emotions can have on one's work neglecting that such events can also have impact on professional life in a long term, which became the focus of my second essay. In particular, it asks: How and with what consequences does a personal, grief-inducing event affect professional life, including work identity? To pursue this question, I undertook a qualitative study by

conducting 55 in-depth interviews among employees who experienced grief-inducing events, particularly the termination of significant relationships as the result of bereavement or the breakup of a strong, committed partnership.

I found that these events prompt identity humanizing – i.e., prioritizing personal (human being-related) over instrumental (professional-related) – that can take different paths. Such processes were induced by affective, cognitive, and relational triggers generated by grief- inducing events which became a basis for sensemaking. Those triggers made people feel in a particular way (affective triggers), try to understand what the event meant for them (cognitive triggers), and make sense of the way they were treated when experienced such events (relational triggers). Identity humanizing paths could be directed toward self (e.g., becoming more self- compassionate, taking better self-care) or towards others (e.g., becoming more compassionate colleague, or leaders, or employee). Consequently, identity humanizing resulted in job crafting behavior, work-life balance recourses reallocation, or even career path change. For example, one of my participants Alex suggested that the loss of her partner made her realize "you never know what someone is going through". As the result, she became more compassionate colleague and employee which affected the way she started interacting with her coworkers and clients. Similarly, Mary suggested that before losing her parents and husband, she was a manager who would only be interested in talking with her employees on work-related topics. However, the losses changed her as a leader, she became more compassionate and patient manager. She was no longer limiting her interaction with employees by covering only work-related topics. Instead, she intentionally became interested in their lives outside of work and made such topics a part of her interactions with her employees; she even included such conversations as a norm to start with her weekly meetings with the team. Jack is an example of those who the event made realize one might have not that much time left. This resulted in his change of the focus from working for money to working for meaning and joy, as well as the desire to maintain deep connections with people he has left. Consequently, he changed his career path to start doing what would address the need to feel fulfilled and see more meaning in his work, as reallocated his work-life balance resources dedicating more time and attention to his loved ones. Thus, as the result of sensemaking process of the event, emotions it brought, and treatment of others, people altered not only their identity in general but also in relation to their professional field, humanizing their work identity. This, in turn, contributed to altering some aspects of their professional life in a long term.

Theoretically this essay contributes to the identity literature by uncovering the impact that personal, grief-inducing events can have on an individual's work identity. Additionally, it reveals the mechanisms of this process and, thus, answers the identical call (George, Wittman, & Rockmann, 2022). Moreover, the study contributes to the literature on the work-life interface by enriching our understanding of the interconnection between personal events and professional life in the long-term. If the previous literature demonstrated the immediate and short-term effect that personal events may have on the work domain – the spillover effect (Crouter, 1984; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) – my second essay shows that such an impact can occur long term and have a lasting effect.

The findings also have practical relevance for employees who experience personal, grief- inducing events. In particular, being aware of the possible impact grief-inducing events can have on an individual's professional life can prepare people for radical changes they may experience, such as career path change. In addition, the essay provides insights on factors contributing to humanizing the workplace.


In my third conceptual essay, I examine the factors that affect the way in which a grieving employee would use work as a refuge. I build this conceptual piece on the findings of my first essay and propose their further development. As my first essay shows, the extent to which people immerse themselves in work differs; moreover, some people do not immerse themselves in work at all, using work as a refuge in a different way. While immersion in work is characterized by getting distracted from event-related thoughts and emotions, processing the grief in the workplace occurs by introducing a grief-inducing event to the workplace, sharing it with colleagues, and talking about it. Nevertheless, despite critical differences in the mechanisms for using work as a refuge, the factors that affect whether a grieving employee will immerse themselves in work, process the event at work, or do both remain unknown. Expanding our understanding of such antecedents is important because it provides a theoretically compelling understanding of the phenomenon of work-as-refuge, which I uncover in my first essay as well as will help predict possible behaviors grieving employees might have. By offering a conceptual analysis of such factors, this essay promises to be useful in this regard. In particular, it categorizes such factors as work-related (e.g., work centrality), life-related (e.g., family demands), and event-related (e.g., feeling guilt), and offers insights into how such factors would affect the choices of coping at work. For example, the third essay suggests that people with high work centrality will engage in both cognition-based and support-based forms of work-as-refuge. Specifically, it proposes that work centrality is positively related to immersion in work and is positively related to processing because for people with high work centrality their work might be the only source for both distraction and social support; while people with low level of work centrality may have other sources to address the needs generated by grief-inducing events. However, those who the event made feel shame (e.g., in case of a breakup which a person interprets as a failure in romantic relationship) will engage in cognition-based form of work-as- refuge but not its support-based form. Specifically, people will use the workplace as a chance to avoid thinking about the event but would prefer not to reveal the details because of feeling shame: Feeling shame is positively related to immersion in work and negatively related to processing in the workplace.

Theoretically, this essay provides critical contributions that extend the limited theory on grief in organizations and the work-life interface. Specifically, the essay incorporates the complexity and interdependencies inherent in the grieving employee phenomenon, allowing organizational scholarship to achieve a more complete picture of the experience of a griever in the workplace. While prior research recognizes the importance and relevance of the context of a grieving employee (Freidin et al., 2020; Petriglieri & Maitlis, 2019), thus far the field of management has offered little with respect to circumstances in both the work and life domains that can affect coping with the grief experiences of an

employee. By acknowledging the numerous and varied factors affecting this coping experience, my theory encompasses both the complexity and nuances of both work and life domains that play a critical role in how grieving employees behave and use the workplace to cope.

Practically, this essay is useful for managers, because knowing antecedents of specific coping behaviors can provide managers with guidance in understanding the personal circumstances of grieving employees. This understanding, in turn, can contribute to creating the conditions needed for employees to make grieving at work more comfortable and helpful.

To conclude, in its three essays my dissertation reveals different aspects of a grieving employee's experience and uncovers the interlink between personal grief and the work context. In so doing, it contributes to clearer understanding of the role work plays for grieving employees as well as the impact personal grief can have on work identity and professional life overall.

Table 1: The illustrations of three forms of work-as-refuge

| Form of work- as-refuge | Illustration |
| --- | --- |
| Cognition-based | I think having something to fill my time and kind of to fill my mental focus was really helpful because I was pouring all of my mental focus and energy into kind of processing the breakup in the relationship, and to have something that pulled me away from that which was work was really helpful. (Program Officer, breakup) |
| Emotion-based | Work was one of the things that was constant through that time; that could be a source of success when, like, when losing that many people, again many of which were… You have felt like, you know, losing over and over again. (Manager of Product Management, death of a mother-in-low) |
| Support-based | I couldn't pretend like I had it together and I couldn't pretend like oh, I'm OK when I very clearly was not and no one would be OK in that circumstance. So, I think that at work I was, like, very openly not OK pretty, like, vulnerable with the people around me. […] When I say vulnerable, I think really what I mean, it's letting other people take care. […] I was working with people that I really loved and who were really supportive, and so it actually felt better to be at work than it did at home by myself. (Health and Technology Assistant, breakup and death of a friend simultaneously) |
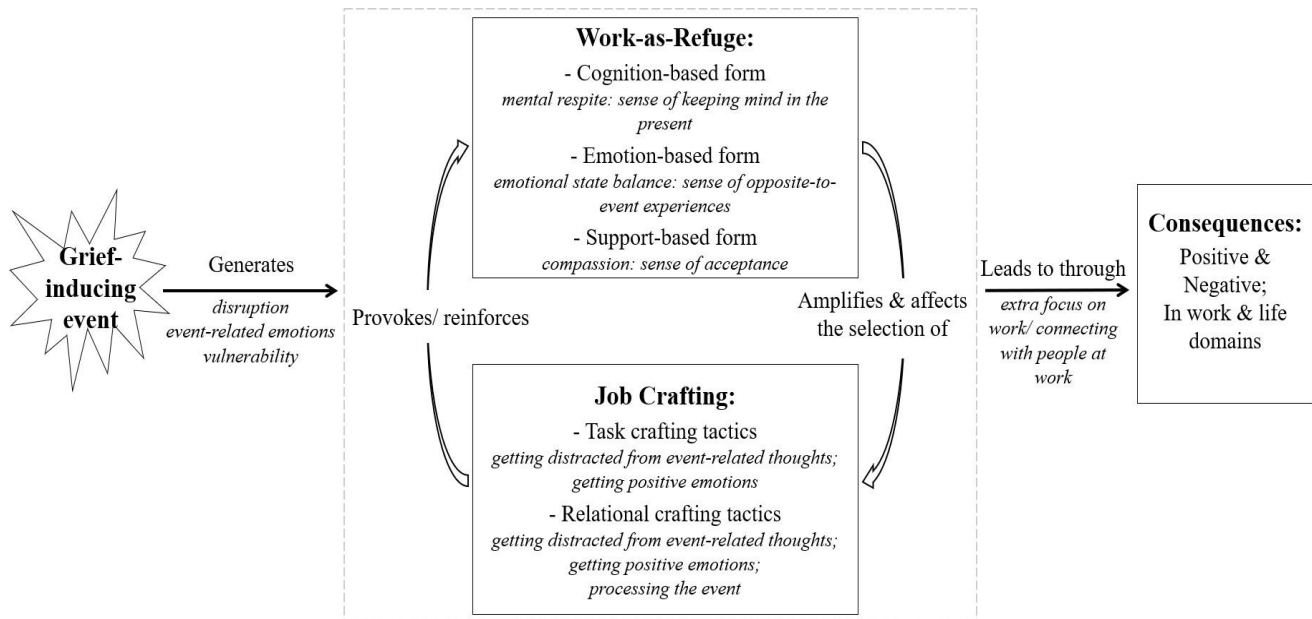
Figure 1: Work-as-Refuge from a Personal Grief-Inducing Event

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Understanding Job Crafting Through the Lens of Individuals' Temporal Characteristics.
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*The Role of Storytelling in Building Attachment and Leading Change*

SUMMARY

Deep-diving into the turbulent waters of organizational change, this mixed-method dissertation explores the power dynamics between sensemaking and sensegiving of change agents. Employing a multidisciplinary lens, it illuminates the commensurable interplay of social cognition, adult attachment, and social identity theories. Findings reveal that change leaders' prosocial approaches and narrative intelligence significantly impact recipients' readiness for change. Moreover, the dissertation pioneers the integration of screenwriting perspectives into organizational storytelling, enhancing our understanding of recollected experiences during change. Despite the COVID-19 challenges, this research underscores the importance of emotional engagement and strategic narrative construction in navigating the ambigous waves of transformation.

## 1. Purpose of the research

This doctoral dissertation examined the dyadic relationship between change leaders and change recipients, in an effort to expand our understanding of organizational change dynamics with novel insights from an organizational storytelling perspective. Previously published seminal research by Battilana and Casciaro (2012) clarified the importance of mobilizing change agents into change adoption through influential efforts of change leaders, however the question of *what is the actual mechanism they excert over change recipients* needed additional exploration.

The overarching aim of the dissertation was to discern how change leaders leverage storytelling to influence change adoption among recipients, with a focus on building attachment and leading change. Specifically, employing a follow-up explanation mixed-methods research design, I investigated how the change leader's utilization of Champion Behavior, Leadership Influence Tactics, and Narrative Intelligence during their sensegiving process impacted change recipients sensemaking process.

Drawing from John Yorke's five-act screenwriting framework (2014), the qualitative method of this study delves into persuasive narrative strategies employed by change leaders during organizational change. This research framework integrated social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 2013), and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) to elucidate triggers, mediating mechanisms, and desired outcomes of organizational change.

Across three chapters I focused on answering three key research questions:

(4) How can integrating findings from interdisciplinary research on persuasive communication and storytelling contribute to understanding the role of storytelling in change leadership?

(5) *What is the relationship between change recipients' psychological need satisfaction, readiness for change, and change leaders' demonstration of champion behavior, utilization of leadership influence tactics, and narrative intelligence?*

(6) *What are the salient elements of change leaders' experiences during organizational change?*

Through this inquiry, the dissertation aimed to enrich existing conversations on successful organizctional change implementation, with the ultimate goal of reducing change failure rates and fostering overall organizational development for the benefit of broader society.

## 2. Research methods

In order to understand how change leaders' influencing endeavors affect change recipients' readiness to change, I opted for a follow-up explanation mixed-method research design. Recognizing the conceptual and methodological complexities inherent in understanding these endeavors, I undertook an interdisciplinary literature exploration as a starting point to deconstruct the process of persuasion and its altering effect on attitudes.

Drawing from most cited SSCI journals across research fields of developmental psychology, linguistics, political science, consumer psychology, and religious studies, I constructed a narrative- based conceptual model with propositions depicting the relationship of identified constructs in an effort to delineate the experiential dynamics of change leaders' sensemaking and sensegiving processes. Subsequently, I empirically tested these propositions with change leaders engaged in ongoing organizational change projects, aiming to discern the impact of change leaders' behaviors on change recipients' perceptions. However, the research encountered limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a reduced sample size of 37 change leaders from 12 organizations and 164 change recipients, which jeopardized the intially envisioned multilevel analysis.

Nonetheless, a moderated mediation analysis was performed to examine the hypothesized relationships between idea champion behavior, psychological need satisfaction, readiness to change, leadership influence tactics, and narrative intelligence; representing change recipients' impressions of change leaders' sensegiving efforts. And in a follow-up qualitative study I explored change leaders' incident recollection of the same change process.

In order to mitigate biases, the incident recollection method was employed for qualitative analysis, identifying eseential elements of the organizational change metanarrative. Leveraging John Yorke's narrative creation methodology, incidents during organizational change phases were recollected, and analyzed to extract common themes and identify sentiment transitions across different stages of change implementation – phrased as acts with respective sub-acts.

The resulting narrative analysis, mixed with quantitative insights, formed the basis for answering the research questions and concluding the study. Through this integrated approach, the dissertation contributed towards to a deeper understanding of change leaders' influential endeavors in organizational change contexts, with chapters published as articles in SSCI journals.

## 3. Major results

### 3.1 A narrative-based process of change leaders' influence over change recipients

This interdisciplinary exploration delves into the intricacies of influential behavior across disciplines, laying the groundwork for a nuanced understanding of organizational change adoption complexities. By integrating experimental perspectives from philosophy, notably Feyerabend (1993), actionable insights for change leaders and recipients emerge. Drawing from developmental psychology, linguistics, political science, consumer psychology, and religious studies accessed through reputable journals, this endeavor aims to illuminate the role of storytelling within the sensegiving process.

Central to this discourse is the recognition of persuasive narratives' significance, exemplified by Rosenbaum et al. (2018) and Brown et al. (2009), in fostering engagement and inducing attitude shifts. Additionally, the narrative explores the intertwining of storytelling with sensemaking, organizational symbolism (Weick, 2012), and societal narratives' impact on identity formation (Stromberg, 1990). It

underscores the instrumental role of storytelling in navigating power dynamics, organizational politics, and ideological differences to convey intended messages effectively.

Furthermore, parallels between organizational change and innovation diffusion in marketing underscore the importance of managing negative perceptions and establishing trust. The narrative underscores the pivotal role of persuasive narratives in mobilizing critical mass for organizational change, irrespective of change leaders' archetypes, amidst ideological shifts and cultural norms.

Change agents' influential behavior is elucidated through commensurable theories, primarily rooted in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989). This theory delineates three models of agency— direct personal agency, proxy agency, and collective agency—to explain individuals' regulation of behavior in social settings, emphasizing the role of change leaders in constructing, filtering, and framing organizational change narratives.

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) predicts behavior within groups based on perceived status differences, with change leaders striving to create a referent group to influence the broader organization. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 2013) sheds light on how early life experiences shape attachment styles, impacting leader-follower relationships during change. The convergence of these theoretical perspectives forms a narrative foundation for further conceptual model development, highlighting the intricate nature of understanding change dynamics amidst diverse disciplinary lenses, where change leaders excert influence through relationship development instead of coercion.

This theoretical foundation helped progress the research towards a narrative-based process model, in an attempt to answer the first research question: *How can integrating findings from interdisciplinary research on persuasive communication and storytelling contribute to understanding the role of storytelling in change leadership?*

I explored this through two conceptual frameworks and respective propositions (P1-P11):

- change leader's sensemaking mechanis (Figure 1; propositions P1-P6) and

- change leader's sensegiving mechanics (Figure 2; propositions P7-P11).

The conceptual framework regarding a *Change Leader's Sensemaking Mechanics (Change Internalization)* underscores the complexity inherent in organizational change dynamics, acknowledging it as an emotionally charged human experience necessitating adaptation at both individual and group levels.

The central inquiry poses a fundamental dilemma: whether change leaders' actions are reactive responses to external pressures or proactive efforts to influence the external environment. It contends that irrespective of the scenario, change leaders must personally experience the change process before influencing others, aligning with Liu and Perrewé's (2005) concept of primary and secondary appraisal. This exploration distinguishes between individual and group change processes, delineating the change leader's role in sensegiving for group change. The intertwined nature of envisioning, signaling, revisioning, and energizing underscores the fluidity of the change leader's role and its evolution with change adoption.
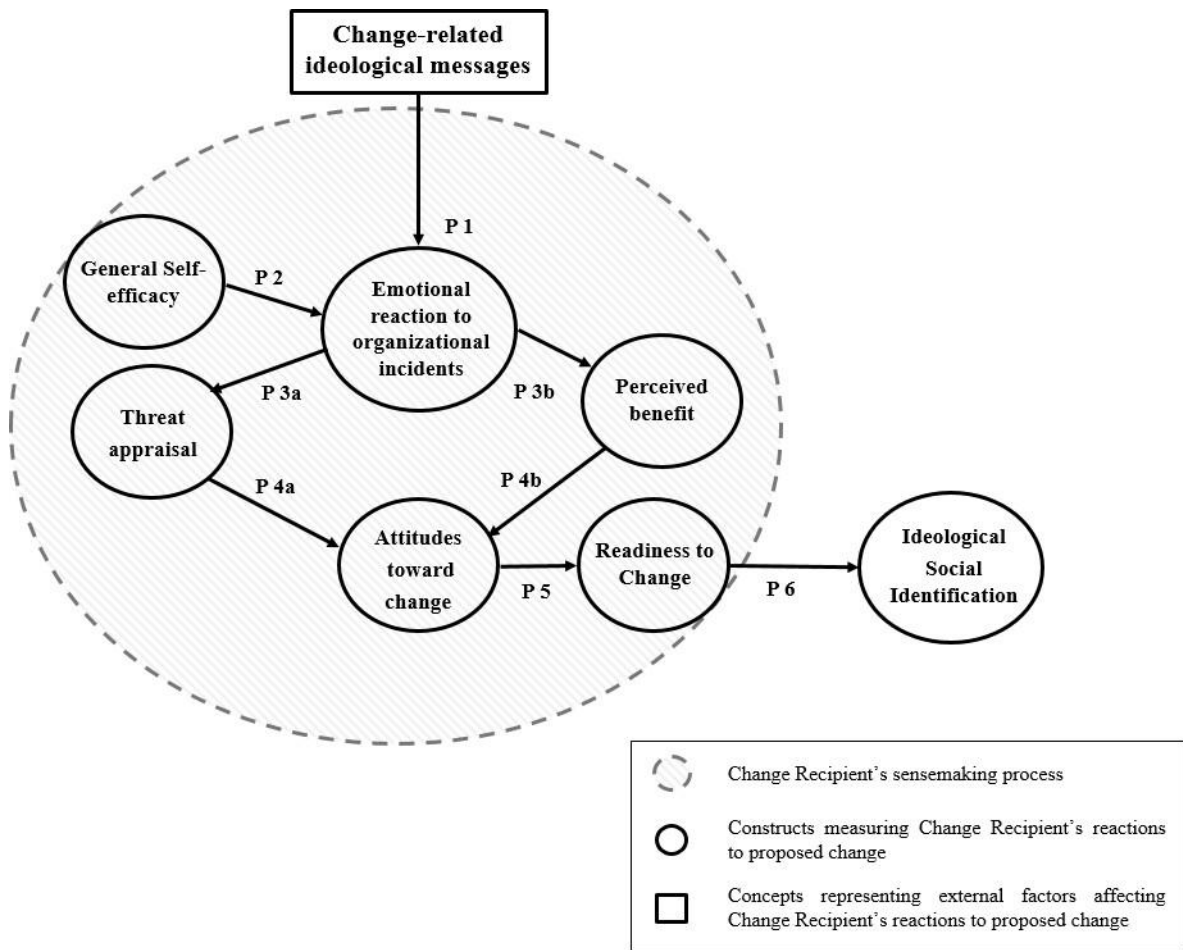
Figure 1. Conceptual Overview of a Change Leader's Sensemaking Mechanics (Change Internalization; source: Own work)

Sensemaking, framed as an emotional process catalyzed by disruptions to the status quo, underlines the pivotal role of shared meaning and emotion in facilitating adaptive responses. Emotional reactions precede cognitive interpretations, shaping individuals' perceptions of environmental events and influencing their readiness to change.

The proposition posits that individuals with lower self-efficacy are prone to interpret organizational change negatively, amplifying stress and anxiety levels during change. Moreover, emotional reactions play a crucial role in determining individuals' threat-benefit perceptions of organizational change, with negative experiences often correlating with heightened threat perceptions and diminished benefit perceptions.

The formation of attitudes towards change is contingent upon individuals' emotional reactions and cognitive interpretations, with expectations serving as key drivers of meaning creation. This dynamic interplay between emotions, cognitions, and attitudes underscores the intricacies of sensemaking processes during organizational change. Additionally, attitudes towards change significantly impact individuals' readiness to change, emphasizing the interdependence between psychological factors and

organizational dynamics. The negotiation of social identity within changing contexts further complicates sensemaking processes, with individuals adapting self- schemas and ideological affiliations in response to contextual shifts. Ultimately, individuals' readiness to change influences their ideological identification within the organizational context, shaping their embrace or rejection of change initiatives. This iterative process underscores the subjective, ever-evolving nature of sensemaking in the context of organizational change, followed by change leader's sensegiving efforts (Figure 2).



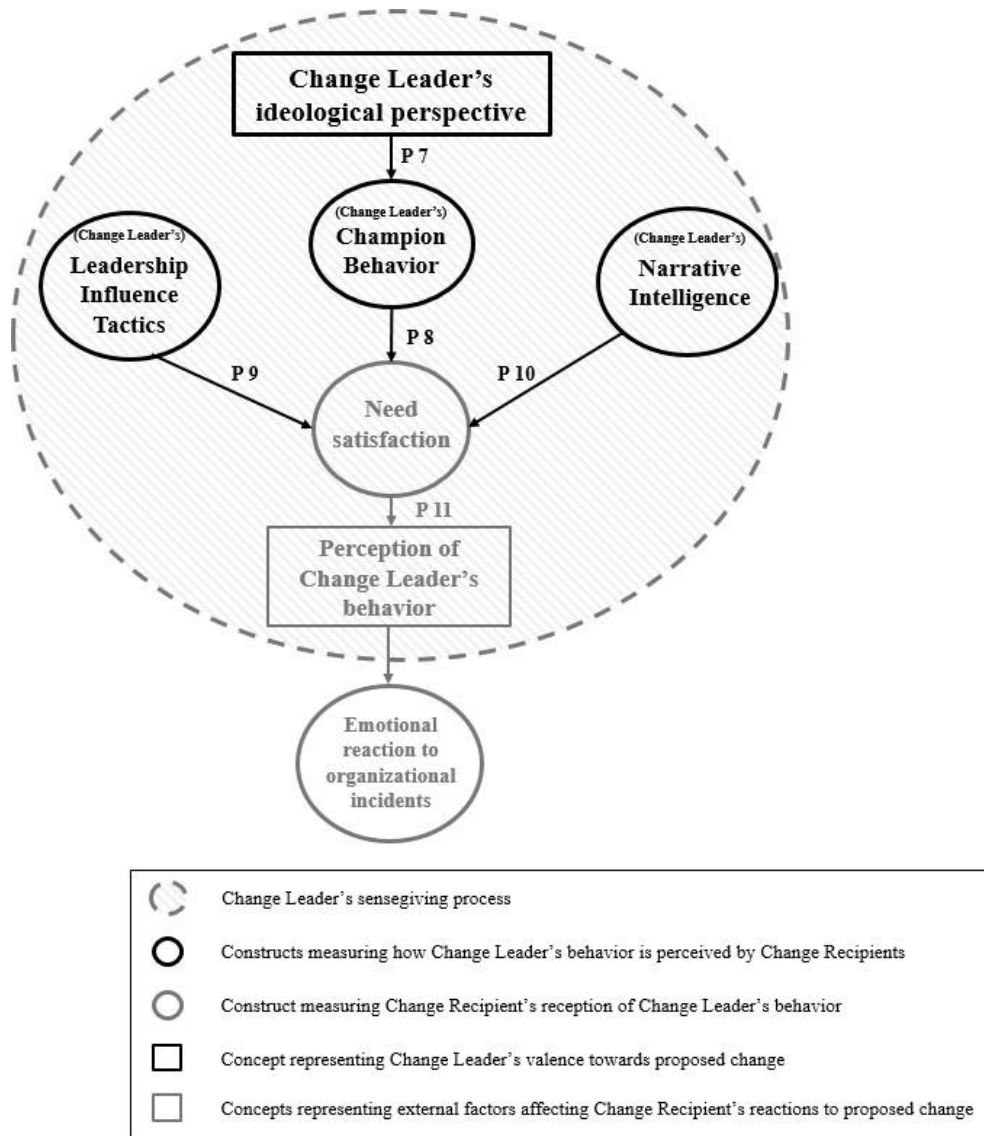Figure 2. Conceptual Overview of a Change Leader's Sensegiving Mechanics (Change Externalization; source: Own work)

The conceptual examination of a change leader's sensegiving mechanics, (termed *Change Externalization*) highlights the pivotal role of change leaders as the initiators and navigators of organizational change. Change leaders, having undergone their own sensemaking processes, must

mobilize change recipients to sustain momentum and ensure successful adoption. However, sustaining change adoption necessitates addressing various manifestations of resistance and cynicism, underscoring the complex nature of change leadership.

Change leadership focuses on envisioning the future and introducing revised interpretative schemes through sensegiving processes, leveraging symbols and storytelling to shape shared meaning and culture within the organization by evoking emotional reactions over rationalization.

These symbolic actions, including storytelling, serve to manage the symbolic interactionism inherent in the sensemaking process, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a follower focus. Contextual framing gains significance through cultural resonance, while narratives draw on sequencing to structure the change process into a coherent storyline.

The sensegiving process involves crafting narratives to influence change recipients' sensemaking of the new ideology, utilizing emotionally engaging symbols to foster attachment and mitigate ambiguity-induced anxiety. Change leaders, akin to attachment figures, wield influence over change recipients, with the strength of attachment influencing the extent of influence exerted.

Champion behavior, a hallmark of successful change leaders, involves inspiring and mobilizing change adoption through clear vision, enthusiasm, commitment, and involvement of others. Leadership influence tactics further shape change recipients' perceptions, emphasizing prosocial approaches to convey meaning and alleviate anxiety. Narrative intelligence, demonstrated through compelling storytelling, enhances emotional engagement and facilitates sensemaking, ultimately contributing to psychological need satisfaction among change recipients.

In conclusion, change leaders play a critical role in facilitating sensemaking and sensegiving processes, forging dyadic relationships that promote psychological need satisfaction and alleviate anxiety associated with organizational change. This understanding underscores the intricacies involved in comprehending the underlying mechanisms of change leaders' influence over change recipients' perceptions, emphasizing the conceptual and methodological challenges inherent in this domain. Detailed analysis available for review upon request.

## 3.2 A moderated-mediation perspective of change leaders' sensegiving introducing narrative intelligence as a rival predictor of change recipients' readiness to change

Aforementioned propositions were used to illustrate a theoretical overview of the sensemaking-sensegiving perpetual dynamic as change cascades across organizational levels, and followed-up with a quantitative exploration and hypotheses testing. This quantitative study aimed to answer the question: *What is the relationship between change recipients' psychological need satisfaction, readiness for change, and change leaders' demonstration of champion behavior, utilization of leadership influence tactics, and narrative intelligence?*

Employing survey questionnaires to measure change leaders' actions and recipients' personal responses, this study was facilitated through the online data collection platform Qualtrics. To address potential

common method variance, several preventive measures recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) were applied. These measures included clarifying the study's purpose, splitting data collection into three waves, linking personal affect with subject-matter behavior, ensuring respondent anonymity, and utilizing different endpoint scales. Harman's factor analysis was conducted to assess the presence of common method variance.

The independent variable, change leader's demonstrated champion behavior, was assessed using the Champion Behavior scale developed by Howell et al. (2005; α = .84). This scale comprised 15 items covering three dimensions of champion behavior related to advocating innovation. Respondents rated their perception of change leaders' behavior on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Change leaders' utilization of leadership influence tactics was measured using a scale developed by Yukl et al. (2008; α = .80). This scale consisted of 20 items covering pro-social influence tactics, excluding influence tactics such as exchange, legitimating, pressure, coalition, and coercion. Respondents rated their perceptions of leadership tactics from 1 (*I can't remember him/her ever using this tactic with me*) to 5 (*He/she uses this tactic very often with me*).

The measure of change leaders' utilization of narrative intelligence was adapted from Pishghadam et al. (2011; α = .75). This scale comprised 20 items covering different dimensions of compelling narratives, such as characterization and generation. Respondents rated their perceptions of change leaders' narrative intelligence from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Change recipients' psychological need satisfaction was assessed using a scale developed by LaGuardia et al. (2000; α

= .77). This scale contained nine items covering autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined by Deci and Ryan (2000). Respondents rated their satisfaction with team interaction on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The dependent variable, change recipient's individual readiness for organizational change, was measured using a scale developed by Vakola et al. (2013; α = .74). This six-item measure allowed individuals to express their readiness to embrace change on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Additionally, a theoretical control variable, general self-efficacy, was included in the model, assessed using a measure developed by Chen et al. (2001; α = .86). This scale contained seven items covering dimensions closely related to self-esteem, locus of control, and neuroticism. Respondents rated their general self-efficacy from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 6 (*strongly agree*). The study also examined demographic variables such as gender, age, tenure, and hierarchical position within the organization. However, none of these variables showed statistical significance in influencing individual readiness for organizational change, consistent with findings by Kunze et al. (2013). Five hypotheses are as follows, depicted on the conceptual model (Figure 3):

*Hypothesis 1: Change leader's demonstration of champion behaviour has a positive relationship with change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change.*
*Hypothesis 2: During organizational change, change recipients' psychological need satisfaction has a positive relationship with their readiness to change.*

*Hypothesis 3: The relationship between change leaders' demonstration of championship and change recipients' readiness to change during organizational change is partially mediated by change recipients' psychological need satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 4: The relationship between change leader's demonstration of idea championship and change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by change leaders' utilization of leadership influence tactics.*

*Hypothesis 5: The relationship between change leader's demonstration of championship and change recipients' psychological need satisfaction during organizational change is enhanced by change leader's utilization of narrative intelligence.*
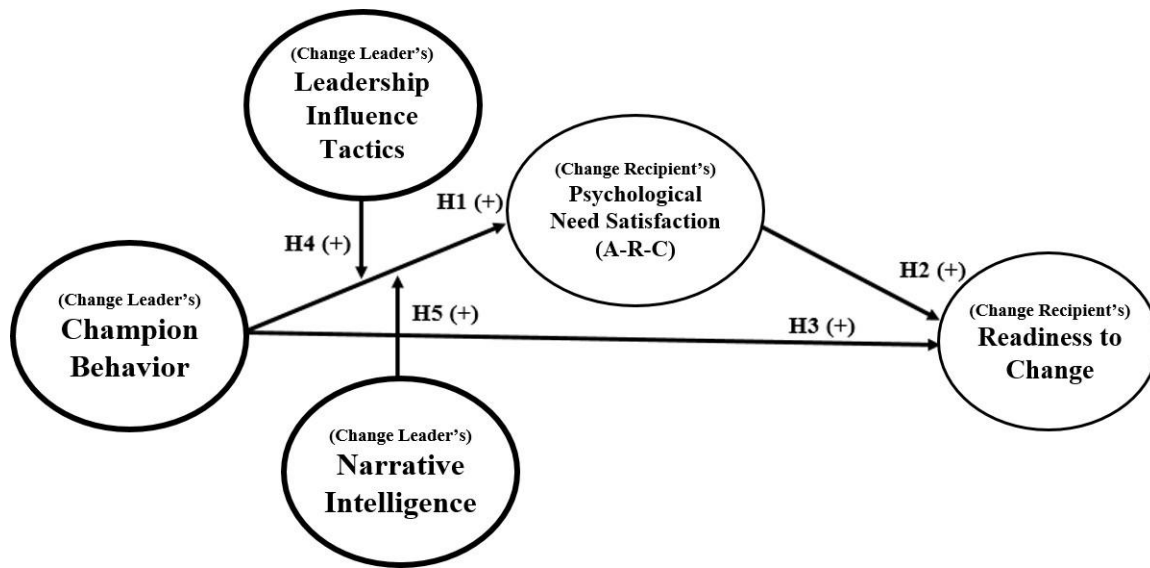


Figure 3: A moderated mediation model of the effect that change leader's demonstrated champion behavior has on change recipients' individual readiness to change (Source: own work)

Initially I aimed at a multilevel research design study, but encountered limitations due to relatively low response rates and external deadlines, resulting in methodological challenges. Although the collected sample size was smaller than recommended, an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analysis was conducted to account for respondent data nested within change leaders (see Table 1). To bolster methodological rigor, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to validate factor structures, and common method variance (CMV) was assessed using the common latent factor (CLF) test, available upon reviewer request.

Despite these limitations, an alternative analysis using Hayes' PROCESS macro in SPSS Version 26 was chosen, specifically testing moderated mediation Model 9. Hierarchical multiple regression was utilized to examine direct and indirect effects as recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). Before advanced statistical analyses, data quality was ensured following Cohen et al. (1983) requirements.

Hayes' PROCESS model initially established the relationship between change leader's Champion Behaviour and change recipients' Readiness to Change, with Psychological Need Satisfaction introduced as a mediator. Subsequently, the relationship between Leadership Influence Tactics, Champion Behaviour, and Psychological Need Satisfaction was examined, along with the moderating effect of Narrative Intelligence.

Table 1: Interclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) Overview

| Scales | k | Intraclass Correlation | Lower Bound (95% Confidence Interval) | Upper Bound (95% Confidence Interval) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Champion Behavior | 15 | .122 | .-128 | .330 |
| Narrative Intelligence | 9 | .877 | .845 | .905 |
| Leadership Influence Tactics | 20 | .931 | .913 | .946 |
| General Self-efficacy | 7 | .843 | .792 | .883 |
| Readiness to Change | 6 | .685 | .598 | .759 |
| Psychological need Satisfaction | 9 | .795 | .741 | .842 |

*Note.* Findings are based on Average Measures.

Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.

a. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.

b. Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from

the denominator variance.

c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.

Source: Own work

The second phase of moderated mediation testing assessed how Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence as moderators affected the moderation effect of Psychological Need Satisfaction. A 95% confidence interval was ensured through bootstrapping, and the conditional indirect effect was visualized and interpreted to conclude the hypotheses testing process. These methodological choices navigate the challenges of understanding the mechanisms underlying change leaders' influence over change recipients' perceptions of change within organizational contexts.

Exploratory analyses of change leaders' sensegiving endeavors yield intriguing insights, confirming Hypotheses 1 to 3. These findings indicate that change leaders' demonstration of Champion Behavior positively influences change recipients' perception of Psychological Need Satisfaction, which in turn correlates with increased Readiness to Change. Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediates this

relationship, suggesting that autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs foster stronger attachment to the change leader and, consequently, heightened readiness for change (Table 2).

*Table 2: Moderated mediation effect overview (Hayes' PROCESS model 9)*

| Model 1: Outcome Mediator (M) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | T | P | 95% CI | |
| **Variables** | | | | LL | UL |
| Constant | 48.49** | 120.29 | .00 | 47.69 | 49.28 |
| Champion Behavior | .002 | .05 | .95 | -.07 | .07 |
| Leadership Influence Tactics | .23** | 8.28 | .00 | .18 | .29 |
| Champion Behavior *Leadership Influence Tactics | -.002 | -.96 | .33 | -.007 | .002 |
| Narrative Intelligence | .07 | 1.07 | .28 | -.06 | .22 |
| Champion Behavior *Narrative Intelligence | -.006 | .006 | .34 | -.01 | .006 |
| **Model 1 Summary** | R | R² | F | p | |
| | .56 | .31 | 14.80 | .00 | |
| **Model 2: Outcome (Y)** | | | | | |
| | B | T | P | 95% CI | |
| **Variables** | | | | LL | UL |
| Constant | 24.58** | 11.15 | .00 | 20.23 | 28.93 |
| Champion Behavior | -.01 | -.50 | .61 | -.05 | .03 |
| Psychological Need Satisfaction | .12** | 2.73 | .007 | .03 | .21 |
| **Model 2 Summary** | R | R² | F | p | |
| | .21 | .04 | 3.90 | .02 | |
| **Moderated Mediation** | | | | | |
| **Values of Narrative Intelligence** | **Values of Leadership Influence Tactics** | **Effect** | **Bootstrap LLCI** | **Bootstrap ULCI** | |
| -1 SD (-14.13) | -1 SD (-5.62) | .0089 | -.0123 | .0348 | |
| M (0.0) | M (0.0) | .0003 | -.0095 | .0103 | |
| +1 SD (14.13) | +1 SD (5.62) | -.0083 | -.0297 | .0096 | |

Note. B = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Level; p = probability value; $R^2$ = Percentage of variance explained by model; t = t distribution value; UL = Upper Level

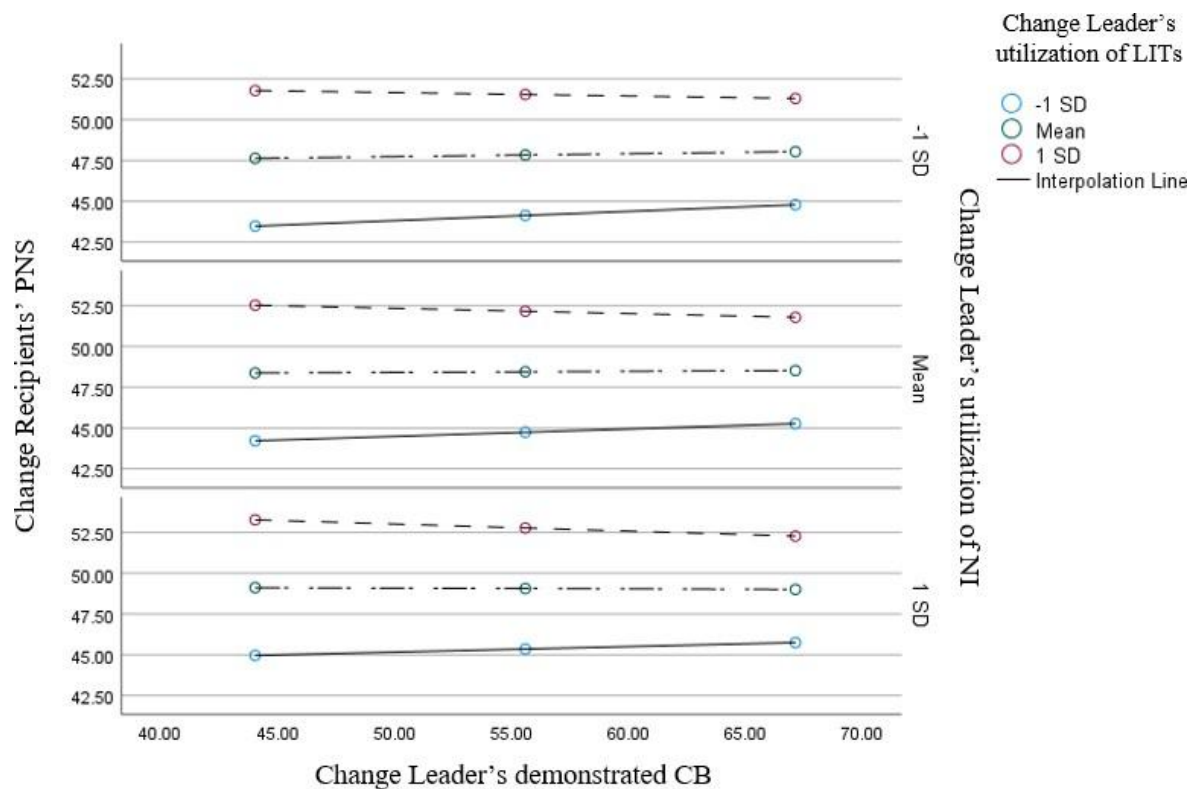** p < .001
* p < .01

*Source: Own work*

Figure 4: Visual representation of the Moderated Mediation (Hayes' PROCESS model 9; source: Own visualization in SPSS)

However, Hypotheses 4 and 5 are not substantiated, indicating that the utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics and Narrative Intelligence does not moderate the primary relationship (see Figure 4). Additionally, theoretical and demographic controls are found to be insignificant. Further analyses attempt to mitigate sample restrictions but yield consistent results contrary to theorizing. Notably, Leadership Influence Tactics emerge as a stronger predictor of change recipients' Readiness to Change, with Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediating this relationship. Particularly, rational persuasion and consulting tactics prove most prevalent, challenging prevailing perspectives on the role of Champion Behavior in innovation implementation.

Narrative Intelligence, when utilized independently of Leadership Influence Tactics, significantly impacts Psychological Need Satisfaction and Readiness to Change, highlighting the efficacy of emotionally engaging storytelling. Reflecting on these findings and considering critiques of hegemony and scope limitations, attention is drawn to the potentially adverse effects of excessively persuasive change leaders. Those exhibiting traits associated with the dark triad of personality—psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism—may prioritize goals at the expense of recipients' well-being.

Notably, narcissistic personalities, often advancing careers rapidly, warrant scrutiny regarding their impact on adult attachment and organizational dynamics.

## 3.3 Organizational change metanarrative and change leaders' sensemaking efforts

Following-up on the previous study exploring change recipients' perceptions of their change leaders, I turned to interviewing 10 change leaders and get a better understanding of organizational change by asking them to recollect a certain organizational incident typical for the process of organizational change.

Primary research question was: *What are the salient elements of change leaders' experiences during organizational change?* My examination of their recollected experiences during organizational change underscores the significance of narrative style in conveying pivotal messages across various narrative acts, and the following analysis is significantly shortened to meed the word-count limitation for the EDAMBA dissertation competition, with the full dataset and analysis available for reviewers upon request.

This study examines the contrasting effects of corporate-style and personal-style narratives on emotional engagement during organizational change. Drawing from Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), shifts in sentiment parallel changes in central characters' focus, reflecting sensemaking and sensegiving dynamics. Adopting John Yorke's (2014) screenwriting methodology, five acts of organizational change unfold, echoing Shakespearean sub-act structures:

(Act I) The Calm of Status Quo: Initiating change amidst organizational flux, a change leader emerges as a bridge between inertia and transformation, necessitating alignment with recipients' understanding.

(Act II) The Challenge of Change: Recipients confront change implications with skepticism, prompting a shift towards recipient insights.

(Act III) The Deceptiveness of Acceptance: This act sees the change leader reclaiming a proactive stance, addressing prior concerns and criticisms while leveraging personal narratives and emotional appeals to underscore the benefits of change adoption. Notably, many change leaders fail to recognize the evolving knowledge of recipients, emphasizing personal growth narratives over organizational outcomes. Their persistence mirrors the nurturing behavior of mentors, reinforcing the importance of narrative versatility and character modulation (Bauman et al., 2003).

(Act IV) The Adversity of Apprehension: Both parties reach understanding parity but encounter renewed doubt, highlighting the collaborative nature of sensemaking and the importance of cocreation.

(Act V) The Resolution of Transformation: Culminating shared experiences foster unity and understanding, guiding the organization towards embracing change. These findings, blending qualitative and quantitative insights, shed light on change leaders' subjective experiences and inform future change leadership strategies.

## 3.4 Mixing quantitative and qualitative research results into a follow-up explanatory QUAN- qual mixed-method study

Despite variations in narrative engagement, all stories portrayed a transformative journey from initial ignorance or resistance to eventual mastery of change, highlighting the pivotal role of knowledge transfer and personal growth.

Importantly, emotionally resonant narratives, coupled with adept utilization of Leadership Influence Tactics, emerged as key drivers of psychological need satisfaction and readiness for change among recipients. Moreover, narratively intelligent change leaders demonstrated an impressive ability to craft compelling storylines, fostering enhanced learning and retention among recipients.

These findings underscore the profound impact of narratives as powerful sensemaking tools and advocate for a balanced approach to change leadership. By prioritizing emotional resonance and psychological needs over energy-intensive behaviors like Champion Behavior, change leaders can navigate the complexities of organizational change with empathy and efficacy, ultimately facilitating smoother transitions and fostering organizational success.

## 4. Implications

This doctoral dissertation aimed to enrich theoretical discourse within the academic community while offering practical insights for practitioners grappling with escalating rates of organizational change failure. Across three methodologically distinct chapters, I delineated three theoretical implications:

Firstly, I underscored the significance of sensegiving within an overarching social-cognitive framework (Weick, 2020), emphasizing its role in mitigating organizational change failure through prosocial leadership. By integrating social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989), adult attachment theory (Bowlby, 2013), and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), I illuminated triggers, mediating mechanisms, and desired outcomes of organizational change.

Expanding upon cognitive perspectives proposed by Liu and Perrewé (2005), I incorporated affective dimensions, illustrating how change leaders shape organizational ideology through sensegiving, while recipients construct their own interpretations. Tajfel's social identity theory elucidates these dynamics, offering insights into change leaders' influencing efforts. Moreover, drawing parallels from varied relationships, such as teacher-student or mentor-mentee, I explored how adult attachment styles influence information exchange, thereby impacting organizational change dynamics.

Furthermore, leveraging self-determination theory, I elucidated how individuals' perception of autonomy, relatedness, and competence influences their attachment to change leaders and readiness for change. By conceptualizing change leaders as attachment figures, I argued for a prosocial approach to change leadership, emphasizing the role of attachment strength in facilitating change adoption.

Secondly, employing quantitative methodology, I validated prior propositions and reveal that change recipients' Psychological Need Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between change leaders' Champion Behavior and recipients' Readiness to Change. Contrary to convention in the field, Leadership Influence Tactics emerged as stronger predictors of readiness for change, emphasizing the need for tailored leadership approaches.

Thirdly, through qualitative analysis, I introduced narrative engagement as a pivotal aspect of change leadership. By leveraging narrative transportation, effective change leaders imbue organizational change with meaning, facilitating recipients' sensemaking process. Despite the exploratory nature of my methodological approach, I pioneered the application of screenwriting perspectives in organizational storytelling, shedding light on key elements of recollected experiences during organizational change.

Practically, I advocated for change leaders to view organizational change as an internal product, emphasizing benefits over threats to stimulate positive emotional reactions. Moreover, by positioning change leaders as the face of change and utilizing storytelling effectively, organizations can foster emotional engagement and reduce resistance to change. Structuring emotionally engaging narratives in five acts, leveraging narrative aesthetics, and strategically navigating challenging phases of change enhance narrative engagement and information retention, ultimately facilitating smoother organizational transitions.

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*A Tale of Two Concepts: Exploring the Relationship between Firm Performance and Multinationality*

## SUMMARY

Previous research on internationalization's benefits and costs remains inconclusive. This thesis examines firm performance and multinationality, revealing a paradigmatic bias in previous research. Through a multiphase research approach including systematic literature review and regression analysis, it critically assesses existing literature and investigates the causal direction between firm performance and multinationality. Findings challenge the assumption that multinationality influences firm performance, instead highlighting firm performance as the driving force behind multinationality. Drawing from behavioral theories, the study bridges organizational and individual-level perspectives, enriching discussions on managerial decision-making in internationalization and providing a holistic response to understanding firm performance with multinationality.

## Research Problem

Despite being a pivotal topic over the past 50 years, the benefits and costs of internationalization are not well understood (Nguyen & Kim, 2020), and debates about an optimal level or degree of internationalization, also referred to as multinationality, are still ongoing. A substantial body of research in international business, strategy, and general management is devoted to understanding firm internationalization and its connection to a firm's financial performance. However, a consensus regarding the relationship between multinationality and firm performance remains elusive (cf. Verbeke & Brugman, 2009). Researchers observe and argue for a multitude of different shapes for the multinationality-performance relationship. This includes a positive linear relationship (e.g., Morck & Yeung, 1991), a negative linear relationship (e.g., Kim, Hoskisson, & Wan, 2004), a U-shaped relationship (e.g., Contractor, Kumar, & Kundu, 2007), an inverted U-shaped relationship (e.g., Tallman & Li, 1996), an S-shaped relationship (e.g., Lu & Beamish, 2004), and an M-shaped relationship (e.g., Almodóvar & Rugman, 2014). In addition, replication studies could not confirm previous results (e.g., Berry & Kaul, 2016).

While the variety in the results from previous research is not a problem per se, the inconclusiveness is problematic. Furthermore, there are no indications of a theoretical rationale that would explain a generalizable multinationality-performance relationship (Verbeke, Li, & Goerzen, 2009). Nevertheless, researchers continue to contribute to this field, following the underlying assumptions of their predecessors. Hence, conclusions on whether it pays to be multinational cannot be drawn (Pisani, Garcia-Bernardo, & Heemskerk, 2020).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the financial performance of firms in relation to internationalization processes and to question the assumptions upon which the two concepts are most often related to each other. This leads to the following overarching research question:

What role does firm performance play in relation to multinationality?

## Relevant Literature

To fully understand internationalization, there is a need for cross-level theorization (Cowen et al., 2022) and theoretical pluralism (Lowe, Magala, & Hwang, 2012), as no single theory can fully explain all aspects of internationalization (Monaghan, Tippmann, & Coviello, 2020). The two central behavioral theories in this thesis are the resource-based view and prospect theory. Combining those theories allows for a better understanding of resource allocation decisions under uncertainty in the internationalization process, as well as for risk evaluation as a critical mental process within individuals that influence firm behavior.

The resource-based view (Barney, 1991; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Wernerfelt, 1984) is one of the most prevalent descendants of behavioral theory. According to resource-based theorists, the strategic allocation of resources drives a firm's financial performance (Barney, 1991). By strategically combining tangible and intangible assets, which include the firm's processes, routines, information,

knowledge, and management skills, the firm creates a sustainable competitive advantage, which, in turn, contributes to the financial performance of the firm (Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001). However, the resource-based view does not explicitly claim previous experience and market knowledge affecting the internationalization process. Building on the theoretical resource-allocation arguments in the resource-based view, the internationalization process model (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Vahlne & Johanson, 2017) introduces and emphasizes previous experience and market knowledge as two crucial resources in the internationalization process. Furthermore, the model suggests taking small and incremental steps in the internationalization process to avoid risks. Hence, it contributes to a more precise picture with theoretical foundations for resource allocation in an internationalization process with theoretical implications on an organizational level.

Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Tversky & Kahneman, 1992), on the other hand, addresses the human complexities of decision-making, ambiguity, and risk perception on an individual level. Initially developed in the field of psychology, it helps explain managerial behavior when confronted with evaluating risks versus rewards (Tversky & Kahneman, 1992). Risk perceptions of managers and their mental processes influence the performance outcomes of the firm. According to prospect theory, there is a more significant impact on the decision-maker for losses than gains (Barberis, 2013), which influences the decisions made in connection with internationalization (Levy, 1992).

While multiple economic and behavioral theoretical perspectives offer notable arguments for both benefits and shortcomings of internationalization and their effects on firm performance, it is through the combination of resource-based view with prospect theory that theoretical advances can be made (cf. Coleman, 1990; Cowen et al., 2022). This combination of theories allows for a deeper understanding of the underlying individual mental processes of risk evaluation when decisions on resource allocation at an organizational level need to be made in the internationalization process. Subsequently, introducing individual-level prospect theory to the organizational-level resource-based view broadens the understanding of the underlying mechanisms behind the multinationality – firm performance relationship.

## Research Method

The research project relied on a sequential, multiphase research approach (cf. Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), consisting of three consecutive phases: exploration, confirmation, and explication. This facilitated an investigation of the overarching research question from different angles, enabling triangulation (see Brewer & Hunter, 1989, p. 83). This more dynamic approach to the research design permitted the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. The three consecutive phases resulted in four academic papers that addressed specific research questions while using individual method descriptions.

The first phase of the research process was descriptive and exploratory. A systematic literature review method (Snyder, 2019) was applied to explore previous literature in the search for a better understanding of the variation in results and findings. The systematic literature review relied on a

multi-step iterative process for data collection, ensuring robustness and rigor by eliminating subjectivity in data collection and analysis (Zahoor et al., 2020). Paper I in the thesis offers a systematic review, content analysis, and cross-tabulation analysis using chi-square tests of 115 empirical studies from over 40 major management, strategy, and international business journals between 1977 and 2021.

The second phase of the research process was confirmatory, in the sense that hypotheses following the assumption of a causal relationship between multinationality and firm performance were tested. Findings from the first exploratory research phase shifted the attention to investigating the multinationality-performance relationship in a previously unresearched context, namely founder-controlled firms. To test causality in the multinationality-performance relationship (cf. Nguyen, 2017; Verbeke & Forootan, 2012), panel data analysis was the most suitable one. This phase resulted in paper II in the thesis, which uses hand-collected data for 2055 firm-year observations of Swedish publicly listed firms in the years 2001 to 2013. Various multiple regression models test for differences with other firms.

The third phase in the research process was explicative, where a reversed causal relationship between firm performance and multinationality was tested and explained. The design of this phase was similar to a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006) since first quantitative and then qualitative data was collected and analyzed in two consecutive steps. This permitted a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The main advantage of this explicatory research phase was that quantitative data analysis was followed by qualitative data analysis, which facilitated a more robust overall analysis when combined (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This phase resulted in papers III and IV. Paper III uses a competing model approach with non-linear ordinary least squares regression on unbalanced panel data for 2066 firm-year observations of Swedish publicly listed firms over 12 years. In the competing model approach, the first model consists of the reversed causal firm performance-multinationality relationship, while the second model covers the traditional causal direction from multinationality to firm performance. Paper IV uses two pilot case studies with in-depth, semi-structured interviews with managers of two firms at two locations in the Asia-Pacific region. Thereby, the pilot case studies examine the long-term nature of international strategies and help illustrate the theoretical argumentation based on the resource-based view and prospect theory further.


## Main Findings

The overarching findings of this thesis reveal a paradigmatic bias in previous research, where authors propagate the ubiquitous causal assumption that multinationality affects firm performance. Instead, this thesis finds solid statistical support for a reversed causal relationship, meaning that firm performance is a driving factor for multinationality.

As this thesis is built upon four academic papers, the results of the individual papers deserve further clarification. The results in Paper I point to a complete lack of patterns and consistency in previous

literature. The systematic literature review concludes that the prevalent assumption of a direct causal relationship between multinationality and firm performance is highly dubious. The context specificity of the relationship makes general declarations difficult, if not impossible. Hence, Paper I suggests future research to acknowledge internationalization as a process that takes different forms at different times, with no specific dominant form. Consequently, the process of internationalizing deserves more attention rather than the outcome. Moreover, Paper I advocates for a critical reevaluation of the current oversimplification of the relationship between multinationality and firm performance.

Paper II confirms the predominant causal relationship between multinationality and firm performance in the novel context of founder-controlled firms. It further is an illustration of a paradigmatic bias in academic research, as it follows the predominant assumption of causality without questioning or testing for a reverse causal relationship.

Paper III presents both theoretical and empirical arguments for a reversed causal relationship, with firm performance being the antecedent to multinationality. The results show strong support for the argumentation that firm performance drives internationalization and shows a positive U-shaped relationship. Furthermore, the traditional causal relationship is found to explain less than half the variance, has marginal significance on the key variables, and has an illogical outcome. Thereby, Paper III highlights how risk-taking attitudes, in accordance with prospect theory, explain a high level of internationalization when performance is negative. As performance rises, internationalization drops to an inflection point near zero, where, in accordance with resource-based theory, the degree of internationalization begins rising.

Findings in Paper IV postulate that the financial performance of an organization influences future strategic internationalization decisions. Furthermore, it highlights the moderating impact that both market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation can have on the relationship between performance and internationalization. Paper IV further develops theoretical arguments for a reversed causal relationship of firm performance affecting multinationality. Due to the scant amount of prior literature, this paper improves the understanding of how firm performance influences the decision-making processes concerning internationalization.

Hence, this thesis challenges the paradigmatic bias in the research field because it questions causality and finds empirical and theoretical support for a reversed causal relationship between firm performance and multinationality.

## Implications for International Business Theory

This thesis offers three main implications for international business theory.

First, there is a paradigmatic bias in academic research centering around the underlying assumption that multinationality affects firm performance. The paradigmatic bias in academic research manifests itself in new literature, striving to confirm previous knowledge. The reality of this bias is highlighted by several studies, which vividly illustrate that scientists prefer findings consistent with their prior beliefs over findings inconsistent with their prior beliefs (e.g., Epstein, 2004; Hergovich, Schott, & Burger, 2010; Koehler, 1993; Mahoney, 1977), and are even more resistant to change when beliefs based on a causal link are challenged (Masnick & Zimmerman, 2009). The lack of questioning of the underlying assumption of the causal effects of multinationality on firm performance is a critical indicator for the research field suffering from a paradigmatic bias that enhances conformity. Another indication of paradigmatic bias is the variety of different contexts, measurements, methods, and theories utilized in previous research (Nguyen, 2017). It illustrates the authors' search for gap-spotting, which has become a disturbing problem in management studies (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). Instead of questioning the underlying assumptions within the paradigm, researchers focus on confirming the paradigm with the help of new contexts, theories, definitions, measurements, and methods. Researchers risk repeating methodological shortcomings from previous research by adding additional and new variables or moderators in the empirical studies. Construct clarity and coherence in definitions and transparency over measurements are of uttermost importance. The paradigmatic bias within the research field affects scientists unconsciously, making them "both the victim and the perpetrator of what one does not realize is imagined or distorted" (McSweeney, 2021, p. 851). One helpful route forward is to create awareness about cognitive biases' influence on the scientist. Awareness of potential biases in research would contribute to the critical evaluation of research designs and underlying assumptions while aiming to falsify theories and assumptions instead of confirming them (Popper, 1959).

Second, to not fall victim to the paradigmatic bias, causality issues need to be further addressed in international business literature, both conceptually and empirically. One main contribution of this thesis lies in the finding that firm performance, as an antecedent to multinationality, is an empirically much stronger relationship than the opposite. Combining the resource-based view with prospect theory serves as theoretical support for this finding and induces a change in the existing paradigm (Kuhn & Hacking, 2012). Together with other antecedents to the internationalization process (Hitt et al., 2006; Kirca et al., 2012), firm performance is crucial.

Third, in this thesis, prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) was introduced as another behavioral theory to explain the individual-level decision-making that influences firm-level decisions (cf. Coleman, 1987) on resource allocation in the internationalization process. Consequently, this thesis contributes to prospect theory, as it extends the risk-seeking actions of individuals to an organizational level (Shimizu, 2007), and the explanatory power and applicability of prospect theory within international business. Furthermore, this thesis strongly advocates for applying both the resource-based view and prospect theory as complementary behavioral theories to explain the role of firm performance in an internationalization process. Thereby, the thesis advocates for bridging the organizational-level

resource-based view with individual-level prospect theory. Using both theories allow for an investigation and explanation of the longitudinal process between firm performance and multinationality, while only using one theory would require focusing on one part of the particular relationship (cf. Glaum & Oesterle, 2007), resulting in an incomplete understanding.

To conclude, in thoroughly investigating the nature of the relationship between multinationality and firm performance, this thesis suggests that researchers should be cautious not to fall into the paradigmatic bias trap and attribute positive or negative performance outcomes to internationalization processes. Conceptual and empirical analysis reveals strong support for firm performance being an antecedent to internationalization. Researchers should also consider the antecedent role of firm performance, where internationalization can occur at both negative and positive levels of firm performance.


## Managerial Implications

This thesis offers several practical implications for managers. First, internationalization decisions can occur at positive and negative levels of performance. Prospect theory highlights individual decision-making biases toward fearing potential losses more than appreciating potential gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Those potential losses do not necessarily only need to be the financial investments required for internationalization but also the potential losses of not internationalizing and thereby missing out on potential gains. In this context, managers must be aware of how their performance biases may influence decisions. Thinking in terms of gains and losses should not override solid market analysis when debating internationalization.

Second, while there seem to be other aspects influencing risk-taking when performance is positive, prospect theory helps to explain managerial decision-making when financial circumstances are constrained. Managers need to be aware of potential biases that might influence their decision-making (Bazerman & Moore, 2009) within the internationalization processes. Hence, careful strategizing and planning before or during an internationalization process and considering individual and personal biases are imperative.

Third, from a long-term perspective, multinationality does not necessarily lead to increased performance. Instead, any internationalization process is much more than a strategic decision to internationalize or increase the current degree of internationalization. Short-term possibilities should not overturn long-term consequences when strategizing to internationalize.

Fourth, on some occasions, a "fear of missing out" drives poorly performing firms to seek further internationalization. This creates a risk for firms that might internationalize too quickly without establishing properly on a single market first. Although customer- or market orientation are crucial motives in the decision-making process for internationalization, a firm's financial constraints should also be considered. Moreover, more focus should shift toward the global value chains of firms. An overall judgment on the suitability of an internationalization process should be made.

Fifth, as founders or their heirs take over managerial activities in founder-controlled firms, they tend to have higher levels of control. Consequently, those founder-managers need to be aware of their own imprinting effects on their organizations and their personal motives in their decision-making processes. The greater risk avoidance and desire to maintain control in founder-controlled firms might lead to a more cautious behavior that, in some instances, can have positive effects but might be hindering in other fast-moving industries.

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# Irena Sker

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*The Role of Sensory Marketing in the Creation of a Tourism Experience*

SUMMARY

Sensory marketing, a recent concept, was initially considered in the field of experience marketing and retail, and later in the field of tourism. The lack of empirical research on this concept motivates the purpose of the work - to prove that with sensory marketing it is possible to influence the tourist experience of visitors in the destination and their behavioural intentions. Primary data were collected by questionnaire and interview in rural tourist destinations on a sample of 429 respondents for quantitative and 10 for qualitative research. The results indicate that the sensescape has a statistically significant influence on the affective and cognitive responses of tourists, which directly affects satisfaction, destination attachment and behavioural intentions. The importance of the sense of touch in shaping the sensescape is particularly emphasized, while the sense of sight is singled out as the most important according to the destination decision makers, although the senses should be approached holistically.

## Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century brings new trends in the development of industries, where marketing experts recognize the importance of the senses in creating a deeper and more meaningful connection with consumers. With the evolution of marketing practices and the abandonment of traditional marketing, which is based on the idea that the consumer is focused on a product or service, the focus shifts to an experience in which senses and emotions are key. Embracing the concepts of experiential and emotional marketing, marketing has been developed that deals with influencing psychological reactions through the five human senses - sensory marketing. Sensory marketing can be defined as a marketing process that begins by stimulating stimuli from the environment that are perceived through human senses and affect the consumer's emotions, with the goal of directing his behaviour. It is a recent concept that was initially considered in the field of experience marketing and retail, and later in the field of tourism, although tourists have always experienced the destination with their five senses. Only in recent years the tourism industry has adopted the concept of sensory marketing as a marketing strategy to create a competitive advantage in the rapidly growing tourism industry, therefore empirical studies on sensory marketing in tourism are scarce (Markwell, 2001; Urry, 2002; Dann & Jacobsen, 2003; Pan & Ryan, 2009; Buzova et al., 2020). In addition, of the five human senses, most of the previous research focused on one or two senses (Satti et al., 2021), the most common sense of sight, which until recently dominated marketing practice (Hultén et al., 2008), although it is important that the five human senses perceive holistically (Miller & Stoica, 2004).

The lack of research on sensory marketing in tourism results in insufficient research on the relationship between sensory marketing and the tourist experience, as well as the consequences of the tourist experience resulting from stimuli in the sensory environment. The reason for this is reflected precisely in the dynamism, inscrutability and difficulty of measuring the tourist experience, and the authors mostly limit themselves to descriptions of the dimensions of the tourist experience, singling out the sensory dimension (Schmitt, 1999; Gretzel & Fesemaier, 2003; Brakus et al., 2009; Godovykh & Tasci , 2020) as one of the significant ones, therefore the relationship between sensory marketing and the tourist experience remains insufficiently researched, which defines the research problem. Therefore, the main purpose of the paper is to prove that it is possible to influence the visitors' tourist experience of the tourist destination and their behavioural intentions with sensory marketing. The main goal of the work, in accordance with the perceived deficiency in the available scientific literature and recommendations for future research, is to develop a theoretical basis based on previous theoretical and empirical knowledge and to create a valid and reliable conceptual model for assessing the impact of the application of sensory marketing on the affective and cognitive states of tourists and on the consequences of the tourist experience, i.e. satisfaction with the tourist experience, destination attachment and tourist behavioural intentions.

Based on previous research, a conceptual research model was formed and the following hypotheses were developed:

**H1:** The perception of destination sensescape has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourists' affective responses,

**H2:** The perception of destination sensescape has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourists' cognitive responses,

**H3:** Tourists' affective responses have a positive and statistically significant influence on their satisfaction with tourist experience,

**H4:** Tourists' cognitive responses have a positive and statistically significant influence on their satisfaction with tourist experience,

**H5:** Satisfaction with tourist experience has a positive and statistically significant influence on destination attachment,

**H6:** Satisfaction with tourist experience has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourist's behavioural intentions.

In accordance with the set hypotheses, a conceptual model was built according to which the perception of destination sensescape represents an environment in which stimuli are created that are perceived by the senses, and which are expected to have a positive and significant influence on tourists' affective and cognitive responses, and consequently on the satisfaction with tourist experience, destination attachment and behavioural intentions (Figure 1).
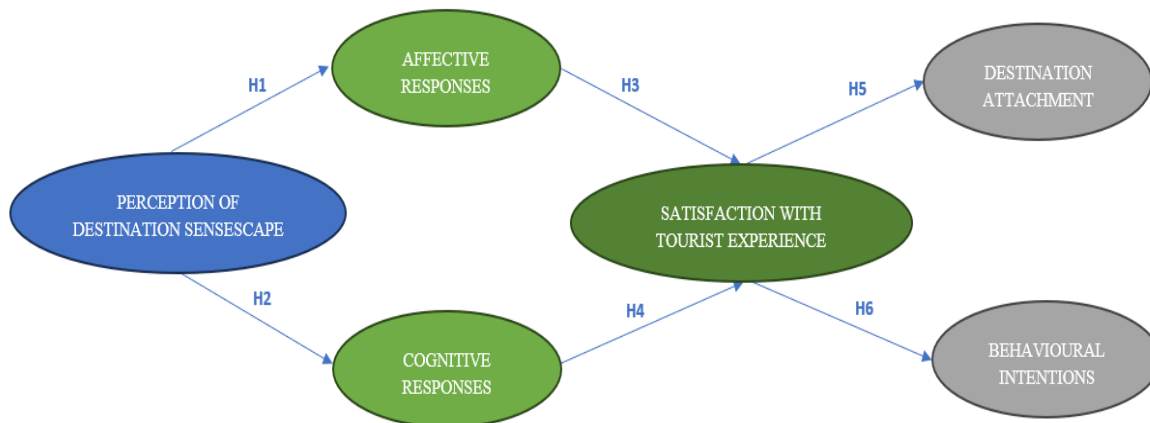


Figure 1: Conceptual research model
Source: PhD student research

## Research Methodology

In order to test the conceptual model, a quantitative study was conducted. The survey method was used for data collection, and the form for data collection is a structured questionnaire designed on the basis of previous research and modified according to research needs. Given that the measurement scales of the constructs were originally developed in English, they were subjected to a content validity check performed by seven experts in the field of marketing and tourism. Furthermore, in order to check the content validity of the questionnaire, its clarity and comprehensibility, a pre-test was conducted on a sample of 48 respondents. The questionnaire was then translated into German and Italian. After designing the survey questionnaire, it was tested through a pilot study that was conducted from July 10 to July 25, 2022 on a purposeful random sample of 102 respondents in order to analyse the psychometric characteristics of the survey questionnaire, and the obtained results of the pilot study were used in analysis of the results related to the assessment of the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument, after which the final version of the survey questionnaire was formulated. The main quantitative research was conducted on a purposeful random sample of 429 respondents in the period from August 1 to September 30, 2022. Given that the purpose of the research was to examine the impact of sensory marketing on the tourist experience in a tourist destination and their behavioural intentions, the survey was spent in tourist destinations. A rural area was chosen which, according to Ružić (2012), is interesting for tourists because it brings them back to nature, which is man's natural environment, the place where he comes from, where he likes to return and where he feels comfortable and relaxed, and according to Kastenholz et al. (2012) the rural environment is ideal for the process of conceptualizing tourist experiences because it can stimulate many senses. The rural area where the research was conducted are rural tourist destinations in the interior of Istria, because rural tourism in Istria, according to the number of overnight stays (Croatian Tourist Board, 2021), is considered the most developed in Croatia. The selection of the rural research area in the interior of Istria was based on the classification of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Collected primary data were analysed using univariate and multivariate methods of statistical analysis.

After conducting quantitative research, based on the obtained results, questions for the qualitative research were formulated with the aim of a broader and deeper insight into the understanding of the concept of sensory marketing and the possible application contribution of the research results, and an exploratory qualitative research was conducted. For the purposes of the research, an interview method was used with 10 stakeholders of rural tourist destinations, where a quantitative research was carried out, and an effort was made to determine their attitudes and opinions about the knowledge of the concept of sensory marketing, the importance of the senses in the tourist experience and their influence on behavioural intentions, as well as the importance of levels application of sensory marketing strategy. The processing of primary data collected through interviews was carried out through content analysis.

Table 1: Descriptive statistical analysis of the constructs

| Construct | Arithmetic mean | Standard deviation | Coefficient of skewness | Coefficient of kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Perception of destination sensescape** | **5.99** | **1.173** | **-1.426** | **2.180** |
| Visualscape | 6.09 | 1.086 | -1.448 | 2.445 |
| Soundscape | 5.72 | 1.284 | -1.071 | 0.866 |
| Smellscape | 5.98 | 1.164 | -1.411 | 2.130 |
| Tastescape | 6.16 | 1.101 | -1.614 | 2.800 |
| Hapticscape | 5.98 | 1.193 | -1.561 | 2.860 |
| **Affective responses** | **5.77** | **1.233** | **-1.246** | **1.675** |
| Joy | 6.19 | 1.008 | -1.850 | 4.884 |
| Love | 5.66 | 1.281 | -1.140 | 1.295 |
| Positive surprise | 5.47 | 1.279 | -0.959 | 0.880 |
| **Cognitive responses** | **5.66** | **1.408** | **-1.319** | **1.281** |
| Knowledge | 5.30 | 1.559 | -0.858 | 0.011 |
| Memory | 6.27 | 1.033 | 1.934 | 4.638 |
| **Satisfaction with tourist experience** | **6.12** | **1.138** | **-1.655** | **3.139** |
| **Destination attachment** | **4.59** | **1.796** | **-0.413** | **-0.738** |
| Place dependence | 5.17 | 1.339 | -0.636 | 0.118 |
| Place identity | 4.67 | 1.624 | -0.252 | -0.603 |
| Affective attachment | 4.83 | 1.638 | -0.281 | -0.774 |
| Social bonding | 3.23 | 2.151 | 0.508 | -1.192 |
| **Behavioural intentions** | **5.81** | **1.440** | **-1.367** | **1.445** |
| Sharing experience | 5.45 | 1.668 | -1.070 | 0.273 |
| Recommendation intention | 6.14 | 1.134 | -1.484 | 2.079 |
| Revisit intention | 5.84 | 1.384 | -1.340 | 1.575 |

Source: PhD student research

## Results of Empirical Research

The exploratory factor analysis of the pilot study determined the dimensionality of the scales, and the community values of all particles within the constructs were above the limit. Also, common method bias was not established. Taking into account the above, the main research was started using the same survey questionnaire as a data collection instrument.

A total of 429 respondents took part in the main survey, predominantly female (54.8 %), the most represented age group was 36 to 45 (32.2 %), highly educated (31.5 %). The sample includes respondents from 21 countries, and the most represented number of respondents, as much as 42 %, comes from Germany. The largest number of respondents are married or in a relationship (82.5 %) and

most of them travel with family members (59.2 %). Considering the frequency of visits to the destination, half of the respondents stated that it was their first visit (50.1 %), and the largest number of respondents stayed in a holiday home (57.1 %) for more than seven nights (71.1 %)). As many as 81.4 % of respondents stated that rest and relaxation are among the main reasons for coming, followed by entertainment (63.9 %), the beauty of nature and landscape (57.8 %), new experiences and experiences (52.5 %) and the gastronomic offer which is one of the main motivators for coming for half of the respondents (50.1 %).

With the aim of describing the collected data, their systematization and presentation, a descriptive statistical analysis was performed and the basic parameters for all constructs of the questionnaire were calculated (Table 1).

Based on the data presented in the table, it can be concluded that all observed constructs show high average ratings (Likert scale from 1 to 7) ranging from 4.59 to 6.12. The construction of satisfaction with the tourist experience received the highest average rating, while the construction of destination attachment received the lowest rating. Considering the values of the standard deviation, it can be concluded that the construct destination attachment has the greatest dispersion from the arithmetic mean (sd = 1.796). By calculating the coefficient of asymmetry and the coefficient of roundness, the deviation from the given normal distribution is visible.

To assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model, multivariate statistical analysis was used by structural equation modelling using partial least squares (PLS-SEM) and it was determined that all indicators are reliable for further analysis, that there is a high level of reliability in the measurement of latent constructs, and that all variables agree with the construct to which they are attached. Discriminant validity in this model was confirmed.

By analysing the higher-order constructs that are part of the reflective-reflection model, that is, by checking their reliability and convergent validity, it can be concluded that reliability and convergent validity have been confirmed for all constructs. Discriminant validity was confirmed by calculating the Fornell-Lacker criterion, while discriminant validity for most constructs was confirmed by calculating the Heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT).

Given that the proposed model also consists of a formative construct of a higher order - the perception of destination sensescape, an assessment of the formative measurement model was carried out, i.e. its collinearity, significance and relevance of weight loads and discriminative validity. By checking the collinearity by calculating the coefficient of variation of inflation (VIF), it was determined that there is no collinearity between the related constructs, which shows that the measurement is appropriate. Furthermore, in order to assess the contribution of each lower-order construct to the formation of the higher-order construct, the weight values of the lower-order constructs shown in Table 2 were calculated.

Table 2: Significance and relevance of the formative measurement model

| Higher-order construct | Lower-order construct | Outer weight | T statistics | P-values | Outer loading |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perception of destination sensescape | VS | 0.277 | 3.306 | 0.001 | 0.802 |
| | SS | 0.069 | 0.973 | 0.331 | 0.716 |
| | SMS | 0.206 | 2.487 | 0.013 | 0.828 |
| | TS | 0.316 | 4.470 | 0.000 | 0.760 |
| | HS | 0.391 | 5.473 | 0.000 | 0.812 |

Source: PhD student research
Note: results are significant at p < 0.05; VS – visualscape, SS – soundscape, SMS – smellscape, TS – tastescape, HS – hapticscape

The weight values of the constructs, which determine whether lower-order constructs contribute to the formation of higher-order constructs, show in Table 2 that the haptiscsape is the most significant dimension (outer weight value = 0.391), while the soundscape contributes the least to the perception of destination sensescape.

Given that the t-values are more than 1.96 at the 5% significance level, the direct relationships are statistically significant and positive, except for the soundescape which records a t-value of 0.973. However, by analyzing the p-value, it was observed that the value of the soundscape is above the threshold value at the level of p < 0.05, and the values of the outer loading of all constructs are above 0.5, which can be interpreted as extremely important (Hair et al. , 2017). Considering the other observed values: weight values, t-values and standardized factor loading, it is suggested that the soundscape remains included in the testing of the structural model.

Comparing the research of Buzova et al. (2021) who developed the destination sensescape index that was used in this study; hapticscape represents the second construct that contributes the most to the formation of the sensescape construct in urban destinations, while the first one refers to the visualscape, which is different from this research. At the same time, the results of previous research on sensory marketing in the tourism context document visual impressions as the most prominent ones cited by tourists (Xiong et al., 2015; Lv et al., 2020; Kastenholz et al., 2020), while the visualscape in this research is only in the third place of contribution in shaping the perception of destination sensescape construct. Another construct that contributes to shaping the perception of destination sensescape is tastescape, i.e. the importance of local gastronomy in rural destinations, which in the research of Buzova et al. (2021) is on third place. These results differ from those obtained by previous research conducted in natural environments (Agapito et al., 2014; Kastenholz et al., 2020). For example, an analysis of the content of rural tourists' reports on sensory experience showed that the second most frequently mentioned sensory category is the sense of hearing (Agapito et al., 2014). In this study, the soundscape contributes the least to shaping the perception of destination sensescape construct, which is also confirmed by the results of the research by Buzova et al. (2021). The smellscape as the

penultimate construct that shapes the perception destination sensescape is in accordance with the research of the author Buzova et al. (2021) in urban tourist destinations.

After evaluating the measurement model, which contained the reflexive-reflective model and the reflexive-formative model, the structural model was evaluated. The assessment of collinearity as the first criterion for evaluating the structural model was carried out by checking the internal variance inflation factors (VIF) of the latent constructs, and it was determined that there is no problem of collinearity between the latent constructs. The second step of the evaluation of the structural model is the examination of the proposed links between the latent constructs in the structural model through the calculation of path coefficients, which is shown in Table 3.

The values of the path coefficient show that the strongest relationship is established between the constructs of perception of destination sensescape and affective response (path coefficient - original sample = 0.746), followed by the connection between satisfaction with the tourist experience and behavioral intentions (path coefficient - original sample = 0.720).

By calculating the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), which represents the share of the variance of the endogenous (dependent) variable explained by the independent (predictor) variables, it was observed that the constructs satisfaction with the tourist experience, affective responses, behavioral intentions show a significant relationship, while cognitive responses and destination attachment show a moderate relationship.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing - direct relationships

| Hypothesis | Relationship | Path coefficient ß – original sample | Path coefficient – sample mean | Standard deviation | T statistics | P-values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | PDS -> AR | 0.746 | 0.747 | 0.041 | 18.339 | 0.000 |
| H2 | PDS -> CR | 0.689 | 0.689 | 0.051 | 13.453 | 0.000 |
| H3 | AR -> STE | 0.231 | 0.235 | 0.088 | 2.611 | 0.009 |
| H4 | CR -> STE | 0.601 | 0.593 | 0.077 | 7.824 | 0.000 |
| H5 | STE -> DA | 0.520 | 0.521 | 0.038 | 13.779 | 0.000 |
| H6 | STE -> BI | 0.720 | 0.720 | 0.041 | 17.640 | 0.000 |

Source: PhD student research
Note: PDS – perception of destination sensescape, AR – affective responses, CR – cognitive responses, STE - satisfaction with tourist experience, DA - destination attachment, BI - behavioural intentions

According to the structural model analysis data from Table 3, it can be seen that the **hypothesis H1 The perception of destination sensescape has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourists' affective responses** is confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.746, t-value = 18.339, p = 0.000 ), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

The proposed **hypothesis H2 The perception of destination sensescape has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourists' cognitive responses** was confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.689, t-value = 13.453, p = 0.000), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

**Hypothesis H3 Tourists' affective responses have a positive and statistically significant influence on their satisfaction with tourist experience** was confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.231, t-value = 2.611, p = 0.009), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

**Hypothesis H4 Tourists' cognitive responses have a positive and statistically significant influence on their satisfaction with tourist experience** was confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.601, t-value = 7.824, p = 0.000), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

**Hypothesis H5 Satisfaction with tourist experience has a positive and statistically significant influence on destination attachment** was confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.520, t-value = 13.779, p = 0.000), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

**Hypothesis H6 Satisfaction with tourist experience has a positive and statistically significant influence on tourist's behavioural intentions** was also confirmed due to the empirical relationship (ß = 0.720, t-value = 17.640, p = 0.000), which is statistically significant at p < 0.05.

In order to understand the thinking and attitudes of the stakeholders of the tourist offer and decision makers in rural tourist destinations where quantitative research on sensory marketing and its importance for the rural tourist destination was carried out, the survey of stakeholders in the rural destination was started. The survey was conducted on a sample of ten decision makers: the mayor, the director of the tourist board, and the stakeholders of the rural tourism offer, i.e. representative of the association, holiday house owner, tourist guide. Most of the surveyed stakeholders are in the age group of 36 to 45 years (90 %), with a high level of education (70 %), female (60 %). According to the function they perform, with a focus on the diversity of respondents in rural destinations, the largest number of respondents is in the position of director of the tourist board (50 %).

Figure 2. Frequency of occurrence of words related to the contribution of the senses to the tourist experience
Source: https://wordart.com

In the following, the processing of the collected qualitative data was started. First, the respondents' associations related to the term sensory marketing were analyzed, that is, the answers to the question *Are you familiar with the term sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand by that term?* And while the majority of respondents answered that they were familiar with the term sensory marketing (60 %), 40 % of respondents answered that they were not familiar with the term, but 20 % of them tried to define it. Of the total of 27 words collected, the terms "senses" (13) and their specifications - "sight" (7), "hearing" (7), "smell" (7), "taste" (6), "touch" (4), and "emotions" (4) appear most often as an association.

Respondents believe that the senses are important (10 0%), however, according to Figure 2, they attach the greatest importance to the sense of sight (60 %), followed by taste (50 %), all senses (40 %), smell (30 %), and hearing (10 %) and touch (10 %).

It is clear that, in contrast to the results of the quantitative research, which showed that the sense of touch contributes the most to the perception of destination sensescape, stakeholders in tourism believe that the sense of sight comes first. The sense of taste is in second place in terms of importance in qualitative research, and it occupies the same place in quantitative research, that is, the tastescape contributes next to the formation of the perception of destination sensescape construct.

Furthermore, all respondents recognize the importance of stimulating the activation of tourists' senses in a tourist destination for future behavioral intentions, and for the implementation of a sensory

marketing strategy in a tourist destination, the majority of respondents see the responsibility of tourist boards together with the stakeholders of the tourist offer.

### *Conclusion as Application of the Research Results*

Starting from the topic "The role of sensory marketing in the creationof a tourism experience", and based on a detailed review of scientific literature, a complex conceptual model of the connection between the perception of destination sensescape, affective responses, cognitive responses, satisfaction with tourist experience, destination attachment and behavioral intentions was created, which is quantitatively statistical processing confirmed the existence of a connection between the constructs. The assessment of the structural model established the existence of the strongest connection between the constructs of perceptions of destination sensescape and affective responses, and thus decision makers in the tourist destination are recommended to design sensory experiences that will influence affects – joy, love and positive surprise. However, regardless of the establishment of the strongest connection, it was also determined that the connections between the other constructs are statistically significant and that there are mostly large influences of the variables, and it is recommended to look at each individual construct and their connection when shaping the experience of a tourist destination. At the same time, the assessment of the measurement model concluded that the hapticscape contributes the most to the formation of the construct of perception of destination sensescape, that is, all other environments stimulated by the senses - taste, visual, smell and sound contribute to the formation of the said construct. Therefore, it is necessary to approach the creation of the sensory environment of the destination holistically. Recommendations for decision makers in rural tourist destinations refer to identifying the potential of rural tourist destinations, microlocations, events, that is, analyzing existing ones and introducing new ones with a focus on activating all five senses. The holistic approach is reflected in concrete activities such as the creative design of the interior and exterior, i.e. the creation of a natural and authentic atmosphere that strengthens the senses of tourists (the use of natural materials, pleasant smells and music), the culinary offer of local products, i.e. the use of local fresh ingredients in the creation of authentic taste and culinary offerings (tastings, themed dinners, cooking workshops), creating an artistic environment through exhibitions of local artists, murals or installations, encouraging interaction with local culture (traditional workshops, folklore performances, craft presentations), designing promotional materials that convey authenticity and diversity sensory experiences. All the mentioned activities should be viewed through the creation of stimuli in the environment aimed at all five senses.

Given that the measuring scale for the construct of perception of destination sensescape was taken from the research of the author Buzova et al. (2021) which was conducted in an urban destination, the practical application of the results of this research can greatly contribute to the management of rural tourist areas. Understanding the connections between the constructs confirmed by this research enables the development of strategies and interventions aimed at creating a sensory environment, improving the

tourist experience, achieving greater destination attachment and behavioral intentions. For example, focusing on creating positive perceptions of the destination's sensory environment can increase tourists' affective responses and their satisfaction with tourist experience, which could result in greater destination attachment and intentions to revisit or recommend it to others.

Since the qualitative research determined that the respondents see the importance of stimulating the activation of the tourists' senses in the tourist destination for future behavioral intentions, and for the implementation of the strategy of sensory marketing in the tourist destination, the majority of the respondents see the responsibility of the tourist communities together with the stakeholders of the tourist offer, the application of the results can be useful except for decision makers and policy makers in rural tourist destinations (tourist communities, municipalities, destination managers...), and for local tourist agencies, owners of catering (agritourisms, taverns...) and accommodation facilities (rural hotels, apartments, holiday homes...), tourist guides and other stakeholders in rural tourist areas.

With a joint approach and holistic consideration of the five senses, a tourist destination can boost the local rural economy. The integration of sensory elements into the tourism offer often requires cooperation with local stakeholders, such as local restaurateurs, farmers or artists. It can also increase demand for local products and services, encourage networking and create cooperation.

The results of the research can serve as a basis for improving marketing strategies and promoting the tourist destination. The perception of destination sensescape has a strong connection with the affective responses of tourists and can be a key element in attracting new visitors. Through the promotion of a wealth of sensory experiences, the destination can target specific market segments and stand out as an attractive destination for tourists looking for authentic experiences.

The results of research on sensory marketing in tourism provide valuable guidelines that can be applied in the field of general marketing and retail. Knowledge about the importance of the senses in creating positive experiences can be used to personalize marketing strategies in retail, adjusting the atmosphere of retail spaces and using pleasant smells, music and visual elements to encourage a positive customer experience. Creative design of retail spaces, including the use of natural materials, pleasant scents and music, can create a unique experience for customers, encouraging them to make repeat purchases. The results of the research emphasize a holistic approach, which can be applied in store design to create an authentic atmosphere and stimulate all the senses of customers.

## Scientific Contribution, Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The research results represent a contribution to the scientific field of social sciences, the field of economics, the field of marketing, and the field of sensory marketing. The contribution is manifested in the design and testing of a conceptual model for measuring the connection between the perception of destination sensescape, tourist experience and behavioral intentions, as well as in the adjustment of

measurement scales for measuring the basic constructs in the model and testing the relationship between the variables determined by the conceptual model.

The scientific methodological contribution is manifested in the use of an innovative approach in the collection of data on the subject of research and their processing. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods enabled a comprehensive understanding of sensory marketing and tourist experience and their connection from the point of view of tourists and decision makers in the destination. At the same time, the contribution is manifested in the adjustment of measurement scales for measuring the perception of destination sensescape, affective and cognitive responses, satisfaction with tourist experience, destination attachment and behavioral intentions, testing of the conceptual model for determining the role of marketing senses in the creation of the tourist experience, knowing the influence of the perception of destination sensescape on affective and cognitive reactions, as well as on satisfaction with tourist experience, destination attachment and behavioral intentions.

In terms of application contribution, the research results meaningfully inform the strategic directions that destinations can follow using sensory marketing to attract tourists, their satisfaction, attachments and referrals in today's highly competitive tourism industry. At the same time, the contribution is visible in the practical knowledge of rural tourist destinations because the previous empirical research was conducted in an urban tourist destination.

The limitations of the research are visible in the selection of the research site, i.e. geographic limitation, time limitation because the research was conducted during the main tourist season, the disadvantages of using a survey questionnaire as a data collection technique (unintelligibility, length of the survey questionnaire) and the qualitative method of data collection, i.e. interviews.

Recommendations for future research are reflected in the possible introduction of additional constructs into the conceptual model, the use of other qualitative methods of data collection, for example, in-depth interviews or focus groups which would bring together decision-makers, research time, that is, different periods of the tourist season, such as pre- and post-season.

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# Balsam Touaiti

## Aix-Marseille III, IAE Graduate Management School

*Emotional Labor in the Workplace: Impact on Individual and Organizational Health*

SUMMARY

Emotional labor has been an in-demand research subject among service researchers. In this thesis, we propose to study the impact of external and internal antecedents in the workplace on individual and organizational health through emotional labor from a human resources perspective. In the first ESSAY, we focus on the interaction between individual and organizational factors (effort-reward imbalance model) using 2 studies. We apply a mixed-methods design to investigate occupational health concerns in the second ESSAY; we focus on organizational factors (work benefits). In the third ESSAY, we highlight the impact of individual factors (employee competences) on occupational health. This thesis develops a targeted resource-based framework that employs the core-notion of emotional labor to pinpoint individual and organizational aspects that enable better occupational health.

## General Introduction

Nowadays, one of the psychological subfields that is growing the fastest is emotion regulation (T Tull & Aldao, 2015). The building and upholding of relationships clearly depend on emotional expressiveness. Since people tend to focus on generating or repressing emotions to make them appropriate for a situation, emotion may and often is responsive to management processes (Hochschild, 1979). Today, it is critical to highlight the substantial effect of regulating emotions, which is highly valued in service-related professions. Thus, the object of this research is to provide a thorough understanding of how emotional labor functions in organization management and how it relates to workplace outcomes and antecedents.

The initial definition of "emotional labor" (also known as "emotion regulation" at work) is the process of managing emotions and expressions by displaying appropriate emotions to meet job emotional requirements (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Emotional labor can be considered as a monolithic concept as well as a polylithic one. Indeed, there are three common dimensions/types of emotional labor. Some workers conduct this labor by adjusting their internal emotions to fit the necessary expressions (i.e., deep acting), while others suppress their real emotions in favor of creating the appropriate emotions unnaturally (i.e. surface acting). Employees are in an emotional consonance situation when they are expressing their actual felt feelings. Employees are required to manage their emotions while interacting with clients, coworkers, and superiors (Hochschild, 1983). Expression of emotion (whether felt or not) and the repression of emotions that are sensed but not expressed are valued (Hochschild, 1983). The concept of emotional labor remains complex since the employee is the one doing the emotional labor, he is primarily influenced by this behavior. Yet, emotional labor is exercised to meet the demands and expectations of the position; therefore, it influences the organization and all its characteristics. The question that arises is how this influence is both on the employee and on the organization (beneficial or detrimental for health).

Despite its apparent adaptability to the organization and its relational attractiveness, emotional labor as a monolithic and polylithic concept might jeopardize not just the employee's health but also the health of the organization. This is an issue that the organization, as an organism, must recognize. Indeed, the depictions of organizations are diverse and complex. In this research, we use the "organism" view of the organization (Morgan, 2006) to investigate how regulating emotions affects the service employees' health, who are more vulnerable to emotional labor, but also the organizations' health.

Academic employees who deal with students must always provide their services in a positive manner—and occasionally even the opposite—to fulfill their responsibilities properly. Depending on the situation, they may simulate either a positive or negative mood to keep the environment conducive to effective learning. In nations that ignore their needs and inundate them with job demands, teachers are the most neglected and distressed. Tunisia is a well-known but little-studied example, where teachers endured prolonged difficulties before, throughout, and following the dignity revolution. It begs the question of how these educators may ensure their duties under such conditions. Subsequently, one may query if emotional labor is the special mechanism that allowed them to accomplish their missions regardless of the injustice of the organizational factors and the depletion of their own

resources. The challenges and difficulties may be like those of many other nations and cultures. Therefore, to improve occupational health, it is necessary to investigate these issues in a limited and broad approach.

Employed students are an additional population that is particularly susceptible to emotional labor in the education sector, yet they are frequently disregarded in practice and research. Although their demanding workloads at both job and the university, they also engage in emotional labor to leave a good impression and convey a positive image in the workplace. In societies where individuals join the workforce at young ages and must balance the rigors of education with survival tasks to make a living, student-employees are most stressed out and require a multitude of resources in order achieve both roles at once. We must shed light on this extraordinarily unique population as we are unsure of how they manage their emotions and what resources are necessary to fulfill their great mission, particularly in the workplace. Companies might question their tenacity and resilience, and they might demand specific characteristics to ensure their success in their roles. Since they are still in university, they might have acquired competencies allowing them to adapt to and embrace such challenges. Then, to preserve and protect this population's occupational health, it is imperative to clarify their situation.

## Gaps and Contributions

Working conditions within the organization influence the individual and organizational health. The interdependence between individual and organizational health and their consequences for societies have been acknowledged (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009; Cooper & Williams, 1994), yet their definitions are still Blurry. In this thesis, we give clarifications below the Figure 0.
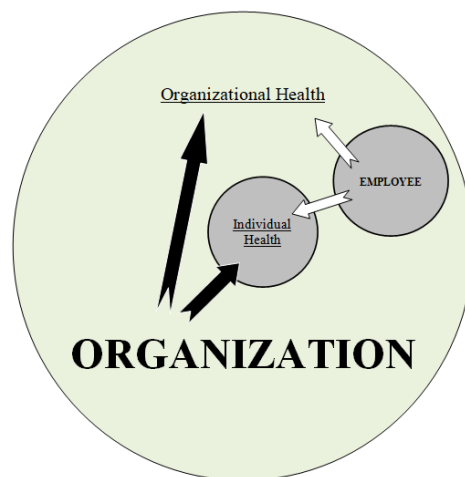


Figure 0: Representation of Individual and Organizational Health

On the one hand, individual health is related to factors that impact the within-person level of people. We define individual health in the workplace as a state of overall physical, psychological, and social well-being of workers in their connection with themselves, which impacts their personal sphere and extends beyond the workplace. On the other hand, organizational health is related to factors that impact the relationship between the person and the organization. We consequently describe organizational health as a condition of overall growth and prosperity of the organization in its relationship with its employees, which reflects the good state of the organization in terms of efficiently achieving its strategic goals.

Previous research has focused on healthy individuals and workplaces as working conditions and pillars in creating favorable work environments. In this thesis, our perspective is to treat individual health and organizational health as work outcomes, which should be targeted, preserved, and maintained in the organizational system. Thus, we suggest that organizational health and individual health are the two indicators of a well operating system. Finally, there is the question of what kinds of strategies may be put in place to make work healthier (i.e. fulfilling, engaging etc) while simultaneously fostering a sense of purpose to focus on health in the workplace whilst understanding the mechanisms involved in health deterioration. Both managers/leaders and researchers are confronted with challenges because of this.

We join previous research to study the antecedents of individual and organizational health (e.g., Bichard, 2009; Poelmans et al., 2009; Fisher, 2010; Quick et al., 2007; Siegrist, 1996; Karasek, 1979). It is particularly relevant to understand how previous theories have explained the mechanisms leading to adverse consequences on health. Namely, based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Model, stress develops when there is a loss or risk of loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989); this is because individuals eventually aim to get and keep their resources, which include objects, conditions, states and other items that people value (e.g. job security, rewards, autonomy, support etc (Halbesleben et al. 2014)).

When it comes to emotional labor, the Conservation Of Resources (COR) theory is most often referenced when examining the depleting impacts of emotional labor. However, like certain other resource-based organizational theories, COR has been criticized for being overly general and vague (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Priem & Butler, 2001). Consequently, our main contribution is the development of a more targeted resource-based model that is also grounded in Self-Determination Theory which introduces the self-regulation notion and the basic needs of humans. In fact, according to SDT, individual motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Besides, autonomy, competence and relatedness are the three innate, essential, and universal basic needs that have to be satisfied in individuals so that they induce health and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory suggests that, due to their sociocultural contexts, individuals are likely to display their competence, autonomy, and relatedness differently across cultures (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The SDT perspective (Deci & Ryan, 1987) based on the internal and external causality of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation encourages our perspective to explain the antecedents related to individual and organizational health by focusing analogically on the causality by means of individual factors (internal) and organizational factors (external) through the strategies of emotion regulation in the workplace.

However, when addressing basic needs and motivation, SDT did not build a link with individual resources and emotional labor related to emotion regulation as addressed in the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) when studying the depleting impacts of emotional labor. Consequently, three key questions remain unanswered.

First, when the relation between the employee-organization is taken into consideration, the person-environment fit model (French et al., 1982) and the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996) were both advanced by several research, however the literature does not establish a link between the effort-reward imbalance –non-reciprocity of exchange- in the workplace and emotional labor. Indeed, the revised transactional model of occupational stress and coping put forth by Goh and colleagues (2010) supports the influence of emotions on an individual's choice of coping strategy (Ficková, 2002). Moreover, this model suggests that the occurrence of stress, coping, and the development of negative consequences may happen at various stages of the occupational stress and coping process and can be caused by both psychological and behavioral coping mechanisms. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research to demonstrate how unfavorable working conditions namely the mismatch between individuals' efforts and their organizations' rewards may lead to unhealthy assessments for individuals by considering their emotional reactions and needs for autonomy. Therefore, the first overall contribution of this thesis is to examine the role of emotional labor and work autonomy in the impact of effort-reward imbalance on individual and organizational health (in ESSAY 1).

Second, when just organizational (external) factors are taken into consideration, early psychological theories of stress may be appropriate for explaining how environmental events cause individuals to have stressful perceptions. In fact, organizational stressors clearly explain the negative health effects as is done in the literature. Regarding external stressors that deplete health, there are theories that suggested that every feature of the work environment may be seen as a stressor by the individual's own perception as workplace stress is linked with exposure to certain workplace situations. Indeed, in the recent version of the theoretical model of Lazarus et al. (2001), the appraisal of the transaction between an individual and their environment provides a causal lane that may better explain the nature of the underlying psychological and physiological mechanisms that drive the entire process and experience of stress. Indeed, Lazarus et al. (2001) emphasized the significance of discrete emotions above the broad categories of positive and negative emotions. This reflection encourages the adoption of emotional labor to explain discrete emotions perceived by individuals during the transaction with their professional environment which may induce adverse health effects. Therefore, focusing on favorable working conditions that generate, stimulate, and protect individual and organizational health, the literature did not previously examine in a mixed methods design the impact of the job benefits such as autonomy and reward considering emotional labor and cultural differences as prompted in the SDT. As a result, relying on an exploratory study of working conditions among a sample of academic employees along with the SDT, the demand-control model (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990) and the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996), the second main contribution of this thesis is to investigate the cross-cultural impact of work autonomy and work reward on individual and organizational health considering individual emotional labor (in ESSAY 2).

Third, considering only organizational (external) elements, the above-mentioned transactional approach of appraisal has been criticized for being overly simplistic and for not necessarily taking a person's past, future, aspirations, and identities into account (Harris et al., 2004). Indeed, stressors mostly have an impact on a person based on how they are perceived and assessed by that person (Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Numerous factors, including personality, environmental demands, coping mechanisms, skills, prior experiences, passage of time, and any existing level of stress, might affect an individual's assessment of their needs and abilities (Prem et al. 2017). Lazarus emphasized that his transactional theories of stress failed to account for the consequences associated with individual coping challenges in particular social circumstances and during interpersonal interactions (Lazarus, 2006). This suggests that the sensation of job stress may relate to the perception of a person's inability to cope or lack of competence. This could mean that, when just individual (internal) factors are taken into consideration, employees' adaptive capacities such as mindfulness, emotional resources, interpersonal and intercultural competences during interpersonal interactions as well as the satisfaction of the need-for-relatedness in the workplace can preserve individual and organizational health. As a result, this thesis' third general contribution is to look at the role of mindfulness, emotional labor, and workplace support in the impact of interpersonal and intercultural competences at work on individual and organizational outcomes (in ESSAY 3).

## Overview of the Dissertation

Many studies have been conducted to determine the causes and effects of work-related stress and poor mental-health among individuals, as well as their proportional implications. It may now be time to apply the same zeal to determining the individual and organizational triggers of workplace individual and organizational health in depth. It is also relevant to study their intervening repercussions in terms of individual emotional reactions that have a direct influence on overall health. Then, it is reasonable to explore the boundary conditions involved in these interactions. Altogether, this dissertation promotes overall the theories of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983), effort-reward imbalance (Siegrist, 1996), job-demand control (Karasek, 1979), conservation of resources (Hobfoll, 1989), and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In this dissertation, there is an emphasis on emotional labor as a central mechanism impacting health in the workplace. The conceptual Framework of the thesis is presented in Figure 1 where the purpose is to examine the antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes related to emotional labor both as a monolithic and polylithic concept. That is to say; to promote the growth of healthy individuals and healthy organizations, one might wonder how emotional labor affects the health of individuals and organizations; a question that this thesis -founded upon methods triangulation- is attempting to answer throughout three articles based on five built-up studies carried out between 2018 and 2022.
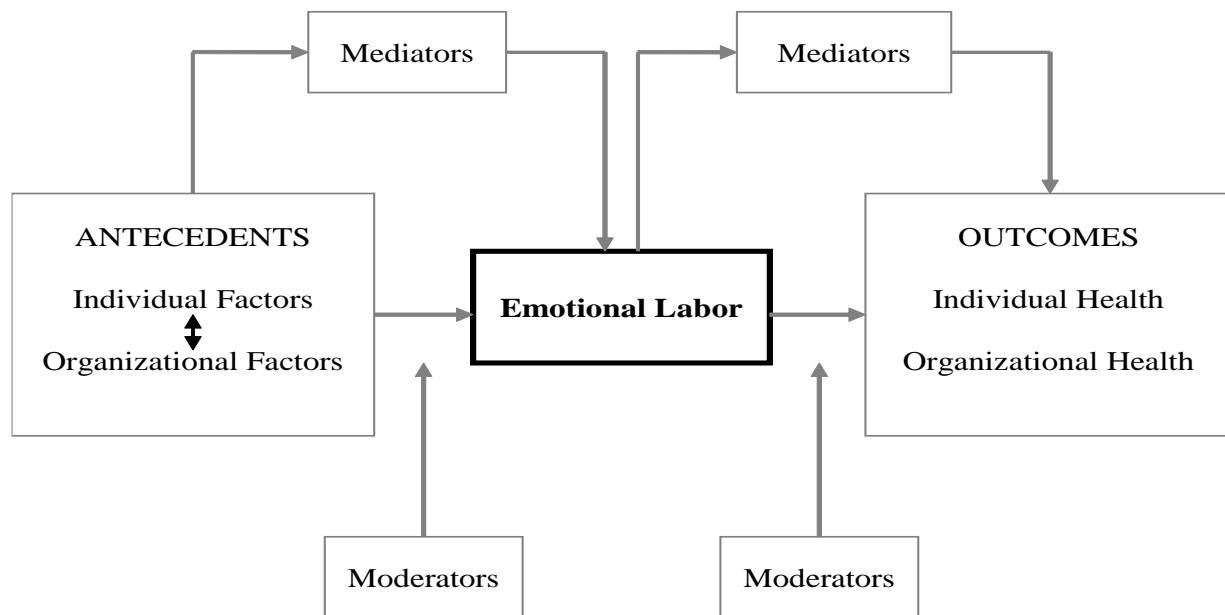
Figure1: Conceptual Framework of the Dissertation: Impact of Emotional Labor in the Workplace

Three papers make up this dissertation; papers 1 and 2 each include two studies, while paper 3 contains only one. The general structure of the dissertation is presented in Figure 2.
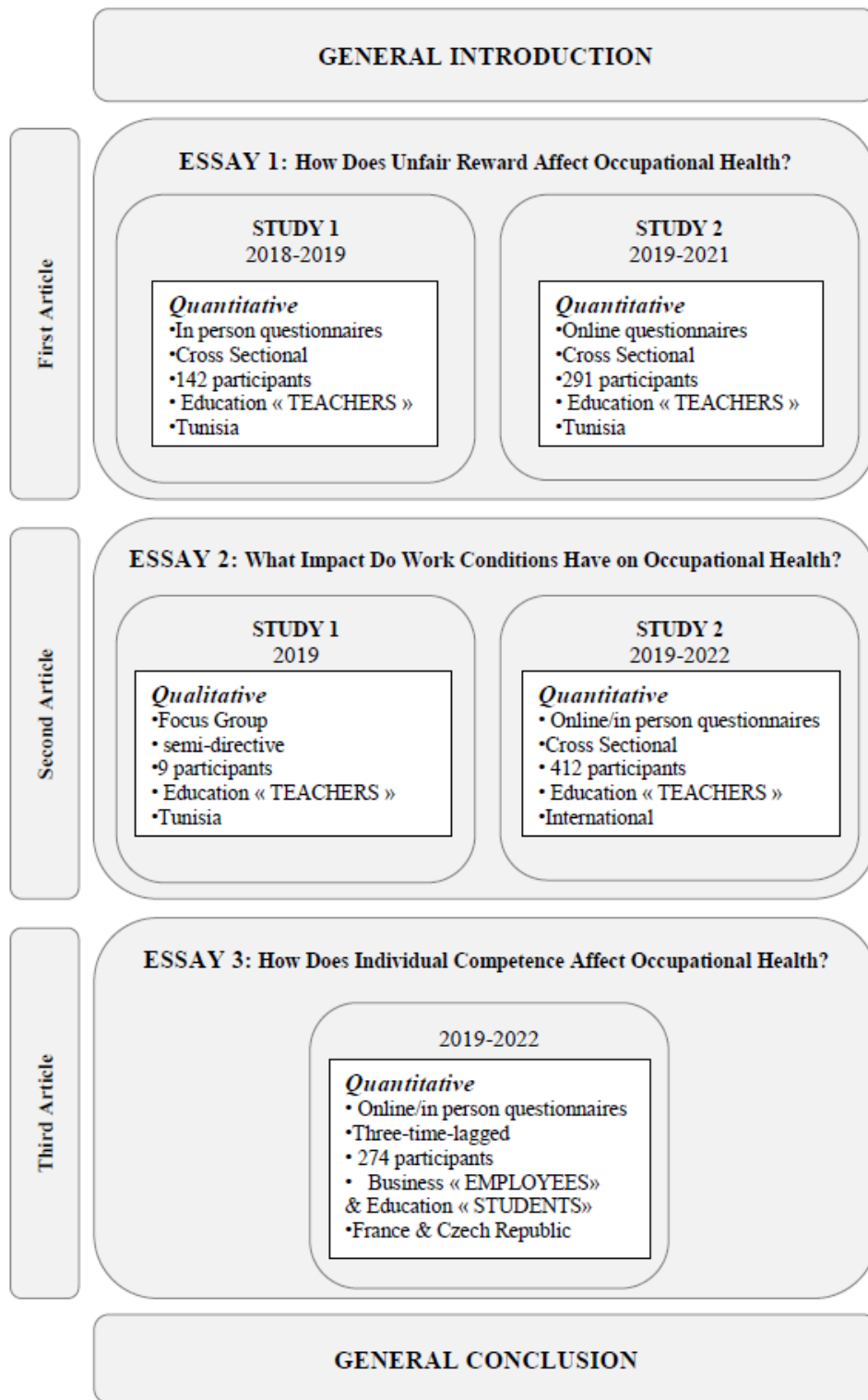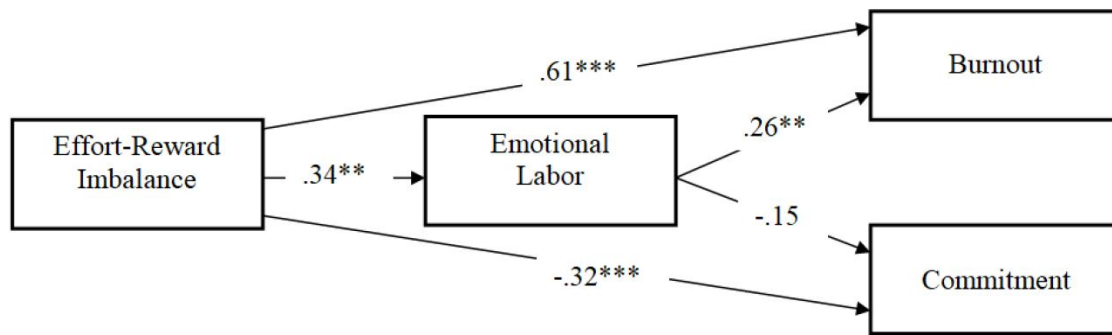
**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**First Article**

**ESSAY 1: How Does Unfair Reward Affect Occupational Health?**

**STUDY 1**
2018-2019

*Quantitative*
- In person questionnaires
- Cross Sectional
- 142 participants
- Education « TEACHERS »
- Tunisia

**STUDY 2**
2019-2021

*Quantitative*
- Online questionnaires
- Cross Sectional
- 291 participants
- Education « TEACHERS »
- Tunisia

**Second Article**

**ESSAY 2: What Impact Do Work Conditions Have on Occupational Health?**

**STUDY 1**
2019

*Qualitative*
- Focus Group
- semi-directive
- 9 participants
- Education « TEACHERS »
- Tunisia

**STUDY 2**
2019-2022

*Quantitative*
- Online/in person questionnaires
- Cross Sectional
- 412 participants
- Education « TEACHERS »
- International

**Third Article**

**ESSAY 3: How Does Individual Competence Affect Occupational Health?**

2019-2022

*Quantitative*
- Online/in person questionnaires
- Three-time-lagged
- 274 participants
- Business « EMPLOYEES» & Education « STUDENTS»
- France & Czech Republic

**GENERAL CONCLUSION**

Figure 2: General Structure of the Dissertation

Figure 3: Research Model 1 and Results

## *ESSAY 1*

In the first article of the dissertation, we address the effort-reward imbalance theory and the roles of emotional labor and work autonomy based on a deductive explanatory approach to explain the emotional process of employees when they are faced with effort-reward imbalance. The latter is considered as an interactional factor between individual efforts and organizational rewards. Using the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996), conservation of resources (Hobfoll, 1989), and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1987, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2006) theories, we conducted two studies among teachers with varying levels of education working in stressful high-cost/low-gain conditions to investigate the role of emotional labor and whether granting high levels of autonomy at work can mitigate the negative effects of perceived unfairness with regards to reward. In the literature, surface acting is well established but less is revealed about the outcomes of emotional consonance and deep acting.

Study 1 reviews the literature on effort-reward imbalance and discusses the role of emotional labor as a monolithic concept in the impact of effort-reward imbalance on individual and organizational health. In study 1, 142 teachers reported that an imbalance between work and reward positively predicted their burnout via emotional labor and negatively predicted their commitment. The failure of emotional labor as a unified notion to predict commitment necessitates an explanation. To meet this need, we decided to start a second phase on a larger sample that details emotional labor strategies.

Study 2 discusses the mediating role of emotional labor as a polylithic concept in the impact of effort-reward imbalance on individual and organizational health. We analyze the effects of different emotional labor strategies such as surface acting, deep acting, and emotional consonance. Then, we elaborate on the moderating role of work autonomy in mitigating the deteriorating consequences on health, as it relates to our research concern and the purpose of the study. In the second study, 291 teachers reported that the effort-reward imbalance positively predicted surface and deep acting, but negatively predicted emotional consonance. Contrary to emotional consonance, higher surface acting generates burnout.
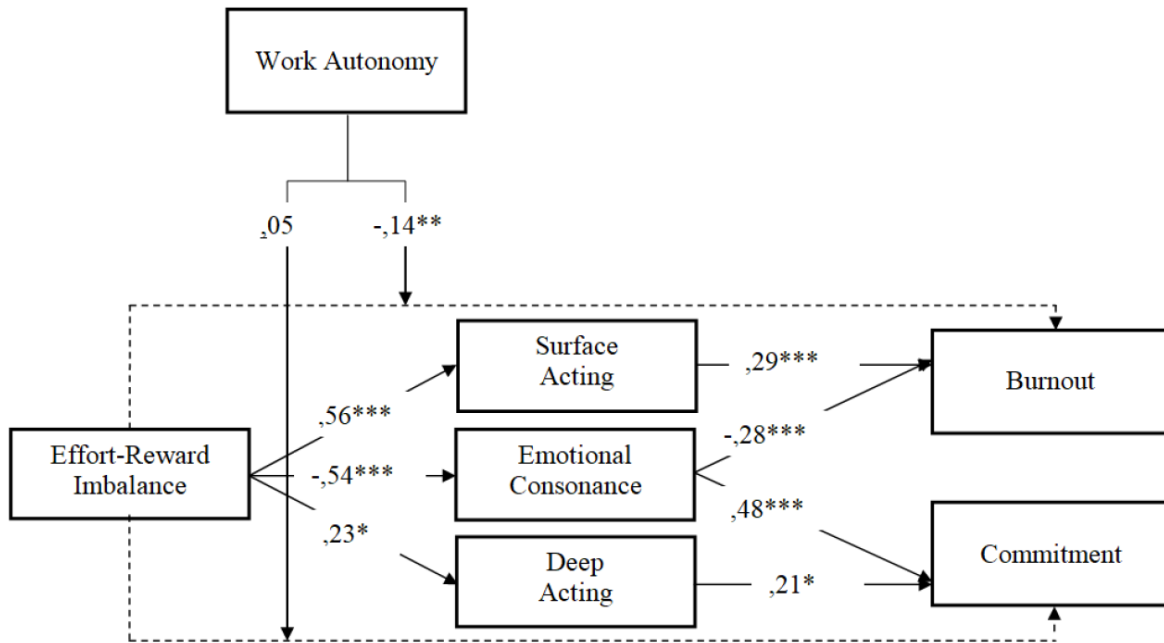
Figure 4: Research Model 2 and Results

Like emotional consonance, deep acting positively predicted commitment. Analyzing the within-person moderating effects of work autonomy, we discovered that it buffered the relationship between effort-reward imbalance and burnout but did not moderate the relationship between effort-reward imbalance and commitment. Afterwards, the moderating impact of autonomy showed its effectiveness on the level of burnout, which extends the SDT.

## ESSAY 2

In the second article of the dissertation, we discuss the relationship between job characteristics and organizational and individual health, as well as the role of emotional labor and cultural indulgence. We do this by using an exploratory sequential design that combines inductive and deductive approaches to explore the emotional mechanisms underlying these relationships. A focus group was utilized to construct a quantitative model that supports and quantifies the focus group data. The research included academic staff and was done over four years. It looked at the factors that affect occupational health and possible connections to emotional states. The role of employee emotions as well as working environments that promote better individual and organizational health were both investigated using a mixed method approach.
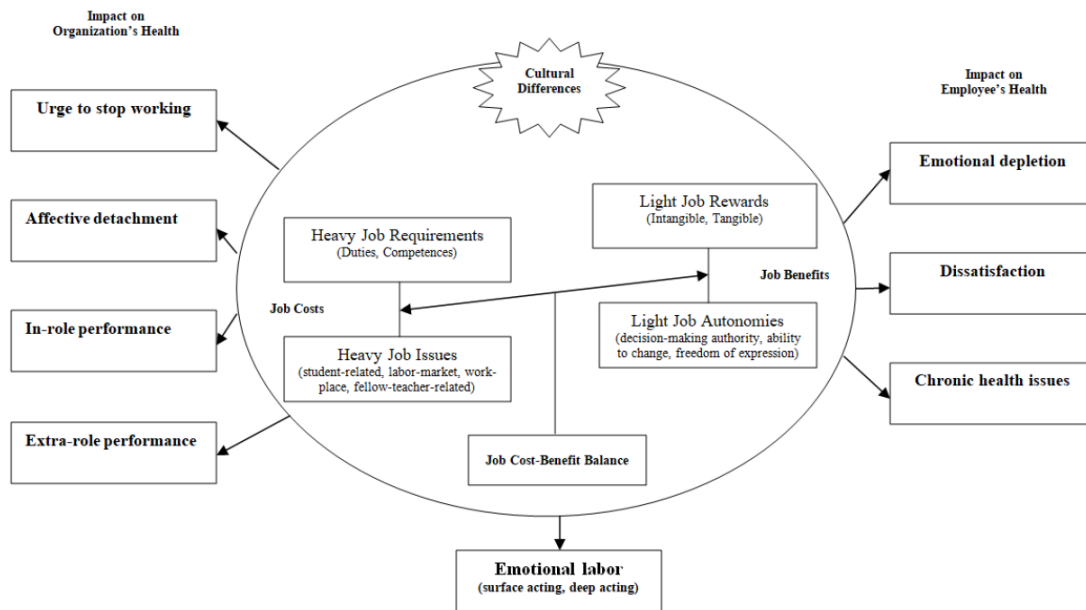
Figure 5: Conceptual Representation of the findings from the focus group among teachers in Tunisia

Study 1 examines the elements that influence occupational health. It presents the exploratory qualitative design, data structure, aggregated dimensions, and the conceptual representation of the findings from the focus group. It initiates to future hypotheses for the study 2. The results showed a variety of factors, including job reward, job autonomy, cultural diversity, emotional labor, emotional depletion, dissatisfaction, intention to quit, emotional detachment, in-role performance, and extra-role performance.

Study 1 disclosed the conceptual representation of the qualitative results and explored how these ideas were configured into constructs in the study 2 and used to test corroborating hypotheses with 412 international teachers, with the aim of expanding the sample compared to previous studies and testing the factors collected qualitatively in an international quantitative study.

Study 2 reviews the literature on working conditions based on finding in the previous study. It discusses particularly the impact of job benefits and explains the role of emotional labor (i.e. surface acting and deep acting) in their relationship with occupational health by presenting the conceptual model and the hypotheses built from study 1 and supported from the literature review. It also examines the cultural impact of indulgence on those associations.

The findings in Figure 6 explained how autonomy and reward at work affect emotional reactions. International teachers reported that work autonomy negatively predicted surface acting, and work reward positively predicted deep acting. Six outcomes related to occupational health have been investigated i.e. role-based performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment, emotional exhaustion, OCB, intention to leave. Then, cultural variations in terms of the level of indulgence have been examined in Figure 7.
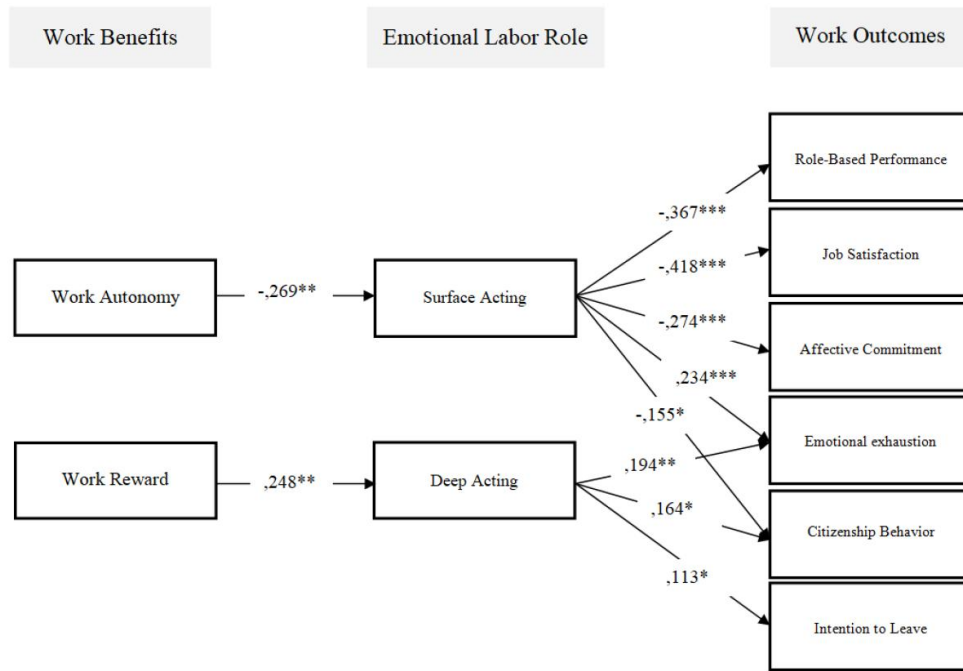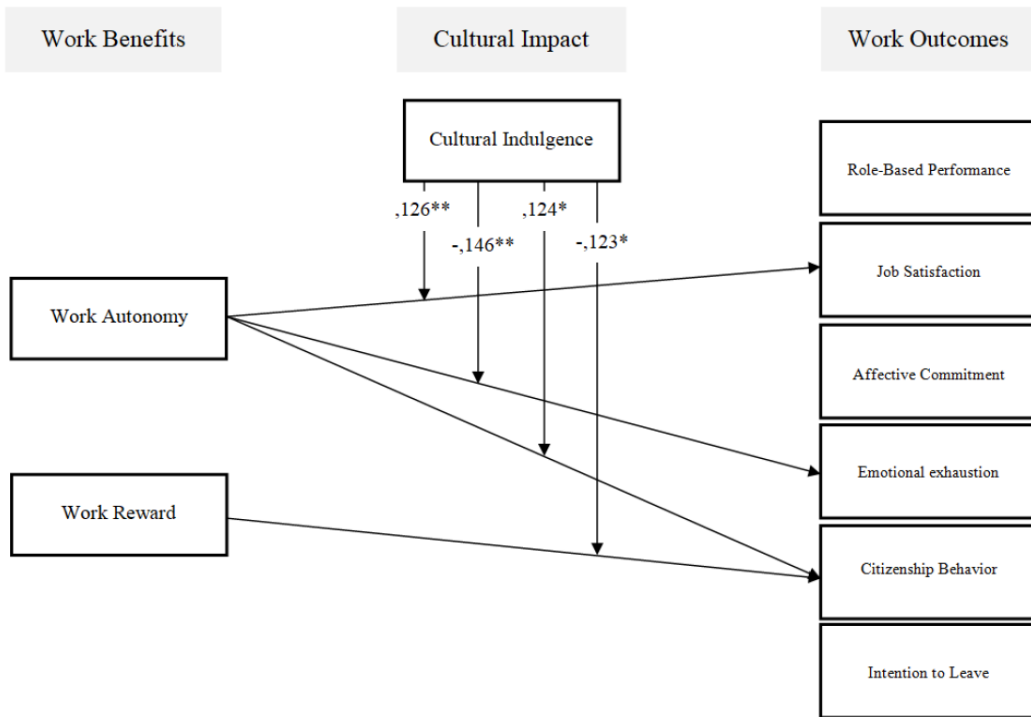
Figure 6: Research Model 3 and Results of mediation



Figure 7: Research Model 3 and Results of moderation

## ESSAY 3

In the third article of the dissertation, we discuss the impact of interpersonal, intercultural, and intrapersonal competences on occupational health over time as well as the roles of emotional labor and social support using a deductive explanatory approach to explain how do employees express emotions while considering their individual characteristics. It thereby examines the double-mediation effect of mindfulness and surface acting between interpersonal and intercultural competences and health outcomes. Then, it investigates the triple-moderation effect of organizational support, supportive and abusive supervision.

Results based on a three-time-lagged design across 274 working students demonstrated that mindfulness among international employed students significantly worsened their surface acting, which in turn worsened organizational citizenship behavior and significantly improved emotional exhaustion. However, the association between interpersonal competence and outcomes was the only one where the double-mediation effects of mindfulness and surface acting were significant. Additionally, the significant positive link between surface acting and emotional exhaustion was moderated by both organizational support and supportive supervision from superiors. However, the negative correlation between surface acting and organizational citizenship behavior was only moderated by abusive supervision.
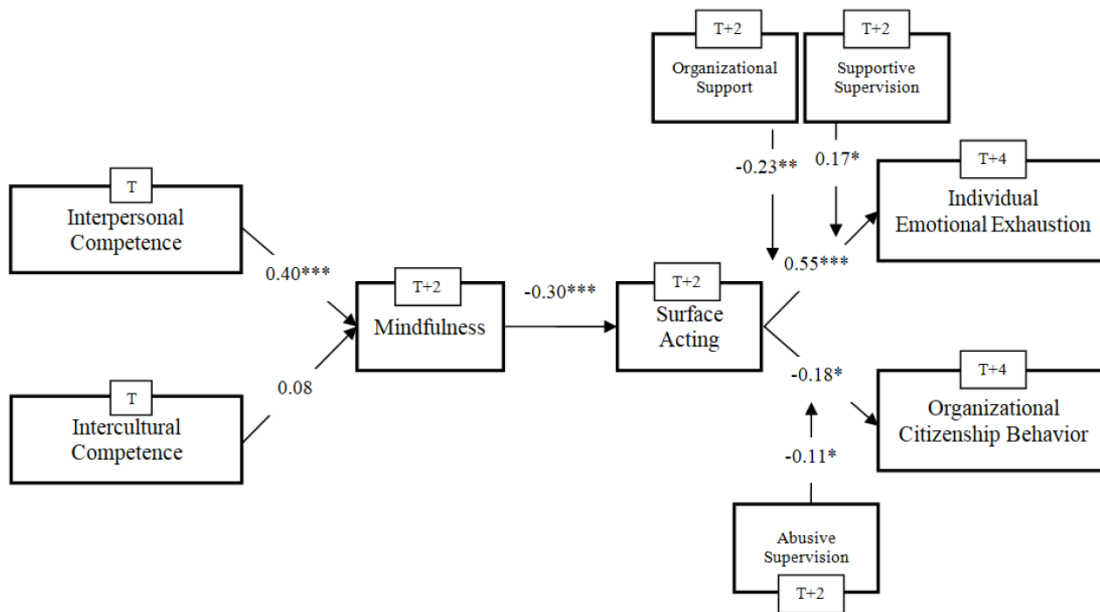


Figure 8: Research Model 4 and Results

In this study, we went through the theoretical and practical considerations of assessing the temporal consequences of employed students' individual competence on them, the mediating function of mindfulness and surface acting, and the moderating function of supportive workplace, supportive supervision, and abusive supervision. Thus, the third general contribution of this thesis was to extend the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1987, 2000, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2006) and Conservation Of Ressources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), thereby examining the roles of mindfulness, emotional labor, and workplace support in how interpersonal and intercultural competences at work affect individual and organizational outcomes. This study was detailed in article 3 of this thesis.

## General Conclusion

Academics and managerial decision-makers are paying attention to the increasing stress levels and unhealthy situation of workers during the last decades. Occupational health is a field that aims to develop and maintain the greatest level of physical, mental, and social well-being among all employees (World Health Organization, 1946).

In the effort to comprehend what influences the health of individuals and organizations, several theoretical investigations have been developed. However, there is still a dearth of research that distinguishes between effects on employees and organizations and that identifies internal and external factors pertaining to the individual and the organization. Also, emotional labor is not well used to explain the links intervening in the association between workplace factors and their resulting consequences on the overall health of employees and their environment.

In line with the World Health Organization's purposes and based on previous research in this topic, this thesis sought to improve the health of employees and the organization in general by answering the gaps through three different Essays.

Our overall contribution of this thesis is the development of a focused resource-based framework that presents the core-notion of emotional labor and the basic requirements of people to identify management individual and organizational factors, conditions and practices that ensure optimal occupational health.

The Integrated Framework of the Thesis (Figure ∞) demonstrates the various workplace relationships linked to the core-concept of this dissertation. Into a big picture that mixes all the results of the three papers in this dissertation (Figure ∞), emotional labor has proven to be favorably impacted by individual factors (i.e., interpersonal competence and mindfulness that mediates this impact) as well as organizational factors (i.e., work autonomy and reward). However, effort-reward imbalance which joins an interaction between an individual factor (i.e., high effort) and an organizational factor (i.e., low reward) has proven to be a trigger for emotional labor.

The emotional labor outcome variables (Figure ∞) found to be significantly related to individual health are the employee's job satisfaction and burnout i.e., especially emotional exhaustion. As for the outcome variables related to organizational health (Figure ∞), we depicted the organizational

commitment i.e., especially affective commitment, role-based performance, organizational citizenship behavior and intention to leave.

Work autonomy and cultural indulgence did not significantly moderate the mediated relationships in our studies (Figure ∞), but only the direct ones. Yet, work autonomy which was not significantly related to emotional labor as a moderator in paper 1 is found to be significantly related to emotional labor (i.e. surface acting) rather as an antecedent in paper 2. Besides, the moderation effect (Figure ∞) of social support (i.e. perceived organizational support, supportive supervision, and abusive supervision) is found to be significant in the relationship between emotional labor (i.e. surface acting) and the individual health (i.e. emotional exhaustion) as well as the organizational health (i.e. organizational citizenship behavior).

Finally, and above all, in accordance with the World Health Assembly's purposes (World Health Organization, 2022), this thesis contributed to explain the influence of a few individual and organizational characteristics intervening in the workplace and thereby sought to suggest a number of factors helping to have healthy outcomes in the workplace.
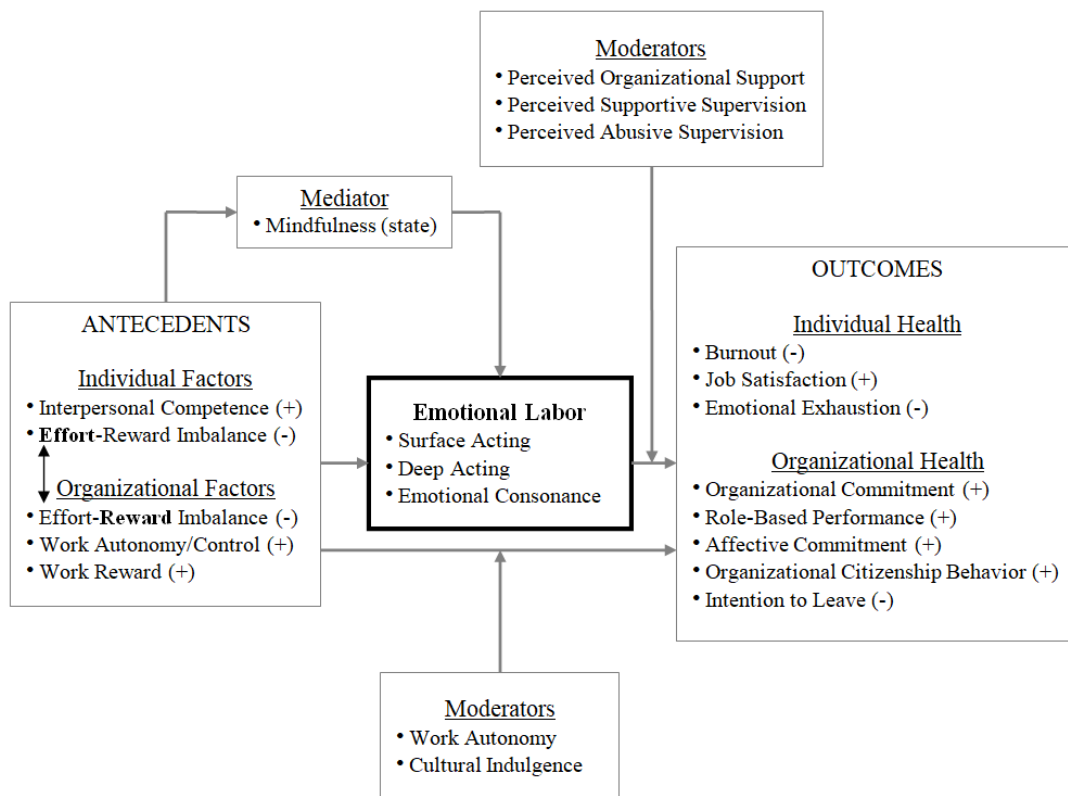


Figure ∞: Integrated Framework of the Thesis: Antecedents, Mediators, Moderators, and Outcomes Related to Emotional Labor

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