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Why not take an opportunity?

"A mixed-method study of the phenomenon of the low women participation in recruitment databases and the reasons behind it"

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Abstract

The underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions and thus corporate power remains a prevalent issue, raising questions about future development in this field. The purpose of this thesis is to determine whether the lower adoption rate of recruitment databases for higher managerial positions for women is prominent and by how much, compared to men. By analyzing existing research and empirical data, both quantitatively and qualitatively through in-depth interviews, the study aims to highlight the complexity of equality in a recruitment setting. The findings in the quantitative data analysis reveal that the recruitment database consists of a major part of men (61.9%), compared to women (31.7%). Invitation acceptance rate is significantly higher for men (8.41%), in comparison to women (5.62%). Differences in genders regarding functions, sectors, experience, and responsibility level were not as great as expected, due to historical perspective and gender differences. Findings in the qualitative study have been divided into the following identified themes; reach, invitation, opportunities of entry, barriers of entry and risks. Prominent among the findings were that the invitation has to be professional, trustworthy, personal and customized in order to increase the acceptance rate, that current life situations highly affect the decision and that data protection is a central part of the evaluation process for accepting or declining an invitation to a recruitment database. Interviewees expressed that the opportunities to enter a recruitment database are foremost getting job suggestions they otherwise should have missed, getting an opportunity to be represented in many geographical labor markets, time saving due to small effort and being proactive in the job search process. Highlighted barriers to entry were life situations, such as having young children, job situations, such as being newly recruited, fear of not being qualified, belief of not being matched due to preferences. The findings connect to previous research in this field, for example studies that examine career advancement blocks for women, life goals by gender, gender differences in communication and risk willingness by gender. In conclusion, this thesis has found several aspects and factors that affect women's decision regarding accepting or declining invitations to recruitment databases.

Key words: Equality, recruitment, gender stereotypes, top management positions, recruitment database

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1. Introduction

Within the domain of corporate leadership, equality, diversity and inclusion have gained increased attention during the last decade. Despite progress within these areas there are still disparities between men and women in senior leadership teams and executive boards all over the world. The underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions and thus corporate power still remain a prevalent issue. (World Economic Forum, 2023)

Women continue to encounter barriers that block their advancement into senior leadership roles. The “glass ceiling” is a notion from the 1980s describing an invisible barrier that blocks the access of women to the top, in terms of women's career development (Singh, 2007). This phenomenon prevents women from reaching top leadership positions in the workplace, despite their qualifications and achievements. (Morrison et al., 1987). Factors that contribute to the existence of the glass ceiling are for example gender bias in hiring and promotion practices, lack of access to sponsorship and mentorship opportunities and an organizational culture that prioritize masculine leadership traits (Eagly & Carli, 2009).

While both men and women fill requirements and qualifications for senior leadership roles, women are less likely to actively apply for these roles, compared to men. (Eagly et al., 2007) The underrepresentation of women in higher managerial positions raises questions about the underlying factors contributing to discrepancy in recruitment processes and in extension inequality in senior leadership roles in general.

This thesis aims to answer questions concerning the recruiting landscape with regards to particularly women in senior leadership positions and their attitudes towards recruitment databases. By analyzing existing research and empirical data the study aims to highlight the complexity of equality and gender dynamics and give insights concerning increased gender diversity and inclusion, in a recruitment setting.

1.1 Background

Gender equality in top leadership positions has been an issue during decades in organizations worldwide (World Economic Forum, 2023). Historically, women have been underrepresented in senior leadership positions, which is why it is important to understand the historical context to gain valuable insights of this phenomena and issue (Wikander, 2009). While progress has

been seen in many sectors during the recent decades in terms of women's growing participation rate in the workforce and increased gender equality in higher positions, there is still a lot left to address. As figure 1 shows, the labor force participation rate for Swedish women during 1964 to 1991 increased from 54% to 85% compared to Swedish men who had a labor force participation rate of 90% in 1964 and 87% in 1991. (Krapf, 2014)

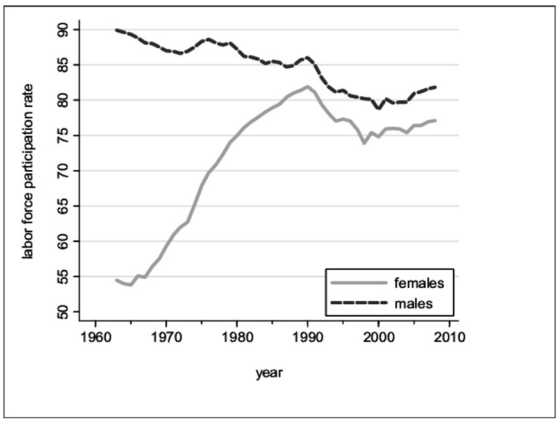


Figure 1: Development of labor force participation among men and women in Sweden. Age 15-64. (Krapf, 2014)

According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Report 2023, women take up 32.2% globally, of senior leadership roles (i.e., director, vice president or C-suite) during first quarter 2023, highlighting the remaining gap in female leadership representation.

Over the past two centuries, both men and women in Europe have experienced overall improvements in their socioeconomic conditions. However, the development of women's working conditions and opportunities for paid employment has not progressed at a similar pace, compared to men. Women have gained rights, mainly political, but also social. Equality between men and women in working life has increased during the 20th century but is far from being fully achieved. Gender equality in recruitment processes has emerged as a fundamental area of focus within organizational contexts to promote gender parity and inclusivity in the workforce. (Wikander, 2009)

Historically, women have faced many barriers and biases in recruitment processes, hindering their career advancement (Singh, 2007). Addressing these challenges requires a broad understanding of the factors contributing to gender disparities in recruitments and the strategies to counter this matter.

1.2 Purpose and contribution

The purpose of this paper is to determine whether the lower adoption rate of recruitment databases for higher managerial positions for women is prominent and by how much, compared to men. The goal is further to investigate what factors may affect women's decision of accepting or declining offers to be part of a recruitment database for higher managerial positions. Additionally, the aim is to get insights in how these factors, based on existing theory and future research possibilities, can delve deeper into ways to increase women's participation in this type of recruitment process which in turn can contribute to making the gender gap in higher managerial positions smaller.

1.3 Research questions

To determine the purpose of this thesis, the following research questions have been formulated.

1. To what extent do women demonstrate lower acceptance rates for recruitment databases for higher managerial positions compared to men?
2. What factors may affect and explain women's decisions regarding accepting or declining invitations to recruitment databases for higher managerial positions?

1.4 Delimitations

Due to the time limitations of this study, the analysis has only been based on one database from one recruitment company that mainly operates in Sweden. Due to the issue addressed in this thesis, that few women accept invitations to recruitment possibilities for higher managerial positions, the database consists of fewer women than men. Furthermore, by using an existing database constructed of predetermined information points, the authors have not been able to affect which information that should be gathered from the women that have accepted an invitation.

Additionally, due to time limitations, no more than eleven interviews were conducted and the age spread of the women interviewed was not that large. With difficulty to find interviewees and time limitations, concessions had to be made.

1.5 Disposition

This paper is structured into six main parts, starting with introducing the reader to the background of the subject including the current status and development in equality between

men and women in the work environment. Following this will be the purpose and contribution of this study, the research questions and the paper's delimitations. The next part will introduce the theory that the paper has been structured upon. This consists of relevant reports of economic institutes and previous research on the subject.

The third part continues to outline the paper's methodology, starting with the research design, the research methods, the data collection process, the data analysis and lastly methodology discussion. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative research will be presented in the fourth part of the thesis, the data analysis. The fifth part contains a discussion of the found results and analysis, which includes as conclusion of the exploratory and descriptive data analysis, theoretical implications and possibilities for future research. Lastly follows the sixth part, a short conclusion of the thesis findings and its implications.

2. Theoretical background

The purpose of this section is to explain relevant literature on which this study is based upon and aim as a knowledge foundation of the subject of investigating whether the lower adoption rate of recruitment opportunities for higher managerial positions for women is prominent and by how much, compared to men.

2.1 Historical perspective

In society today, it is indisputable that women and men should have the same opportunities to get an education or a job. However, it has not always been that way, a century ago there were enormous differences gender wise (Wikander, 2009).

Historically, women have worked at least as much as men, because work is more than what is done for payment in terms of money and women have been overrepresented in non-paid jobs. The presence of paid labor has increased steadily in relation to other forms of labor over the past two hundred years, where women were significantly affected. (Ibid)

In earlier ages, women foremost engaged in labor within the household for their family and other relatives. Additionally, women played a crucial role for societal welfare purposes, for those in need, beyond the family sphere. During the 19th century, charity associations emerged. These associations, often led by women, aimed to help the infirm people of society. In recognition of their contributions, women gained esteem and occasionally were given a voice

in the public space. This way, women gathered experience and often received expressions of gratitude in return, however, it lacked monetary reward. (Wikander, 2009)

Women have during time increasingly transitioned into paid employment, whether as employees or self-employed individuals. Accordingly, their labor has been more monetary valued, typically compensated with an agreed salary. Many tasks that were traditionally performed within the household or in the family have undergone transformation, characterized by rationalization and industrialization. Over the last two hundred years, societal shifts have led to a revolution, with a dominant part of labor now being compensated monetarily. Simultaneously, there has been an increased dependency on monetary income among people. In pre-industrial society, a household or a farm could typically sustain themselves, with monetary transactions reserved only for rare purchases. However, the industrialization entailed significant changes, as the production of for instance goods and food were shifted to factories. Therefore, the demand for monetarily compensated work increased, driven by the necessity to secure housing and meet essential needs. (Ibid)

The industrialization impacted women in different ways, depending on their social class. Firstly, a significant number of women were offered employment in low-wage positions, yet this provided women with the opportunity to support themselves financially. Secondly, a few women now gained access to education, which led to higher-paying jobs, sometimes even skilled occupations, equivalent to those held by men. During this period of mining, when an old production system was slowly replaced by a new one, women were allowed to work alongside men. Women could, for example, become public school teachers, telegraph operators, dairy workers and typesetters at printers. Initially, women were compensated equally to men for the work performed. However, the parity did not last for long, as the remuneration for roles held by women subsequently declined. The government began to employ women over men as a cost-saving initiative. The fact that women should have lower salaries was perceived almost as a law of nature and women gravitated towards lower-paying employment out of necessity. The comparatively lower education level by women was one of the reasons given for paying women less in salary. Among different work tasks women often were offered the simplest ones and had to accept worse working conditions than men, not because women were naturally more resilient or efficient, but because of limited alternatives available to them. (Ibid)

2.2 Differences in the work environment and salary based on gender

Over the past two centuries, both men and women in Europe have experienced overall improvements in their socioeconomic conditions. However, the development of women's working conditions and opportunities for paid employment has not progressed at a similar pace, compared to men. Women have gained rights, mainly political, but also social. Equality between men and women in working life has increased during the 20th century but is far from being fully achieved. One identified aspect of inequality is the prevalence of part-time employment among women, a trend less common among men. Today's lingering inequality has its main point in the labor market and in its division of jobs according to gender. The gender division of labor is now the main reason why men can still be seen as superior to women. Men still have the majority share of capital, which translates into societal and corporate power. (Wikander, 2009)

In 2017 Sweden ranked among the best OECD countries in terms of gender equality. Women have a high employment rate, outperform men in education and are well represented in parliament and government. Nevertheless, achieving full parity is still distant in several areas. Wage differences between genders remains, women are underrepresented in senior management positions, in private company boards and in many well paid and influential professions. (André & Bourrousse, 2017)

Bertrand & Hallock (2001) analyze gender differences among top executives in US public corporations for the years between 1992 and 1997 and examine the gender compensation gap among high-level executives. Women, who represented 2.5% of the sample, earned approximately 45% less than men. About 75% of this gap can be explained by the fact that women managed smaller companies and were less likely to become a CEO, chair, or a company president. Nonetheless, between 1992 and 1997 women nearly three times increased their participation in the top management ranks and also strongly improved their compensation, mostly by gaining representation of women in larger organizations. (Bertrand & Hallock, 2001)
In 2022, the median amount for the total earned income in the age group 20-64 was 371 500 SEK for all persons registered in Sweden. For women, the amount was 338 500 SEK and for men 406 700 SEK. Women's incomes are thus 83% of men's incomes, year 2022. (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2024)

As earlier mentioned, there are many historical events that have set the stage to analyze gender differences between men and women in the workplace. The differences have, to a certain

extent, put women in the workplace at a disadvantage because of women's perceived inferiority to men, primarily due to historical gender inequalities (Merchant, 2012). Research on sex bias in the workplace has proved repeatedly that in situations in which performance level is ambiguous, women are not perceived to be as competent as men in performing male gender typed work (Heilman, 1995). Gender stereotypes exist in many working places where men are associated with assertiveness, competence and independence while women are associated with warmth, nurturance and cooperativeness. These stereotypes can lead to biased evaluations and differential treatment of men and women in the workplace, where women often are penalized for deviating from general expectations. (Rudman & Glick, 2001) Moreover, Merchant (2012) studies gender differences in leadership styles and their perceived effectiveness. While traditional leadership theories often emphasized an agentic, task-oriented leadership style associated with masculinity, research has increasingly recognized the value of a communal, relationship-oriented leadership style typically associated with femininity (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Research has consistently demonstrated differences in communication styles between men and women. Women are often described as using more affiliative language, emphasizing cooperation, empathy and emotional expressions, whereas men tend to use a more assertive, direct and instrumental language, focusing on achieving goals and asserting dominance (Holmes, 2006). These differences can impact personal interactions, conflict resolution and team dynamics in the workplace (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Women may demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors such as inclusiveness, empathy and collaboration, which are associated with higher levels of employee satisfaction and team performance (Eagly et al., 2003). However, stereotypes and gender biases can influence perceptions of leadership effectiveness, with women often facing greater scrutiny and higher performance standards than men do (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

When minority groups are less than 15% of the total group, the minority may be treated as tokens by the dominant group seen as representing their category, for example, women, rather than individuals. As few women progress into senior management positions in many organizations they do not achieve more than token status. This leaves women isolated and seen by males as either representative of the stereotypical woman or otherwise dominant and lacking femininity. Such stereotyping tends to reduce women's power. When the number of women in

a group increases, their position usually changes and they are seen as individuals, according to research on women directors. (Singh, 2007)

Concerning gender roles, women are seen as fundamentally different from men in terms of their need for connection to others, and their preference for working in a social, humanistic and inclusive way for the common good of the organization and society. Men are seen more as power-seeking, individualistic, natural team leaders. Some believe that the differences are biological. Other explanations are that women are socialized to be different, as girls are expected to be social, play quietly, look attractive etc. while boys explore, play team games and compete to be the leader. (Ibid)

Humans learn how to think and behave based on their observations, experiences and interactions in the world. Studies on gender and volubility have shown that women speak up less often than men do due to an awareness of the backlash that women frequently obtain for voicing their opinions (Brescoll, 2011). Moreover, women make career choices that lead to their lower position in the hierarchy and attribute their career successes to good fortune and failures to their shortcomings, in contrast to men who attribute career success to themselves and failure to bad luck. (Singh, 2007)

2.3 Barriers to women's representation in leadership roles

In work life women have experienced different advancement blocks hindering them to reach top leadership positions. The "glass ceiling" is a phenomenon from the 1980s explaining an invisible barrier that blocks the access of women to the top, in terms of women's career progression and organizational effectiveness (Singh, 2007). The "glass ceiling" prevents women from reaching top leadership positions in the workplace, despite their qualifications and achievements. The phenomenon highlights systemic barriers such as gender bias, stereotypes, and discriminatory systems that restrict women's access to top leadership roles (Morrison et al., 1987).

The "glass ceiling" demonstrates across different industries and organizations, perpetuating gender inequality and hindering diversity and innovation. Women can see their goal, they can see male peers going up, but few women get through to the top level. (Singh, 2007). Factors that contribute to the existence of the glass ceiling are for example gender bias in hiring and

promotion practices, lack of access to sponsorship and mentorship opportunities, and an organizational culture that prioritize masculine leadership traits (Eagly & Carli, 2009).

Women in general are modest about their achievements and tend not to push themselves forward and their strategies for gaining visibility and recognition are based on high performance and commitment. Women's commitment is often less visible to their managers, as women take on many organizational roles which are not formally rewarded and women do not promote their commitment as visibly as men. Whereas the high performance often does lead to recognition, it must be tied with information to the senior manager about ambition and career plans to have the greatest effect. In contrast, women often say they are waiting to be invited to apply for a higher-level job, i.e., awaiting confirmation from others that they are able do it. Many women are lacking firm career plans until they are in mid-career. (Singh, 2007)

Concerning recruitment, senior positions are often not offered openly in organizations, which include unclear selection criteria and a hidden promotion system. Often women only hear about the good opportunity after it has been given to a male colleague. As women generally are unlikely to put themselves forward unless they fill almost all the criteria for the position, it is important that clear and realistic criteria are given, so that women can evaluate the offer as well as what they can aspire later. (Singh, 2007) Additionally, statistics claim that women will only apply if they meet 100% of the job qualifications, whereas men would apply for a job even if they met only 60% of the qualifications (Desvaux et al., 2008).

Role model is defined as a person whose life and activities influence another person in some way (Basoc & Howe, 1979). Individuals tend to seek role models who are similar to them in some apparent identifiable way, such as race or gender (Bandura, 1986). Role models seem to be especially of importance to women because the lack of female role models in non-traditional careers (e.g. science, engineering) has been identified as a barrier for women who choose to enter these professions (Basoc & Howe, 1979).

According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Report 2023, women take up 32.2% globally, of senior leadership roles (i.e., director, vice president or c-suite). Examples of sectors where gender diversity in senior leadership is higher (i.e., women taking up between one third and one half of senior leadership roles) are: Healthcare and Care Services (49.5%), Education (46.0%), Consumer Services (45.9%), Government and Public Sector (40.3%) and Retail (38.5%) World Economic Forum Global Gender Report (2023) displays the concept "drop to

the top", which refers to the degree to which female representation drops when seniority level increases. The report shows that female representation drops to 25% in C-suite positions on average.

Role models play a significant role in shaping people's career choices, particularly among women navigating their career. Diversification in role model representation is important, as exposure to a variety of role models with different backgrounds and career paths can expand women's perspectives and their possible career options. (Quimby & De Santis, 2011)

2.4 Risk willingness

Gender differences in risk preferences is a debated topic and it has often been argued that these differences might have a possible explanation of the observed differences between the genders in various aspects of economic life such as financial decision making. (Alam et al., 2022) Surveys from Croson & Gneezy, 2009 provide supporting evidence of women being less willing to accept risks. Powell & Ansic (1997) shows that women are less risk seeking and adopt different strategies in financial decision environments than men. Factors such as cultural influences, societal norms and biological differences are explanations given to why men and women have different risk preferences, compared to men (Ibid). Moreover, Bowles et al., (2007) explore gender differences in negotiation outcomes, revealing a persistent trend where men tend to achieve more favorable outcomes than women in identical negotiation scenarios. Women's concerns about being penalized or facing negative repercussions for assertiveness may reduce women's willingness to adopt assertive wage negotiation strategies. (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010) Furthermore, Amanatullah and Morris (2010) shows that women view others' negotiating on their behalf as positive, due to risk of backlash, often experienced by women. Understanding that gender variances in negotiation arise from strategic reactions to social constraints provides insights about the boundary conditions of gender effects. (Ibid)

2.5 Life values

Women do often have different values than their male colleagues. For many women, the main work focus is on task accomplishment, with attention to details, high standards and a need for challenge. Also, women seem to have different criteria for evaluating personal success in their careers. The traditional model of career success in organizations has emphasized the external criteria of hierarchical position and salary, including the associated benefits such as company car, expense account and office size. Instead, women tend to value being seen as experts. Women, in general, value the challenge and content of the job more than its status.

Moreover, women value their salary as much for recognition for their contribution as for its monetary value. More women, compared to men, view success as balancing important parts of their lives, such as family and work (Singh, 2007).

According to Gino et al., (2015), women, compared to men, have a higher number of life goals, place less value on power related goals and associate more negative outcomes (i.e., trade-offs and goal conflict) with high power positions. Furthermore, women are less likely to take advantage of opportunities for professional advancement and perceive power as less desirable. Gino et al.'s study shows that men and women have different perceptions of what the experience of holding a high-level position will be like. Additionally, women view high level positions as equally attainable as men do, but less desirable. (Ibid)

Early studies on work-life balance focus on the conflict between professional demands and family duties (Frone et al., 1992). According to Frone (1992), this conflict arises because some aspects of work and family roles are not compatible. Research shows that women have a disproportionate responsibility for domestic work and childcare, even when both partners are working (Gunter & Stambach, 2005). The roles of motherhood and professional work seem incompatible and conflicting, which is the reality of many working women's lives (Schoon et al., 2007). Furthermore, companies that are not implementing work-life balance policies and/or the concept of family, work-life balance, or similar within the firm's mission, vision, or values, do not have women in management positions. Research states a positive relationship between the presence of female workers in firms and the implementation of work-life balance measures. (Adame, 2016)

2.6 Communication

As already mentioned, communication styles of men tend to be more demanding and direct than those of women, who tend to be more nurturing and relational (McQuiston & Morris, 2009). Although men and women use the same grammar and vocabulary, there are some subtle but consistent differences in their communication styles. These differences have consequences for business settings in general and particularly in sales settings. Rather than progressing right into the task, a male salesperson would benefit from understanding that his female client may prefer spending more time early on getting to know her and building a relationship in order to reach a comfort level that will allow the sales process to continue successfully. The male salesperson needs to focus on cooperative, collaborative and reciprocal conversations and rely

less on the directive communications that are typical for men. Their approach should be much more exploratory rather than declarative to consider the female's tendency to empathize. (McQuiston & Morris, 2009).

Moreover, Merchant (2012) shows gender differences in influence tactics and negotiation strategies, highlighting how men and women may employ different approaches to influence and achieve their objectives. Research suggests that men are more likely to use direct, assertive tactics such as persuasion and assertion, while women may rely on indirect, relational tactics such as persuasion through emotional appeals, and collaboration. These differences can impact negotiation outcomes and power dynamics in organizations. (Ibid)

According to Gaucher (2011), one institutional mechanism that might contribute to fewer women in traditionally male dominated jobs, such as engineering or natural science, is gendered wordings used in job recruitment materials. Since 1973, job advertisements are no longer allowed to advertise for people using pronouns as she or he, however gender preferences can still be communicated with more subtle signals typically associated with a certain gender. Words such as dominant, competitive or leader are associated with male stereotypes, whereas words such as understand, support and interpersonal are associated with female stereotypes. Job ads using more masculine wording were seen by women to be less appealing than the same ads using more feminine wording regardless of if the jobs were male or female dominated occupations. This means gendered words in job advertisements could make the position seem less appealing to men or women, thus limiting the job applicant pool. (Gaucher, 2011)

Developmental relationships play an important role in the career development for both men and women (Burke et al., 1995). However, women seem to lack access to informal networks and are excluded from informal relationships with male colleagues (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Burke et al. (1995) have studied differences in networks of men and women and found that women's networks contained a higher number of women compared to men's networks. Additionally, women seem not to be aware of the importance and potential usefulness of informal networks. One reason could be that women may not be as skilled as men in building informal networks. Another reason suggested is that men, being the dominant group, may want to maintain their dominance by excluding women from informal networks. If women are excluded from these networks, they might be missing several components important for a successful career. These components would include information, resources, knowledge, support, advice, influence, power, mentors and sponsors. (Burke et al., 1995)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

For this thesis, a mixed-method approach has been used, meaning that both a quantitative and a qualitative approach has been taken in data collection and data analysis. (Bell et al., 2022, p 566). Quantitative data from a recruitment database have been analyzed to provide a perspective of the participation rate of women in such a database. The purpose of using a quantitative approach for this thesis is to be able to systematically find patterns and trends in the acquired database, that can provide further insight in and measure the phenomenon that few women accept invitations to recruitment opportunities (Bell et al., 2022, p. 165). The addition of a qualitative approach, focused more on words rather than numbers, is used to gain a deeper knowledge of the phenomenon and the reasons behind women's decisions (Bell et al., 2022, p. 378-379).

The aim of using quantitative data initially is to determine the existence of fewer women in such databases and thus get further confirmation of an issue rather than only basing our inquiry into this problem on hearsay. Then, with that confirmation the authors can move forward to the qualitative part of the study. With the help of the found demographic characteristics of the women in the database the authors could identify a selection of women relevant to participate in the qualitative interviews. The aim of the qualitative approach is then to gain deep insights and more complex knowledge of the underlying factors affecting women's participation in the type of databases that was used in the quantitative study.

This thesis has implemented an abductive approach to its theory, moving between literature and collected data in an iterative process to further being able to develop the theory of the thesis (Bell et al., 2022, p. 528-529). Furthermore an abductive approach is more suitable given the unexplored phenomenon that this thesis aimed to examine and it allows for the need of the data to "surprise" the authors rather than to confirm the authors pre-understanding of the phenomenon. (Bell et al., 2022, p. 25)

3.2 Research method

For this thesis both an exploratory and descriptive research method have been applied on the quantitative data. Exploratory research focuses on identifying what is happening, seeking new insights and to assess a phenomenon in a new light (Saunders et al., 2009). This supports and

connects to the purpose of the thesis; to identify and solidify the phenomenon of few women accepting invitations in recruitment possibilities. To further fulfill the purpose, a descriptive research method will aim to accurately describe the situation and the women in the database that have chosen to accept an invitation. As mentioned further in Saunders et al. (2009), a descriptive research approach can work as an extension of an exploratory research, and thus provide further insights and understanding.

Secondly, due to the mixed method approach, a qualitative study has also been made in the form of interviews. Individual interviews were chosen over focus groups due to the potential of there being personal and sensitive reasons behind women's decisions regarding their choice of participating or not participating in a recruitment database. This is due to the fact that individual interviews have been shown to reveal higher frequency and breath of sensitive themes compared to focus group discussions. (Schuster et al., 2023) Given that the investigation has a very clear focus based on the research questions rather than a very general notion, and due to it being multiple people that will hold the interviews, *semi-structured interviews* were conducted. Furthermore, semi structured interviews also allow for a flexibility in the interviews to adapt to what the interviewees say thus allowing the interviewers the possibility to gain further understanding from the interviewees though follow up questions. (Bell et al., 2022, p. 428)

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Quantitative data

At the inception of this thesis, a recruitment company was contacted regarding the intended research area; the low level of women accepting invitations to recruitment opportunities. The company focuses on recruitment of executive positions through their database, using AI with the purpose of matching potential candidates with firms' requirements and needs of competencies. Upon the initial meeting with the CEO of the company it became clear that the selected research area is a valid and substantial problem for this company and in the recruitment business. Following this a collaboration was started that allowed access to their database consisting of 10 801 individuals that have signed up to their recruitment service. This company is focused on recruiting for higher positions in a variety of sectors and has experienced problems with the adoption rate of women. Thus, their information gathered on individuals

willing to accept a recruitment opportunity was highly relevant for the goals of this study. Hence, a secondary analysis on the data collected by the recruitment company was conducted.

The benefits of the choice to use secondary data are, but are not limited to, the time benefit of an already gathered database, a large database that allows for multiple subgroups and subset analysis and the opportunity for the authors to spend more time on the data analysis itself. (Bell et al., 2022 p. 293-294)

In addition to the initial meeting with the company CEO and getting access to their data, two informal interviews were held with two of the company's employees; the CPO and the Management trainee and growth team leader. The meeting with the CPO provided a walkthrough of the data file and their database, to be able to accurately navigate and interpret the data. The meeting with the Management trainee and growth team leader, who was responsible for sending out invites to their database, had a focus on getting an approximate number of the amount of men and women they have invited to become a part of their database. It also became apparent that the last year's invitation effort has been focused on recruiting specifically women to the database.

3.3.2 Qualitative data

Prior to the interviews, an interview guide was constructed, please see appendix 8.1-8.3. The type of questions was based on the nine different questions presented by Kvale (1996). Furthermore, as preparation for holding and conducting interviews, Kvale (1996) outlines ten criteria for a successful interview. These were studied and practiced on a pilot interview to prepare the authors to be able to conduct meaningful and valuable interviews. Additionally, insights gained through the analysis of the quantitative data and research in existing theories contributed to shaping the design of the interview guide.

All interviews were conducted online via Teams meeting to be able to accommodate the interviews busy schedules more easily. Teams meeting was used specifically due to its ability to simultaneously transcribe the interviews and record them. All interviewees agreed to be recorded and transcribed in the beginning of the interview. Eleven interviews were conducted, consisting of only females, with ages spanning from 28 to 45 and lasted between approximately 25-40 minutes. The interviewees are active in a variety of job sectors including business law and fin-tech.

The selection of the interviewees was based on a number of factors. Firstly, due to the research questions and purpose of the thesis only female interviews were conducted to get insight in female reasoning of recruitment databases. Furthermore, the selection was made of women in relevant job sectors that are similar to the sectors included in the database retrieved from the recruitment company. This is based on the assumption that these women would be more relevant and be a part of the target groups for this type of recruitment database.

The ages of the women start at the approximately youngest age of the database. See data analysis for quantitative data for more details in how the age assumption has taken form.
Finally, decisions were also affected by availability and feasibility to conduct these interviews during the limited timeline that is the limitation of this thesis. Thus, it is important to note that the interviewee selection was a convenience sampling (Bell et al., 2022, p. 200), even if the sample managed to meet the above mentioned criteria to be of larger relevance for this thesis.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative data

Initially, the data received needed to be cleaned and restructured. Before any data analysis, it is highly necessary to check the data for errors or missing data (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2019). Given that the data is from a secondary source where the collection and compilation of the data was done by the company, an initial inspection was prudent. Initially the presence of missing data was recognized, and considered on the data analysis.

Moreover, each individual in the database was given an identification number, to more easily identify and keep track of each individual. Secondly, certain cells with string variables need to be separated and re-coded to fulfill its purpose. The cell containing up to five values chosen by the individuals in the database was, in the raw data file, located in one cell. For easier management of this information later on in the analytics tool, they were split into five separate columns by dividing them by each comma sign. Finally, information about the individual's current sector needed to be separated from one cell that contained information about all the individual's past sectors as well as their current one. This was done by re-coding the cell. The result was that each cell that contained a sector that had “Yes” connected to it was sprayed into its own column, thus providing a column only stating an individual's current sector.

The data was then transferred to begin analysis. The use of descriptive statistics was used to explore and build an understanding for the data sets core characteristics. (Bell et al., 2022, p. 318). Starting off the exploratory and descriptive analysis of the data was the computing of several new variables. A new variable for gender was computed, where the values were re-coded into nominal numbers.

When analyzing the database, no age of the individuals was given, thus a new variable to assert the age of the individuals in the database was constructed. To be able to get an approximate age of the database the number of years on the job market was used as an indicator to create age groups. Based on the OECD report "Education at a glance" (OECD, 2020), the average age of graduates from a bachelor program in Sweden is 28 years old. Given that the majority of the individuals in the database reported having a master's degree, two years were added on this average age to get an approximate starting age of the database. Thus, the youngest age of the database was estimated to be 30 years old. To further calculate the age of the individuals in the database, 1-5 years of job experience equaled an age of 30-35. The authors warn the reader to note that this is only an approximate age, and could be misgiving due to multiple reasons. Since not every individual has reported having a master's degree, the age of the individuals when they started to work may differ. Furthermore, job experience could have been gained simultaneously as studies which the individual could have counted when stating their years of job experience in the database. Thus, this age divide will only give a broad approximation of the age to gain a better understanding of the database. With this system of grouping the ages in the database, ten age groups were identified.

Following the computing of the new variables, frequency analysis was done on several data pits, split into groups based on gender to showcase differences between men and women. Frequencies produced included the number of men and women in the database, the newly constructed age groups variable, the values of the individuals in the database, as well as their current job sectors. The findings found relevant for this thesis were summarized in tables to be more easily presented and more clearly showcase the insights gained from the recruitment database.

3.4.2 Qualitative data

Initially, the automatically generated transcriptions from the interviews were downloaded and cleaned to be easier to follow. Mistakes by the software were corrected and matched against the video recording. Names or other identifying comments recorded on the transcription were erased. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to look over the transcription of the interviews to confirm their accuracy.

To analyze the conducted interviews a thematic analysis was used. The search for themes can be found in most qualitative analysis approaches, speaking of its relevance. Thematic analysis can be used for a wide range of qualitative data and is relatively easy to learn and perform well, which is the basis for the choice (Bell et al., 2022, p. 530). Additionally, the choice of thematic analysis was based on the clarity it gives the results. By presenting the findings divided in themes it provides a structured way of presenting the analysis that will be clear to readers.

To analyze the data the six stages as presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed; stage 1, familiarization of data, stage 2, generating initial codes, stage 3, searching for common themes, stage 4, reviewing themes, stage 5, defining and naming themes and stage 6, producing a final report. To aid the authors in searching for themes in stage 3, the search was focused on identifying, as recommended by Ryan and Bernard (2003), repetition, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and analogies, transition similarities and differences, linguistic concerns, missing data and theory related material.

3.5 Methodology Discussion

Reliability and validity are important factors when evaluating the quality of research and are applicable on both quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, there have been discussions among researchers on how to utilize these factors depending on the research design of a study. It is discussed as to how the meaning and nuances of these factors may differ when assessing qualitative research contra quantitative (Bell et al., 2022, p. 368). Further, according to Bell et al. (2022), can qualitative research often be evaluated instead by authenticity and trustworthiness, which clarifies certain aspects of evaluation of a qualitative approach. Trustworthiness contains four separate criteria that correlates to values of reliability and validity used when evaluating quantitative research. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. (Bell et al., 2022, p. 369) Credibility, which mirrors validity, and dependability, which mirrors reliability, will be the main focus and is

taken into consideration when the authors of this thesis have evaluated the quantitative part of the research to ensure a deeper understanding of its quality.

3.5.1 Validity

Validity covers the integrity of the conclusions drawn from the research performed (Bell et al., 2022. p. 48). To ensure the validity of the quantitative data analysis from the company database, several steps were taken. A short background check of the company was done to ensure its registration as a legitimate business in Sweden. The content of the data file the authors received was validated by comparing it with the central database of the company. Thus, it could be established that the information given matched with the company's internal data, ensuring its accuracy and authenticity. Additionally, the results from the quantitative analysis were compared with previous research and theory to assess consistency where the identified differences between men and women have been found in other areas.

Regarding qualitative data analysis, several strategies were employed to ensure its validity. Multiple interviewers crossing different ages and job sectors were conducted to gain a broader and more multifaceted understanding of the phenomenon. With a broad spread of the interviewee’s characteristics, findings for the interviews and correlation between them would hold great weight, compared to interviews conducted with similar individuals.

Furthermore, protocols and guidelines for successful interviews based on previous research were utilized to ensure a good quality of the interviews as well as consistency across different interviews. This is connected to ensuring that the research in this thesis is conducted in a good manner, which is essential for the credibility criteria of trustworthiness of qualitative research (Bell et al., 2022. p. 369). To ensure that interviews' answers were interpreted correctly, follow up clarification statements were made during the interviews, as recommended by the guidelines used from previous research. Additionally, to avoid any errors in interpretation or errors from the transcription function, all interviewees were contacted to provide clarification and affirmation of the accuracy of the transcriptions. This technique is called respondent validation, and is also used to support the thesis credibility (Bell et al., 2022. p. 369) However, important to note, to not affect the integrity of the interviews, no answers were changed or edited by the interviewees during this procedure.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability of a study concerns whether the results generated by the study are repeatable (Bell et al., 2022, p. 48). To ensure this, our steps for the quantitative analysis were clearly outlined and explained under the data analysis chapter under method to enable other researchers to trace the procedures. However, the nature of our quantitative data itself might negatively affect its reliability. Given that our tested sample consists of the recruitment company´s database it can be argued that that the sample has been targeted. The recruitment company has specifically targeted certain individuals with their invitations based on internal guidelines. Thus, our sample is not a reflection of the entire population but of a very specific portion of it. With a larger sample or a different sample, the outcomes of this thesis analysis could be different. Even given that the focus of the thesis lies on this specific part of the population that would be eligible for this type of recruitment database it is important to note that the authors have had no control of the sample selection, thus it could be biased in an unknown way that may provide out specific results.

To strengthen the reliability of the qualitative data analysis based on the conducted interviews the authors took similar measures as regarding the quantitative analysis. Additionally, dependability, one of the criteria for trustworthiness when evaluating qualitative research, was kept in mind during the process of this thesis. Dependability calls for a level of "auditing" of the research process (Bell et al., 2022, p.370-371) To provide accurate information for this study to be audited, detailed descriptions of our research process has been performed. The steps for the selections and of interviews and the construction of the interviews has been clearly outlined. For heightened transparency, the interview guides used during the interview, along with interview information can be found in the thesis appendix. Furthermore, under data analysis a full table can be found with the findings from each conducted interview.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

Bell et al. (2022) discuss four main principles regarding ethical considerations in business research. These are *harm to participants*, *lack of informed consent*, *invasion of privacy* and *deception*. The first principle, regarding harm, can entail any number of things from physical harm to participants' stress level or career prospects. To avoid this, we have ensured anonymity for all participants in our interviews, excluding any information that may identify them. Additionally, anonymity was offered to the company supplying us with our quantitative data and to the employees we talked with at this company. Furthermore, to avoid any additional

stress to the interview participants and company representatives, all contact was proposed to be done online to more easily fit interviews and meetings into their schedules. All interviews were also performed individually, thus no group interview or any focus group format was not used. Since reasons for accepting or declining participation in a recruitment database may be of a more personal nature, interviewees might not want to openly discuss them in a group setting.

To address the issue of lack of informed consent all interviews as well as the company representatives were informed of the purpose of the thesis and what the information they gave would be used for. All interviews were also informed of the interviews being recorded and transcribed and were free to express if they would not want to participate. This information was given to all participants to ensure avoidance of lack of informed consent. To avoid deception, great care was given in providing accurate information of the thesis purpose and what the given information would be used for to all participants in the interviews and to the company representatives.

To avoid invasion of privacy all interviews were voluntary, and all participants were free to refuse to answer any question given. The company representatives had similar rights regarding questions asked about their company.

4. Data analysis

4.1 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative analysis has been conducted in the areas; quantity of men and women, number of invites and acceptance rate per gender, age distribution, education level, sectors, functions, experience and values.

4.1.1 Database quantity of men and women

The database consists of a total number of 10 801 persons with stated gender, excluding 734 (6.4%) genderless people, due to missing values. Divided into men and women, the numbers are 3656 (31.7%) women and 7145 (61.9%) men.



Figure 2: Members by gender represented in the database. Bars represent the number of women, number of men and total number.

The estimated number of persons invited to the database is 65 000 women and 85 000 men (Employee interview, 2024) and of these, 3656 women and 7145 men have accepted the invitation and are represented in the recruitment database. This gives an invitation acceptance rate of 5.62% for women and 8.41% for men.

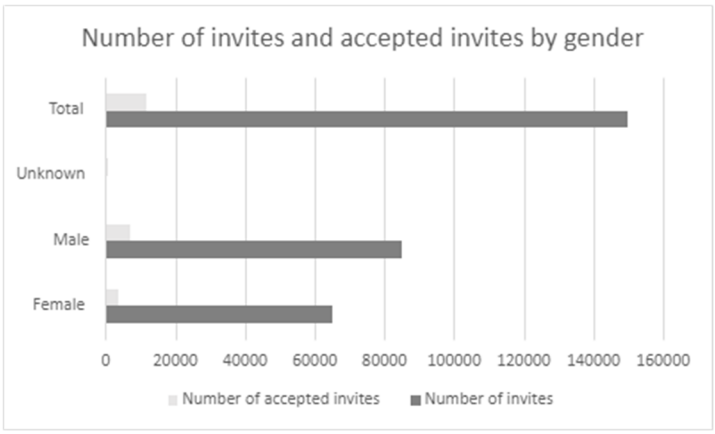


Figure 3: Amount of invited persons to the database and accepted invitations. Bars represent the number of women, number of men and total number of men and women that are invited and number of men and women that have accepted the invitation.

4.1.2 Age distribution & education level

Due to the fact that there are a larger number of men than women in the database, every age group also consists of a larger number of men, compared to women. However, by looking at the percentage share, the proportion of women aged 30-35 years to 46-50 years is larger than the proportion of men in these ages. After the age group 46-50 years, there is a larger proportion of men compared to women, which is showcased in figure 5.

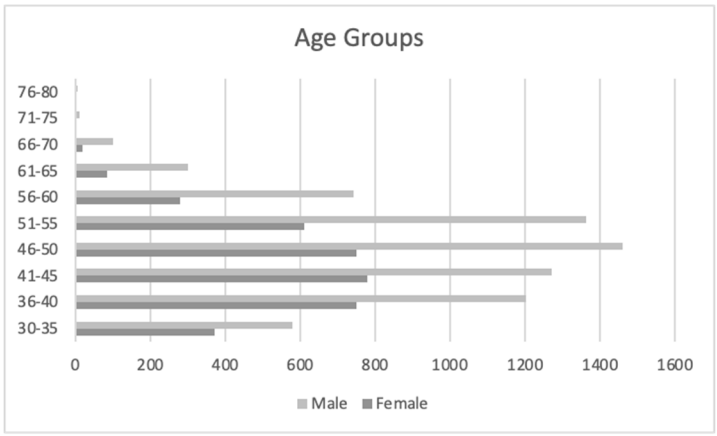


Figure 4: Age groups by gender represented in the database. Bars show the number of men and women represented in the database divided into ten age groups.

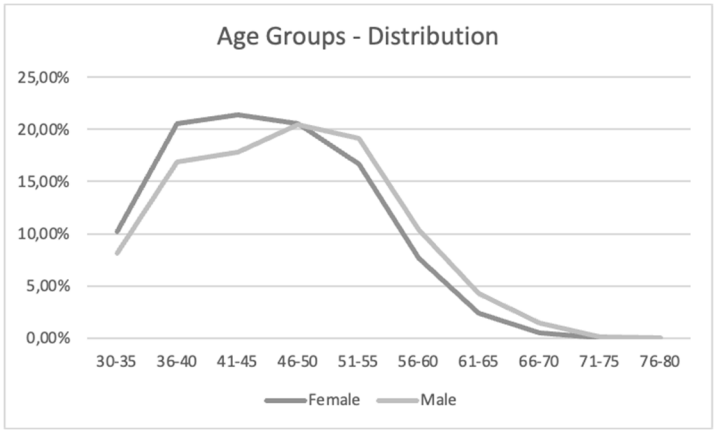


Figure 5: Age distribution by gender represented in the database.

A majority of those represented in the database have a highest education level corresponding to a MSc. 58.64% of the women and 60.14% of the men have obtained a MSc degree. In comparison, 27.65% of the women and 23.56% of the men have obtained a BSc degree as their highest education level.

Due to missing values, there is a smaller sample size concerning education level, in total 1313 women and 2988 men, i.e., persons that have chosen to state education level in the database.

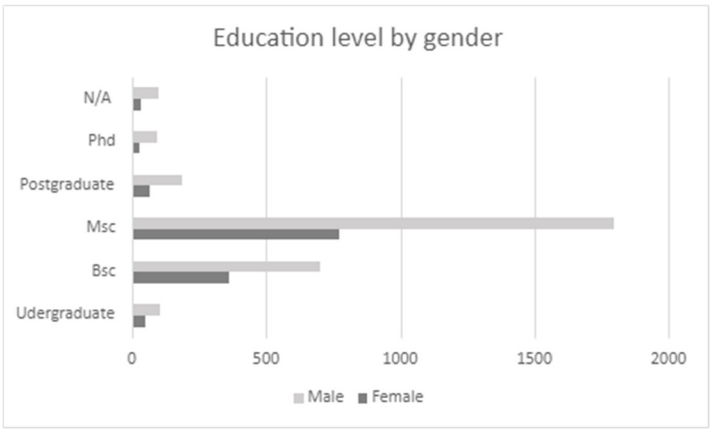


Figure 6: Education level by gender represented in the database.

4.1.3 Current job sectors

For women, *Technology* (25.29%), *Professional services* (15.38%) and *Financials* (11.45%) are the top three current job sectors. Compared to men, where the top three current job sectors are *Technology* (29.34%), *Financials* (15.15%) and *Professional services* (13.17%).

Due to missing values, there is a smaller sample size concerning the current sector, in total 2289 women and 4738 men, i.e., persons that have chosen to fill in the current job sector in the database.

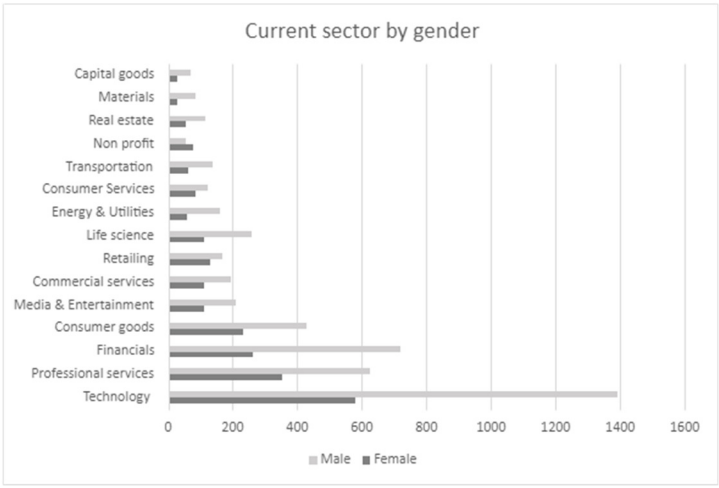


Figure 7: Current job sectors by gender represented in the database.

4.1.4 Current functions

Regarding current functions, the majority of both men (34.70%) and women (29.52%) have a current function within *General Management*. Followed by *Finance & Strategy* for men (20.91%) and *Sales, Marketing and Communications* for women (24.70%). Thereafter, *Sales,*

Marketing and Communication for men (18.43%) and *Finance & Strategy* for women (18.46%).

Due to missing values, there is a smaller sample size concerning current function, in total 1826 women and 3864 men, i.e., persons that have chosen to fill in the current function in the database.

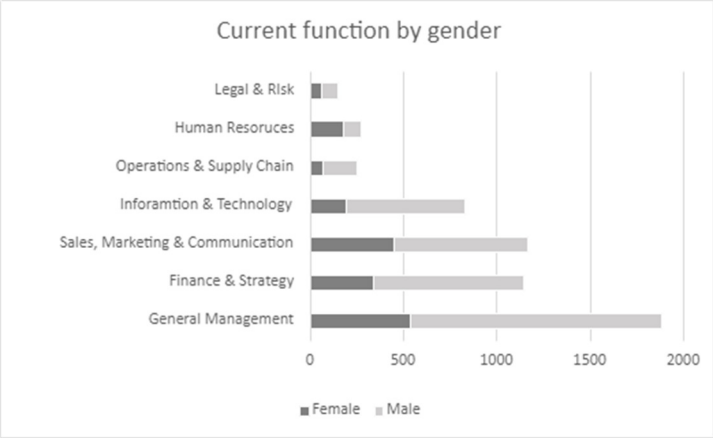


Figure 8: Current functions by gender represented in the database.

4.1.5 Professional experience

The top three regarding sector experience by gender are *Technology, Professional services* and *Financials*, for men. And for women, *Technology, Professional services* and *Consumer goods.*

Regarding function experience, the top three function experiences by gender in the database are *General management, Finance & Strategy* and *Sales*, *Marketing & Communication,* for men. Top three function experiences for women in the database are *Finance & Strategy, General management,* and *Sales*, *Marketing & Communication.*

Average expected monthly compensation are for women 130 284 SEK per month and for men 136 147 SEK per month. The monthly compensation includes perks and bonuses. The difference between men and women in expected compensation is thus 4.5%.

Average years of professional experience are for men 17.67 years and for women 16.03 years. Thus, the difference between men and women regarding professional experience is 10.2%.

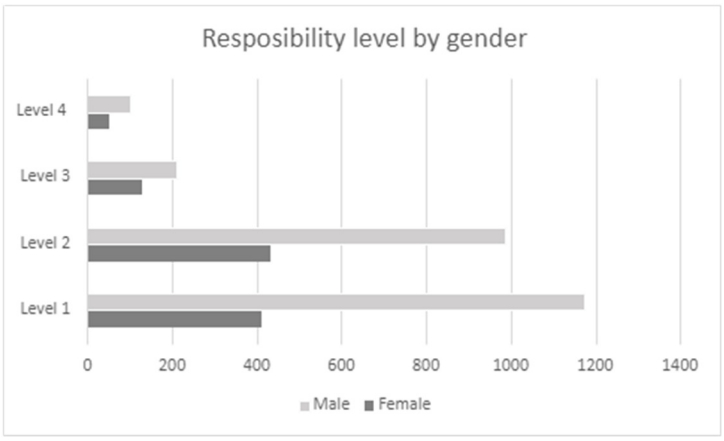


Figure 9: Responsibility level by gender represented in the database.

Regarding current responsibility level, men are overrepresented in *Level 1* (47.47%), compared to women (40.16%). In *Level 2* the numbers were 42.21% for women and 39.90% for men. *Level 3* consists of 12.54% of the women and 8.50% of the men, compared to *level 4* where 5.09% of the women and 4.13% of the men were represented.

Due to missing values, there is a smaller sample size concerning current responsibility level, in total 1021 women and 2471 men, i.e., persons that have chosen to fill in the current responsibility level in the database.

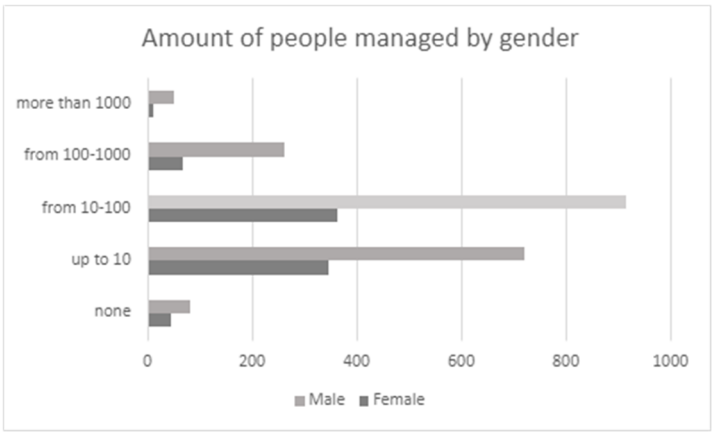


Figure 10: Amount of people managed by gender represented in the database.

The most common number of people managed were *10-100* for both men (45.01%) and women (43.65%). For *up to 10* people managed, the numbers were 35.51% for men and 41.49% for women.

Due to missing values, there is a smaller sample size concerning the amount of people managed, in total 834 women and 2033 men, i.e., persons that have chosen to fill in the amount of people managed in the database.

4.1.6 Values

Regarding values, men's top four were *Leadership, Achievement, Teamwork,* and *People.* In comparison, women's top four were *Leadership, Teamwork, People,* and *Achievement,* among many other values that could be chosen.

4.2 Qualitative data analysis

The findings reveal that women's approach towards recruitment databases depends on several factors. From the interviews six themes have been identified; reach, invitation, opportunities of entry, barriers of entry and risks, these themes will be described in more detail in this section. First, an overview of the findings identified in the interviews are provided and thereafter the themes are described more specifically.

Interviewee	Reach	Evaluation process	Invitation	Opportunities of entry	Barriers of entry	Risks
Interviewee 1 Female 29 years Business Law	Invited Accepted	Should be able to adapt to my preferences and background. Get relevant job offers. Professional and serious. Spelling layout professional. See jobs they are recruiting for. Is it niched in some way, like niched in my job sector? More attractive if targeted for higher positions, though I need to know I am qualified.	Information important, could be good with phone calls but could also give the feeling of a telephone salesperson. Disregards directly if generic and feel like mass email. Based on my previous experience. First message on LinkedIn would be good.	No need for searching for jobs myself, getting job applications that match my profile, timesaving. Finding new opportunities that I would not find myself.	Will the offers be completely uninteresting? Fear of getting mass notifications that have no relevance and constantly getting contacted. "commercial feeling".	Would not want information to get out to the employer if I am actively searching for something else. However, judge that risk with the recruitment database to be very low.
Interviewee 2 Female 45 years HR	Invited Accepted	A way to find a new job. Positive, short evaluation process.	Invitation came through a personal and trustworthy contact connected to recruitment. Easy to sign up. Needs to be serious, feel secure and trustworthy,	Job opportunities otherwise missed. Time saving. Positive to be represented in different geographical labor markets.	Fear of not having the right keywords (i.e., extensive experience but maybe not a master's degree) and thus not receiving relevant suggestions.	None.
Interviewee 3 Female 34 years Construction	Not invited	Short. Not interested due to life situations.	Needs to be personalized and customized, (not generic) emails. Recommendations from others would increase the probability to sign up.	Getting job opportunities otherwise missed. Easy to sign up. Motivated due to change in jobs. Positive to be represented in different geographical labor markets.	Current life situation. The sign up process could not be too complex and time consuming.	Data leakage. GDPR concerns. Concerns due to my current employer.
Interviewee 4 Female 28 years Finance	Not invited	Background info about the firm needed, incl. reviews from users. GDPR concerns.	Needs to be personalized, (not generic) emails. Customized and relevant info.	Time saving. Job opportunities otherwise missed. Receive offers despite minimal effort.	Fear of being "forgotten" due to other "better" candidates. Time consuming if complex process signing up.	Data leakage. GDPR concerns.
Interviewee 5 Female 29 years HR	Not invited	Positive, short. Opportunities provided.	Needs to be personalized, customized, (not generic) emails, follow up call, or vice versa. Via networks.	Getting job opportunities otherwise missed. Time saving.	Data leakage. GDPR concerns.	Data leakage. GDPR concerns.
Interviewee 6 Female 29 years FinTech	Not invited	Positive, interesting, new jobs not able to find on my own.	Needs professional, seriousness, not generic mass email, information about me and my job sector.	New opportunities, a wide network, finding jobs I could not find on my own.	Unserious database, not secure in handling my information.	GDPR concerns.

Interviewee	Reach	Evaluation process	Invitation	Opportunities of entry	Barriers of entry	Risks
Interviewee 7 Female 29 years Corporate Law	Not invited	Skeptical, need to know they are competent, look at relevance for me, is it adapted and targeted to me, needs to be professional. More positive if it is for higher positions, but again even more important that it is relevant, that I am matched and qualified for jobs offered.	Needs to be professional, no spelling errors and such or would delete right away. Good to see if they work with big companies, specialized in my area.	Good job matching with preferences, not having to search on my own.	Can they handle my personal information well? GDPR concerns. Knowing too little about the company.	Employers would not be happy to know in a database, conversation with HR is not desirable. Maybe not get new big projects. A concern if the database feels insecure.
Interviewee 8 Female 29 years Master student	Not invited	Will it help, just part of a "flock of others" Positive if good matching, relevant. Personality values component would be good. More attractive with higher positions, but would feel like a scam since I am not qualified for it right now.	Need much information. Differentiating in some way, is it a good algorithm? Personified and targeted to me.	Easy way of finding a job, finding new jobs.	Not qualified, not matched to my preferences.	None.
Interviewee 9 Female 28 years Private equity	Not invited	Neutral, depends on if I want to change jobs, how the company looks like, which companies they recruit for and jobs they can find. Want professional contact. More positive approach if for higher positions if it is clear why I am invited to this.	Not recruiters or email coming non stop, references to what they offer, professional, should feel like a selective process not mass mail, high end and exclusive feeling. Personally connected to me.	Get interesting opportunities that I would not find otherwise.	Note relevant role that match my intrees or profiles, Feels safe if someone I know knows about the database.	Unrelated messages constantly. If you are not interested in changing jobs, if there is a risk employers can find out, it seems like an unnecessary risk.
Interviewee 10 Female 29 years Business Law	Not invited	Positive, have an interesting profile, is it serious, seen it before, is there "no strings attached", no demands to be active since not actively job searching. Higher positions recruitment is more attractive, given that I am relevant for it	Disregard directly if unserious language, or emojis or very colorful. Want it to be professional, clean. Not get a "click bait" impression. Want exclusive and professional. What company	Being proactive in the work market, new opportunities.	How does sharing of data work? Will I have control over how/when my information gets shared?	Employers finding out of the participation database might affect, lead to uncomfortable talks.
Interviewee 11 Female 30 years Tax law	Not invited	Not opposed to being a part of the database. Depending on time I have to read it and do the signup process. Can't take too much time. Need to offer unique special opportunities I can't find myself. Does it feel trustworthy and professional? Higher position recruitment gives a more positive approach, and feels more flattering to be invited. However, it needs to be clear why I am qualified for such positions.	Personally contact, get information on offers, how it fits my job experiences and interest. Connected to my profile why I am relevant for their database. needs to be professional, and well known names. Not generic, disregard directly.	See new opportunities, easier to seek jobs when it is done for you. Knowing how the process works.	What my life situation is, family can be a factor. Could have just changed jobs then not relevant. But still interesting, could change jobs sideways not just upgrade so as not to affect family situations, or just to see opportunities. Getting many irrelevant offers and messages.	None.

Table 1: Overview of findings in interviews, divided into themes identified.

4.2.1 Reach

The interviews show that 18.2% (2 out of 11) of the interviewees have been invited to a recruitment database. 100% (2 out of 2) of the invited interviewees accepted the invitation. Due to a small sample size, there are limitations in this part of the study. The invitation process experienced by the interviewees was done through a personal contact within a recruitment firm, through a meeting or a telephone call. With the personal contact the interviewees found the process and the recruitment database to be a legitimate business and built up a trust for its abilities to offer them good opportunities. With a one-on-one conversation the interviewees further expressed how it enabled them to more accurately specify theory job preferences so that the recruiter could ensure they would get relevant job applications sent to them. The process had been made simple, convenient and adapted to their needs which led to them accepting the invitation.

Interviewees further expressed their opinions and reaction to simply getting an invitation as something positive with the condition of the invitations being of good quality. If it is just a mass email they receive, their feeling for getting approached with an invitation was not positive.

4.2.2 Evaluation process

From the interviews, common threads in the interviews evaluation process of recruitment databases were found. The majority see an invitation as something positive that shows that they have been selected and that they can gain a multitude of opportunities for their participation in the database. This is however not true if the invitation to a recruitment database has the feeling of a generic send out that has been sent out to numerous people, then the invitation could be disregarded quite quickly by all interviewees and not be seen as something flattering.

The importance of conveying professionalism and seriousness is highlighted and has been mentioned in every interview. It is of importance both in the layout of the invitation, the language used, and also the information given about the company. Information about the type of jobs offered and the partnering company has high value. If the recruitment database works and recruits for big and well-known companies it signals credibility and value for the service they offer. Success stories of hirings is also a factor that positively affects interviewees decisions regarding the recruitment database, as well as reviews made by users. It is also revealed that concerns about protection of personal data is a critical part of the evaluation

process, and it is of importance for the recruitment company to be clear and transparent in how they handle this issue, in order to build trustworthiness.

"First of all, I would check out the recruitment company and see if there are any reviews about them, and also what kind of personal data I would need to share."

Furthermore, information and understanding of the database is crucial. If the invitation provides a professional enough appearance to not be disregarded directly as a mass email, the ability to easily research more information is an important part of the evaluation process. The interviews show the weight of understanding how the database would work and what it means for the interviews if they sign up. Concerns about constant messages with irrelevant job offers or information, like commercial newsletters, were expressed.

Additionally, the current life situation affected how the relevance of the recruitment database was evaluated. If the interviewees were not actively searching jobs or happy at their current jobs their likelihood to accept an invitation was lower. Those respondents still expressed, like those actively searching for new jobs, a curiosity of seeing what is on the market and perceived being well informed of other jobs as a good opportunity. If they did not have the desire to change jobs right now it was also clear that the benefits of the recruitment database would have to be clear, beneficial and attractive for them to consider joining. More demands of a good invitation that showcase future benefits would be necessary for them to consider accepting an invitation to a recruitment database. Those actively searching jobs explained a less critical evaluation process of the recruitment database.

Current life situations in the form of family and children also affected how they evaluate the invitation and also how they would think about possible job applications that would be brought to them if they were in the database. With young children in the picture, accepting an invitation was more far-fetched due to lack of time and other priorities. When interviews talked about accepting invitations in the future, where children might be a part of the picture, they expressed the need for it to be clear that the recruitment database could be used as they want, that there is no demand if continuously being active in responding to job applications. A shift in pritiose was also noted in the interviewee's response to recruitment databases in the future. Flexibility would be a bigger factor, especially in the job applications for them to consider, due to being able to juggle work recruitments with family life. For some the benign part of the recruitment

database was not so different as it would be now compared to the future when children might be a factor. They expressed they would still want to be active and know of possibilities, but that the evaluation of the job applications would need flexibility and fit their needs.

4.2.3 Invitation

The importance of the invitation itself to the recruitment database has been clear in all of the interviews. It can determine whether the interwebs disregards the database directly or make a positive enough impact to make the interviews accept it directly or look into more information before deciding. The content and form of the invitations as the first contact between possible applicants and the recruitment company forms applicants first impressions. If the invitations are obviously generic emails and sloppy formulated with no professional appearance, all interviews showed that the invitation would be disregarded directly. Other attributes that interviewees identified as "red flags" for a recruitment database was the usage of emojis, spelling and grammatical eros, informal language, too many bright colors and no form of specific personalized invitations. These factors contribute to the feeling of the invitation being something that gets sent out to anyone, thus does not convey a feeling of professionalism and exclusiveness that is desired.

"If I had received a personal email where, for example, they refer to my skills on LinkedIn, then it would be more interesting because then I see that there is a little more thought behind it and not just trying to get as many people as possible into the database."

The interviews show that professionalism, credibility and seriousness is important for them to consider the recruitment database as a good choice. Information like big companies the recruitment database recruits for, successful hiring and a clean presentation of this information are factors that the interviews see as professional and induce a positive response. Information regarding how their database works, what it would mean for them to sign up and how the recruitment process would look is also highlighted as having a great importance.

4.2.4 Opportunities to entry

Recruitment databases are seen as a help of being matched with companies that request certain qualifications and competencies. Interviewees view this as an opportunity to find a job they would not have found themselves and be seen as proactive in the job market. Interviewees expressed that the database provides a great opportunity to match roles, candidates and firms

according to given preferences. It was also highlighted that many of the most senior roles never reach the market through job ads, instead the search and recruitment is handled through internal databases and LinkedIn, by recruitment and search firms.

"You get the opportunity to get a job that you otherwise might not have found, because it is a jungle to find a job, so of course it is positive, because then you do not have to look for it yourself."

Life situations in general and in particular if moving to another city is imminent will increase the motivation to sign up to a database of this kind. To be represented in different geographical labor markets was viewed positively and considered time saving, i.e., getting relevant job suggestions despite minimal effort.

4.2.5 Barriers to entry

Both life situations and job situations seem to be crucial for showing interest in being a part of a recruitment database. In both cases, the interviewees do not want to spend time on being a part of this kind of database if they are at the moment not interested at all in changing jobs, for example due to family situation or recently recruited, thus they are not motivated to spend the time required to sign up.

"To me it is all about life situation, for the time being I am not motivated to make any job changes, due to young children and an overall busy life."

Other barriers are GDPR concerns including; if personal data is handled according to GDPR, how the data is shared, if the candidate does have control over how data is shared, if the candidate does have influence over the account and does the recruitment firm and if the database feels secure and reliable. Getting only relevant job offers was also highlighted as important during interviews, connecting to customized and trustful communication. Getting spam as newsletters and massive amounts of irrelevant job suggestions was one concern brought up as a hinder for signing up. Interviewees stressed that the communication regarding the database must be convincing that only relevant information will be sent out to candidates.

"I have no interest in being in a database that is irrelevant, where I would receive job offers that are not relevant and interesting to me. The firm would have to convince me that this is not the case."

Change in job too often is viewed in certain sectors, particularly within law, as negative with regards to career development, which constitutes a barrier to entry. Also, the fear of not having the right keywords, for instance having extensive experience but not a master's degree and thus not receiving relevant suggestions. Also, the fear of being "forgotten" in the database due to other more relevant candidates, was expressed. Additionally, uncertainty of being qualified for the database that targets senior executives was stated. This uncertainty seems to be mitigated by personalizing invitations highlighting the recipients' competencies and skills via LinkedIn. Moreover, if the procedure to sign up is too complex and time consuming, that is also seen as a barrier to becoming a part of a recruitment database.
Knowing about the recruitment company and even better, getting recommendations from a friend or a colleague to connect to the database seem to significantly lower many of these barriers.

4.2.6 Risks

Risks that are associated with being a part of a recruitment database are a few, highlighted in the interviews.

First, the risk that the current employer, via HR department's search, finds out that an employee is in the database, i.e., open for recruitment, can lead to uncomfortable internal discussions, mistrust and even worsened career opportunities within the current organization. Many interviewees view this risk as rather low, and discussed that many people are part of a recruiting database without having any intentions of leaving their current position, however, if the employer is a customer to that specific recruiting firm and have access to profiles in the database this can result in problems for the employee being represented in the database.

Second, how the company is handling the data with regards to GDPR, since it contains sensitive personal data as compensation expectations etc., were brought up as a severe factor of risk among the majority of the interviewees. Data leakage is one risk that is highly considered and without any doubt the most common concern among the interviewees.

"One risk is if the information in the database would be hacked and that the information would get spread through data leakage, that would not be good."

Third, anonymity is considered important and that you can decide yourself if you would like to be an active or passive member, where you can choose, i.e., control, if you are open for new recruitment or not. Additionally, the interviewees thought that being recommended by a friend or colleague to connect to the recruitment database would decrease their risk perceived connected to recruitment databases.

"I might have talked with my colleagues and friends and asked if they knew about this database before I signed up. If more people than me knew about it and recommended it, then I would feel safer signing up."

5. Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether the lower adoption rate of recruitment opportunities for higher managerial positions for women is prominent and by how much, compared to men. The findings in the quantitative data analysis reveal that the recruitment database consists of a major part of men (61.9%), compared to women (31.7%). Invitation rate is significantly higher for men (8.41%), in comparison to women (5.62%).

Regarding the age distribution, in percentage share, the proportion of women aged 30-35 years to 46-50 years is larger than the proportion of men in these ages. After the age group 46-50 years, there is a larger proportion of men compared to women. Furthermore, there is no connection identified between women's childbearing age and lower participation in the recruitment database.

Average expected monthly compensation, in the database, is for women 130 284 SEK per month and for men 136 147 SEK per month, including perks and bonuses, which entail a difference of 4.5% between the genders, to the men's advantage. This difference is significantly lower compared to the general wage difference of 20.1% in Sweden, between genders, to the men's advantage. This result can be explained by the fact that the database is a relatively small sample of high-income earners and is not fully representative for the entire population in that sense. Moreover, the compensation difference in the database can be explained by the men's

higher level of experience and men's higher average age which may justify the gender differences in compensation. Furthermore, the compensation in the database is the expected compensation stated by candidates, not the actual compensation, which must be taken into consideration.

The differences found in aspects of sectors, functions, responsibility level, experience and values were not as great as the authors may have expected due to historical perspective and gender differences. However, it is important to note that the database is a small sample of the entire population and might not reflect all differences that could be found. Also, since the recruitment company had an increased focus of inviting women to the database the amount of men invited was still larger, which could indicate that there are fewer women in the labor force with regards to executive positions which are targeted in this database.

Secondly, the purpose of this thesis was to explore what factors may affect and explain women's decision regarding accepting or declining invitations to recruitment databases. The qualitative data, conducted by in depth-interviews, sought to answer this research question. In the interviews the following themes to explain women's choices were identified; reach, evaluation process, invitation, opportunities of entry, barrier of entry and risks. Regarding reach it was found that only 2 out of 11 of the interviewees had been invited to a recruitment database and accepted the invitation. Due to small sample size this result contains a factor of uncertainty. The evaluation process of accepting an invite to a recruitment database differs among the interviewees due to life situation, job situation, data protection concerns and background research of the recruitment firm. Reliability, credibility, professionalism, personal and customized are components that seem to be important with regards to the invitation. Interviewees mentioned that the opportunities to enter a recruitment database are foremost getting job suggestions they otherwise should have missed, getting an opportunity to be represented in many geographical labor markets, time saving due to small effort and being proactive in the job search process. Highlighted barriers to entry were life situations, such as having young children, job situations, such as being newly recruited, fear of not being qualified, belief of not being matched due to preferences, GDPR concerns or if the process of signing up is too complex and time consuming.

Risks identified in the interviews are foremost GDPR concerns such as data leakage and how the data is used, worsened career development due to the current employer getting matched

with a candidate already employed and getting irrelevant job suggestions or promotions. Being recommended by a colleague or friend seems to mitigate these risks mentioned.

5.1 Theoretical implications

To the authors' knowledge no extensive research has been done regarding women's attitudes and decision process towards recruitment databases. Rather, research has been done on traditional recruitment processes and job applications. Thus, the findings regarding barriers for women's entry to recruitment databases sheds light over barriers taking place even before a formal recruitment process begins and therefore contributes a new aspect to recruitment research.

The findings in the quantitative study with regards to gender representation, age distribution, differences in salary, level of seniority and responsibility between men and women are supported by the theories connected to historical perspective. The differences identified can be explained by the historical perspective, due to women historically not having held senior managerial positions to a large extent (Wikander, 2009), stereotypes (Rudman & Glick, 2001), lack of role models (Basoc & Howe, 1979), advancement blocks such as glass ceilings (Singh, 2007) are possible explanations of the fact that the women still are underrepresented in senior leadership positions (World Economic Forum, 2023) and thus also underrepresented in this recruitment database which targets executive recruitment. Other explanations could be that women seem to have a lower risk willingness compared to men when it comes to financial decisions (Alam et al., 2022) which can be applied in a recruitment context where a change in jobs sometimes can be viewed as financial risk increasing. Furthermore, compared to men, women seem to have a higher number of life goals, place less value on power related goals and associate more negative outcomes, such as trade-offs and goal conflict, with high power positions (Gino et al., 2015), which can also be an explanation of the lower female participation in the database. Also, since women generally have a disproportionate responsibility for domestic work and childcare (Gunter & Stambach, 2005) the importance of work-life balance is another factor that can explain the female underrepresentation in senior management positions. However, there is no connection identified between women's childbearing age and lower participation in the recruitment database, which could indicate that theory demonstrating the opposite is not general.

The gender differences in wage *expectations* in the database is lower for women, compared to men, which could foremost be explained by men´s higher level of experience and higher average age in the database. However, according to Statistiska Centralbyrån (2024), wage inequality still is an issue in society today, where women earn less than men for the same work performed. The problem can be explained mainly from the historical perspective where it was seen almost as a law of nature that women should obtain a lower compensation, compared to men (Wikander, 2009). Furthermore, it can also be explained by wage negotiation strategies, where men seem to be more skilled, compared to women (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). Moreover, women seem to have less belief in their abilities, compared to men, referring to research that indicates that women often fill 100% of the job criteria while men fill 60% of them before applying for a job (Desvaux et al., 2008). Connecting to the interviews showing that women wanted to know if they were qualified for the database and that they are suited for the job suggestions provided.

Regarding the qualitative study including in-depth interviews it was found that reliability, credibility, professionalism, personal and customized are components that seem to be important with regards to the invitation. Connecting to research on differences in gender when it comes to communication (Gaucher, 2011), it is important to be aware of how tonality and choice of words can affect how women perceive the invitation and thus accept it or not.

Highlighted barriers to entry were life situations, such as having young children, job situations, such as being newly recruited, not being qualified, not being matched due to preferences, GDPR concerns or if the process of signing up is too complex and time consuming. This connects to both women's lower risk willingness (Alam et al., 2022) and multiple life goals (Gino et al., 2015), compared to men. In addition, women's disproportionate responsibility for domestic work and childcare (Gunter & Stambach, 2005) i.e., work-life balance and thus women are only willing to change jobs when the life situation allows, might contribute to this result.

Being recommended by a colleague or friend seems to mitigate these risks mentioned, which connect to the research on women's relatively lower presence in informal networks (Burke et al., 1995) where components important for a successful career, such as information, knowledge, support and advice is spread among the participants (Ibid). Moreover, many interviewees mentioned that they have never talked about recruitment databases before,

expressing that it would improve their attitudes if someone they know or trust has been part of a recruitment database and thus indirectly confirmed its trustworthiness. This result connects to the theories which support the importance of network (Burke et al., 1995) and role models (Basoc & Howe, 1979) and how this positively can affect the evaluation process with regards to recruiting databases. These factors can explain parts of the lower female representation in the database as well as the lower invitation acceptance rate, compared to men.

5.2 Managerial implications

Based on this study several managerial implications can be drawn. First, it could be suggested to do a screening of the invitation due to the awareness of the differences in how tonality and choice of words can affect how women perceive invitations to recruitment databases and thus accept or decline the invitation. To increase the chances of having women signing up it is of importance to mitigate risks perceived by women, for example GDPR concerns, by communicating in a trustworthy way transparently informing about data protection and other possible concerns proactively. A personal follow up activity, such as a telephone call, after an invitation has been sent seems to increase the level of credibility and trustworthiness and thus increase the chance to have the invited person signing up for the service.

Moreover, it is suggested to communicate success stories and references in terms of partnering companies/customers to build trust and credibility. The sign-up process is recommended to be easy and not too time consuming, in order to optimize the number of invites converted to candidates in the database. Also, it could be stressed that the algorithm must be developed enough to ensure that only relevant job suggestions will be sent to candidates, and that assurance can also be an advantage to highlight in the invitation.

Requesting existing female candidates to recommend the recruitment database could spread the awareness of the recruitment database and thus lower the perceived risk of joining an unfamiliar service can be a successful way to increase the female representation in the database.

5.3 Limitations

Although this study provides valuable insights, it is important to recognize its limitations and evaluate other aspects that influence the adoption rate of recruitment opportunities for higher managerial positions for women, with regards to recruitment databases. Regarding the quantitative study, the analysis has only been based on one database from one recruitment company that mainly operates in Sweden. Given additional time, multiple quantitative analysis

of different recruitment databases could be done to gain further insights and to a greater extent confirm the spread of this phenomenon. Additionally, regarding the quantitative data are the small sample groups. Even though the entire database consisted of over 11 000 individuals, the sample groups when categorizing the data did get significantly smaller. This is due partly to some respondent getting sorted away which is natural when grouping the data. But this happened mainly because not all individuals in the database filled in all the information columns. Thus, causing a large amount of missing data when looking at certain data aspects, which lessens the strength and credibility of the insights gathered.

Furthermore, the qualitative data also offers its limitations. The interviews were conducted on a rather small sample, this could be increased to provide further strengthened answers. Additionally, the interviews could be conducted on a more widespread sample, including more different age groups and job sectors to show the extent and universality of the answers gathered. All the interviews could also with less time constraint be longer to gain even deeper understanding of women's reasonings regarding recruitment databases and what might solve their hesitations. Furthermore, interviewing men as well could provide insights into the specific differences between men and women and showcase how recruitment database invitations might be more adapted to men rather than women.

Furthermore, an experimental component could be added to the interviews, where the interview gets presented with various construction invitations to the recruitment database, to judge which attributes of an invitations generate which response.

Lastly, it is important to note that the database is a small sample of the entire population and might not reflect all differences that could be found. Also, the recruitment company indicated that they have had an increased focus of inviting women to the database the past year, the amount of men invited was still larger, which could indicate that there are fewer women in the labor force with regards to executive positions which are targeted in this database.

5.4 Future research

For future research, the authors would encourage researchers to expand and elaborate the work of this thesis. By examining multiple recruitment databases, findings from this thesis can be determined and more support conclusions can be drawn. Conducting a larger amount of interviews that encompasses a larger span of ages, job sectors and countries will also provide more support for this thesis finding. It could also yield differences and more nuance that affect

women's decision making that could provide more detailed solutions on how to increase women's participation in recruitment databases. Thus, also promote a more equal recruitment process and equal opportunities for women to advance in the workforce.

Furthermore, the authors would implore the importance of looking further into the algorithm function in recruitment databases. The interviews yield that a major concern for women regarding recruitment databases is whether the database itself and its algorithm is well functioning enough to provide accurate and relevant job matches. To look further into how such algorithms can produce the most desired results from women could be of great importance for recruitment databases to alter their offerings.

Additionally, the authors found the construction of the invitation itself to recruitment databases held great importance for women's decisions regarding recruitment databases and could cause them to disregard the database completely and quite quickly. Further research on how the ideal invitation would be, both with regards to gender differences and with the purpose to mitigate risk and build trust, is recommended. Moreover, a subject for future research is gender differences regarding risk willingness in a recruitment setting. As the findings reveal, risk is a crucial part of the evaluation process among women for accepting or declining an invitation to a recruitment database, and getting further insights into this subject would be considered valuable.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has in addition to gaining a deeper understanding of how the phenomenon of fewer women in recruitment databases expresses itself, found several aspects and factors that affect women's decision regarding accepting or declining invitations to recruitment databases. The authors have identified how life situations and the invitation itself can act as a barrier but also as an incentive for acceptance. Furthermore, the thesis has shown some of women's main motivators for accepting and what they would value in service provided by recruitment databases. It has further shown some of the main barriers and obstacles for recruitment companies to overcome to increase the adoption rate of women for recruitment databases. It is the author's belief that these findings will aid not only researchers but also recruitment services to work towards a more equally beneficial recruitment process that in turn will create a more equal and diversified business world.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Kvale's nine type of questions

1. Introducing questions: 'Please tell me about when your interest in X first began?'; 'Have you ever . . .?'; 'Why did you go to . . .?'
2. Follow-up questions: getting the interviewee to elaborate his/her answer, such as 'Could you say some more about that?'; 'What do you mean by that . . .?'; even 'Yeeees?'
3. Probing questions: following up what has been said through direct questioning.
4. Specifying questions: 'What did you do then?'; 'How did X react to what you said?'
5. Direct questions: 'Do you find it easy to keep smil- ing when serving customers?'; 'Are you happy with the way you and your husband decide how money should be spent?' Such questions are perhaps best left until towards the end of the interview, in order not to influence the direction of the interview too much.
6. Indirect questions: 'What do most people round here think of the ways that management treats its staff?', perhaps followed up by 'Is that the way you feel too?', in order to get at the individual's own view.
7. Structuring questions: 'I would now like to move on to a different topic'.
8. Silence: allow pauses to signal that you want to give the interviewee the opportunity to reflect and amplify an answer.
9. Interpreting questions: 'Do you mean that your leadership role has had to change from one of encouraging others to a more directive one?'; 'Is it fair to say that what you are suggesting is that you don't mind being friendly towards customers most of the time, but when they are unpleasant or demanding you find it more difficult?' (Kvale, 1996)

8.2 Kvale's ten criteria

1. Knowledgeable: is thoroughly familiar with the focus of the interview; pilot interviews of the kind used in survey interviewing can be useful here.
2. Structuring: gives purpose for interview; rounds it off; asks whether interviewee has questions.
3. Clear: asks simple, easy, short questions; no jargon.
4. Gentle: lets people finish; gives them time to think; tolerates pauses.
5. Sensitive: listens attentively to what is said and how it is said; is empathetic in dealing with the interviewee.
6. Open: responds to what is important to interviewee and is flexible.
7. Steering: knows what he/she wants to find out.
8. Critical: is prepared to challenge what is said, for example, dealing with inconsistencies in interviewees' replies.
9. Remembering: relates what is said to what has previously been said.
10. Interpreting: clarifies and extends meanings of inter- viewees' statements, but without imposing meaning on them. (Kvale, 1996)

Kvale's nine types of questions are as follows.
• Introducing questions: 'Please tell me about when your interest in X first began?'; 'Have you ever . . .?'; 'Why did you go to . . .?' .
• Follow-up questions: getting the interviewee to elaborate his/her answer, such as 'Could you say some more about that?'; 'What do you mean by that . . .?'; even 'Yeeees?'
• Probing questions: following up what has been said through direct questioning.
• Specifying questions: 'What did you do then?'; 'How did X react to what you said?'
• Direct questions: 'Do you find it easy to keep smil- ing when serving customers?'; 'Are you happy with the way you and your husband decide how money should be spent?' Such questions are perhaps best left until towards the end of the interview, in order not to influence the direction of the interview too much.
• Indirect questions: 'What do most people round here think of the ways that management treats its staff?', perhaps followed up by 'Is that the way you feel too?', in order to get at the individual's own view.
• Structuring questions: 'I would now like to move on to a different topic'.
• Silence: allow pauses to signal that you want to give the interviewee the opportunity to reflect and amplify an answer.
• Interpreting questions: 'Do you mean that your leadership role has had to change from one of encouraging others to a more directive one?'; 'Is it fair to say that what you are suggesting is that you don't mind being friendly towards customers most of the time, but when they are unpleasant or demanding you find it more difficult?' (Kvale, 1996)

8.3 Interview questions

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your current job sector and position?
4. How many years have you been working?
5. Have you ever gotten an invite to be a part of a recruitment database, for higher positions or otherwise?
6. How did/how would your thought process go when receiving such an invite?
7. How would you perceive a recruitment invitation?
8. What would make you interested in being part of a recruitment database?
9. If the database was focused on recruitment for higher positions, would that have a higher, lower or the same level of attractiveness as a database for any job?
10. Would how you get invited to be a part of a database affect how you think about the invitation? How?
11. What would be better ways to present an offer to be a part of a recruitment database for you?
12. If you imagine getting asked to be part of a higher position recruitment database 5-10 years in the future, how would your thought process be then? Would there be differences?
13. What advantages and/or disadvantages do you see with being part of a recruitment database?

14. If you accepted an invitation to a recruitment database now, how would that affect your current job?
15. How would there be any effects?
16. If you receive an invitation to be part of a recruitment database, do you see it as something positive or negative? Why?
17. If negative; how could the invite or company change their approach or communication channels to make your impression more positive?
18. If you have gotten an invite, do you generally disregard it or accept it directly, or do you try to find out more about the company before you make your decision?
19. Have you ever discussed recruitment databases with friends, family or colleagues?

8.4 Interview information

Number	Interviewee (gender, age)	Sector	Date	Setting	Length	Recorded
1	Female, 29	Business Law	2024-04-27	Online	39:01	Yes
2	Female, 45	HR	2024-04-24	Online	28:13	Yes
3	Female, 34	Construction	2024-04-23	Online	32:24	Yes
4	Female, 28	Finance	2024-04-23	Online	31:20	Yes
5	Female, 29	HR	2024-04-24	Online	30:45	Yes
6	Female, 29	FinTech	2024-04-24	Online	32:07	Yes
7	Female, 29	Corporate Law	2024-04-25	Online	29:01	Yes
8	Female, 29	Master student	2024-05-25	Online	32:33	Yes
9	Female, 28	Private Equity	2024-04-25	Online	31:17	Yes
10	Female, 29	Business Law	2024-04-26	Online	30:09	Yes
11	Female, 30	Tax Law	2024-04-26	Online	27:32	Yes

8.5 AI tools

According to Stockholm School of Economics' guidelines for students on use of GenAI in thesis writing 2024, we would like to state that we have not been using any AI tools when writing this thesis.