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TITLE:

Exploring leadership behavior in support of gender diversity as a competitive advantage: A case study on Nordic service industry

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This thesis was written as the final work of the Master's program of Service Leadership in International Business, at University of Stavanger. The opportunity to explore such an under-researched phenomenon of leadership theory and practice has motivated us to devote ourselves to this research. After analyzing the leadership ontology: tripod, DAC and PAC, we see further questions of this ontology need to be explored. This thesis would not have been possible without the contributions of the respondents who took time out of their busy and irregular workdays during these busy summer times. We would also like to express our most profound appreciation to our supervisor, professor Rune Todnem By, who has advised and challenged us in this process when needed.

Stavanger, August 15, 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dissertation explores the leadership behavior and perspective through leadership ontologies that support gender diversity to gain competitive advantage. The present and past literature on diversity leadership is focused more on identifying to "fix" diversity with the end goal of improving the KPI of the organization. Only a few studies have demonstrated the leadership behaviors to embrace diversity as a strength, a source of value, and a competitive advantage. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap in the literature, as it focuses on the leadership perceptions to get meaningful progress in the corporate gender diversity programs.

The research questions then become:

Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?

A study aimed to answer this question and look at all three leadership ontologies: tripod ontology, DAC, and PAC, and how they would function in the Nordic hotel and IT service sectors. Empirical data was collected through interviews of employees in the formal and informal leadership positions in 2 hotels and 1 IT company.

This dissertation has the world view of interpretivism, and the analysis is qualitative content analysis. And the data reveals that there are six main themes of relevance to the problem question. The findings suggest that tripod ontology, where leadership influences most of its integration and expects followers and shared goals to follow, has adverse effects on gender diversity in the hotel and IT industry. DAC ontology which focuses on collective interest, coordination of knowledge and works and has a widespread agreement on the overall goals, mission, and vision, has limited practice. Still, it can diversely affect the integration of gender diversity in both industries. PAC ontology which defines leadership as a collective pursuit of delivering on purpose, not a privilege of the few, has a mixed findings in this research. In the hotel sector, leaders tried to implement gender equality within their organization in a way that hasn't had known to have a business value, on the other hand, the IT sector has an excellent potential to implement PAC to integrate gender.

This dissertation is based on a paradigm that allows for consistent re-evaluation of the problem question. However, the main recommendation is to develop the problem question early and review the literature at a stage where one can utilize the literature to form a problem question. In addition, this dissertation recommends the careful use of leadership definitions. Because there are so much disagreement and vagueness among scholars in this field, this

thesis also suggests combining leadership studies with quantifiable data besides qualitative data.

TABLE OF CONTENT

List of Figures and Tables

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Introduction

Diversity and inclusion are essential social issues in our world today. The efforts to improve diversity and address racial inequality have profoundly affected the workplace. Basuil (2019) mentioned how a gender-diverse workforce is linked to superior innovation and financial performance outcomes. Zhang (2020) opines that the more gender-diverse a workplace is, the higher the experience of positive market variation and increased revenue. This leads to the question of diversity and inclusion (D& I). Ely and Thomas (2001) defined diversity as a characteristic of a group of two or more people considered to be a demographic difference among other groups and focus on factors such as age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, education, and work status. Merriam Webster (n.d) provides two essential meanings of diversity; 1) The quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas, etc. 2) The state of having people who are of different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization.

Gender inequality and women empowerment are on a high political agenda globally, as one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 (SDG no. 5). Ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making has intersection across multiple SDGs which accentuates the catalyzing role of gender equality and diversity toward achieving progress at all levels, interpersonal, institutional, societal, national, and global (Manandhar, Hawkes, Buse, Nosrati, & Magar, 2018). Previous research has helped us to understand the various structures, attitudes, and biases that systematically reduces the importance of women and people of other sexual orientation in workplace environments (Eagly, Carli, & Carli, 2007; Graves & Powell, 2007). But there remains a question of the notion of responsibility. In other words, when an individual or an organization decides to address the underrepresentation of specific gender, their behaviors, attitudes, and belief systems are perceived to be changed to achieve gender equity.

The previous empirical studies (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Pitts, 2009) do not distinguish between the effects of organization-wide diversity policies and the impact of leadership behaviors that play a strategic role in cultivating an inclusive organizational culture. But leaders' beliefs and experiences also seem to play an essential role in implementing diversity efforts (Stevens,

Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008) to make changes in the workplace. Therefore, this research aims to explore the leadership perceptions and behaviors on gender diversity within the Nordic service industry to make meaningful progress in corporate gender diversity programs.

1.2. Research Question

The focus of this study is to examine further the leadership behavior toward a globalized and diverse workplace and determine possible alternatives to policies, procedures, and practices within gender diversity management in the business. Despite the effort that companies have put into gender diversity, they are still not making faster progress. Pollmann-Larsen et al. (2021) mentioned homogeneity among leaders is a vital part of the problem at lower levels of companies. The data shows that most company leaders- primarily white, heterosexual males- still underestimate diverse employees' challenges. These leaders control budgets and decide on diversity programs to pursue. But if there is a lack of clear understanding of the problem, effective solutions can't be designed. This led to the following question to address the flawed approach of leaders regarding gender diversity:

Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?

The prevalent diversified workplace continuously embraces the issue of gender diversity within businesses. That leadership is vital in making personal and institutional changes to achieve gender equity. Although leadership theories have significantly evolved to reflect changing social contexts, there is a lack of research on issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion viewed through the lenses of leadership ontology. The disagreement, different frameworks, and confusion on an ontological level fuel thought about leadership. Therefore, the objective of this study is to answer the research questions through the analysis of qualitative data.

1.3 Background of Choice

The Nordic countries are typically viewed as diversity pioneers globally. But that is not the case anymore. If we start by taking the gender perspective, the Nordic countries are being outpaced globally on female leadership share, and females are far from the business-critical decision-making. For example, World Economic Forum (2020) showed that Nordics were outpaced on women's participation in leadership, especially in Norway, as the rank declined over the last 10 to 15 years. In 2006, Norway and Sweden shared a rank of 36[th,] but in 2020 only Sweden ranked top 50 in the world, and Finland, Norway, and Denmark have declined

in rank which is 51, 68, and 101, respectively (Figure 1).
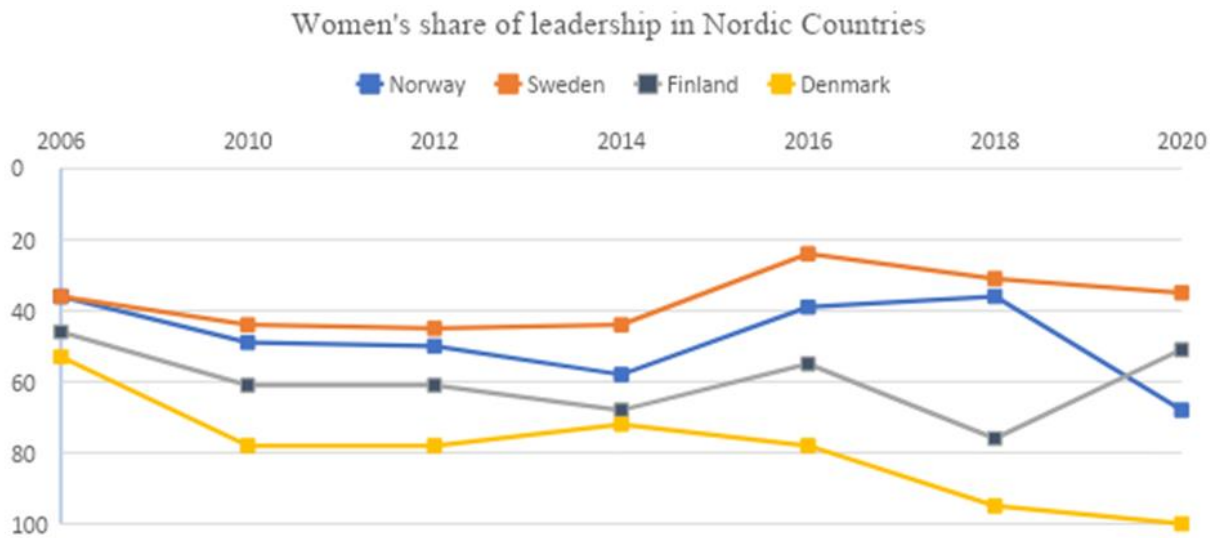
Figure 1. World Economic Forum: The Global Gender Gap reports 2020

Moreover, the gap between women and men in the tendency to seek career advancement is much more significant in the Nordics than on a global level among younger generations. Interestingly, the gap between men and women is as large as 24 percentage points for young people in the Nordics, whereas it never exceeds six percentage points globally (Figure 2).
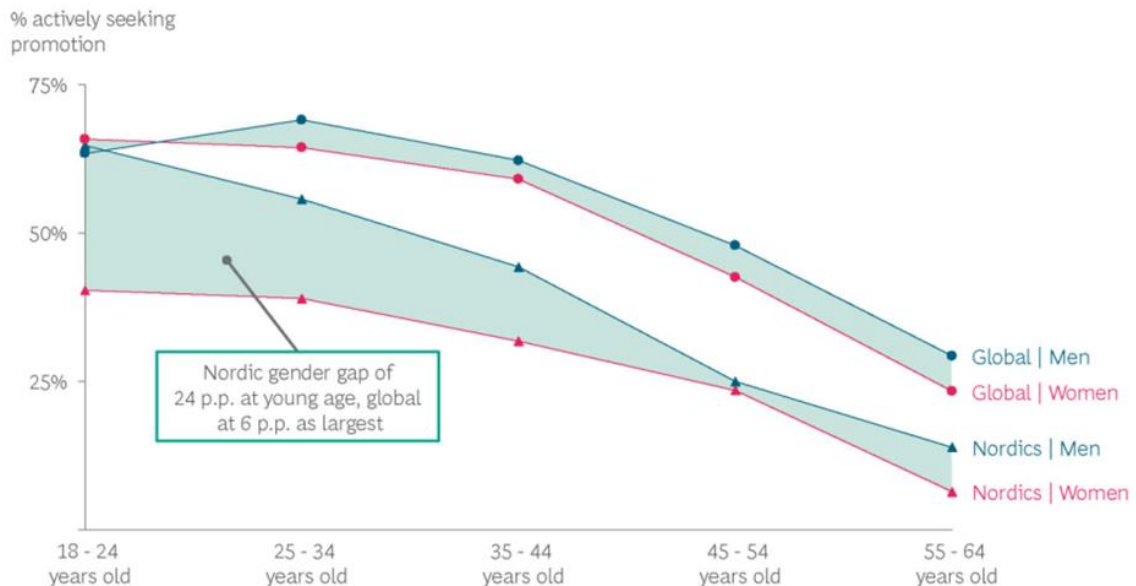
Figure 2. BCG global diversity survey 2020

In addition, the coronavirus pandemic can be viewed as hindering D&I in the Nordics, as women have been affected more than men in terms of job losses. Pollmann-Larsen et al.

(2021) showed that, in the first and second waves of COVID-19, the percentage of job loss was significantly higher for women than for men in all four countries: between 1% and 4% for women and between 0.5% and 2.5% for men.

These discrepancies raise the question of whether Nordic companies could enhance their competitiveness in global markets by securing more robust diversity and inclusion representation on their executive teams. The main challenge is that many companies and organizations focus on 'fixing the problem' instead of leveraging diversity to capture business value. Only 11% of the public diversity approaches for the top 30 Nordic companies have a clear focus on value creation from diversity with tangible initiatives in place. Companies deprioritize efforts as they don't understand the underlying business case for investing in diversity. Drawing the picture of the current diversity and inclusion scenario, this study thinks it's high time for leaders to uncover the blind spot related to gender diversity and rethink their role and principles because diversity should not be only an HR topic. The core business must be in the driver's seat as diversity should be the whole group's priority, not only HR.

Therefore, the focus of the thesis will be to examine the leadership perspective toward a globalized and diverse workplace and determine which leadership ontology best fits the service industry to achieve gender diversity. This led to the following question to address the flawed approach of leaders regarding gender diversity:

Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?

1.4. Structure of Thesis

	Description	**Where**
Research Questions	Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?	Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter Chapter 4 Findings& discussions Chapter 5 Conclusions & Recommendations
Aim	To explore and provide expert advice in the areas to practitioners.	Chapter 5

		Conclusions & Recommendations
Objective 1	The first chapter of the thesis deals with the research questions and problem statement for the research.	Chapter 1 Introduction chapter
Objective 2	Current theoretical perspectives and previous research will be reviewed here.	Chapter 2 Literature review
Objective 3	Chapter three will cover the methods used and how data is collected and processed.	Chapter 3 Methodology
Objective 4	Critical analysis and discussion of research findings will be presented and discussed.	Chapter 4 Findings & discussions
Objective 5	The most important research findings will be summarized, and the main problem described will be answered.	Chapter 5
	A list of recommendations will be presented for students and practitioners.	Chapter 6

Table 1.1. Structure of Thesis

1.5. Summary of Introduction

The introduction chapter oversees the background of this study, the issue that needs to be investigated, and why the field is necessary to be studied for additional research. Furthermore, the definitions from different scholars of diversity have been presented. In addition, the research question is also offered based on the study focus and the background of additional relevant information. Through the theoretical frameworks and primary research through semi-structured interviews, this study aims to explore the leadership perceptions and behaviors to support gender diversity within the Nordic service industry to achieve a competitive advantage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide a critical review of gender diversity management through the lenses of leadership perception in support of the research question "Exploring leadership perception in support of gender diversity as a competitive advantage: A case study on the Nordic service industry." This dissertation has a modern view on leadership, defining leadership as a "process producing purpose" (By, 2021). Leadership is, therefore, considered a

collective process guided by the internal good of delivering on purpose (By, 2021). The chapter starts by exploring the issues of gender diversity and its competitive advantage in the workplace, then connecting gender diversity to leadership, and finally describing the related theories and existing literature.

2.2 Gender Diversity

Gender diversity is known as commonly distinct for women that are the object of diversity and inclusion (D & I) from the "male-dominated industries and occupations" (Catalyst, 2020). However, the D & I in these industries are often confronted with challenging situations for women, such as sexual harassment (Pitot et al., 2022), lack of mentoring and career development (H. S. Chen, Severt, Shin, & DiPietro, 2021), and compensation inequality (Owen & Temesvary, 2019).

Gender diversity has been defined by different scholars and organizations in different ways but shares a common connotation. The American Psychiatric Association (2015) described gender diversity as:

> *"... refers to the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex. This term is becoming more popular to describe people without reference to a particular cultural norm, in a manner that is more affirming and potentially less stigmatizing than gender nonconformity."*

While Nanda (2014) referred to it as

> *"... the social, cultural, and psychological construction that imposed on the biological differences of sexual orientations. Gender diversity extent its definition through gender identity, which refers to a person's deeply felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or an alternative gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender non-conforming, boy-girl, ladyboy)."*

These definitions may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics. Since gender identity is internal, a person's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. Gender identity refers to the deeply-held inner feeling of whether a male or female, both, or neither. Others don't see the gender identity; it may be the same-sex assigned at birth (cisgender) or not (transgender), and some have a

gender identity that doesn't fit into one of the common genders (Diversity and Inclusion, 2020). 'Affirmed gender identity refers to a person's gender identity after coming out as transgender or gender non-conforming or undergoing a social and medical transition process (American Psychiatric Association, 2015). Thus, these definitions omitted the belief that D & I on gender diversity are solitary distinct with the women as the minority and object of D & I. This does not enclose the probability of having men and other gender/s as a minority of D & I in gender diversity. Everyone can be an object of D & I in any part of society regarding gender identity; the International Labour Organization (2020) also recorded women-dominated industries that 'might' have a problem having men or another gender within these industries. As being said, men are known to be more favored in the issue of gender diversity; 90% of people shown in a study are proven to be biased against women, including women per se (BBC, 2020). However, there are proven results of the belief that 'this is a man's world' (Born, Ranehill, & Sandberg, 2019; Williams, 1995), dominating even the women-dominated industries (J. Chen, n.d.).

Gender inequality and women empowerment are high on the political agenda globally, being one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 (SDG no. 5). The relationship of gender (SDG5 and in particular to SDG5.5 "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making") has intersection across multiple SDGs, such as SDG 8 (gender and the health workforce, formal and informal, decent work, fair employment), SDG4 (education), SDG16 and 17 (governance) and SDG1, 8 and 9 (macroeconomic policies), accentuate the catalyzing role of gender equality and diversity toward achieving progress at all levels, interpersonal, institutional, societal, national, and global (Manandhar et al., 2018).

Norway is known to be one of the most gender-equal countries in the world; the Institute for Social Research (2021) shows how Norway still has systematic differences that affect the opportunities available to men and women in society. The study shows that "women's hourly wages are 89 kroner for every 100 kroner men earn", "23.5 percent of female pensioners receive the minimum pension while the number of men is 4.2 percent", "14 percent of CEOs in the country's largest companies are women", and "40 percent of representatives on municipal councils in the country are women".

2.2.1. The Competitive Advantage of Gender Diversity in the Workplace

As introduced in the subsequent literature, the effect of men-dominated industries (Catalyst, 2020)0) and women-dominated industries (International Labour Organization, 2020) creates a gap between genders and industries per se. Gender diversity often creates a glass ceiling as employees suffer from this issue and some of these workers usually wait longer to succeed due to their gender identity (Wilson, 2021). It is also known that gender-diverse industries risk women missing out on future jobs through the digital revolution, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Bello, Blowers, Schneegans, & Straza, 2021). Reviews showed a positive impact of being a gender-diverse organization (Zhang, 2020).

Wilson (2021) believes that a productive working environment requires an equal ratio between the genders. According to her, a good gender-balanced improves the stock values and profitability. While to Basuil (2019), a gender-diverse workforce is linked to superior outcomes in innovation and financial performance, and employers have plenty of incentives to use every strategic tool to attract and retain women in their workforce.

Gender-diverse workplaces depend on the acceptance of the industry or country they operate in, says Zhang (2020). Adding that to these countries and industries, the more gender-diverse a workplace is, the higher experience of positive market variation and increased revenue. The study of gender-diverse versus male-dominated workforce provides findings that will change the perspective of industries with single-gender dominated industries. Force with unbalanced (lower percentages of women) gender has low performance and low profit than workforce with balanced gender diversity. The increase of women in the workplace relatively increases yield in a business (Hoogendoorn, Oosterbeek, & Van Praag, 2013).

2.3 Leadership

"Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns, 1978, p. 2). Burns (1978) sheds light on the challenge of leadership theory with this statement. Rost (1991) chastised past and present researchers for the theoretical fuzziness and absence of meaningful definitions in their attempt to understand the concept of leadership as he claims, "The process of leadership, the understanding of leadership as a relationship, the connection among leaders and followers- all these are far down from the list of priorities that scholars and practitioner must have to understand how to put leadership in work (Joseph Clarence Rost, 1991, p. 4). In a similar vein, Barker (1997) also presents cases with

leadership studies where scholars who discuss leadership just accepted the practice, not defined it. He stated, "The influence of the feudal paradigm of leadership is so compelling that many authors feel no need to define the term *leadership"* (Barker, 1997, p. 346). However, some theorists have made up their definitions of the term. Bennis (2007) expressed the dominant leadership ontology, "leadership is grounded in a relationship. In its simple form, it is a tripod- a leader or leaders, followers, and the common goal they want to achieve. None of these three elements can survive without the others". Though this cannot be considered a definition, it might be seen as a basis of the term. Rost (1991) summarized the twentieth-century leadership paradigm: "Leadership is great men and women with certain preferred traits influencing followers to do what the leaders wish to achieve group/organizational goals that reflect excellence defined as some kind of higher-level effectiveness." Elmore et al. (1989) came up with a similar synthesis in this statement, "Leadership is again defined as having a vision, or agenda of one's own, coupled with the ability to articulate one's message, gain support through transactional means, and bring one's own goals to fruition." Most of the theories of leadership were conceptualized as a synonym for management which is reflected in the statement of Rost (1991) "In large part, there has been very little difference between our concepts, models, and practices of management development and those of leadership development" (Rost, 1991, p. 98).

A closer look at the literature on leadership studies of the 20th century reveals leadership as good management. It has emphasized personality and characteristics, traits, styles, desired leader behaviors, skills, and competencies. Moreover, "Leadership has been understood as being that which the leader does" (Rost, 1991, p. 97). Subsequently, the problem of "equating leadership with the leader" and "confusing leadership with good management" has required reconstructing the definition of leadership. Therefore, Rost (1993) attempted to define leadership as:

> "…an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." (Rost, 1993, p. 99)

Barker (1997) considered leadership as a non-supervisory relation characterized by the words "dynamic" and "mutual" while interpreting the definition of Rost (1993) as: "Leadership is a dynamic social and political relationship that is based on a mutual development of purposes which may never be realized" (Barker, 1997, p. 351). Burns (1978) also focused on the relationship aspect of leadership by distinguishing leadership from leaders and defined leadership as: "the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and

16

values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 425). The idea of leadership as a relationship in the post-industrial paradigm has shifted from the attempt to focus on individuals in the industrial paradigm. However, most studies have focused on leaders with little attention to followers. Still, the shared goal, the third element of the tripod, has received the least attention, such as the nature of the purpose, how it emerged and how to achieve them (Drath et al., 2008).

2.3.1 Limitation of the Traditional Leadership Ontology

Drath et al. (2008) emphasized the limitation of the traditional leadership ontology when it comes to developing leadership theory. The development of leadership theory requires equal action in the leadership ontology because of the emerging leadership theory areas: shared and distributed leadership, application of complexity science, and relational approaches (Drath et al., 2008, p. 639). The concept of shared leadership does not fit with the formal roles of the tripod- leaders and followers. Shared leadership is dependent on lateral influence among peers. Such force takes place in teams in two ways- either through the practice of the traditional vertical leader or through the source of the group itself (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003).

Moreover, as the team is one of the primary sources of influence, there is an inter-relating system of individuals as an origin of leadership because it takes both leaders and interaction within the group to create leadership influence. Drath et al. (2008) point out that shared leadership in this context means a social process of interactive and collective impact, and leadership is not passed on between the individuals. Therefore, the notion of shared leadership eliminates the tripod's leader-follower distinction, and there is a need for a new ontology that includes both vertical and shared leadership (Drath et al., 2008).

 In addition to the shared and distributed leadership theory, the relational theory also challenged the completeness and usefulness of the tripod ontology (Uhl-Bien, 2006) As a general conceptual scheme, the relational theory elucidates that meaning creation is essential for leadership and is continuously made, maintained, and negotiated over time in the context of ongoing organizational relationships. The ontological suggestion of such a general conceptual scheme is that the meaning of leader, followers and shared goals is not fixed. The definition is constantly being framed and reframed both contextually and periodically (Drath

et al., 2008). Suppose the meaning of leadership entities significantly depends on the context of ongoing relationships. In that case, the tripod ontology is put in doubt from the perspective of relational theory as to its validity and usefulness in continuous meaning-making for leadership theory and practice (Oral, 2019).

2.3.2 Towards an Alternative Leadership Ontology

Drath et al. (2008) opined that the emergent leadership ideas had not been aptly addressed by the tripod ontology that frames leaders, followers, and shared goals as essential, indispensable elements of leadership. They propose a more integrative ontology, namely the DAC leadership ontology: direction, alignment, and commitment. Instead of focusing on the entities leaders, followers, and shared goals, they described the leadership outcomes as (1) direction is a "widespread agreement in a collective on overall goals, vision, and mission," (2) alignment is "the organization and coordination of knowledge and works in a collective," and (3) commitment is "the willingness of members of a collective to subsume their interests and benefits within the collective interest and benefit. The DAC ontology is not about one individual in the leader's role but about a group of people coming together to produce DAC. While the tripod explains the characteristics of leaders and how they interact with their followers to achieve goals, the DAC ontology explains "how people who share work in collectives produce direction, alignment and commitment" (Drath et al., 2008, p. 636). DAC ontology is more inclusive, increasing the understanding of leadership's true nature (Drath et al., 2008). However, ontology has been criticized for its focus on outcomes and its view on processes and for not including all types of practices (Kempster, Jackson, & Conroy, 2011). The DAC framework, however, focuses on collective and multifunctional (Drath et al., 2008). As a response to the framework, By (2021) has introduced PAC ontology which focuses on purpose rather than direction. By (2021) proposes viewing leadership as the responsibility of many, who should work together in pursuit of delivering purpose. The principle, therefore, removes the focus from leaders and followers and relocates it to collective processes. By (2021) established a framework (Figure 3) under the label of Telos Leadership Lens (TLL) and proposed the outcome of leadership processes in terms of purpose, alignment, and commitment (PAC) where the purpose is at the heart of leadership convention. The TLL principles presented below can be used as an essential component in any type and level of research and practice, not only in leadership challenges (By, 2021).

"Leadership is a responsibility of the many, not a privilege of the few."

"Leadership is the collective pursuit of delivering on purpose"

"Leadership purpose is to be guided by internal goods"

(By, 2021, p. 1)

Leadership is intertwined with concepts of mission, vision, shared goals, and objectives. These concepts accentuate the importance of leadership focusing on facilitating the accomplishment of something significant, and they are all linked to the purpose (Kempster et al., 2011). The PAC model offered a way forward for scholars and practitioners to move from the traditional leadership convention designed for external goods, i.e., power, influence, wealth, status, etc., and explore new leadership conventions for collaboration and partnership to meet current societal change.
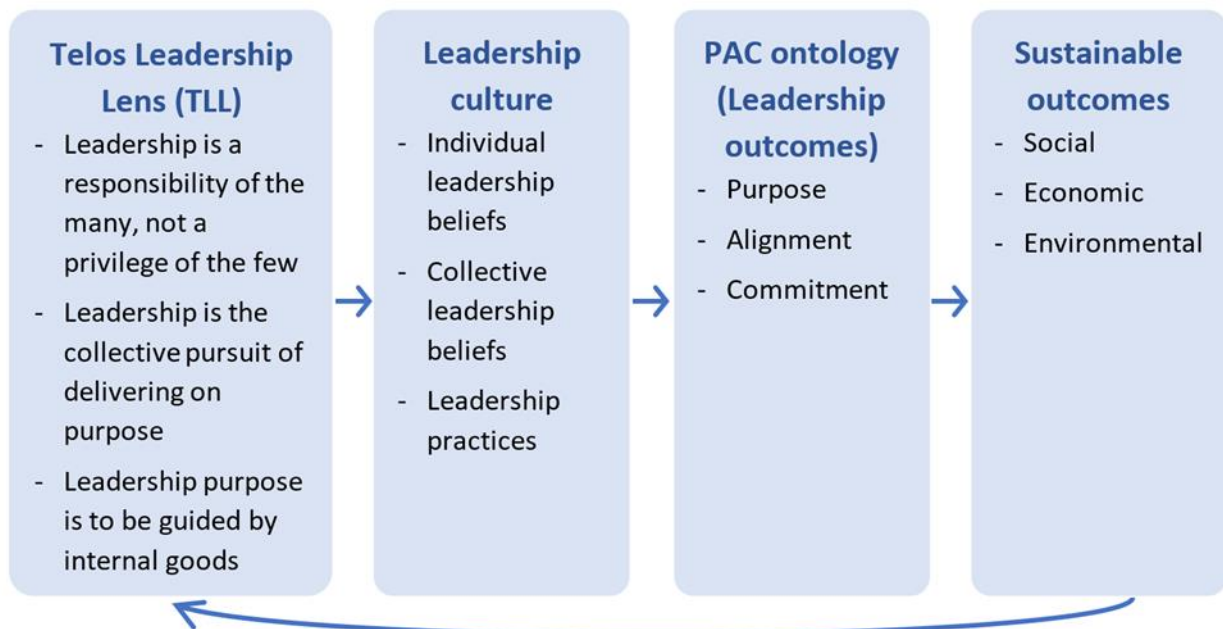
Figure 3. TLL and PAC model. By (2021)

2.4 Gender Diversity and Leadership

A diverse workplace reflects many beliefs, understandings, values, views of the world, and unique information (Guillaume et al., 2014; Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, & Monga, 2009). While rapid internationalization, globalization, and growing self-expression have increased the importance of workforce diversity, many organizations are still reluctant to hire and promote ethnic minority and female employees, especially to higher positions (Shen et al., 2009). Moreover, some organizations design diversity programs to comply with legal requirements, marketing capabilities, or employee retention; however, not all programs manage to increase

diversity (Kulik, 2014; Shen et al., 2009). For example, tokenism, one of the standard practices of hiring women merely to improve a company's gender ratio to give the impression of better equality within the workforce (Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010).

Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie, and Lev-Arey (2006) claimed that diversity management is a complex and delicate process since it aims to remedy or diminish historical forms of discrimination based on employee demographic differences. At the same time, these actions tend to trigger social categorizations. Previous research, for instance, studies on unequal earnings (Feder & Levine, 2010), sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1988), and mentoring (Ragins, 2007), helped to highlight the institutional mechanism that constantly impedes gender equity in the workplace. This leads to the question when an individual or an organization decides to address this gender diversity issue to make changes in the organization, whose behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs are imagined needing changes? This question examines leaders' perception of change, responsibility for change, and women's, men's, and other gender's roles within change efforts.

The previous empirical studies (Choi & Rainey, 2010; Pitts, 2009) do not distinguish between the effects of organization-wide diversity policies and the impact of leadership behaviors that play a strategic role in cultivating an inclusive organizational culture. But leaders' beliefs and experiences also seem to play an essential role in implementing diversity efforts (Stevens et al., 2008) to make changes in the workplace. However, researchers have suggested that the other factors, such as a person's belief (e.g., thinking diversity is essential, feeling prejudiced towards social groups), maybe a better predictor of endorsement of diversity programs than an individual's demographic group membership (Avery, 2011). These studies suggest that individuals' attitudes and beliefs about gender predict their valuation of diversity better than their gender.

In briefly reviewing the extant literature on diversity leadership, it could be deduced that most studies are focused more on identifying to "fix" diversity with the end goal of improving a KPI. Only a few studies have demonstrated the leadership behaviors to embrace diversity as a strength, a source of value, and a competitive advantage. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap in the literature, as it focuses on the leadership perceptions to get meaningful progress in the corporate gender diversity programs.
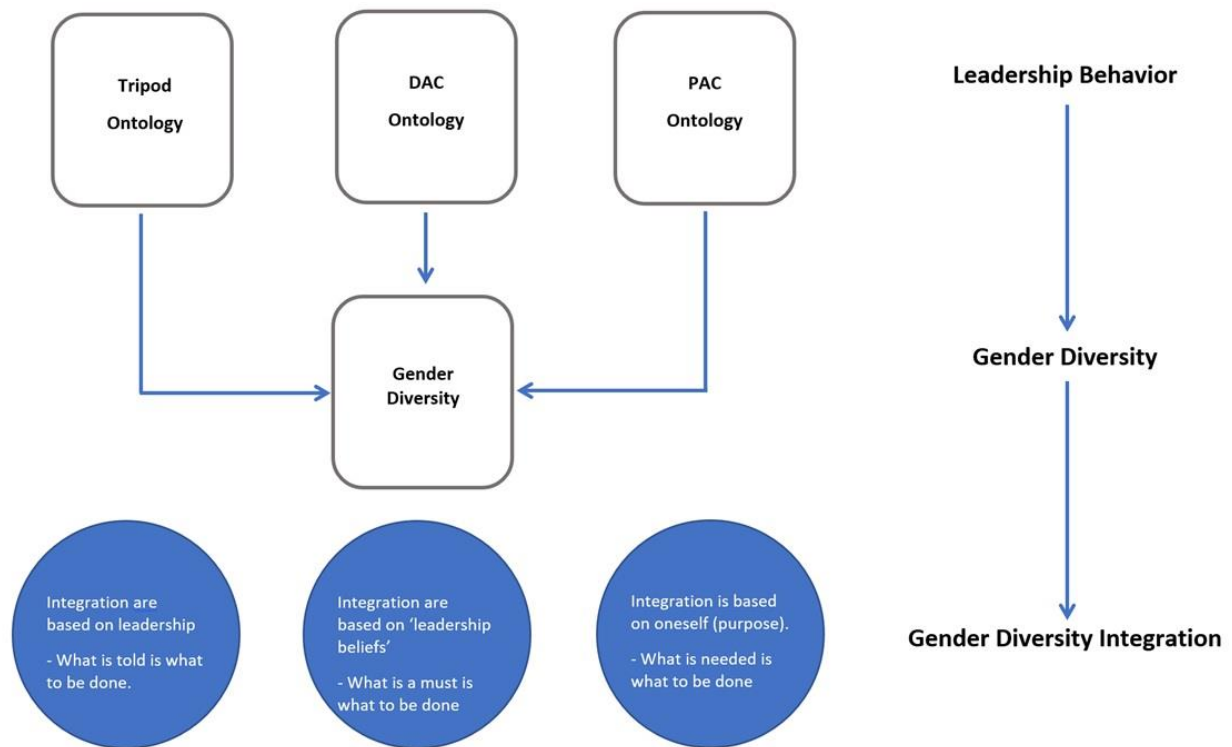
Figure 4. An emerging Gender diversity and Leadership model

2.5 What Influences our Perspectives?

As the purpose of the study is to explore leaders' perceptions of gender diversity within the service industry, it is essential to know what influences the perspectives of individuals regarding the given phenomenon. According to upper echelon theory, people's cognitions, values, and perceptions, which are formed by previous experiences, can significantly affect the process of strategic choices (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). As Hambrick (2007) stated, "The central premise of upper echelons theory is that executives' experiences, values, and personalities greatly influence their interpretations of the situations they face and, in turn, affect their choices … bounded rationality [introduce] the idea that informationally complex, uncertain situations are not objectively 'knowable' but, rather, are merely interpretable". Therefore, to enhance the understanding of leaders' perceptions, this study draws on social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979) and the self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982).

2.5.1 Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory

According to social identity theory, once a person categorizes and identifies themself as a

21

member of a specific group and gains physical and psychological resources from the group membership (Hackman, 1992; Tajfel et al., 1979), the group becomes an essential source of pride and self-esteem. This increases the likelihood that group members- in our study leaders- are obliged and willing to conform to and protect the extant norms. The interpretation and identification processes interact. In other words, men or women watch the established standards according to their experience and the value of being the majority and being in control (Huang, Diehl, & Paterlini, 2020). The more strongly the members identify with and adhere to the group, the more tightly they grip the extant norms. Although these perceptions are often perceived as overemphasis and most likely unreliable, individuals still rely on them (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009).

Self-categorization theory suggests that people categorize themselves into various social and psychological identity groups such as intellectual, engineer, male, white, or Australian (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Self-categorization categories operate at multiple levels (Haslam, Powell, & Turner, 2000). The narrowest category level relates to an individual's self-identity, and broader group-level categories create the individual's social identity, in which the individual shares their self-identity with other group members (in-group) but not with non-members (out-group). Therefore, a gender-diverse workforce may produce distinct psychological groups of male and female members. People like to perceive their social identity positively (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), and the tendency to see one's group as better than others promotes psychological division and social comparison between an in-group and an out-group.

Gender diversity has often been negatively associated with team processes and performance (Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; Van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003; Wegge, Roth, Neubach, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008). Because members categorize one another based on gender similarity when the team is being formed, diversity in this category relates negatively to team commitment. On the other hand, "The cognitive resource diversity" perspective underlines how a diverse team would have more of a diverse group to draw new ideas or solutions to problems, allowing the team to outperform more homogenous teams (Hong & Page, 2004). McMillan-Capehart (2003) used the resource-based view of the firm to argue that gender and racial diversity at the management and organizational levels can provide a firm with a competitive advantage. The study's results demonstrate a positive relationship between corporate gender diversity and organizational performance when performance was operationalized as return on equity.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Moving from a company that "has diversity" to a company that "manages diversity" is a process that takes place in stages. This is determined situationally by the diversity of human capital and through efforts of inclusion. Both theoretical considerations and the empirical research mentioned earlier lead us to conclude that a group's value is based on its members' diversity. The workplace is much richer when all members can contribute according to differences in education, background, sex, or skills. Organizations that focus on diversity and inclusion allow themselves to be more creative, have more energy, and make better use of talented employees. However, this requires a safe, inclusive, respectful, and accepting work environment.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology chosen to answer the question: Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage? First, the research paradigm is presented, followed by reasons to select the research methodology and method. After that, the explanation of the data collection will be presented. Furthermore, the sample is represented before describing the processing and analysis of data. At the end of this chapter, the ethical issues and the researcher's reflection on this aspect related to this study will be discussed. The objective of this chapter is to explain the study's rationale and method.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework on which the research is based. It represents a pattern of beliefs and understandings from which the theories and practices of a research project operate. Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006) stated that a research process has three major dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Creswell and Poth (2016) stated that the ontological issue is related to the nature and characteristics of reality and that researchers doing qualitative studies embrace the idea of various realities. According to Martinich and Stroll (2014), Epistemology is the philosophical study of the nature origin and the limits of human knowledge and may be described as the

theory of knowledge. Ontology and epistemology are commonly referred to as a person's worldview.

According to Mangan, Lalwani, and Gardner (2004), two different paradigmatic positions are often seen as antithesis: positivism and phenomenology. In the phenomenological paradigm, the world is considered socially constructed and subjective. Science is moved forward by human interests, and instead of focusing on facts like the positivistic paradigm, it focuses on meanings and seeks an understanding of what is happening (Mangan et al., 2004). Creswell and Poth (2016) and Johannessen, Christoffersen, and Tufte (2004) describe phenomenological research as a perspective on qualitative research that describes the nature of a specific phenomenon by exploring the experiences and understandings of people within a particular group regarding the phenomenon. Phenomenology and other philosophical aspects are subject to the broader perspective of interpretivism. Thanh and Thanh (2015) stated that the interpretive paradigm lets researchers explore the world through their studies' participants and how they perceive and experience the world.

This thesis will be based on the interpretivism approach as it seeks to understand the perception and behaviors of leaders in an organization to support gender diversity. Those perceptions fit into leadership ontologies. Leadership behavior and the perspective of leadership ontology are understood as a phenomenon. This thesis will not look for absolute and objective truth but seek the reality derived from the participants' answers from their perception, understanding, and experiences. The choice was made because there is no simple truth or reality in connection with the research question of this thesis.

Paradigm	Ontology *What is reality?*	Epistemology *How can I know reality?*	Theoretical Perspective *Which approach do you use to know something?*	Methodology *How do you go about finding out?*	Method *What techniques do you use to find out?*
Positivism	There is a single reality or truth (more realist).	Reality can be measured and hence the focus is on reliable and valid tools to obtain that.	Positivism Post-positivism	Experimental research Survey research	Usually quantitative, could include: Sampling Measurement and scaling Statistical analysis Questionnaire Focus group Interview
Constructivist / Interpretive	There is no single reality or truth. Reality is created by individuals in groups (less realist).	Therefore, reality needs to be interpreted. It is used to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities.	Interpretivism (reality needs to be interpreted) • Phenomenology • Symbolic interactionism • Hermeneutics Critical Inquiry Feminism	Ethnography Grounded Theory Phenomenological research Heuristic inquiry Action Research Discourse Analysis Femenist Standpoint research etc	Usually qualitative, could include: Qualitative interview Observation Participant Non participant Case study Life history Narrative Theme identification etc
Pragmatism	Reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situations.	The best method is one that solves problems. Finding out is the means, change is the underlying aim.	Deweyan pragmatism *Research through design*	Mixed methods Design-based research Action research	Combination of any of the above and more, such as data mining expert review, usability testing, physical prototype
Subjectivism	Reality is what we perceive to be real	All knowledge is purely a matter of perspective.	Postmodernism Structuralism Post-structralism	Discourse theory Archaeology Genealogy Deconstruction etc.	Autoethnography Semiotics Literary analysis Pastiche Intertextuality etc.
Critical	Realities are socially constructed entities that are under constant internal influence.	Reality and knowledge is both socially constructed and influenced by power relations from within society	Marxism Queer theory feminism	critical discourse analysis, critical ethnography action research ideology critique	Ideological review Civil actions open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, open-ended observations, and journals.

Table 3.1. Research Paradigm. Patel (2015)

3.3 Research Methodology

Bryman (2016) and Newman (2014) stated that researchers should follow a specific "path" to conduct research- selecting and defining the research problem, planning a design for the

25

study, collecting data, analyzing the data, interpreting the data, and informing others in a written form. We can support that this path is congruent with the methods as the collection of specific techniques we use in a study to select cases, measure and observe social life, gather and refine data, analyze data and report on results.

According to Neuman (2014), research is a process of getting as close to the truth as possible. Ghauri, Grønhaug, and Strange (2010) said that the research purpose plays an important role when choosing a research approach. There are two different approaches to conducting a research study- qualitative research and quantitative research. Ghauri et al. (2010) mentioned that qualitative research focuses on understanding processes through interpretation. On the other hand, quantitative research emphasizes testing, verification, and a generalizable approach that relies on facts and logic.

This thesis used the qualitative research approach to explore the leadership phenomenon to gain insight into the leadership ontology that best fits the service industry to support gender diversity. In the past and present literature, there is a theoretical fuzziness and an absence of meaningful definitions to define and understand the concept of leadership. Leadership was mixed up with management. Though the traditional leadership ontology is known to people, the alternative integrative leadership ontology like DAC and PAC is not well known. For that focus, this thesis is explorative research. According to Johannessen et al. (2004), it is important to remember that qualitative data from explorative research designs cannot be seen as statistically generalized truth. Still, it can contribute to a general thesis of the phenomenon's reality. As the leadership ontology is the phenomenon of this thesis, and the aim was to explore leaders and their experiences and understanding of this phenomenon, the qualitative methodology has been utilized.

3.4 Research Method

This thesis is qualitative research to find out a detailed understanding of the leadership phenomenon, and this "detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find out or what we have read in the literature" (Creswell, 2013, p. 48). To understand the leadership phenomena in their natural setting and to interpret them based on opinions, interviews were chosen to collect data for this thesis. More specifically, semi-structured open-ended questions and answer dialogue has employed in this study. This thesis also used multi-case studies- exploring two hotels and one IT company for the replication logic so that

the research can examine how leadership phenomena can be displayed in different environments, and it can contribute more to the reliability of the research rather than a simple case study. One of the most important tasks of the multi-case researcher is "to show how the phenomenon appears in different contexts" (Stake, 2006).

There are two general approaches to acquiring new knowledge: inductive and deductive. The inductive approach starts with a set of observations and then moves from those experiences to a more general set of propositions about those experiences and a deductive approach, the researcher formulates a set of hypotheses at the beginning of the research, then uses appropriate research methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This thesis has chosen an inductive research approach because the phenomenon of DAC and PAC leadership ontology is an unfamiliar field in the leadership literature which calls for a process that still relies on some basic theory and seeks theoretical conclusions based on the empirical data. Deductive reasoning doesn't fit with this research. There is no strict theory to test that will leads to the findings.

3.4.1 Data Collection

To achieve necessary insight into how leaders of an organization understand leadership to implement gender diversity, this thesis focused on leaders' words and experience and their reflections on opinions and emotions, so it has conducted an individual semi-structured interview to extract how the respondents construe a phenomenon (Jacobsen, 2005).

The interview questions consisted of 11 questions with some sub-questions and general questions such as age, gender, position, experience, ethnicity, etc., where necessary. The questions were open-ended, but there were no response alternatives. The questions were not delivered before the interview to better observe the participant's reflections on opinions and emotions. The interview guide has been created based on the problem, research questions, and literature review. Some key questions have been picked up from research relevant to exploring the leadership perspective in a Nordic context. The interview guide has been divided into two main themes: gender diversity in the company and leadership. The questions were asked in an intended order, and the wording of the questions was prepared to allow the participants to answer the questions as freely as possible.

The participants were chosen based on availability and willingness to participate. The interviews were scheduled to last between 20-40 minutes. Most of the interviews were held

face to face at the respondents' offices. The interviews were recorded digitally so that the focus during the interview could be entirely devoted to the respondents and their answers instead of taking notes. The one-to-one interviews were transcribed after that, and the transcribed responses were sent to the participants for confirmation that they were transcribed correctly so there would be no misunderstanding regarding the answers. The digital recorded files have been deleted after transcribing. The interviews were conducted in English and transcribed into English as well.

3.4.2 Sample

Qualitative research employs purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016; Punch, 2013), so the respondent should possess the knowledge and the necessary experience in the era you are researching and interviewing about (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

This thesis selected two different hotel chains and one IT firm. The selection is based on the working environment where employees of other ethnicity and gender are working and available. The sample group consists exclusively of managers because of their positions and organizational involvement. This study focused on getting a sample of participants in a leadership position, formal and informal, for 3 to 15 years. The intention of collecting samples was to interview each company's CEO or general manager as they are the ultimate decision maker for policy implementation. However, this did not happen due to their covid infection and lack of time in their schedule for the interview. Organizations will be called Organization A, Organization B, and Organization C.

Organization A

Organization A is a Stavanger-based male dominant IT company that has provided the world's top-ranking resource for time and time zones for the last 24 years. The participants were one 40 years old female HR manager with seven years of experience and one 32-years-old senior developer who has been a team lead for five years. The CEO of this couldn't participate due to covid infection.

Organization B

Organization B, one of the largest hotel chains in Scandinavia, has a diverse workforce. General Manager is a 58 years old female with a master's degree and seven years of experience in this hotel; the front office manager is a 52 years old male with a bachelor's degree and three years experience in the current position, and the restaurant manager is a 25

years old young male who has a master degree on leadership and eight years experience in this field and the housekeeping manager is a 36 years old female with a master degree and holds 8.5 years experience in her current position.

Organization C

Organization C is also one of the largest hotel chains in Scandinavia and a pioneer in diversity management. Unfortunately, the general manager and deputy manager couldn't participate in the interview at the last moment due to their busy schedule. The housekeeping manager who participated in the discussion is a 38 years old male with a master's degree and eight years of experience as a housekeeping manager.

Table 3.2. Respondents

Organizations (Respondent No.)		Gender	Age	Education	Position	Years of experience
A	R3	Female	40	Bachelors in Media and Communication	HRM	7
	R5	Male	32	Higher Secondary	Lead developer	13
B	R7	Female	58	Masters	General Manager	5.5
	R4	Male	52	Bachelors in Economics & Hospitality Mgt.	Front Office Manager	3
	R6	Male	25	Masters in service leadership	Restaurant Manager	8
	R2	Female	36	Masters in Biology	Housekeeping Manager	8.5
C	R1	Male	38	Masters in Offshore Technology	Housekeeping Manager	8

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis aims to understand core concepts and discover themes that describe what the researcher has examined (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Gibbs (2007) told coding as follows:

"How you define what the data you are analyzing are about. It involves identifying and recording one or more passages of text or other data items such as the parts of pictures that, in some sense, exemplify the same theoretical or descriptive idea. Usually, several passages are identified, and they are then linked with a name for that idea – the code. Thus, all the text and so on that is about the same thing or exemplifies the same thing is coded to the same name. Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it"

While Neuman (2014) introduced three stages in qualitative coding data. "Open Coding" is the first stage in coding, and this stage allows for categorizing of data collected and examining them while looking into the relevant themes. "Axial Coding" is the second; this stage concentrates the categories and compares possible links to the themes. And the final stage is "Selective Coding," which is the cross-referencing for researchers to go back to the previous codes and examine them to look for data supporting the developed categories. This study analyzed the individual respondents and categorized them into three themes. This is to investigate everyone's perception disconnecting them from the organization to avoid bias in generalizing the results. The questions given to all respondents are the same, and additional questions may ask depending on the answers given. The findings from the interviews are organized individually. The interview answers will be coded as per respondent. Coding as per answer might fall under one or more codes depending on the individual's perception of the given questions. Discussions will follow; each respondent will be discussed individually, with the possibility of discussion per industry based on the findings.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Neuman (2014) described reliability and validity as a tool used to establish the credibility of research and leads research towards an ideal truth. Reliability means consistency, where the same thing is repeated under identical conditions and validity, suggests truthfulness, and suggests how well an idea fits with actual reality (Neuman, 2014).

According to Neuman (2014), several techniques such as interviews, participation, photographs, and document styles are used to record observations consistently. Gibbs (2007) suggests several reliability procedures confirm and increase the reliability of the study. Therefore, this study used the pilot-testing method to pre-test questions before finalizing the interview questions to check whether different question formats produce other answers. After the modification of the questions, there was no problem regarding the consistency of the

question for the interviewees. Moreover, the transcripts were checked several times so that no words could be omitted while transcribing. In addition, as these companies belong to different surroundings with different management styles, but under the same sector, which is service, it increases the reliability of the outcome. Finally, the concepts, theories, and definitions used in this research study have been used by other scholars within the same phenomenon of leadership and diversity. Thus, these have been researched in the service industry and contribute to reliability. However, the research would be more reliable if the same research could be done at different points. Due to limited time, conducting repeated research was not possible for the study of this dissertation.

The respondents' ability to give trustworthy interpretations was necessary for this research. The thesis must find out the perception of leaders to contribute to gender diversity in the organization. The open-ended questions in the interviews and referring to the interview participants' subjective perspectives have strengthened the validity of the data. There is a disadvantage of generalizing the findings compared to qualitative research because, in quantitative research, the sample can be selected randomly but not in qualitative research. Therefore, it isn't easy to generalize the findings from this study. Nevertheless, the outcome of this research study can be generalized within international hospitality and IT service sectors where the workplace is more diverse.

3.7 Ethics

The ethical problems in interview research arise because of the complexities of "researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena" (Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) developed an ethical guideline consisting of four tools for a qualitative study. The study followed these four fields to conform with the ethical issues stated below:

Informed consent: The participants were informed about the purpose of the research. This thesis obtained the consent of voluntary participation with the option of withdrawing from the study at any time.

Confidentiality: The anonymity of the interviewees in this thesis has been secured. The participants were informed ahead of the interview that the name and company they work for would be kept anonymous and would have excess to the discussion later.

Consequences: This thesis tried to decrease the risk of possible harm to participants by

keeping a balance between interviewees and interviewer regarding the openness and intimacy of such qualitative research. Because this can lead the participant to regret the information they revealed later.

The role of the researcher: The researchers followed guidelines of integrity, empathy, sensitivity, and commitment to the moral issue and action to strictly adhere to the scientific quality of the knowledge.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results from the qualitative and explorative interviews; the most relevant information/ findings are extracted and discussed in the light of the literature, framework (Figure 4), and problem question of "Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?". The different themes are interconnected, although they have meaning, whereas statements may be relevant to one or more themes. The acknowledged themes can be linked to other questions and sub-questions (Appendix B) dependent on the statements and explored which statement/s fit a particular theme. The identified themes are linked directly to Figure 4, elaborated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1. Essential elements of Leadership behavior, Gender Diversity and Gender Diversity Integration (Expanded from Figure 4)

Leadership Behavior		Gender Diversity	Gender Diversity Integration
Tripod Ontology	• Process of persuasion or induces objectives. • Leaders influences followers more than followers influence leaders.	• Equitable access and use of resources • Equitable participation in relationships, the household, the community, and political arenas • Shared rights and a balance of power • Equal rights, responsibilities, and	• Integration is based on leadership • What is told is what is to be done.
DAC Ontology	• Goal-oriented • Influences may or may not exist • Leadership beliefs come with collective beliefs and individuals' beliefs • People understand their direction, alignment, and commitment.		• Integration is based on 'leadership beliefs' • What is a must is what to be done.

		opportunities	
PAC Ontology	• Self-organizing • Concerned with the search for meaning and a desire to make a difference • Requires insight, introspection, and planning • Meaning contributes to the development of purpose, and once developed, a sense of purpose drives meaning		• Integration is based on oneself (purpose). • What is needed is what to be done

The content of analysis consists of coding under the themes. The interpretation of the context of the statements is based on the presented Table 4.1. The discussion follows the content of the analysis, utilizing the literature to view each analyzed theme. The final theme ends with a more extensive visualization of how the first three themes are presented and connected, clarifying the research and discussion.

4.2 Findings

The research finding was sought to find answers to the research question. The chapter is divided into multiple sections to explain each area in a comprehensive mode. Each analysis identifies and validates a theme through coding, organizing, and condensing. Overall, the result findings cover three (3) different themes. Together with the qualitative report analysis, the phenomena of ontological leadership behaviors (Tripod, DAC, and PAC) are discussed by each theme below each content of analysis.

Table 4.2. Nvivo Coding Reference Summary

	Tripod Ontology	**DAC Ontology**	**PAC Ontology**
Respondent 1	17.05%	50.16%	23.28%
Respondent 2	48.68 %	12.62%	26.16%

Respondent 3	25.55%	23.62%	46.33%
Respondent 4	41.03%	9.94%	48.84%
Respondent 5	30.92%	14.25%	54.76%
Respondent 6	50.23%	13.53%	34.46%
Respondent 7	19.82%	19.02%	61.09%

Table 4.2 represents the frequency of statements with the corresponding themes under each coding. The total tally of statements is more than or less than 100% because some views may represent more than one theme, or the statements are not covered under themes. This does not convey any information regarding the findings, as respondents expressed themselves differently. Nonetheless, this means how many words the respondents used in each coding; the content of the analysis will be based on the tables under each theme.

4.2.1 Results of Content Analysis

The apparent theme for the content of the analysis was one termed Gender diversity as a competitive advantage, which is directly connected to the research question, where the focus is to explore the different ontological behaviors in the Nordic service industries. It was based on the value perceived by the respondent's conduct on Gender Diversity and Leadership and whether they are using one or more leadership ontological behavior. The content analysis will also examine the effect of administration ontological behavior within the Nordic service industry. The theme 'Tripod Ontology' was given attention to understanding how the respondents perceived leadership behavior regarding integrating gender diversity into their organization. The theme 'DAC Ontology' was interested in how respondents' leadership beliefs perceived the integration process of gender diversity. The theme 'PAC Ontology' was of interest as a way to see how purpose and meaning relate to integrating gender diversity into the respondents' views. Each of the themes is presented by its content analysis. The overall understanding of the themes results in the view statements of the respondents and includes discussion for each theme by the qualitative and explorative content analysis.

4.3 Tripod Ontology

Table 4.3. Tripod Ontology Coding Reference

Theme: Tripod Ontology	
Respondents	**Statements**
Respondent 1 **(17.05%)**	**Q4:** Fair/ balance **Q7.a:** Time management/ not having enough rest
Respondent 2 **(48.68%)**	**Q1.b:** "…actually, with communication, females are better. We talk more, usually. So, in the total atmosphere, it's not easy to describe, but we have some things that males are better in and females with other things. So, in the hotel branch, it's very important. Like in housekeeping, in the room cleaning, usually females" **Q3:** "Actually, I don't think so because here I work here for over eight years, and actually I didn't notice that gender matters" **Q5:** "I don't think I have any challenges only those women, with heavy work, have problems carrying heavy stuff. So only this thing. So that only challenges us that they cannot have the heavy part of this work or of this job." **Q6:** "If definitely that we need to have contact with all employees and just to show them what we expect, and help them"
Respondent 3 **(25.55%)**	**Q1.a:** "…it's not very different for now, but we have more females in management roles than before. So, I'm thinking it's just similar. It's been the same sort of difference in male and female employed but it's getting better." **Q5:** "…we started that group with three women in management because we sort of need an event because like, why don't they understand this and that like, things like there. We experience that we do communicate differently, react differently, and things like that. We started out a conversation about that. It's not a major thing. It doesn't happen too many times. There are things like mansplaining that occur that piss everyone off." **Q6:** "I find it hard to do something that they tell me if they're not doing it themselves, that's just that doesn't work for me at all." **Q7.a:** "The company I'm in is my leader started this company all along like it's this little baby you know, the classic situation. So, he's in control of every aspect of this company." **Q8:** "My role is now people and culture, and that gives me a lot of time to focus on shaping this safe space that I talked about." **Q11:** "I can be out outspoken about any issues, talk about it to my CEO, talk about it to everyone in the company if something comes up, and normalize gender diversity as well as while recruiting. I have a big role in making sure that we have agenda like letting in more females and other genders"

Respondent 4 (41.03%)	**Q1:** "We are quite good in the reception with the balance and I'm very aware of that (being a female-dominated company). I want that (balance) because it's making the team better" **Q1.a:** "I think […] is what you call in Norwegian 'godbevelte' (well-ordered). I think is a quite good balance in […] to that. So, you see, we have a female GM and female housekeeping manager. I think it's balance. **Q1.b:** "I think it's balanced in the whole industry." **Q2:** "As for myself, I look for a balance. If now, I have already hired them (males). But I will hire a female even if I had a better male because I need this balance." **Q4:** "For me in reception, it's important because if you have too many females, you can have nags and things. As you need males to balance it that way because we are different and that is a good balance. So, you can work with females and males, and it's completely different with two females that are competing about status can be a problem. I had that here and that is not good. Therefore, it is important that you have this balance, male can usually that they're grounded, that's why I do it but then we have those different reasons. I think others are thinking of how they do the work." **Q8:** "That is one part of the job. If my people are happy at work, they are happy with the guests, that gives us more revenue. It's quite easy. **Q9:** "I don't think we do it in […] and in our hotel because we pick the best we can get at any time. No (not on gender per se), of course when I say I have to pick up females now I only get female applicants, so, it was no problem"
Respondent 5 (30.23%)	**Q3:** " I've seen is, as part of the hiring process where new employees are searched, we're definitely, we are specifically accepting everybody and make sure that okay, we don't really see which what's the name or I don't see the name of the person. I just get a little overview of this person who wants to become part of our team. And I look for the facts and are not supposed to care what the name or what the gender is. And I also don't make those criteria when I evaluate if the person can fit our team." **Q7.a:** "…I had mainly the trouble that there are other developers who haven't been working at the company or who have been working at the company for a longer time than me but didn't get a promotion." **Q10:** "if you're looking for a position and there are only so many candidates, then at some point you need to fill out a position and then it's the question. Can you wait for another X month and do another application to see if there's like a candidate which might be from different gender, or do you need to fill the position fast and only have like X amount of positions who are from a different gender?"

Respondent 6 **(50.23%)**	**Q1.b:** "I would say it's not an industry that really discriminates in any way, in regard to gender."
	Q2: "I know in Norway there are rules now that you need a percentage of female members of like every board of Norwegian stock companies."
	Q3: "if you like you would have an older female would be typically more caring towards the kids in a restaurant compared to the young male or even female, so it's about like benefiting with those differences that diversity brings. But I can't say I know of any specific top-down strategies to support it."
	Q4: "…it was the kind assumption that you would hire people both for the skills, but also the way they look that you would want to be greeted by a beautiful person and then often as most travelers from back then were men, you will have more women. But no, today it's more about just hiring the people that work and even though you can often kind of you can have those stereotypes and your own experiences going like"
	Q6: "…but then also having the opportunity to be strict when that is needed when maybe we are too friendly and don't do our work the way we should."
	Q7.a: "I probably had some time periods where I wanted to do other work because I was bored of what I used to be doing before I got this position and again that is related to me wanting to move on. I wanted to manage, I wanted to be in charge."
	Q8: "The revenue generated, both directly and indirectly and well I like to be confident enough to say that I know that the job that I do is really good, so I know it also brings them for the company at least benefit at other hotels in if it might be in Stavanger or other parts of Norway or even abroad"
	Q9: "as long as they kind of put it out there and want to use that talent, then I would assume that gets used but I think it has more to do with the personality of each worker now it's their gender."
	Q11: "but you don't want five girls at the same age working the same breakfast because not necessarily because they're five girls at the same age, but because they're inexperienced, they will spend a little too much time talking about yesterday instead of doing the work. Whereas if you had one young girl."
Respondent 7 **(19.82%)**	**Q2:** "right now we were hiring for the reception and as we have many males, like night shift, then we are many and Tom and Kjetil and many, we were looking to hire on fulltime position, a woman."
	Q7: "And then I will need my managers to follow the guidelines of […] as a company and the instructions that I have given, and then carry out the values throughout the whole organization."
	Q10: "I think we always need to focus on gender diversity either. It's like women going into computer science and more engineering topics. But there are I think, it's important also in this society as a general. I think we are quite good at it in Norway. I would say so."
	Q11: "I can always encourage people like for housekeeping; we could have more males working in housekeeping. We have some, they are very good. We have night shifts, but we could also have more for daytime."

4.3.1 Findings

Table 4.3 shows the frequency of statements of the respondents under the Tripod Ontology theme regarding leadership perspective on gender diversity. The respondents were asked the same questions shown in Appendix B. At the same time, Table 4.2 has the same frequency ratio and the respondents' statements under the content analysis.

Most of the respondents from the hotel industry speak about how they balanced gender diversity in the industry. Respondent 1 expressed his statements briefly with the ideas of their organization the fair and balanced gender diversity practices. And having challenges with time management and, as a leader, not having enough rest.

While Respondent 2 thinks that gender has its ability in communication and planning. According to her, gender has never been a problem in their organization as gender doesn't

matter in the day-to-day operations; the only challenge they faced was the women's ability to carry heavy things or the heavy parts of the job. While being a leader, she needed to communicate to every employee on her team to show them what they expect from them and to help their employees; this statement doesn't have any number on how frequently she is doing it to every person on her team.

Furthermore, Respondent 4 considers his team gender-balanced and is very aware of how to balance it, considering that the overall gender diversity in their organization is well-ordered and so with the hotel industry. According to him, it is always important to look at the balance even if they have a better male/female applicant if he already has enough on one gender. The respondent also emphasizes that having an unbalanced gender ratio means you can hurt the production rate.

While Respondent 6, with an unbalanced gender ratio in his team, considers diversity and inclusion very important to his team. According to him, diversity and inclusion regarding gender diversity don't have any specific 'top-down' strategic differences supporting this statement. He is very much focused on the demographics of his employees, not employing people with the same gender and age brackets, but rather having them as very different from each other as his strategy on how to put his employees into accomplishing the task without "too much talking." Adding, employing people in the team is not based on a particular gender or physical appearance but on how they work for the company. He deliberates himself on the revenue production of the company as one of the leaders, confidently saying that he knows that the job means a lot to the industry, not just in Norway but possibly to other nations.

On the other hand, Respondent 7 reflects gender diversity and inclusion with the hiring process of choosing which gender they need and not offering the job to different genders. But at some point, she also sees the need for the other gender to work in a known gender-dominated job/area. Considering the importance of gender diversity, she positively thinks that Norway is doing good with this. Together with her team, they are trying to improve diversity and inclusion by following the guidelines and instructions she has given and carried out the organization's values.

While in the IT industry, Respondent 3 thinks gender diversity in the industry is stagnant (with male-dominated), although it is changing/ improving. Having to work in a gender-dominated sector, negative things are happening; there is 'mansplaining' within their organization. For that reason, she and two other fellow women in the organization have

started a group because they need their own safe space with the same gender. Respondent 5, who is also part of the same organization working as a lead developer in their organization and personally involved in the hiring process, considers this as gender neutral for they hide the identities of the applicants as part of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The only challenge while working in the industry was having problems with co-workers with longer serving time in the company questioning his promotion.

4.3.2 Discussion

Drath et al. (2008) contemplated tripod ontology to have a hierarchical level toward the leader-follower behavior toward their shared goals. In the interviews with the hotel leaders, most respondents speak about how they are trying to balance the gender ratio in their organization/ team through the hiring process so that they can choose which particular gender they want to employ and employing gender with their lack even bringing up the rear possible good players. However, this method can improve diversity and inclusion; Pollmann-Larsen et al. (2021) considered this harmful as they know their moral obligation with no reference to the positive business value. Van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003) also thought gender diversity is often negatively associated with team process and performance. Also, leadership reflects (gender) diverse workplace has an undesirable effect on communication and differences.

On the other hand, other leaders consider diversity as part of their strategy to eliminate some adverse effects of having one demographic, but not particularly on gender. According to the self-categorization theory, people categorize themselves into various social and psychological identity groups (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, having diversity lets team members share their self-identity with the group as people like to perceive their social identity positively (Tajfel et al., 1979).

The concept of leadership has superiority in providing instructions on what to expect as part of the shared goals without taking any criticism from the followers. Leaders expect their followers to follow guidelines and instructions and to carry these values within the organization, which are expected of any organization. And given that, the need to contact the employees to follow up on what they're supposed to do or expect them to do can positively or negatively affect their performance as per employee relations management (ERM). These efforts implement such induce objectives in their followers, and these objectives come from

leaders per se without any influence from the followers (Drath et al., 2008). Kaufman and Kaufman (2009) identified a negative effect of this behavior, and the more tightly team members grip on the norms (shared goals), it will often fall to overemphasis and, most likely unreliable; as an effect, individuals still rely on themselves.

On the flip side, leadership from the IT industry considers gender diversity as a moral obligation and, to a great extent eager to become gender diverse, having only one problem that only one gender stands out in this area, and this is because of the lack of females want to study for this area. Hearsay established by respondent five whether the recruitment process has an initial screening of genders before undergoing the proper hiring process. Despite that assumption, respondent 3 assures the equality of the hiring process as she is part of the underrepresented gender in the industry, trying to create a safe space for everyone. At some point, the attempt to provide a safe space for everyone topped the expectation of gender diversity with equitable participation in the organization. Excluding the other gender into their group can be considered inequality. Huang et al. (2020) reflect on this behavior to the possibility of increasing the likelihood that group members are willing to conform to protect the organizational norms.

4.4 DAC Ontology

Table 4.4. DAC Ontology Coding Reference

Theme: DAC Ontology	
Respondents	**Statements**
Respondent 1 (50.16%)	**Q1.a:** "Collaborative" **Q1.b:** "Progressive" **Q3:** "Any position does not require specific gender." "…equal pay and opportunities." **Q7:** "Perseverance" **Q11:** "Focus on individual talents/ abilities"

Respondent 2 (12.62%)	**Q4:** "I think that it's much easier just for women, maybe planning the day with the room cleaning and for men it's much easier to work in the conference area with preparing the conferences. I see that men are better planning in this part."
	Q9: "It's hard to say because I think that everyone does their best. If the hotel, if we see something, we try to help it out with this but, no, I think we are not missing out one. So I don't feel it."
	Q10: "we are on the good level of this. So, in my opinion, we don't have to improve it. And I feel that everyone feels like, we are on the same level. My opinion here, is we don't have to, it's always good to improve but I think that we are on it already."
Respondent 3 (23.62%)	**Q1.b:** "…I feel that most of the male that we have out of this 17 are working as developers, everyone except one, actually we have one that one female that works in a developer role. The female seems to have other roles in the company. I'm guessing that IT is an industry that is male dominant. That's my guess from this company, from looking at this company, I think that it's rising though. I think more women are entering the industry now than before. When I took my education, I didn't meet a lot of females that were taking the developer as education and like engineering and stuff like that."
	Q3: "We decided to do those things if we're doing that, we're doing it outside of work hours, but we're trying to make a social safe space between the women and the company. But we chose to do that outside of company hours. And it's a volunteer like you don't have to join."
	Q5: "I just have to see it at the moment as we look to create equality and fair treatment towards everyone, gender included. It wouldn't be a challenge to any practice, but one gender challenge that sometimes occurs here is because most management roles in our company are men." "If I feel mistreated in a way like that, I will tell him, I haven't had to do so, I wouldn't know how his reaction would be or what he would do about it."
	Q7: "I guess the main factor was that I'm there to speak up for myself and also that he was very welcoming. He didn't want me to leave the company. I didn't threaten him to leave, but he understood. I think that I was starting to look around. And so he provided me with the role of HR. And he sent me to an HR course and paid for that as well as working 50% of the time. I felt like he gave me a good start and a good chance to stay in the company."
	Q7.a: "Giving HR over to me I think a challenge was to gain the trust that I could do the work like without having that 'hawk sitting on your shoulders, like making sure you're doing everything and just letting go that took a lot of time we got there."
Respondent 4 (9.94%)	**Q2:** "There are no instructions from the GM that we have to do that, I do it because I have experience with both (genders)."
	Q3: "We as well as other managers must make decisions on how they will balance it and I do mine. Our GM is not telling us, a little bit maybe but not in instructions. It's based on how you wanted it and what you have experience with."
	Q7: "Experience. I have like 30 years of experience with this, experience is very important one."
Respondent 5 (14.25%)	**Q2:** "we have a code of conduct which says that we need to treat all our employees the same way. And we have in our yearly talks, and we ask like, if there are any problems where employees feel like they don't get treated equally and even like, not necessarily in their yearly meetings, like every person is able to raise up issues, not just for themselves or also like for others when they noticed it."
	Q5: "maybe one challenge is that there are not that many women applying for positions, for example, in a development position where like software development position, I don't know what causes it, but from the applications that I've seen and that have been disclosed, those people that I've noticed that there were like a lot of males who were seeking for a position. I don't know or don't think that there was like any filter in advance, which filtered out with females. It's probably that it's a lack of interest from women may be in the position."
	Q6: "Leadership is the concept of enabling your employees to follow the vision that you give them. You try, of course, to do the whole organizational part of making the finances, to make the company stay alive"

Respondent 6 (13.53%)	**Q1.a:** "It's commonly said that there are more women than men in hospitality, especially in Norway and even though a lot of the senior managers at the headquarters are male, it feels like there are equally as many women, to be honest." **Q3:** "No, not really, not directly at least, but again in […], and I think most other companies within hospitalities focus a lot on totalizing the differences that we have within the company" **Q7:** "Well, the main reason I'm in my position now is I've been in […] for eight years. To begin with just as a part-time job next to high school to basically just to earn money, to spend it on a stupid party, and then continue to work while doing a business degree. And then at the same time kind of realized that I wanted to do hotel. So, I guess the main factor for why I'm in my position today is because while I've been here for eight years, I wanted to grow. To all that every step of the way for the past five years, one could say my education, but you know, honestly, that's not it, it's more my actual work and my personality, I guess, my eagerness to want to learn and to develop." **Q11:** "…Say one young guy, an old woman, and I, you would kind of have a better diversity to do the job properly. You would have someone to manage, someone to take, someone to do the work, someone to do the heavy lifting, I guess."
Respondent 7 (19.02%)	**Q3:** "I don't think that much of it, I think the best person fit and then as I sort, I told you if equal, I will think was what will be the best mixture of team members in that specific teams." **Q5:** "I'm not really facing any difficulty. No" **Q9:** "I always encourage, if some think they would like to go and work in the kitchen. I have females, of course, I've been working in France as a chef and there I was the only woman in the kitchen that time, they were only male and that was a rough atmosphere. So, but I think it's to balance it out with gender, it would have created a more positive atmosphere."

4.4.1 Findings

Table 4.2 shows the frequency of statements on content analysis under the DAC Ontology theme regarding leadership perspective on gender diversity. The respondents were asked the same questions shown in Appendix B. Nonetheless, content analyses are chosen under the same bucket of the theme, DAC ontology. Findings will conclude the respondents' statements under the content analysis.

In the hotel industry, R1 considers its organization collaborative and the whole sector progressive regarding gender diversity. As per gender diversity management, they do not require any specific gender but rather have every gender equal opportunity and salary.

While R2 positively believes in the planning techniques of each gender in particular areas, given that gender has its place. And if something doesn't seem in place, she knows that everyone is willing to give a helping hand; that's why she doesn't have any problem having an unbalanced gender ratio in her team. She also emphasized that their organization has integrated gender diversity, and there is nothing to be improved because they are already on it.

Furthermore, R4 mentioned that the hiring process depends on them and not on higher management, so with gender diversity management, it is up to them to balance it based on their experience.

On the other hand, R6 engaged the study of (Pollmann-Larsen et al., 2021) that the hospitality industry is female-dominated, but the higher management is male-dominated, balancing the industry's diversity. And R7 expressed that their hiring process is based on who fits in the position but having equal applicants can let her choose the underrepresent to have a mixture in the team.

While in the IT industry, R3 emphasized that the industry is male-dominated, and based on her educational background, she knows that there are not much of female students in this education, saying:

"When I took my education,
I didn't meet a lot of females that were taking the developer
as education and like engineering and stuff like that.
Now women seem to be more eagerly taken to the stage, so I'm positive,
but it might take some time before we see those
students reflected in the actual workforce."

While thinking about how to create a safe place in their organization, she formed a group of the same gender and voluntarily met outside working hours concerning the other gender and the company. Although a gender-dominated industry exists, the company's policy and leader's actions assure everyone is treated equally. As the company grows, its leader trusts other higher managers, the ability to decide for the company, and gives them the right to the position they hold. At the same time, R5 emphasized the company's code of conduct that they are following in creating a safe space. He considers leadership as a concept of enabling the employees to follow the vision that has been given to them.

4.4.2 Discussion

Drath et al. (2008) framework of DAC assumes that leader-followers have developed beliefs from the combination of individuals and collective beliefs that connect everyone in an organization, being the significant determinant and justification for the practices- and these practices are expected to be put into action. It is also stated that DAC is more inclusive, increasing the understanding of the "true nature of leadership." Leaders from the hotel industry positively employ DAC ontology in their leadership behavior to their recruitment

and communication with their employees. The recruitment process doesn't use higher management and gender diversity management influences. And leaders understand what part of the job their employee (as per gender) excels in and not. This leadership behavior is explained by Tajfel et al. (1979) as people like to perceive social identity under their self-identity, and the tendency this behavior can "see one's group as better than the other group promotes psychological division and social comparison; between in-group and out-group."

In the IT industry, gender diversity problems don't come from the hiring process but the applicants per se, even though they open positions to everyone for equality and diversity. The problem is the lack of one-gender applicants in the industry. Leaders are also trying to create a safe place but somehow forget to incorporate all genders in this aspect. Barriers often occur on the different sides of an organization; Shen addressed the rapid change in the business world with internationalization, globalization, and others, and the need to increase a diverse workforce by promoting to hire the minorities to have a better impression of equality within the workforce (Bear et al., 2010).

4.5 PAC Ontology

Table 4.5. PAC Ontology Coding Reference

Theme: PAC Ontology	
Respondents	**Statements**
Respondent 1 (23.28%)	**Q6:** "The ability to guide and set a good example." **Q9:** "Yes. Gender Stereotyping"

Respondent 2 **(26.16%)**	**Q1.a:** "I think the atmosphere is very good because this is very important that we have both males and females. And in total, I think it's approximately 50/50, or maybe 60% female. So, I think the total atmosphere is very nice. We came from other countries but yes, current gender is very important to have female and male at all because we think not the same. We have all not the same ideas and so the main thing is just that it's very important that luckily here we have like 50/50 male and female, and this is very good for atmosphere because it's nice. Easy to talk to." **Q2:** "I think it's the same within as management practices. It's for me it's the same to work with both genders." **Q4:** "I said before, in housekeeping, the room cleaning, it's very often that only women want to work in room cleaning, I don't know if it's easier or what but it's hard to say about after eight years of practice." **Q6:** "It's that we need to feel like a team member, not only the boss, but we need to feel that we are in the team, we need to work with everyone, we need to know all team members, to know how to work with them, to know how to be a team." "Leadership is also to help all employees, if they have any problems with work or with the atmosphere, with problems with other colleagues, then leadership is very important to be there always, and listen." **Q7.a:** "I think when I begin in the team on the same position as everyone. And the big challenge, to others- this position today was to help work with others when one day we are colleagues in the same position and suddenly next day, I need to give them tasks and everything. So, that was a big challenge to be the boss, but not like the boss, because days before we were in the same position." **Q8:** "I think so because I try to be everywhere, I try to be when someone needs help, and I try to be there, I try to motivate my old employees, my old team, to be better so that our hotel would get a good score will be better in this branch. So, I think I'm good with that, I think I'm good at motivating my employees, and my team, and then it affects the whole hotel"

Respondent 3 **(46.33%)**	**Q1.b:** "Now women seem to be more eagerly taken to the stage, so I'm positive, but it might take some time before we see those students reflected in the actual workforce. So, the general atmosphere. Yes, I think it's male dominant. But I am positive that it is changing over the course of the years." **Q2:** "we don't have anything that is gender-specific but we're focused on promoting our company as a workplace with a safe space for everyone. We're a very international company, we have 13 different nationalities here. So, focusing on what we call Safe Spaces, can also be gender-related. But it can be culture related, it can be about personal challenges that people have. So, we aim to be a company or for company culture. That's considerate to everyone that is on board, not just females but there could be someone bisexual could be, that does require trust, though, to keep this culture or this company culture requires trust between management and employees in both directions. I guess you can say that that's our strategy to create trust and safe spaces for everyone that is working here, including genders." **Q3:** "We are aware of the problem of gender diversity issues, in general. What we've done is that we have a group of three women who are all in management positions, one is me as HR. The other one is called COO there is a new term to me, and the third one is one of the team leads in the company, all women. We just meet up monthly and we just chat to talk about women and the company, if there are, if we see any issues arising or if we aim to be there. If anything comes up or if anything is spotted that is gender specific. Currently, we do not have a lot of issues that we see reflected, but that's our mission anyway, to be there. And we also try to reach out to or how do I say that there was a suggestion to reach out to all the females in the company and sort of have everyone included in a lunch or just talk women's like amongst us women, but we decided that, or I suggested because we don't want to exclude anyone. I feel like doing that makes the females the excluding group." **Q4:** "The practice that we do here is that we try to create this safe space for everyone and not just gender-specific but include(other)genders." **Q6:** "People are very different so it's important to see and understand all the individual differences. I love people who are leading by doing, that's a personal preference." **Q7:** "I just fell in love with IT people, they're great personalities, they're so nice to work with and I really like that." **Q8:** "Enjoyable trust, like building a trust-filled company culture as well as having more time to see the individual in this company. I believe in the long run when I have had some time to build something there, a role like mine will contribute to making employees happier, and safer in the company and maybe that can give them a set salary, a reason to want to be in […], the salary, and the work itself, people like what they do. But it's a challenging time nowadays like it's difficult to get new employees and especially in these business people are overpaid. So, they change companies. I think my role will contribute to keeping people, I think." **Q9:** "We are missing out in a way given that skewed sort of developers world here, diversity in developers in the company but I know that if there were like, we hire the ones that we find best suitable and most qualified if a female comes to the stage and is just as qualified as a male, we are more interested in the female these days because we are talking about this that we would love to have more females in the developers' roles. As I said earlier, I think maybe down the line, this will hopefully balance out a little bit as we will see more females coming onto the stage." **Q10:** "There's always room for improvement. As you said in the beginning Scandinavian countries has been in the front of this (gender diversity problem) for a very long time, we've never reached a top there's always issues, there's always going to be, we're still looking at unequal pay for example, it's a big thing in top like in leader positions and other positions. And as I said genders these days is so much more than female and male. There's a whole other level of that entering the stage. That is new to at least Norway like the US has come way longer than when it comes to that kind of thing. And we're sort of touching in on that now. And I can see that the younger ones are much more natural to them than it is to the older generations. I'm always hopeful and I think as we get in younger people in the company, I'm hoping that it will just sort of improve as we go and obviously you must have leaders that are accepting this."

Respondent 4 **(48.84%)**	**Q4:** "I think it's quite good because we have quite good leaders that are aware of it. So, I think about how I need to balance it then. Others may be balanced in another way like they need more females because they are better, it's easier to get females with good experience in their department." "I'm not sure if it's smart but I can see why they do it, but you can also lose good people both ways. If you're going to be hired on what gender you are, I don't know if that is a qualification for doing a job, it should be more focused on (qualifications)" **Q5:** "it's a little bit what I said now that the practices that you must have a 50/50 ratio, you can miss good people. Other than that, I don't know." **Q6:** "…my way is I work for my people. Like my job is to get them better, get them to thrive, and to like their job, that's my goal." **Q7.a:** "It's qualified people in general. Not just gender, but in general. We can't get people to work. It's your lack of people everywhere and especially skilled people." **Q9:** "I can see it as a problem when I talk about these boards that must have 40% females that you may miss out on a good male. That is what I see as a problem with, with that type of doing as a, with this quotation" **Q10:** "Yes. If you add this third gender to it, there are probably few. I think they are what you call excluded cause of their gender and there are probably very good people that are excluded because they are in between. That's what I think but I have not experienced that myself, but I can see that's a problem. And if you see on the debates, on the news on TV that they have issues and they have problems in kind of being accepted. It's too difficult to go into it and even if they have a good education and what's frightening is you are uncertain about what you're going into. Therefore, you maybe take them away and that's of course not good. But it is like that now, I think they have a problem with gender acceptance." **Q11:** "Be aware of it, think of it and, I think it's always good to have a balance to think not only females or not only males or if you have a mix. That's always the best. Always."

Respondent 5 **(54.76%)**	**Q1.a:** "I think our company is very open to all genders. We are facing a general problem in the IT industry, which is a lack of available candidates for hire. When we are looking for people, we are struggling to find people in the first place, but we don't specifically select only men or only women."

Q1.b: "I think the industry is becoming more and more open toward women where IT used to be at the beginning a very male-dominated area. But I think there's like a general tendency towards like, including more women and make IT like more equal environment. But I think the industry is not there yet where it could be, and it still needs to work to be more inclusive."

Q6: "… also make sure that your employees can work for a company with a little amount of hassles and that you make sure that you're available for your employees and for talking about issues that they're concerned of. And for enabling them to grow farther, improve the employees themselves and the way that they're interested and in a way that possibly also benefits the company and makes sure that employees are treated equally."

Q7: "I think what helped me personally is the experience that I've collected over the years, and I have a very large and broad interest in the web itself, like as a user and as a developer. And also, because I am motivated to like provide a service for the general public, which is what my company is doing."

Q7.a: "And since I got the promotion at my previous job, it helped me to get another position as a senior developer. If I wouldn't have a promotion at my previous company, I would probably have more trouble getting a new position right now."

Q8: "I'm trying over the things that I'm developing to make them as good as possible and try to be as much as a team player as possible, where I involve other persons and try to not just work by myself, but try to involve the design, try to involve data, target, try to involve the quality assurance to make sure that what we are producing is of good quality and something that helps the users."

Q9: "I think the more variety you have in terms of experiences and in terms of cultural backgrounds in college, in terms of things that you have learned as a person in your past the more people are bringing themselves in to contribute the greater of a solution there will be. If there are only people with x being, gender being, religion being, a country that you're coming from, you only develop or make things in one specific way, but there are so many other aspects to take care of. So, the more diverse your team and equal your team is the more you can work together on doing and creating something great."

Q11: "I would like if there were candidates if I'm looking for new people and I would be, then I would try to make sure that, if there are candidates who are like from a gender that is underrepresented in my team and they have like qualifications that are good enough to fill the position, then maybe I would try to prefer them to make sure that there's like equality. If I had to choose between two candidates who are from different genders, but have the same amount of skills, then try to use that also as an opportunity to level out the qualities, of course" |

Respondent 6 (34.46%)	**Q1.a:** "it's good. […] has a lot of focus on diversity and creating opportunities for everyone, not related to, well, many reasons really, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on. So yeah, it's good."
	Q4: "I kind of want to hire a man because parts of his work are going to be more physical that's it's often about just creating a workforce that is diverse so you can split that. But then again, it doesn't only go to gender because you'll have big, strong women as well. But again, you can typically say that it's easier to find a strong young man than a strong young woman."
	Q5: "I'm quite new in this position and I would consider myself a young man as well and I had to just in those four months handle cases that are related to femininity that I didn't really have any experience with and honestly kind of feels doesn't feel weird or strange, obviously know of the issue, but it's obviously difficult to relate to, let's say that time of the month or pregnancy or whatever but it's not related to any practices. No, but those are again, those practices that we have in Norway and that […] has as well that you have paid maternity leave and all that stuff but those are not problems. Those are, well, at least I don't consider them problems. They're great, you're supposed to be able to have time off when you give birth and raise your child."
	Q6: "…you must leave the way yourself has to be a good example of what you want to do. To me, it's very important to follow up on my staff making sure they're happy, and also when they're not happy that we talk about and figure it out, I want to be almost friendly with all my staff. I wanted to be able to come to me for whatever reason, even if it's a school project or if it's something more serious back home and then it's being available"
	Q8: "I would also like to think that I bring like more staff educated staff, the staff that I train, the staff that I hire, that they are valuable assets, in which many of those stay for one year or two for the rest of their lives."
	Q10: "That's not my definition of gender diversity and gender equality is supposed to be equal. It should be equal opportunities, but not necessarily equal outcomes. So, I think that what […] does is pretty great like my boss is a female, her boss is a female, and you have to go above her again before you find a male, so I think within […] and again, within like Norwegian hospitality, that is good. It comes more down to you having the personality of each person and their skill, not the gender."
	Q11: "it's not as much about the gender. It's more about your skills but there is some heavy lifting to do from working. In a restaurant and conference area. And typically, it's easier to find young men who want to do that compared to young women, not always, not definitely, not always, but it could be easier, it's the hiring process that I'm the one who can make the biggest impact on, the gender diversity, but it's not really a big concern but you kind of I mean, you obviously want the diversity in some levels"

Respondent 7 (61.09%)	**Q1.a** "I think there are more females because we have a huge housekeeping department. And of course, there are many women working in housekeeping, so there are more women than men working in the hotel. But if I can, I will always look for gender diversity and also diversity of age and background." **Q1.b** "I think people are concerned about it and they strive to keep the diversity because it's for the atmosphere and for the people getting to, I think it's important to have the equal." **Q2:** "No, not really because I will, I'm always looking for the person best fit for their job, and then I consider who will that person fits into the team and then into the hotel. And then if I could do something with diversity for gender, I would always. If I have two candidates the same and I need to have a more mix of gender, I will choose of gender, if they're equal candidates." **Q4:** "In […], we think about gender diversity and we also for instance, I could have hired a female technician, of course, I would have done, but there were no applicants. So, it also in some departments it's more driven by males or females but if possible, I will look for gender diversity." **Q6:** "Leadership is important and it's sometimes something you need to nourish every day, it's like a plant, you need to work with. But first I think, as a leader, it's important for me to think what my values is. What are my goals for this job and for my team members? And to create it, I think it's important to create a trustful atmosphere where people are looking forward to going to the job, they feel secure. We have guests, we are open 24/7. They feel secure. And if something comes up, they can always go to their leader and discuss topics, even topics that are difficult. So, creating a trustful environment, it's important for me." **Q7:** "I think I cannot run this hotel alone. I need to have a good management team and they need to build, I need to build my management team and set the standard for the culture." **Q8:** "I think it's not only me but also my team and every team member. But I think as a leader, you are a role model. So, you should keep going forward and stay for the values yourself." **Q11:** "In the kitchen, we have only males, and now we hired a woman to make the balance she starts in August, I think you always need to pay attention to gender diversity to make a good balance at the hotel."

4.5.1 Findings

In the interview with the hotel industry leaders, R1 emphasized that being a good leader means being able to guide and setting an excellent example for his team. And according to him, fixing the gender diversity issue eradicates gender stereotyping.

While R2 thinks that the general atmosphere of gender diversity in their organization is good, having an almost 50:50 ratio for both genders and the same with cultural differences means a better variety of knowledge from different perspectives. And working with this type of diversity is not a problem at all. While she defines leadership as:

"It's that we need to feel like a team member,

not only the boss, but we need to feel that we are in the team,

we need to work with everyone, and we need to know all team members,

to know how to work with them, to know how to be a team."

"Leadership is also to help all employees,

if they have any problems with work or with the atmosphere,

with problems with other colleagues, then leadership is very

important to be there always and listen."

She also adds that the challenge of being a leader in her team was being a leader for other employees she had worked with before in the same position when she started because she needed to be the boss but not feel like a boss. And her purpose was to try to be everywhere, to help, and motivate her team as she considers herself good at motivating her employees, which affects the overall performance.

Furthermore, R4 thinks that gender diversity practice in their organization is quite good because good leaders balance the gender ratio differently. According to him, other departments in the hotel can have a gender that suits them, and for his team, he needs to balance the ratio. His reaction to Norway's rule on gender equality was:

"I'm not sure if it's smart, but I can see why they do it,

but you can also lose good people both ways.

If you're going to be hired on what gender you are,

I don't know if that is a qualification for doing a job,

it should be more focused on (qualifications)."

He hasn't faced any challenges because of gender diversity practice but the need for a 50:50 ratio of both genders, as he gets the best applicants of which gender needs to balance it. His perception of leadership is:

"…my way is I work for my people.

Like my job is to get them better,

get them to thrive,

and to like their job, that's my goal."

R4 is also concerned with the emerging other genders, as he called "the excluded gender." He thinks this gender has the same working passion as others, probably better. He says that the problem in gender acceptance may lead to taking away good people from organizations.

While R6 emphasized their organization's focus of being diversified not just in gender but also in race, ethnicity, sexuality, and others, providing equal opportunities for everyone. He also says that:

"...it doesn't only go to gender

because you'll have big, strong women as well.

But again, you can typically say that

it's easier to find a strong young man

than a strong young woman."

Being new to the position, he already had different types of cases regarding femininity that he hasn't had any experience with, but he understands this type of situation. He considers leadership as:

"...you must leave the way yourself has to be a good example of what you want to do.

To me, it's very important to follow up on my staff making sure they're happy,

and also when they're not happy that we talk about and figure it out,

I want to be almost friendly with all my staff.

I wanted to be able to come to me for whatever reason,

even if it's a school project or if it's something more serious

back home and then it's being available"

While pinning his stand on gender diversity, he says:

"That's not my definition of gender diversity and gender equality is

supposed to be equal. It should be equal opportunities,

but not necessarily equal outcomes."

"It's not as much about the gender. It's more about your

skills but there is some heavy lifting to do from working.

In a restaurant and conference area. And typically,

it's easier to find young men who want to do that

compared to young women, not always, not definitely, not always,

but it could be easier, it's the hiring process that I'm the one

who can make the biggest impact on, gender diversity,

but it's not really a big concern but the kind of I mean,

you obviously want the diversity on some levels"

Moreover, R7 thinks that the reason for being a female-dominated industry is that more females are working in the housekeeping department. Still, given the change, she will diversify the department not only gender but also age and (cultural) background. And she also thinks that other companies do the same as people are concerned about gender diversity and keep striving for equality and the importance of being equal. On the other side, her hiring strategy is to employ who best fits the job rather than choosing which gender to hire. Given those candidates of different gender but with the same qualifications, she would look to hire someone with a more mixed gender. Her definition of leadership is:

"Leadership is important and it's sometimes something you need to nourish every day,

it's like a plant you need to work with. But first I think, as a leader,

it's important for me to think what my values is.

What are my goals for this job and for my team members?

And to create it, I think it's important to create a trustful atmosphere

where people are looking forward to going to the job, they feel secure.

We have guests, we are open 24/7. They feel secure.

And if something comes up, they can always go to their leader

and discuss topics, even topics that are difficult.

So, creating a trustful environment, it's important for me."

While as a leader, she thinks that what they achieved is not just because of her but her whole team. She had a good management team that she needed to build with a set of cultural standards and being a role model to every team member that kept moving forward while staying in the organizational values.

While in the IT industry, R3 thinks women seem more eager to take the stage, although it may take some time. Being an international company with different nationalities, they are open to everyone as their company promotes a "workplace with a safe space for everyone," including gender. They are also trying to be more considerate to everyone on board with all genders, including the "third gender," who needs trust to keep the culture between

management and employees in both directions of trust and safe space for everyone. She considers good leadership to "see and understand all the individual differences and people leading by doing." Having the HR manager position, she believes that in the long run and having enough time with the company, she can build and contribute to making employees happier and safer and keeping people staying. Currently, she thinks that they are missing out on something because of the gender diversity problem and hoping to balance it out a little bit in no time together with the third gender.

While R5 also considers their company open to all genders, the problem was the lack of available hiring candidates and their preference for candidates not specifically on genders. He thinks the IT industry is becoming more open to women but still needs time to have an equal gender environment. And being a senior developer, he believes that:

"I'm trying over the things that I'm developing to

make them as good as possible and try to be as much

as a team player as possible, where I involve other people

and try to not just work by myself, but try to involve the design,

try to involve data, target, try to involve the quality assurance

to make sure that what we are producing is of good quality

and something that helps the users."

R5 also emphasized the possibility of hiring from the underrepresented gender in the industry, given that they have the qualification they need for the job and the best candidate, among others.

4.5.2 Discussion

By (2021) points to reevaluating DAC into PAC ontology, focusing on 'Purpose' rather than 'Direction'. The argument shadows the viewing of "leadership as the responsibility of many, who should work together in pursuit of delivering purpose." The leaders of the hotel industry are aware of the problem of gender diversity within their organizations but have different stands on it. Some leaders highlight their responsibility toward gender balance and how to fix the system. However, some resorts do not have business value or do not know the value of gender diversity in their organization. At the same time, one leader with a high value on PAC

ontology declares the importance of integrating gender diversity as part of their organization's culture as a social issue and for equality and security. This leader is trying to look at how to mix gender in the hotel's maintenance section, which years before could be an awful idea but is acceptable now. Adding to that, the hiring of new women for their kitchen team, which she considers a male-dominated area in the organization, and the restaurant manager believes heavy work can also be work for women. These statements provide equal opportunities and rights for women.

On the other hand, PAC ontology speaks about the collective process; the leadership support to its existing employees provides equality not only in gender but also in different demographics, as mentioned. But speaking on the hiring process of this industry is somehow skewed with the filtering of gender amongst candidates conflicts with the traits of gender diversity, equal rights, and opportunities. However, sometimes this happens to keep the gender balance; some leaders are using this hiring strategy to keep on one gender which leads to gender bias.

Stirring to the IT industry, the collective process of leadership focus on providing the workplace with a safe space as the focus of equality and a trustful environment for all demographics, including gender. Sighting at the importance of the need to diversify gender in the industry and welcome gender from the underrepresented group, R3 emphasized the possibility of shifting the ratio to near equal with both genders, including the third gender in their organization. The concentrated gender in this industry is not because of filtration in their hiring process but the lack of candidates. However, they have tried employing outside the country, and some barriers affect this process comes out to a decision not considering it. The barriers are more on external processes, making them hard to employ from other nations and cost a lot. Choi and Rainey (2010) agrees with this leadership behavior, as gender cultivating inclusive organizational culture creates plays an additional strategic role in the organization.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews are presented together with the discussions considering the relevant literature on leadership ontologies (Tripod, DAC, and PAC) in connection to gender diversity and the research question. This chapter also visually presented all content analysis views on the essential aspects under themes' data findings and discussions.

5. CONCLUSION

Rost (1991) points out leadership theories that "there has been very little difference between our concepts, models, and practices of management development and those of leadership development."

This dissertation aims to contribute to leadership theory and unveil "Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage." The research aims and objectives have been seen, with the relevant theories, addressing methodological choices, and exploring ontological leadership by linking the literature reviews and the research findings. This dissertation has been written to challenge the three leadership ontologies introduced in connection with the integration of gender diversity, the data gathered from the respondents, and the discussion of the findings.

This dissertation discusses leadership behaviors from the tripod ontology to DAC to PAC. The basics of the leadership ontologies and gender diversity shown in Table 4.1 will challenge the claims that gender diversity is commonly distinct for women (Catalyst, 2020) and acceptance is based on industries and countries (Zhang, 2020) with the help of Tripod, DAC, and PAC (By, 2021; Drath et al., 2008)y.

Leadership under tripod ontology is the most common leadership behavior with the leadership skills and knowledge towards followers and shared goals (Drath et al., 2008). In integrating gender diversity with the tripod process, leadership influences most of its integration and expects followers and shared goals to follow. The findings show results on how gender diversity is carried by leaders in the hotel industry, concentrating the industry will one gender in every sector of its organization, with only one sector standing out as being gender diverse. This leadership behavior has two contradicting effects; 1) According to Van Knippenberg and Haslam (2003), gender diversity harms the processes and performance of employees because team members categorize one another on the basis of gender similarity and also harm team commitment; 2) Tajfel et al. (1979) addressed the people's positive perception of social identity, and the tendency to see one's group as better than other groups promotes psychological division and social comparison between an in-group and an out-group. The ERM also falls under tripod ontology as leaders try to contact everyone on what they expect, inducing objectives to employees. This leadership behavior is negatively identified by Kaufman and Kaufman (2009) due to the possibility of overemphasizing, and

most likely strong team members might think leaders as unreliable. While in the IT industry, leaders are trying to implement a safe working environment for employees and acceptance of (gender) diversity and inclusion. The acceptable reason for being a male-oriented industry with fewer female candidates applying eliminated the assumption of concentration in the industry. Therefore, the dissertation concludes that tripod ontology is incorporated in both industries with different effects depending on the implemented leadership process. As to perceived leadership behavior, based on the findings and discussions, the tripod ontology negatively affects the gender diversity integration

The second area of leadership behavior is DAC ontology which focuses on the widespread agreement on the overall goals, mission, and vision, coordination of knowledge and works, and the willingness of each member to subsume their interest, benefiting within collective interest and benefit (Drath et al., 2008). The findings reveal the link between gender diversity and DAC ontology, and the willingness to employ gender diversity in their organization provides a good aspect for the DAC. Leaders believe that employees know how cultural values of the organization in connection to (gender) diversity and inclusion and other parts of the process. The overconfidence of leadership behavior in its norms/ cultural values might be overemphasized and become unreliable (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009) which could affect performance. While in the IT industry, the findings show a well-organized DAC. Leaders show compassion in integrating a gender-diverse workplace and are ready to accept newcomers from the underrepresented group into their company. It is also established how "developers" coordinate work and knowledge in the disposition of results benefiting from the company's system. Although the data shows a limited amount of DAC as the leadership behavior in the IT and hotel industries, as shown in Table 4.2. DAC ontology diversely affected the integration of gender diversity in both industries.

The third area of leadership behavior is PAC ontology which tries to improve DAC ontology by focusing on 'purpose' rather than 'direction.' The leadership view of this ontology is "the responsibility of many, who should work together in pursuit of delivering purpose" (By, 2021). The principle discussed under the findings shows that PAC is integrated into leadership behavior in both industries. The most common integration under the collective process of self-organizing concerns the desire to make a difference. In the hotel industry, leaders tried to implement gender equality within their organization in a way that hasn't had known to have a business value. Other leaders are also trying to keep concentrated gender in the organization to make a difference and believe that a single gender works better. This type

of self-organizing and planning fabricates problems in the issue of gender diversity integration. The gender concentration can be seen in the different areas of the hotel, although the integration of gender diversity in the whole company shows an excellent ratio of almost equal. This leadership behavior could affect gender diversity within teams, as psychological division and social comparison among other teams have the tendency to happen (Tajfel et al., 1979). While looking at the finding for the IT industry, leaders self-desire to make a difference in D & I by integrating all genders within their company and providing safe space to existing employees. And the personal belief of making a difference to become better by involving others as a personal responsibility. The IT industry respondents reflect the multitude of beliefs, understanding, values, views of the world, and unique information on gender diversity integration (Guillaume et al., 2014). The findings show different perspectives under PAC ontology with the integration of gender diversity. Notably, leadership self-organizing, the desire to make a difference, and the collective pursuit of delivering on purpose affect the collective process.

In essence, Catalyst (2020) introduction of having women commonly the subject of gender diversity is not relevant to this study, as seen in the findings that some industries concentrate gender purposedly for women. While Zhang (2020) explains that gender diversity acceptance is based on industries and countries, this literature has seen in the findings of this study that some industries prefer to concentrate on gender integration. Some are willing to diverse the gender. The tripod ontology affects harder in this issue as this is the most common behavior among leaders. The DAC ontology positively affects both industries, which can easily conclude that DAC's goal-orientation influences this issue extensively. While PAC ontology's only concern is self-organizing, leaders are trying to search for meaning in a way that skews the purpose of the collective process. Thus, the introduction of Figure 3 as the process for PAC leadership behavior is needed.

To conclude, gender diversity is not new to leaders in both industries. Although both are trying to raise the issue, only one industry is trying to integrate gender diversity into its organization, while the other is still accepting gender diversity. The findings show leadership behavior doesn't come collectively from organization to organization neither industry to industry, but rather individual beliefs to collective beliefs as introduced in DAC (Drath et al., 2008) and PAC (By, 2021).

5.1 Management Implication

This study can help the leadership of the hotel industry in the Nordic region, especially from the leaders' perspective regarding Diversity and Inclusion (D & I). D&I have become a significant concern for the leadership in the hotel industry. Although they have a collective diversity, as per teams/ departments, they have limited diversity practices, especially regarding gender. One of the findings concerning gender diversity is "tokenism" (Bear et al., 2010), employing underrepresented gender merely to improve the gender ratio and giving the impression of equality within the workforce. And gender stereotyping thinks that men and women have many differences in skills and knowledge. It might greatly help to rethink gender diversity practices concerning the hiring process and employee retention.

5.2 Methodological and Theoretical Implications

This study will help to test the present and past leadership theories, as the leadership literature contains a lot of vague and contradicting definitions regarding leadership and gender diversity. Literature shows disagreements regarding leadership and leadership behavior ideas, as in Chapter 2. The same with gender diversity and practices, some authors incorporated in this study have positive effect on gender diversity (Basuil, 2019; Bello et al., 2021; Hoogendoorn et al., 2013; Wilson, 2021), and some has given negative notion on it (Pelled et al., 1999; Van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003; Wegge et al., 2008). In addition, using qualitative data limits the reliability of the study. Combining qualitative and quantitative data can have reliable implications for the study (see Chapter 6).

5.3 Limitations

One limitation of this research is difficulty in data collection. The organizations selected for this study were heavily scheduled to the extent that after seven weeks of interview request, a few participants gave interview schedule due to their busy schedule and infections of covid so the researchers have to look and wait for other participants. This affected the rest of the research as more time was spent on data collection and the researcher could not follow work plan with deadline set by supervisor. Consequently, it might affect the reliability in a negative way, leading to observer and participant biases. Another limitation is the sample size. The plan sample was to interview 12 people from 6 organization: 3 hotels and 3 IT firms, consisting of CEO's and General Managers but the achieved sample was 7 and only 1

General Manager of a hotel was interviewed which organization "C" which limited the research to gain a clear view of leaders. Also, as only one sample from IT firm was collected, this could affect the result from organization "A" and it can affect the generalization of the results to all IT sector in Stavanger. Last but not the least, as this dissertation is conducted over a relative short time span, but the leadership phenomenon can go deeper, a combination of a qualitative and quantitative data could reflect more reliability of the research.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in this dissertation, recommendations are suggested for **students**; illustrates recommended future research and **leadership practitioners**, the value of leadership ontology, and gender diversity under Table 6.1 and Table 6.2, respectively.

Table 6.1. Recommendations for Students

	Recommendations for Students	Where?
1.	Conduct multiple case studies to research this view of ontological leadership more in-depth in different industries to square various similarities and differences in the results.	Chapter 2.3.2: Towards an Alternative Leadership Ontology
2.	Incorporate different barriers as one of the possible reasons for gender concentration in an organization.	See Chapter 4.5.2: Discussion
3.	Further research on the study of the different ontologies about another side of the service industry.	See Figure 4: An emerging Gender diversity and Leadership model
4.	Do further study of the integration of gender diversity under gender non-concentrated industries.	See Chapter 5: Conclusion
5.	Further research on the study using the TLL principle.	See Figure 3: TLL and PAC model. By (2021)
6.	Conduct quantitative and qualitative data collection to have a reliable finding.	Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Chapter 5.2: Methodological and Theoretical Implications

Table 6.2. Recommendations for Practitioners

	Recommendations for Practitioners	**Where?**
1.	Have an identified and communicated collective purpose.	Chapter 2.3.2: Towards an alternative leadership ontology
2.	Utilize the hiring process to ensure equality and opportunities	See Chapter 2.4: Gender Diversity and Leadership, Chapter 2.3: Leadership, and Chapter 2.5.1: Social identity theory and self-categorization theory
3.	Try to acquire a different leadership behavioral approach. - Tripod - DAC - PAC	Chapter 2.3.1: Limitation of the traditional leadership ontology, Chapter 2.3.2: Towards an alternative leadership ontology, and Figure 3: TLL and PAC model. By (2021)
4.	Incorporating gender diversity as a competitive advantage.	Chapter 2.2.1: The competitive advantage of Gender Diversity in the workplace, Chapter 2.4: Gender diversity and leadership, Figure 4: An emerging Gender diversity and Leadership model

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix A: NSD Application Attachment

<div align="center">

Are you interested in taking part in the research project?

"Exploring leadership behavior in support of gender diversity as a competitive advantage: A case study on Nordic service industry"

</div>

Purpose of the project
The objective of the thesis will be to examine the leadership perspective towards gender diversity in workplace and determine possible alternatives on procedures and practices within gender diversity management in Nordic service industry. This led to the research question Which leadership behaviors support gender diversity to achieve competitive advantage?

Who is responsible for the research project?
Norsk Hotelhøgskole, University of Stavanger

Why are you being asked to participate?

This study will interview top leaders of 2 large hotels and 1 IT (Information Technology) firms of Stavanger but the number of the sample may change during the study. The criteria of selecting the leaders of those companies are 1) minimum 10 years of leadership experience and currently working in an executive position 2) The company has a diversified workforce. The informants or leaders' age will be between 35 to 70. The contact number of the participants have been collected from the company website.

What does participation involve for you?
The interviews are planned to be performed face to face but depending on the corona situation it can be conducted by video conference. The respondents will be sent the interview guide consisting of the questions beforehand, so that they could approach the interview as prepared as possible. Each interview will be scheduled to last between 20-40 minutes and information will be recorded by sound recording.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If the participants chose to participate, they can withdraw the consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about them will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- the student and supervisor in connection with University of Stavanger will have access to the personal data.
- The name and contact details will be replaced with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

The participants will not be recognizable in publications. Personal information (e.g. age, occupation) will be published.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end at 15.08.2022. At the end of the project, sound recordings and personally identifiable information will be removed.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with *University of Stavanger]*, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- *University of Stavanger* via Rune Todnem By.
- Our Data Protection Officer: Trude Furunes
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Rune Todnem By   **Tanha Rashid**   **Rovin Casaman Superal**
Project Leader   Student   Student
(Researcher/supervisor)

Consent form

Consent can be given in writing (including electronically) or orally. NB! You must be able to document/demonstrate that you have given information and gained consent from project participants i.e. from the people whose personal data you will be processing (data subjects). As a rule, we recommend written information and written consent.

- *For written consent on paper you can use this template*
- *For written consent which is collected electronically, you must chose a procedure that will allow you to demonstrate that you have gained explicit consent (read more on our website)*
- *If the context dictates that you should give oral information and gain oral consent (e.g. for research in oral cultures or with people who are illiterate) we recommend that you make a sound recording of the information and consent.*

If a parent/guardian will give consent on behalf of their child or someone without the capacity to consent, you must adjust this information accordingly. Remember that the name of the participant must be included.

Adjust the checkboxes in accordance with participation in your project. It is possible to use bullet points instead of checkboxes. However, if you intend to process special categories of personal data (sensitive personal data) and/or one of the last four points in the list below is applicable to your project, we recommend that you use checkboxes. This because of the requirement of explicit consent.

I have received and understood information about the project *[insert project title]* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in *(insert method, e.g. an interview)*
- ☐ to participate in *(insert other methods, e.g. an online survey) – if applicable*
- ☐ *for my/my child's teacher to give information about me/my child to this project (include the type of information)– if applicable*
- ☐ *for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable*
- ☐ *for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (describe in more detail)– if applicable*
- ☐ *for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (insert purpose of storage e.g. follow-up studies) – if applicable*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. *[insert date]*

(Signed by participant, date)

8.2 Appendix B. Interview Guide

Interview objective: Leadership is the collective pursuit of delivering on purpose (By 2021, p.1) which does not focus only on leaders, followers and common goal. Leaders' beliefs and experiences play an important role in how they implement diversity efforts (Plaut, Sanchez-Burks, & Stevens, 2008) to make changes in the workplace. According to social identity theory, individuals' attitudes and beliefs about gender predict their valuation of diversity better than their gender. Therefore, this interview seeks to achieve an understanding the leadership perspective towards gender diversity in workplace and determine possible alternatives on leadership practices within gender diversity management in Nordic service industry.

Introduction: We, Tanha Rashid and Rovin Casaman Superal, as part of our master's in Service Leadership in International Business at the University of Stavanger. We are doing a dissertation in which we seek to gain a more scientific understanding of the perception of the leaders when it comes to implement gender diversity in the organization. This thesis will be supervised by Professor of Leadership, Rune Todnem By, at the University of Stavanger.

What does it mean for you to participate?

The method in this thesis will be semi-structured interview. If you choose to participate, it will involve participating to an interview in April/May, 2022. The interview will be held between you and us. We are going to take a sound recording of the interview. The interview will last for approximately 20-30 minutes. The answers will be used to form the basis for the analysis for the thesis. The audio recording will be deleted when the project is completed.

Participation is voluntary

Participation to the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can choose to withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All information about you will then be anonymized. It will not have any negative consequences for you if you do not want to participate or later choose to withdraw.

Your privacy - how we store and use your information

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have stated in this letter. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy policy. Those who want access to the information will only be us and our supervisor Rune Todnem By. All

personal data will be separate from other data and will be locked throughout the project. The collected data will not be able to be connected to the respondents or the workplace. The research project lasts until 15.87.2022. When the project is completed, personal data and recordings will be deleted.

Your rights

As long as you can be identified in the data material you are entitled to:

• Insight into what personal information is registered about you

• obtaining personal information about you

• have personal information about you deleted

• get a copy of your personal data (data portability)

• to submit a complaint to the Privacy Ombudsman or the Data Inspectorate regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process personal information about you?

We process information about you based on your consent. On behalf of the Norsk Hotelhøgskole, the Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (NSD) has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Where can I find out more? If you have questions about the thesis, or wish to exercise your rights, please contact: Handelshøgskolen at UiS Rune Todnem By, by e- mail: rune.t.by@uis.no. You can also contact the Norwegian Center for Research Data AS (NSD) at e-mail: personvernombudet@nsd.no or phone: 55 58 21 17.

Kind regards

Tanha Rashid & Rovin Casaman Superal

Interview questions

Interviewee's perception

1. What is the current gender ratio in your company?

       I.   How would you describe the general atmosphere within your company with respect to gender diversity?

      II.   How would you describe the general atmosphere within the industry with respect to gender diversity?

2. Do you have any specific gender diversity management practices?

3. Do you have any example of how gender diversity management is supported as a priority by top management?

4. How would you describe gender diversity practices currently within your organization?

5. If any, what kind of challenges are you facing because of the of gender diversity practice, and what are those?

6. How do you define leadership?

7. What are the main factors that helped you attain to be in your position today??

      I.   What are the greatest challenges you have overcome to advance to this position today?

8. How do you think your presence as a leader impacts the performance of the company?

9. Do you think we are missing out currently by not maximizing the talents of both genders? If any, what are we missing out on?

10. Do you think there is room to improve the level of gender diversity?

11. What is one thing you can do to positively impact gender diversity in your organization?

General information of the participant:

1. Age:

2. Gender:

3. Position:

4. Education:

5. How long have you been employed in this company?

6. Ratio of male and female in the company: