

Exploring the role of personality in the recruitment process

How a high person-supervisor fit affects job seekers' intention to accept a job offer.

Master Thesis submitted to the University of Bern

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Preface

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Summary and Results

In the late 1990s, the global shortage of executive talent, commonly denoted as the “War for Talent”, was prevalent (Chambers et al., 1998). Consequently, it achieved increased scholarly attention and the need for deeper knowledge to develop successful hiring and employer branding strategies arose. Scientists aimed to investigate various aspects of the recruitment process and to formulate hiring and employer branding strategies necessary to attract the right people for the job. Set in this context, this master thesis builds on existing literature by analyzing the importance of the *person-supervisor fit*, which assesses the compatibility between an individual and their supervisor, in the recruitment process. This was done by examining the influence of the person-supervisor fit on the job seekers’ intention to accept a job offer. The person-supervisor fit was specifically broken down to the personality fit between job seekers’ and leaders’ personality traits. Based on the implicit leadership theory (ILT) and the similarity-attraction theory (SAT), two hypotheses were developed. The first hypothesis assumed that the better a leader corresponds to the job seeker’s prototype (ideal) leader, the higher the intention to accept a job offer. The second hypothesis proposed that the better a potential leader’s personality corresponds to the job seeker’s personality, the higher the intention to accept a job offer.

A survey consisting of two standardized questionnaires and six vignette descriptions was sent to university students throughout Switzerland. The results indicate that there is a tendency towards an increased intention to accept if the personality traits of the job seeker, respectively the job seeker’s prototype leader correspond to the actual leader. When investigating the relationship between prototype leader and actual potential leader, all results show significant positive effects. For the relationship between the job seeker’s own personality and the potential leader, effects were significantly positive for four out of six analyzed personality traits. Results were positive but not significant for agreeableness and neuroticism. Based on the regression results, the first hypothesis was confirmed. The second hypothesis could only be partially confirmed. Yet, there were significant positive results for a part of the relationships. This leads to the conclusion that, according to this master thesis’ analysis, a high perceived person-supervisor fit for personality traits appears to have some positive effect on job seekers’ intention to accept a job offer. Thus, the results suggest that

considering and promoting the importance of a personality fit in the recruitment process could increase the chance of job offer acceptance.

Key Words: War for Talent, recruitment, person-supervisor fit, personality, Big Five, Public Service Motivation

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Index of Abbreviations

Adj. R ²	Adjusted R Square
AGFI	Adjusted goodness of fit index
CFI	Comparative fit index
CI	Confidence interval
Consc.	Conscientiousness
CV	Control variable
DF	Degrees of freedom
DV	Dependent variable
e.g.	Exempli gratia (for example)
GFI	Goodness of fit index
GOF	Goodness of fit
H	Hypotheses
Highest e.q.	Highest educational qualification
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource management
ID	Independent variable
ILT	Implicit leadership theory
LMX	Leader-member exchange
n	Number of subjects
p.	Page
PS fit	Person-supervisor fit
PSM	Public Service Motivation
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SAT	Similarity-attraction-theory
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error of mean
Sig.	Significance
SRMR	Standardized root mean square residual
Std. β	Standardized coefficient Beta
TDA	Trait descriptive adjectives
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index

Var.

VIF

Variance

Variance inflation factor

1. Introduction

1.1 Initial Situation and Problem

More than two decades ago, a group of McKinsey consultants announced an ongoing “War for Talent” by stating that many American employers were struggling with a shortage of executive talent (Chambers et al., 1998). However, War for Talent is not only an issue for American employers but is considered to be a global matter (Collings et al., 2019). As according to Chambers et al. (1998), in order to attract desired employees, the employer brand needs to be aligned with the people it wants to win over as employees. Since a great job is defined differently by each individual and no company can fit everyone’s expectations and desires, each employer should detect its desired target audience of potential employees (Chambers et al., 1998). As according to several scholars, the goal of recruitment is to find the right person for the job (e.g. Hongal & Kinange, 2020; Mahapatro, 2010; Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2019). First and foremost, the *right people* need to be skilled and talented (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Yet, as Pudjiarti and Hutomo (2019) state, an important qualifier is a good fit between personal characteristics and values of the employee and the company. This is what is referred to as a *person-environment fit* by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005). Because people are compatible with jobs, groups and organizations to different extends, managers are interested in creating a fit between employees and their work environments (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Whenever there is a high fit, the employees’ personalities, needs and values suit those of the organization in which they work. Personal characteristics of both parties, the employee and the organization, are relevant in order to facilitate a high fit (Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2019). Judge and Ferris (1992) investigated this fit in their research. Rather than as a process, they defined *fit* as an outcome of staffing (Judge & Ferris, 1992). This master thesis specifically focuses on the fit between followers and leaders, which is referred to as the *person-supervisor fit* (Potipiroon, 2023).

This master thesis aims to contribute to the issue of War for Talent by analyzing the influence of the person-supervisor fit on job seekers’ intention to accept a job offering. As stated by Lee and Jilke (2023), job choice is a process rather than a one-time event. In this process, job seekers analyze different situational factors that lead to a decision

(Lee & Jilke, 2023). This master thesis' frame is chronologically set towards the end of the job choice process where a job seeker has met their potential future leader through a job interview, has received a job offer but has yet to decide whether or not to accept it.

The War for Talent is a relevant research object because, according to Hongal and Kinange (2020), winning it is an affair of great importance for organizations. They can only deliver high performance if their employees can do so. An organization's talent is its primary source of competitive advantage. As stated by Mahapatro (2010), a company's competitive advantage is built with employees as an asset, because they are the one thing competitors cannot imitate. Hongal and Kinange (2020) consider talent management to be one of the most important HR tasks to meet business demands, which is supported by the results of their study. Companies need good strategies to build competitive advantages if they want to acquire talented and highly qualified employees (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). In a business environment with high competition, organizations need to find solutions to be able to attract, assess, train, and retain employees with success. Therefore, talent management should play a major role in an organization. One task that contributes to good talent management is an effective hiring and employee acquisition process (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). This also includes identifying the right people (Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2019). The hiring process does not only influence organizations' current achievements but also their success in the future. As according to Mahapatro (2010), great recruitment and staffing is based on the understanding that building and cultivating relationships is of the utmost importance. In order to deliver high performance, companies need to find the right people for the right job (Mahapatro, 2010).

As will be further explained in chapter [2.1](#), the recruitment process according to Swider et al. (2015) is a process which consists of multiple stages ([Figure 1](#)). The positioning of this master thesis' framing corresponds to the last step of the process based on the definition by Walker et al. (2013). According to this definition, the last step follows the receipt of a job offer. In this step, job choice occurs (Walker et al., 2013). Therefore, this master thesis' context is to be located within this phase of the recruitment process. This thesis aims to draw on prior discoveries and to investigate job seekers' intention to accept a job offer as a subject to leader personality. The goal is to look at the impact

of leadership on job seekers' decisions by focusing specifically on the role of personality within leadership. According to Andersen (2005), personality plays an important part in the research topic of leadership. It has been the substance of many research projects and has been discussed intensely in the past (Andersen, 2005). However, before continuing, it is necessary to clarify what definition of leadership will be referred to in this master thesis. As summarized by Silva (2016), there is no consensus how leadership should be defined or what it really is. However, Silva (2016) notes that according to empirical results, it most likely depends not only on the leader but also on the followers and on the context (Silva, 2016). Whenever *leadership* is mentioned in this thesis, rather than including informal leadership shared by many different actors as per Tafvelin et al. (2019), it will exclusively refer to a formally designated leader based on their formal position in an organization or a team.

1.2 Research Gaps and Research Question

There is a wide range of studies that have examined antecedents that influence job seekers' decision-making processes, also specifically with regards to the relationship between personality and job choice decision-making (e.g. A. J. Silva & Dias, 2023; Hameduddin & Engbers, 2021; Judge et al., 2002; Ogunfowora, 2014; Saini et al., 2013). Many of the existing studies in the field of leadership and personality apply output variables such as employee performance or employee satisfaction (e.g. Andersen, 2005; Day & Bedeian, 1995; Mihalcea, 2014). These studies are therefore set in a context in which the subjects have already chosen an employer. However, in the case of this master thesis, the context is chronologically set before a job applicant has decided whether to accept a job offer. What is interesting and relevant for this thesis is how personality influences the decision-making process. The goal is to find out if a high perceived person-supervisor fit increases the likelihood that a job seeker will accept a job offer based on the potential future leader's personality. Despite the broad range of research with regards to related topics that has been performed in the past, so far, no research projects have specifically investigated the influence of leader personality and person-supervisor fit on job seekers' intentions to accept a job offer.

According to Jacobsen and Andersen (2015), there is a discrepancy between how leadership is intended (by the leader) and how employees perceive it. The relationship

between leader-intended leadership and employee-perceived leadership is weak and leaders tend to overrate themselves. Jacobsen and Andersen (2015) suggest that, because what really matters for success are the consequences of perceived leadership, future research should pay attention to the way leadership is perceived by the employees. The results of their study show that leader-intended leadership and employee-perceived leadership are two different constructs. Their findings support that, as expected, only employee-perceived leadership but not leader-intended leadership is positively associated with organizational performance. Jacobsen and Andersen (2015) state that these findings show that attention needs to be drawn towards the interpretation of leader-behavior from the employees' perspectives. Therefore, they suggest that as opposed to commonly used methods, instead of only using leader responses, more attention should be paid to employee perception. In order to be able to motivate employees and therefore prompt them to achieve organizational objectives, leaders depend on employees' perception of their leadership. However, Jacobsen and Andersen (2015) emphasize that in order to generalize these results, more evidence is necessary. They retain that research needs to analyze the relationships between leader intentions and employee perceptions in different types of public organizations. This step is necessary to make findings generalizable for all types of organizations (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2015).

In general, according to Vaiman et al. (2021), contributing to the existing research of how employers can succeed in the War for Talent remains relevant over twenty years after its introduction by Chambers et al. (1998). The challenge of recruiting enough talented employees has remained a focal point in research, a concern that has been further intensified in the post COVID-19-era. Indeed, the pandemic has caused many shifts in HR management (HRM) and employment in general (Vaiman et al., 2021). To sum up, the central argument for this research is the following: By analyzing the relationship between perceived person-supervisor fit and job seekers' intention to accept a job offer, this master thesis aims to contribute to the research gap which was pointed out by Jacobsen and Andersen (2015). They emphasized that the perceived leadership from the employee's perspective should be paid attention to in future research. Kong et al. (2021) suggested further research to expand the application of implicit prototype fit in the field of HRM as well.

This master thesis aims to follow this call by Jacobsen and Andersen (2015) by analyzing leader intentions and employee perceptions in the context of the recruitment process. As argued above, in the context of War for Talent, the intention to accept is a relevant subject for further investigation regarding the job seekers' decision-making. To investigate personality and leadership from a new perspective, the following research question results:

Does a high perceived person-supervisor fit between job seeker and potential leader increase the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer?

This master thesis' objective is to expand the pool of research literature in the field of job seekers' decision-making by investigating the relationship between perceived person-supervisor fit and job seekers' intention to accept a job. The goal is to join existing research by drawing on the conclusion made by Jacobsen and Andersen (2015), namely that more research about leader intention and employee perception is necessary. Since this thesis' research objective concerns job seekers' decision-making, the data that is going to be gathered needs to illustrate the job seekers' perspective.

1.3 Positioning within existing Literature

According to Andersen (2005), personality plays an important part in the research topic of leadership. In order to analyze leader personality, this master thesis will draw on two well-established concepts: The Big Five personality factors and Public Service Motivation (PSM). According to De Raad (2000), the Big Five model contains concepts that help describe individuals' personality traits at an abstract level. According to Perry (1996), PSM is based on the theory which states that specific factors are linked to public service. Examples for such factors are the desire to participate in public policy making or being committed to interests of the public (Perry, 1996). PSM has for example been found to be positively correlated to job satisfaction and individual and organizational performance (Ritz, Brewer, et al., 2016).

Additionally, two theories will serve as a base in order to investigate the role of the perceived person-supervisor fit with regards to the influence of leader personality on job seeker's intention to accept: The implicit leadership theory (ILT) and the similarity-

attraction theory (SAT). According to Lord et al. (2020), the ILT suggests that socialization and past experiences with leaders lead to the development of cognitive structures and prototype categories for members of organizations. On account of the features of these categoric structures, people can distinguish leaders from non-leaders (Lord et al., 2020). The SAT, as stated by Abbasi et al. (2022), assumes that there is positive interpersonal attraction between people who are similar with regards to factors such as personality or values (Abbasi et al., 2022).

1.4 Structure and Outlook

The structure of this master thesis will be as follows: After the [first chapter](#) introduced the topics and the context of this master thesis, the [second chapter](#) will demonstrate the most relevant concepts with the respective theoretical and empirical background. First, the recruitment process including the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer will be introduced. Subsequently, the concept of personality will be explained with the aspects that are relevant for this thesis. This consists of the background of the Big Five model and PSM. Last, the person-supervisor fit will be introduced. This subchapter contains the ILT and the SAT, from which the hypotheses will be derived.

[Chapter 3](#) will in a first step introduce the quantitative research method that was chosen for this thesis. There will be an overview of the measurements for all the variables. Last, it will explain how the data will be collected and analyzed. In [chapter 4](#), the research results will be presented for each hypothesis. The implications of the results for theory and practice will be discussed in [chapter 5](#). Finally, [chapter 6](#) consists of a reflection of the research results and will discuss its limitations. Further, research gaps will be pointed out to make propositions for future research. The thesis will be completed with a short summary at the end of [chapter 6](#).

2. Theory

The purpose of the second chapter is to present the relevant concepts that will be discussed in a more detailed manner including the current state of research. First, the ILT and the SAT will be defined within in the context of the person-supervisor fit. Based on this theoretical overview, the hypotheses will be derived. Subsequently, there will be an overview of the links between the separate concepts followed by a visualization of the research model.

2.1 Recruitment Process

As outlined by Alzoubi (2020), the recruitment process consists of a set of activities that organizations use to attract qualified candidates to contribute to the company's goals. This process' objective is to identify the right person and to assign them to the right job (Alzoubi, 2020). Swider et al. (2015) describe recruitment as a dynamic process that includes multiple stages ([Figure 1](#)): In a first step, organizations identify potential employees and try to attract them to apply for the respective job position (Ma & Allen, 2009). Secondly, organizations assess whether applicants are suitable for the job while also aspiring to sustain the applicants' interest (Ma & Allen, 2009). According to Walker et al. (2013), this step includes job interviews, which applicants can use to gather more information in order to gain a better perspective of what working at this company would be like. The last step is job choice which occurs after a job offer has been received (Walker et al., 2013).

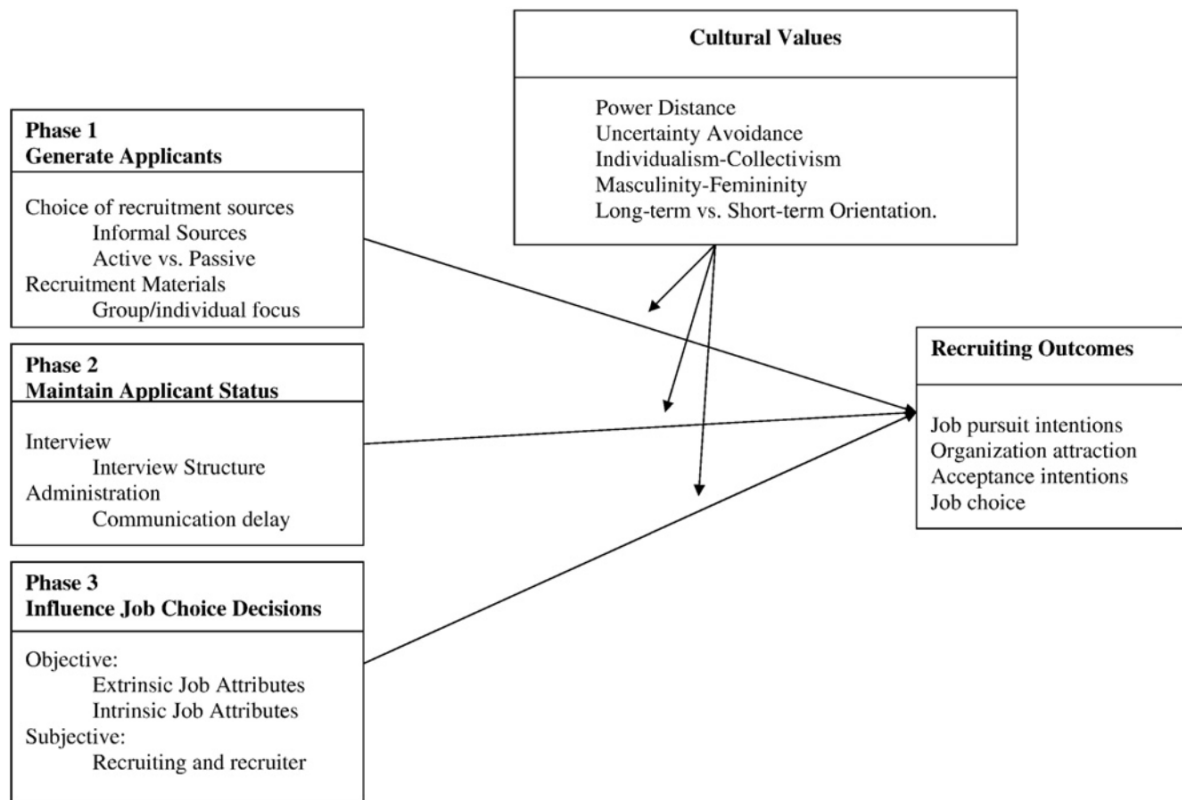


Figure 1: A value-based model of recruitment by Ma and Allen, 2009.

According to McCarthy et al. (2017), applicants' reactions to what happens in the recruitment process have gained of importance in recruitment and selection. Understanding applicants' perception of the recruitment process is substantial for organizations in competitive business environments (McCarthy et al., 2017). Krys and Konradt (2022) for instance investigated how the organizational attractiveness that is perceived by an applicant changes throughout the recruitment process. Their findings show that if an applicant is treated unfairly during the recruitment process and therefore their perception of organizational attractiveness is reduced, this negative effect cannot be fully compensated during the following recruitment stages (Krys & Konradt, 2022). Acikgoz (2019) illustrates the recruitment process as a multi-level model, where applicants constantly receive new information. By combining existing knowledge and experiences regarding the organization with newly perceived information, applicants continuously re-evaluate their perception of the organization throughout the entire recruitment process (Acikgoz, 2019). According to Breugh's (2013) research, at each one of the stages in the recruitment process, applicants constantly try to imagine what it would be like to work at this organization. By doing so, they project such visions

based on their impressions and perceptions of the organization. Job applicants' perception can for example be influenced by the behavior of the recruiter. Breugh (2013) also states that the recruitment process is not linear and goes further than to the point of an application. The process continues dynamically as long as job-seekers and organizations take to reach the employment goals (Breugh, 2013). How the job seeker perceives the organization during the recruitment process is, as according to Carless (2005), a crucial aspect. It influences the likelihood that a job seeker will accept a job offering. Carless (2005) hypothesized that perceived person-job and person-organization fit influence organizational attraction, which was supported by the corresponding research results. However, Carless (2005) further hypothesized organizational attraction to mediate the influence of perceived person-job fit and person-organization fit on the intention to accept a job offer. This hypothesis was only partially supported by the research results. Person-job fit significantly predicted intentions to accept. Indeed, organizational attraction did not significantly predict intentions to accept (Carless, 2005).

2.2 Personality

2.2.1 Personality and Leadership

As a key actor, a leader has a significant influence on how well an organization can fulfill employees' expectations and values (Marstand et al., 2017). Numerous studies have explored factors that influence job seekers' decision-making processes, including the job choice process and how it is affected by different personality factors (e.g. A. J. Silva & Dias, 2023; Hameduddin & Engbers, 2021; Judge et al., 2002; Ogunfowora, 2014; Saini et al., 2013). Many of the existing studies in the field of personality and leadership investigate outcome variables such as employee performance or employee satisfaction (e.g. Andersen, 2005; Day & Bedeian, 1995; Mihalcea, 2014). As an example, Hansen et al. (2020) found empirical support for a positive relationship between charismatic leadership and firm performance. Ogunfowora's (2014) research results support the assumptions of a possible influence of ethical CEOs on prospective job applicants.

2.2.2 Big Five

As explained by Aydogmus et al. (2018), the Big Five factors model is a widely recognized taxonomy consisting of five personality traits that can be used to characterize anyone's personality. According to McCrae and Costa (2008), the Big Five model is a factor analysis that uses groups of related traits to sort variables. The related traits within a group are more or less independent of the other groups but can be used to characterize anyone's personality. The five dimensions of the model are *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *neuroticism*, and *openness*. Individuals with high levels of openness to experience are described as imaginative and curious and are considered to have exploratory tendencies. Agreeableness is characterized by characteristics such as generosity, honesty, and modesty. People scoring high on conscientiousness are hardworking, purposeful, and disciplined. Being sad and scared rather than calm and stable is associated with a high pole of neuroticism. High levels of extraversion are linked to warm, outgoing and cheerful personalities (McCrae & Costa, 2008). According to Rammstedt and John (2005), the Big Five model has become broadly accepted in research. It is applied in research across the borders of personality psychology, such as in the fields of professional success, consumer research or political attitude research (Rammstedt & John, 2005).

According to De Raad (2000), the Big Five model is broadly applied in different fields such as clinical and health psychology. It emerged from the desire to talk about the way people are in a descriptive way and to characterize them with words. One of the first concepts to approach human personality through descriptive language was Norman's Five Factor model from 1963. This version of the Big Five model used adjectives to describe personality. This technique was, however, criticized, because there was a broad spectrum of what the adjectives could mean, which led to the creation of Goldberg's (1992) *Trait Descriptive Adjectives (TDA)* – a list consisting of 100 adjectives which can describe personality. Goldberg created ten bipolar pairs of adjectives for each one of the Big Five factors (Freitag, 2017). Since then, the model has been refined by many researchers, resulting in various standardized questionnaires applied in research (De Raad, 2000).

2.2.3 PSM

Additionally to the Big Five factors, PSM will be included in this master thesis' model as a construct to measure personality factors. According to Ritz, Neumann, et al. (2016), the theoretical perspective of employee motivation in the public sector has been of relevance for many years. The necessity to motivate employees has increased due to scarce financial resources, competition for employees, higher demand of successful retention strategy and complex accountability regimes (Ritz, Neumann, et al., 2016). This concept captures predispositional response to motives that are grounded in public organizations and is referred to as *Public Service Motivation* (PSM) by Perry and Wise (1990). They describe PSM as "(...) an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions." (Perry & Wise, 1990, p.368). According to Perry (1996), the PSM theory assumes that specific factors are linked to the public sector. Such factors are the desire to participate in public policy making or being committed to interests of the public (Perry, 1996). As a response to Perry's (1996) call for more research to close the PSM research gap, Naff and Crum (1999) contributed to the PSM theory with further research: They focused on the question whether such a construct really exists and, if yes, to investigate if it influences employee performance and their attitudes towards work in the public sector. Their results show evidence for the validity of PSM and also reveal significant relationships between PSM and attitudes towards job satisfaction, job performance, thoughts about leaving government and receptiveness to government reinvention efforts (Naff & Crum, 1999).

Besides Naff and Crum (1999), there is a broad range of researchers that have investigated the role of PSM in organizational settings (e.g. Christensen & Wright, 2011; Crewson, 1997; Miao et al., 2019; Vandenabeele, 2009). Crewson (1997) found results indicating that individuals who work in the public sector have indeed different motivations and expectations compared to their private-sector counterparts (Crewson, 1997). Research results by Vandenabeele (2009) deliver further evidence for a robust link between individual PSM and individual performance. Except for *compassion*, every PSM dimension which they tested, showed a significant relationship with self-reported performance (Vandenabeele, 2009). On the other hand, Christensen and Wright (2011) concluded that PSM by itself neither causes an increased likelihood of job

acceptance in the public sector nor an increase of likelihood of job acceptance in the private sector. According to the authors, this does not mean that PSM and person-organization fit are necessarily trivial. However, they suggest that linking PSM and employment sector alone are not enough to identify person-organization fit (Christensen & Wright, 2011).

An example for more current research is a study by Miao et al. (2019). They tested the influence of PSM on organizational identification and how this affects job performance for civil servants in China. The results indicate that organizational identification caused by PSM can explain higher job performance (Miao et al., 2019). To summarize, this short overview of research results points out that there is evidence for significant correlations between the construct of PSM and different output variables such as job performance and employee motivation.

2.3 Person-supervisor fit

As a base for the deduction of the hypotheses, the person-supervisor fit will be further described in this subchapter. This includes the ILT and the SAT, on which the hypotheses will be built. As according to Pudjiarti and Hutomo (2019), a good fit between personal characteristics and values of employee and employer is an essential success factor. Potipiroon (2023) also argues that the person-supervisor fit holds paramount significance among the various types of person-environment fit when investigating leader-follower relationships. This is what is referred to as a *person-environment fit* by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005). Personal characteristics of both parties, the employee and the organization, are relevant in order to facilitate a high fit (Pudjiarti & Hutomo, 2019). As according to Lord et al. (2020), leadership not only consists of how leaders behave and what they do, but also how others perceive such leadership. If a leader is perceived as a leader by their followers, it has an influence on leadership effectiveness and potential. Much research which concerns this phenomenon has focused on implicit leadership theories (Lord et al., 2020), – particularly ILT and SAT, which will be further explained in the following subchapter.

2.3.1 Implicit Leadership Theory

Lord et al. (2020) define the ILT as a cognitive structure that guides the processing of a leader's characteristics. This facilitates an easier derivation of likely behaviors and outcomes. Through socialization and past experiences with leaders, members of an organization create mental categories. These categories contain the characteristics of a prototype leader. The prototype leader is the mental construct of a person who is perceived as the ideal type of a leader by the job seeker. This categorization process enables quick assessments of new leaders' behavioral patterns. The categories incorporate features that differentiate leaders from non-leaders. By doing so, leadership perceivers compare a leader to their ideal leader prototype, categorizing them based on the similarity to their ideal prototype leader (Lord et al., 2020). In the context of the ILT, Lord et al. (2020) state that leadership not only constitutes how a leader behaves and what they do, but also how others perceive their leadership. Consequently, if a leader is perceived as a leader by their followers, this has an influence on leadership effectiveness and its potential, granting access to resources that are critical for themselves and their team. This means that the perception of leadership influences not only individual but also team and even organizational outcomes, such as performance and identification (Lord et al., 2020).

As the large variety of research articles shows, researchers have been interested in the ILT for multiple decades (e.g. Keller, 1999; Kenney et al., 1994; Offermann et al., 1994). As an example, Offermann et al. (1994) aimed to evaluate leader traits that are perceived as positive traits by followers. Keller (1999) also investigated the aspect of personality and analyzed the impact of personality traits on ILT. Keller's (1999) results show that individuals not only look for symmetrical but also for compensatory traits in their ideal leaders. Already in 1994, Kenney et al. (1994) applied the theory that if leaders meet their followers' prototype expectations, they may have a stronger leader influence. Their research aimed to gather a complete and more representative image of the expectations that followers have of new leaders. Their results propose an existence of universal basic-level behavioral expectations that leaders need to fulfill in order to be accepted by their follower-group (Kenney et al., 1994). As opposed to Kenney et al. (1994), more current ILT research tends to deliver results that propose multidirectional and multi-level processes (e.g. Derler & Weibler, 2014; Lord et al.,

2020). Lord et al. (2020) present a model that, rather than solely focusing on the leader's personality traits, combines many factors such as person behavior and features, memory and liking that lead to the rating of leadership (Lord et al., 2020).

Further, prior research has analyzed the influence of congruence between the ideal prototype leader and the actual leader on diverse dependent variables (e.g. Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019; Kong et al., 2021). Such an example is the research by Khorakian and Sharifirad (2019). They intended to investigate the assumption that higher congruence between followers' ILT and supervisors' characteristics increase job performance. According to their results, there is no direct correlation between these two factors. Yet a high congruence does influence job performance when the relationship is mediated by leader-member exchange (LMX) and self-efficacy (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019).

As according to Epitropaki and Martin (2005), LMX is a theoretical and empirical approach with the central premise that in organizational leadership leaders and subordinates create different kinds of relationships between one another. The assumption behind this concept is that supervisors develop close and high-quality relationships with a few of their subordinates. These individuals then belong to the leader's inner circle (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). As an empirical example, the study by Epitropaki and Martin (2005) shows that the lower the prototype difference, the higher the quality of the LMX. The results also show an indirect effect of prototype difference on the outcome variables *employee attitudes* and *employee well-being*. High prototype difference negatively influences LMX. The higher the perceived difference between the manager's profile and the prototype, the worse the quality of the LMX. This negatively influences employee attitudes and well-being (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005).

More evidence for a relationship between prototype fit and certain outcome variables was found by Kong et al. (2021). Their goal was to investigate the importance of fit in personnel selection. They found evidence for an increase of person-supervisor fit caused by employees' perception of implicit leadership prototype fit (Kong et al., 2021). This result creates the basis for the first hypothesis in order to investigate the research question which aims to analyze whether a high perceived person-supervisor fit increases the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. On account of the results of

Kong et al. (2021), there is evidence for a positive relationship between a perceived prototype fit on person-supervisor fit. Therefore, the first hypothesis **H1** is as followed:

The better a leader corresponds to the job seeker's prototype (ideal) leader, the more likely the job seeker is to accept a job offer for the respective job. (Figure 2)

2.3.2 Similarity-attraction Theory

The similarity-attraction theory as according to Van Hoye and Turban (2015) assumes that similarity of aspects such as personality characteristics lead to attraction between individuals (Van Hoye & Turban, 2015). Similarly, Abbasi et al. (2022) stated that people experience positive feelings of attraction when they perceive themselves as similar to others. The effect refers to relationships between individuals and concerns aspects such as personality, values, interests, education, socio-economic backgrounds or age (Abbasi et al., 2022).

According to C. Goldberg et al. (2008), relational demography research proposes that similarities between individuals have a positive influence on work outcomes. However, prior to the study by C. Goldberg et al. (2008), research had mostly investigated the similarity effect from the supervisor's perspective. C. Goldberg et al. (2008) state that social exchanges are a two-way construct and therefore both perspectives are relevant for research. Accordingly, they focused their study on the influence of an individual's similarity to their supervisor on how the individual perceives leadership effectiveness. However, the findings provide limited empirical support for their hypothesis. This anticipates that the similarity between supervisors and subordinates would positively affect subordinates' perceptions of their supervisor's leadership skills. Further research was necessary to investigate this manner (C. Goldberg et al., 2008). As an example, Bakar and McCann (2014) performed a study based on similarity-attraction theory and LMX theory. They analyzed the influence of dyadic relational demography on the evaluation of relationships and key organizational outcomes by supervisors and subordinates in Malaysia. Their first set of hypotheses predicts a positive effect of ethnic, religion, and gender similarity on LMX quality dimensions. The second set of hypotheses predicts a positive effect of age and tenure dissimilarity on the LMX quality dimensions. Results show that ethnicity and gender similarity in relationships between

supervisor and subordinate have a positive influence on the perceived LMX quality (Bakar & McCann, 2014).

Further, Van Hove and Turban (2015) extended prior research by testing predictions from SAT and the trait activation theory. They applied three personality traits of the Big Five model (conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion) in order to analyze the relationship between personality traits and organizational attractiveness. They examined whether an applicant-employee fit has an influence on how attractive an organization is perceived by its employees. The results show that employees who possess personality traits that are highly valued by the organization prefer organizations with similar personality traits. However, there is no influence on organizational attractiveness when applicants have few valued personality traits (Van Hove & Turban, 2015). Current research by Abbasi et al. (2022) conducted a literature review of 49 empirical studies which investigated hypotheses regarding SAT in organizational settings. They summarized that the results of these studies support the validity of similarity-attraction and that it is a fundamental factor that drives employees' behavior (Abbasi et al., 2022). These empirical results show that similarity between individuals indeed influence different output variables, which leads to the following hypothesis **H2**:

The better a potential leader's personality corresponds to the job seeker's personality, the more likely the job seeker is to accept an offer for the respective job. (Figure 2)

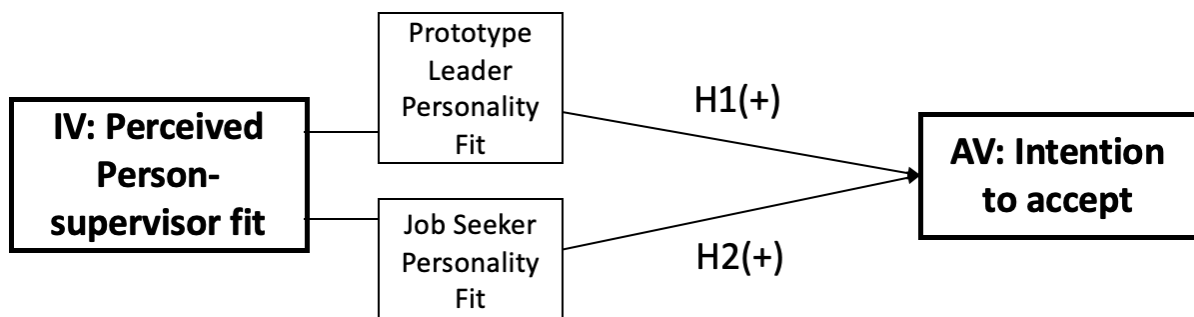


Figure 2: Self-provided visualization of the research model.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Quantitative Research

To address the research question and investigate the hypotheses of this master thesis, a quantitative research approach was employed. As according to Ahmad et al. (2019), the objective of quantitative research is to analyze cause and effect relationships between variables. Because this method applies mathematical, computational and statistical methods, effects can be accurately measured (Ahmad et al., 2019). This is supported by Stockemer (2019), who states that quantitative research helps to numerically describe phenomena and that it is the primary tool to establish empirical relationships (Stockemer, 2019). Additionally, the analysis of results can be simplified by using raw data to construct graphs and tables (Ahmad et al., 2019). Because quantitative research's inquiry is result-oriented (Ahmad et al., 2019), it can be considered as the appropriate method for this master thesis. It aims to analyze the results of the person-supervisor fit with respect to job seekers' intention to accept rather than focusing on the process itself. Therefore, a quantitative study is suitable in this case. However, according to Stockemer (2019), quantitative methods are less suitable to explain the reasons of correlations. A disadvantage of this method is that it is not ideal to explain reasons for possible correlations between the IV and the DV. Nevertheless, this thesis' main objective is not to look for possible reasons and explanations but to look for the existence of possible correlations between the variables. Therefore, it will not be affected by this downside of the method.

As according to Stockemer (2019), contrary to quantitative methods, qualitative research plays an important part in theory building. Prior research has already generated abundant theories and empirical data. Such data is applied as the theoretical base of this master thesis. It was deployed to derive the hypotheses. According to Ahmad et al. (2019), while qualitative research generates hypotheses, quantitative research is applied to test hypotheses (Ahmad et al., 2019). The aim of this thesis is to test hypotheses that were generated based on prior research. Therefore, the use of quantitative methods is justified. Another argument in favor of the use of quantitative methods in this thesis is that its goal is to generate objective results.

Objective results can contribute to a better understanding of the relevance of personality in the recruitment process. As according to Ahmad et al. (2019), quantitative research follows an objective approach and therefore meets the needs of this thesis' research objectives.

3.1.2 Experiment

The quantitative analysis was implemented with the help of validated questionnaires and vignette descriptions. The questionnaires enabled data gathering regarding job seeker and leader personality. The vignette method was applied as a tool to measure the survey participants' job acceptance intention based on the potential leaders' personalities. According to Boßow-Thies and Gansser (2022), experimental designs are necessary to test causal correlations. This is the case, because strictly speaking they cannot be analyzed solely with the help of surveys or observations. It takes a design that allows to calculate the influences on the dependent variable (DV). Therefore, additionally to the standardized personality questionnaires, another data collection method was a scenario-based role-playing experiment (SBRP) as defined by Rungtusanatham et al. (2011). Rungtusanatham et al. (2011) describe the data collection method in the SBRP experiment as a reliable survey approach where participants are given a predefined role and scripted information, to which they are asked to respond. This way, realistic situations can be simulated (Rungtusanatham et al., 2011). Polyviou et al. (2018) state that in a SBRP experiment, vignette descriptions are used to mimic reality as closely as possible. Survey participants find themselves in an assumed role and are asked to react to the information provided in the vignette description. The SBRP experiment method allows to collect judgements, preferences and decisions (Polyviou et al., 2018). This experimental method was applied in this thesis to simulate a job interview situation and to retrieve subjects' reactions to the situation in order to collect data about their leader personality preferences.

As a base of the construction of this master thesis' research model, Ogunfowora's (2014) model was used as a source of inspiration. Ogunfowora's (2014) research analyzed similar variables and its research questions illuminated a resembling area of investigation as the one addressed in this master thesis. The method that was applied was shown to deliver reliable results. Ogunfowora' (2014) tested the likelihood for a

job seeker's application depending on the ethical behavior of the company's CEO with a field experiment. The purpose of the experiment was to compare how ethical, unethical and neutral (unknown ethical level) CEO behavior influenced the likelihood that the experiment participants will apply for a job (Ogunfowora, 2014). This model can be compared to this thesis regarding the DV which in both cases investigates decisions made by job seekers within the job search and the recruitment process. Another similarity is that the participants' decisions were determined by aspects which concern the leader. Ogunfowora's (2014) experiment was set at a job fare. They simulated a speech by a fictional firm's CEO. Fare participants were questioned as participants of the experiment. They were asked to respond to questions regarding the likelihood that they would apply for a job at this company based on the speech that was shown on a screen at the fare (Ogunfowora, 2014). In order to make this method suitable for this master thesis, it was transformed into a SBRP experiment. Instead of the speech videos there were vignette descriptions. These served the same purpose as the video sequences in Ogunfowora's (2014) study: to introduce a potential leader with the traits that define the IV, which, in this case, is the perceived person-supervisor fit. The vignettes were used to present the simulated situation to the survey participants.

3.1.3 Vignette Method

The vignette method has been in use for collecting research data for over 50 years (Erfanian et al., 2020). According to Erfanian et al. (2020), the vignette method is an effective tool to collect research data if great attention is paid to the accurate design of a vignette study and its validity. The purpose of the vignette method is to confront the participants of a research project with a presumptive situation and to collect their responses to that situation. A vignette can for instance be presented through text but also through moving pictures or cartoons (Erfanian et al., 2020). As defined by Finch (1987), vignette studies are «(...) short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond.» (Finch, 1987, p. 105). This definition is yet valid for the contemporary use of vignettes, e.g. it is used to summarize the purpose of the vignette method by Erfanian et al. (2020). They further summarized that vignettes include short descriptions of distinct scenarios in which participants are asked for their viewpoint or to make statements

with regards to the situation described in the vignette. The results of the study by Erfanian et al. (2020) show that the vignette technique can be an efficient tool to extract knowledge, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions and dispositions of participants. It can help to encounter complex issues and to measure emotions of participants that arise when they are confronted with the situations described in the vignette (Erfanian et al., 2020). Christensen and Wright (2011) applied the vignette method in a study for a similar subject area as this master thesis. They investigated the influence of PSM on person-job and person-organization fit. By creating a vignette survey, they constructed hypothetical situations which they used to interrogate students about their decisions regarding hypothetical job offers (Christensen & Wright, 2011). The following subchapter will demonstrate how this was applied in the case of this master thesis.

3.2 Sample and Survey Participants

For this study's purpose, a particular demographic was targeted to construct a sample that mirrors the population, which consists of job seekers in Switzerland. The sample comprises students of Swiss universities, Swiss teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) and Swiss schools of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), regardless of their degree or subject. A student sample was chosen for multiple reasons. First, because students will be confronted with job search within the next years or already have experienced job search. Therefore, there is a high chance that they either have already been in a situation similar to the SBRP experiment or will be confronted with it in the near future. On the other hand, this sample was chosen for practical reasons. In the context of a master thesis, the access to diverse channels to share the survey with students is realistic. It needs to be noted that this is a convenience sample. As according to Hanel and Vione (2016), student samples are controversial. An advantage of student samples is the facility to recruit them. Additionally, because of lower administration costs and because students are assumed to have a lower response bias, student samples are commonly used in psychological studies. On the other hand, there are concerns regarding student sample representativeness, generalizability, and comparability of results. In average, students are thought to be more homogenous than non-student survey participants (Hanel & Vione, 2016). There are that student samples have the risk of creating biases, because

students for instance tend to have stronger cognitive skills and less crystalized attitudes (e.g. Gallander Wintre et al., 2001; Sears, 1986). Hanel and Vione (2016) tested students across 59 countries and twelve variables. Their results show that student samples are just as heterogenous as the general public. This suggests that student samples are moderately accurate estimations for the representative sample (Hanel & Vione, 2016).

However, these results contradict findings of previous research such as Peterson (2001). Peterson's (2001) research results implicate that college student subjects should be used with caution when following the purpose of producing universal research results (Peterson, 2001). Also Henrich et al. (2010) state that there is potentially a broad-ranging variation among populations and that research projects should therefore collect data among diverse populations (Henrich et al., 2010). The population in this case includes all job seekers in Switzerland. Because the outcomes may depend on differences such as cultural biases, the results will possibly not be applicable to other countries. To summarize, it must be pointed out that this sample was chosen for its feasibility. Due to disagreements in prior research (e.g. Hanel & Vione, 2016; Henrich et al., 2010; Peterson, 2001) with regards to generalizability of student samples, it is thus not possible to transfer the results of this master thesis to the general public with certainty. This limitation will be further discussed in the [last chapter](#) of this thesis.

A convenient advantage of student samples is that diverse ways to access the field were available. The survey was distributed to all students of the master's degree *Public Management and Policy* through the corresponding administration at the Universities of Bern, Lausanne and Lugano. The link for the survey was also shared through the author's personal profiles on LinkedIn and Instagram in order to reach even more students and create more awareness for the study. On Facebook, it was shared within groups with student members. Additionally, the snowball principle was applied as according to Parker et al. (2019), social networks can be used to establish initial links. This method begins by contacting a small number of initial contacts. They are asked to participate in the research and to recommend it to others (Parker et al., 2019). For this master thesis, this implicates that the online survey was sent to personal contacts. Additionally, the Career Service of the University of Bern was contacted with the request to send mass mails to all students of the university. However, they declined

the request. The same request was sent to ZIB (*Zulassung, Immatrikulation und Beratung*) but was declined with the explanation that this service is only accessible starting at Ph.D. level.

In order to ensure that only students participate in the survey, there was a question in the first part of the survey asking participants whether or not they were currently registered at one of the three institution types of universities, teacher training colleges and schools of applied sciences. As an incentive, all survey participants were able to enter a contest to win one out of five gift cards worth CHF 20 each for the food delivery service *eat.ch*. The sample is considered a random sample as it was not aimed to match the population characteristics in a representative way (Stockemer, 2019). Because the survey was distributed through social media, personal contacts, and university administrations, it was not possible to control the characteristics of the participants and therefore it is not a representative sample. However, because it is a random sample, this means that it is also not a biased sample (Stockemer, 2019) and therefore a bias resulting from the way of the choice of subjects can be precluded. However, statistical imprecision is to be expected, since the sample will not be able to completely represent the population (Stockemer, 2019). The specific demographic composition of the sample will be discussed in chapter [4.1](#).

To define the minimum sample size, a power analysis was performed. According to Ellis (2010), including effect size in the analysis reduces a source of bias. If the effect size is not considered, there is an increased risk that results are wrongly interpreted as statistically significant. Statistical power indicates the likelihood that an effect will be detected when there actually is a genuine effect. Insufficient power increases the risk of a Type II error (false negative), which means that there is an effect, but it is not found. This would lead to the mistake that a null hypothesis is falsely not rejected. On the other hand, Type I error (false positive) must be avoided as well. This error occurs when an effect is found that is not genuine. In such cases, the null hypothesis would be falsely rejected. Since it is not possible to forecast which error is more likely in many cases, there is a need for an insurance policy that covers both Type I and Type II errors. This is why statistical power is an important indicator. It refers to the probability that a genuine effect will be correctly detected. A larger sample means there is more

statistical power. If the sample is too small, there is not enough power to reject the null hypothesis. However, in order to conduct an ethically responsible study, the sample should not be too large in a way that it would needlessly waste resources (Ellis, 2010). In order to define the minimum sample size that should be applied in this case, Ellis' (2010) table of minimum sample size was deployed. This presumes that the desired power and the desired effect size are defined a priori (Ellis, 2010). In the case of this master thesis, a power of 0.8 and an effect size of 0.5 were targeted. According to Fisher (1958), the significance level alpha is conventionally set at 0.5. This value indicates that the probability of a Type I error will not exceed 5%. As stated by Ellis (2010), there is not one appropriate level of power, but according to Cohen (1988), a power of 0.8 is suggested to balance the risks of Type I and Type II errors. Combined with Fisher's (1958) alpha-significance criterion of 0.5, this resulted in the *five-eighty-convention*. According to Ellis (2010), this indication should be diligently pondered for each individual case. Ideally, the best way is to find a balance that individually fits each study (Ellis, 2010). However, in the case of this master thesis, the established practice of the five-eighty-convention is maintained. According to Ellis (2010), for a power of 0.8 and an effect size of 0.5, the minimum sample size is 128 for a two-tailed test. The power of 0.8 indicates that there is a chance of 80% that a real effect is detected. The probability of a Type II error lies at 20%. The table by Ellis (2010), which can be found in the [appendix](#), indicates a minimum sample size of 128 for a power of 0.8 and a significance level of 0.5 when the goal is to detect a statistically significant difference between two group means and when two-tailed tests are performed (Ellis, 2010). With a total of 197 subjects that ultimately were included in the analysis, the minimum of 128 was surpassed.

3.3 Operationalization and Measurements

The variables perceived person-supervisor fit and intention to accept are latent which makes it necessary to first define measurement methods for both. Standardized questionnaires that have been tested and validated exist for both The Big Five model (e.g. Rammstedt & John, 2005) and for PSM (e.g. Coursey & Pandey, 2007). Building upon these existing questionnaires, the perceived person-supervisor fit was measured with the data concerning subjects' own personalities and their prototype leader personalities. The intention to accept was measured by asking the participants to rate

the likelihood for job acceptance with the help of the vignette method and a five-point Likert scale (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely). Before the survey form was constructed, a breakdown of all the variables and their coding was created with the help of a codebook (Boßow-Thies & Gansser, 2022). The codebook can be consulted in the [appendix](#).

To construct the survey form, the tool *Unipark* was applied. It was chosen as an alternative to the open-source tool *GoogleForms*, because *GoogleForms* did not allow to randomize a chosen set of questions. As another advantage, this application allows to code the items within the program and therefore the exported files already contain the variable values. It additionally offers a broad range of field report data, such as indications of how many subjects opened the survey form, how many of them finished the survey, and what website the subjects were linked to the survey from. The survey was constructed as follows: It was introduced by a welcome page which summarized the context of the survey within a few sentences. It defined the target group of the survey and emphasized that the survey would take a maximum of fifteen minutes to complete and that participants could participate in a raffle to win one of five gift cards. The estimation of the time frame was based on test runs that had been performed by multiple individuals. They were in no way associated with this survey and had no prior knowledge about the content. The introductory page clarified that the responses were going to be anonymized and only devoted to scientific purposes. A second page introduced the first part of the survey. The first set of questions concerned the subjects' private and educational life. This included questions such as current status of registration, what kind of institution they were currently registered at, how much work experience they had gained in the past, etc. These questions were necessary to retrieve the control variables (CVs). The second part of the survey contained the six vignette descriptions. For each one, subjects first had to read a description of a job interview scenario. They were then asked to rate this scenario on a five-point scale by responding to the question how likely they were to accept a job offer based on the information given in the description (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely). The six vignettes were displayed to the subjects in a randomized order. After the vignette descriptions, the respondents were asked three demographic questions regarding the subjects' gender, age, and highest educational qualification. These questions were followed by

three sets of question batteries. These were adopted from the validated Big Five- and PSM-questionnaires. The questions were formulated to retrieve information about the subjects' own personality traits. The last part of the survey contained the same three question batteries, but the statements were adapted so that they referred to the subjects' ideal leader. This was done in order to retrieve information about their ideal leaders' personality traits. The last page of the survey was used as an occasion to thank the subjects for participating. They were given the choice to indicate their email-address to participate in the contest. A comment box was added for them to leave a comment regarding the survey. Multiple test runs were enforced before the actual data collection started. After all the data had been gathered, the Big Five Factors items that were indicated as reverse coded by Rammstedt and John (2005) were recoded in SPSS. Furthermore, to allow statements about the subjects' and the prototype leaders' personalities, the means of all corresponding personality trait items were calculated for each subject. This way there was only one value for each personality trait for each subject which allowed to indicate the subject's, respectively the prototype leader's personality on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = very low, 5 = very high) for each personality trait.

3.3.1 Dependent Variable

The denotation of the DV is based on the terms used in Carless' (2005) research about the relationship between perceived person–job and person–organization fit and organizational attraction, intentions to accept a job offer, and actual job offer decision. The term *intention to accept* (a job offer) was adopted. It was measured by presenting the survey participants six vignette descriptions. The participants were presented one description for each of the Big Five factors and one for PSM. Each of these vignettes comprised a fictional situation, in which the participants meet a potential future leader. The vignette was framed as a job interview. The fictional situation was described as follows: The survey participants find themselves in the role of job seekers who have met a potential future leader in a job interview. After the interview, they receive a job offer for said job. The job context, the organization, the location etc. fulfills their expectations. The leader was described by mentioning the traits that are pre-defined in the items of the two validated questionnaires that were applied to measure leader and job seeker personality. These will be further explained in the following subchapter.

The decision whether to accept the job offer solely depends on how likely they would be to want to work with each leader described in the vignette. Study participants were then asked to rate each leader by indicating how likely they would be to accept a job offer based on the information they retrieved about the leader in the job interview. Therefore, for each survey participant and each vignette description the participants' responses indicated how high the intention to accept would be on a scale from 1-5.

3.3.2 Independent Variable

The perceived person-supervisor fit was analyzed in two different ways: For H1, it was analyzed as the relationship between the prototype leader personality and the intention to accept. This model allowed to analyze how the intention to accept is affected if the actual leader is similar to the prototype leader. For H2, it arose as the relationship between the subjects' own personality and the intention to accept. This made it possible to analyze how the intention to accept is affected if the actual leader is similar to the job seekers themselves. These constructs were analyzed individually for each personality trait. Thus, the analysis explained above was performed six times for each hypothesis. Therefore, the models allowed to directly oppose the survey results of the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV) and to run the corresponding correlation and regression analyses. Because the relationships were analyzed separately for each personality trait, the strength of the person-supervisor fit resulted automatically: If the prototype personality score and the intention to accept were both high, there was a high perceived person-supervisor fit. If both scores were low, there was a low fit. The same principle is valid for the relationship between job seeker personality scores and the scores of the intention to accept. Therefore, if the regression analysis delivered significant positive results, the existence of a high fit was presumed.

In order to measure Big Five personality traits as well as PSM of the subjects and their prototype leaders, validated questionnaires were applied (Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Rammstedt & John, 2005). These questionnaires were developed by scientists and can be adapted one-on-one. The Big Five personality factors were measured with the abridged questionnaire version *BFI-K* by Rammstedt and John (2005). It contains 21 items and has been tested for reliability and validity. The results show that it can test

the Big Five factors in a sufficiently reliable and valid way. The questionnaire includes instructions regarding which items are reversed coded (Rammstedt & John, 2005). A detailed overview of the items and the coding can be inspected in the [appendix](#).

Perry's (1996) initial questionnaire to measure PSM consisted of the six dimensions *attraction to policy making* (5 items), *commitment to the public interest* (7 items), *social justice* (5 items), *civic duty* (7 items), *compassion* (8 items) and *self-sacrifice* (8 items). These were further reduced to four dimensions to eliminate high similarities between certain dimensions. This resulted in a final inventory consisting of the four dimensions *public policy making*, *public interest*, *compassion* and *self-sacrifice* (Perry, 1996). According to the analysis by Christensen and Wright (2011), there are many different measures of PSM. The questionnaire applied in this thesis was the *Five-Item MSPB* scale by Christensen and Wright (2011). For the purpose of uniformity, this was also measured with a five-point Likert scale.

Both questionnaires were applied to retrieve job seeker personality and prototype leader personality. Therefore, in a first step, it was necessary to gather data regarding each survey participant's ideal prototype leader. Prototype leader personality was measured with the help of the validated questionnaires for Big Five factors and PSM. For each item, participants were able to rate how well it fits their prototype leader on a scale from 1 to 5. Since each one of the Big Five factors and PSM consist of multiple items, the mean was later calculated for each one. In order to test H2, the survey participant's own personality had to be retrieved. This was done with the same questionnaires as mentioned above, but in this step the survey participants were asked to respond to the questions regarding their own personality. Again, the mean for each one of the Big Five factors and PSM was calculated before the data analyses were performed.

3.3.3 Control Variables

As according to Bernerth et al. (2018), control variables (CVs) allow to statistically remove distortions by testing whether any other variables may influence the relationship that is analyzed. Commonly used CVs for personal demographics are age, gender, race and education (Bernerth et al., 2018). As an example, Ogunfowora

(2014), who also applied the Big Five factors model, included sex as a CV. Gan et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between PSM and turnover intention and included the CVs gender, age and education. For this master thesis, a set of commonly used sociodemographic variables was therefore asked for in the survey including gender, age, and highest degree of education. Additionally, there were context specific CVs. In order to control whether the area of study distorts the results, study participants had to indicate their home university, what subject(s) they are studying and on what level (bachelor's or master's degree). The participants were also asked how many years of work experience they have, whether they are currently employed and if they have ever been involved in a job search process. Last, they were asked whether they are currently looking for a (new) job. The latter were necessary to differentiate whether factors such as past work experience or current employment may influence the relationships between the IVs and the DVs.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

The choice of the analysis methods foremostly depends on the desired insights that are intended by the research project (Döring & Bortz, 2016). Because testing the defined hypothesis is the major objective in this case, the required approach is an explanatory study. Therefore, inferential statistics were chosen to analyze the gathered data (Döring & Bortz, 2016). According to Boßow-Thies and Gansser (2022), the goal is to test whether the null hypotheses can be rejected. Before this can be done, the data needs to be appropriately prepared. In a first step, it is recommended to create an overview over the structure of the variables (Boßow-Thies & Gansser, 2022). The scale is ordinal for both the DV intention to accept and for the IV perceived person-supervisor fit. This is the case, because both of them consist of values that can be categorized within a scale (e.g. highly agree, agree, disagree, etc.; very high, high, etc.) but no statement or calculation can be made regarding the intervals between the values (Boßow-Thies & Gansser, 2022). There is also a research perspective that arguments that Likert scales can be treated as interval scales (Wu & Leung, 2017). According to Sangthong (2020), the distinction between the scales is thought to be a relevant characteristic in order to select the most suitable analysis methods such as choosing between non-parametric and parametric tests. Oftentimes, parametric tests are considered to be restricted to interval scales (Sangthong, 2020). Thus, the

following paragraph will present reasons and arguments in favor of applying parametric methods regardless of whether the scale of the DV is defined as an ordinal or as an interval scale.

As summarized by Carifio and Perla (2008), the academic literature frequently suggests that Likert scales require non-parametric tests for hypothesis testing. This means that applying a parametric hypothesis test to a Likert scale would influence the results and possibly lead to a wrong conclusion. Correspondent to this perspective, parametric tests should not be applied for this thesis' hypothesis testing. However, according to Sangthong (2020), the manners of how Likert scales should be analyzed is a controversial topic. There have been discussions within research circles about whether or not the assumption to avoid metric tests with ordinal DVs is relevant (Sangthong, 2020). As according to Carifio and Perla (2008), the appropriate use of measurement scales has been a controversy for centuries. Discussions between researchers consist of two parties: One party defines Likert scales to be ordinal and expects them to demand non-parametric statistics. An issue is that, compared to parametric statistics, non-parametric statistics are less sensitive and less powerful. Therefore, when applying non-parametric statistics, there is a risk that weaker findings can get lost. To the contrary, the opposed party points out that Likert scales possess criteria that would define them as interval scales. This would indicate that they can be analyzed with parametric statistics. Therefore, even Likert scales could benefit from the strengths of parametric statistics (Carifio & Perla, 2008). According to Norman (2010), what needs to be considered is the robustness of a test. This indicates how likely a test is to deliver correct results even in the case of a violation of assumptions (Carifio & Perla, 2008).

Additionally, multiple research projects with hypotheses similar to the one of this master thesis applied parametric analysis for models containing DVs that were measured with Likert scales (e.g. Aydogmus et al., 2018; Potipiroon, 2023). As an example, Aydogmus et al. (2018) conducted an analysis with a model with job satisfaction as the DV. They measured job satisfaction with a five-point scale (very dissatisfied to satisfied). Nevertheless, a multiple regression analysis was part of their hypothesis testing (Aydogmus et al., 2018). Another example is a study by Potipiroon

(2023) which investigated the influence of leader PSM on person–supervisor fit and subordinate emotional exhaustion. All variables were either measured with a three-point or a five-point scale. Part of their analysis procedure was a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

A similar controversy in research can be observed for the application of parametric tests for samples that are not normally distributed (Norman, 2010). Norman (2010) considers this assumption as a myth. Generally, a normal distribution is considered a requirement for parametric tests. Norman (2010) among other things refers to Pearson (1931) who found ANOVA tests to be robust even for highly skewed non-normal distributions. Sangthong (2020) also discussed the argument that parametric tests are inappropriate methods for Likert scale analysis because Likert type data tends to be of skewed or polarized distribution. The researcher then studied the efficiency of parametric and non-parametric tests for data gathered with the help of Likert scales. The efficiency of a test was measured by analyzing the test's ability to control the Type I error and the power of the test. Conclusions about statistical significance were found to be similar for parametric and for non-parametric tests. Thus, results show that parametric analysis was also very robust for Likert scale data (Sangthong, 2020).

To conclude, various research results have delivered arguments in favor of the possibility to apply parametric tests in cases like this master thesis without a crucially increased risk of coming to false conclusions. Arguments have been presented which indicate that the risk of coming to a wrong conclusion due to applying the *wrong* hypothesis test, can be neglected to the benefit of the strengths and advantages of parametric tests (e.g. Carifio & Perla, 2008; Norman, 2010; Sangthong, 2020). According to Norman (2010), such strengths and advantages are for instance that parametric tests are incredibly versatile, powerful, and comprehensive. Therefore, to benefit from its strengths and advantages, in this master thesis parametric tests were applied to test the hypotheses.

Before performing the hypotheses tests, multiple preparatory steps were conducted. After the closure of the survey and the revision of the data, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was implemented with SPSS Amos ([Table 1](#)). CFA tests the fit between a theoretical measurement model and the data (Wentura & Pospeschill, 2015).

According to Brown and Moore (2012), it is performed with latent factors or variables that were specified prior to the analysis. The objective is to analyze how well the pre-defined model reproduces the sample covariance matrix of the measured variables. It is usually conducted when a scale is applied and the test instrument needs to be tested (Brown & Moore, 2012). According to Brown (2015), it is specifically used in contexts that deal with measurement models. Since the models applied to retrieve Big Five and PSM were standardized and validated constructs (Christensen & Wright, 2011; Rammstedt & John, 2005), no exploratory factor analysis was performed. A CFA was performed for the multi-item variables prototype leader personality and job seeker personality, in order to test how well the observed measures fit these two latent factors (Brown & Moore, 2012).

To test the fit of the models, the goodness of fit index (GFI) was examined. According to Brown and Moore (2012), the objective of the GFI is to analyze how strongly the relationships implied by the model match the relationships from the sample data. Goodness of fit statistics deliver a global, descriptive indication of how well the model can reproduce the relationships between indicators in the input matrix (Brown & Moore, 2012). The GFI value was 0.845 for the prototype leader personality model and 0.835 for the job seeker personality model. Then, the chi-square value, which is the classic goodness of fit index, was observed. This value was observed in order to provide a global descriptive summary of how well the models manage to reproduce the input covariance matrixes (Brown & Moore, 2012). Because a statistically significant chi-square value indicates that the null hypothesis has to be rejected, the chi-square value for the model should not be significant (Brown & Moore, 2012). The chi-square value shows to be significant for both the prototype leader personality and the job seeker personality. However, the analysis of further values is necessary. According to Brown and Moore (2012), there are drawbacks of the chi-square value. It is for instance highly sensitive to sample size. Therefore, it should not be applied as the sole identification of a model fit (Brown & Moore, 2012). As suggested by Brown and Moore (2012), the goodness of fit analysis is consequently extended by the indicators *standardized root mean square residual* (SRMR), *root mean square error of approximation* (RMSEA), *Tucker-Lewis index* (TLI) and the *comparative fit index* (CFI). The cutoff values indicated by Brown and Moore (2012) are based on Hu and Bentler (1999). According

to Hu and Bentler (1999), acceptable values for SRMR are close to 0.08 or below. This criterion applies to the model for prototype leader personality. The SRMR value for the job seeker personality model lies above 0.08 but is still closer to 0.08 than to 0.09. The less stringent cutoff value based on Kline (2015) is 0.1. According to this value both models are acceptable. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), values for RMSEA should ideally be close to 0.06 or below. Again, this applies for the model for prototype leader personality. For job seeker personality, the value is above 0.06. CFI and TLI values should be close to 0.95 or greater. These criteria are not accomplished by neither the prototype leader personality model nor the job seeker personality model. Even though some criteria are fulfilled, both models do not constitute an ideal fit according to the interpretation guideline by Hu and Bentler (1999). However, as stated by Brown and Moore (2012), the cutoff guidelines are a debated matter and are asserted to be too conservative by some researchers. For instance Marsh et al. (2004) address the dangers in overgeneralizing Hu and Bentler's (1999) research results. They state that the stringent cutoff values can lead to an incorrect rejection of a model which should in reality be acceptable. Groskurth et al. (2023) even opt for an abandonment of fixed cutoff values. The most relevant issue is that fixed cutoff values are based on simulation studies. Therefore, the defined values only apply to a limited set of specific scenarios (Groskurth et al., 2023). Reußner (2019), who presents suggestions for cutoff indexes, also emphasizes that the cutoffs are subjectively defined borders and that the model fit is rather a continuum. Nevertheless, the results of the CFA indicate that multiple indexes show only acceptable or insufficient values of model fit.

	GFI	Chi-square	SRMR	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
Prototype leader personality	0.845	0.000	0.079	0.059	0.811	0.835
Job seeker personality	0.835	0.000	0.084	0.066	0.831	0.852

Table 4: Results of CFA based on Brown and Moore, 2012.

As for the hypothesis testing, the choice of the analyses will be explained in this paragraph. According to Döring and Bortz (2016), the purpose of explanatory studies is to derive hypotheses from theory and to subsequently apply sample data to test the

hypotheses. Thereby, it is of great importance to insure that possible effects confirming hypotheses indeed refer to an actual systematic effect and to exclude the possibility that such a confirming effect is the result of a coincidence. Döring and Bortz (2016) generally suggest various possible approaches that can be applied in the case of inferential statistical analysis. These approaches are classical significance tests, minimum effect size tests, structural equation models, resampling procedures and Bayesian statistics (Döring & Bortz, 2016). Structural equation models were not applied to test this thesis' hypotheses, because, according to Döring and Bortz (2016), these models are only applied for structural models that consist of various hypotheses. This is not the case in this thesis. Bayesian statistics were also not applied, because, as stated by Döring and Bortz (2016), they consider a-priori likelihood that a hypothesis is true based on the researcher's previous knowledge. This is irrelevant for this master thesis' hypotheses tests. Subsequently, the approaches that were applied to test the hypotheses will be explained and the reasons why these approaches were chosen for the analysis will be discussed. In the model that is applied in this case, there is only one sample. Relationships within this one sample are analyzed. According to the research question, which implies an analysis of relationships between variables within the same sample, suitable tests to analyze such relationships were chosen.

Because the relationships between the variables are to be investigated, a correlation analysis was performed in a first step. According to Stockemer (2019), a correlation analysis shows if two variables are related. It indicates how closely the variables follow a positive or a negative direction. However, it is undirected and therefore does not make any statements about how the variables influence each other. Due to this, the variables are not referred to as dependent and independent in a correlation analysis. However, it can make statements about the strengths of correlations between two variables by indicating the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). This refers to the closeness between the dots of a scatterplot. In the case of a correlation coefficient of 1, all dots are arranged in a perfect line. The more the correlation coefficient approaches 0, the farther apart the dots are spread. The direction of the correlation is indicated with a positive sign for a positive correlation and a negative sign for a negative correlation (Stockemer, 2019). For H1, the correlations between the subjects' prototype leaders' personalities and the values for the intentions to accept

were tested. A test was run for each personality trait. The prototype leader personality values for extraversion were tested for correlations with the values of intention to accept for the vignette description referring to extraversion. The same principle was applied for agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness, and PSM. The correlation analysis for H2 followed the same approach. Instead of the values for prototype leader personality, it included the values for the subject's own personality. After generating the correlation tables, in a first step, the significance level for each correlation was observed. According to (Stockemer, 2019), a significance level of >0.05 indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. In such a case, no linear regression analysis was conducted. For H1, all correlations were significant at the 0.01 significance level. For H2, besides extraversion and agreeableness, all correlations were significant. The correlations for conscientiousness, openness and PSM were significant at the 0.01 significance level. Neuroticism was significant at the 0.05 significance level.

Next, a linear regression analysis was run. According to Stockemer (2019), other than a correlation analysis, regression analysis enables to measure the strength of the influence of an IV on a DV. This means that it can measure the direction of the relationship (Stockemer, 2019). In a first step, a linear regression was conducted to test the hypothesis with a model that did not include any CVs. Thus, in this step solely the influence of the IV perceived person-supervisor fit on the DV intention to accept was tested without including third variables. As according to Stockemer (2019), the influence of the independent on the DV can be measured by constructing a regression line. The steepness of the slope indicates how strong the impact is. A steeper slope means that the impact of the IV on the DV is stronger than it would be if the slope was flatter. Additionally, the closer the dots of a scatterplot are arranged towards the slope, the higher the certainty that the relationship exists. This allows to make statements concerning errors in the data. The more closely the points are arranged towards the regression line, the smaller the error. This also indicates the certainty of the existence of a relationship between the variables. The closer the average datapoints are located to the regression line, the higher the likelihood that the relationship really exists (Stockemer, 2019). The analysis of the linear regression will be discussed in chapter [4.2](#). The regression function for the linear regressions look as follows. Because the

influence of the IV on the DV will be analyzed for each personality trait individually, there will be a model for each personality trait. The regression functions for H1 and H2 are presented as examples for extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The same principle applies for the remaining personality traits neuroticism, openness and PSM.

$$\mathbf{H1: } Y_{\text{extraversion}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{prototype leader fit extraversion} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{agreeableness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{prototype leader fit agreeableness} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{conscientiousness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{prototype leader fit conscientiousness} + \varepsilon$$

$$\mathbf{H2: } Y_{\text{extraversion}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{job seeker fit extraversion} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{agreeableness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{job seeker fit agreeableness} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{conscientiousness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{job seeker fit conscientiousness} + \varepsilon$$

In the regression function, Y indicates the DV. The factor A is a constant which indicates the value of Y when $X = 0$. X (the fit) is the slope of the line. ε is the error term, which indicates the distance between the data points and the regression line. A smaller average distance between the points and the regression line signifies that there is a better fit between the average data points and the linear prediction. Therefore, the smaller the distance, the higher the assurance that the relationship in fact exists. (Stockemer, 2019).

In a second step, a multiple linear regression was performed to test the hypotheses with a model including the CVs. The purpose of this analysis is to test if any IVs other than the perceived person-supervisor fit are significantly correlated with the subjects' intention to accept the job offer. According to Stockemer (2019), the DV hardly ever depends on only one predictor. In most cases, it takes multiple factors to explain the DV. As an extension of a linear regression analysis, a multiple linear regression analysis allows to test the influence of multiple variables on the DV. Therefore, the calculation for such a regression equation includes multiple IVs (Stockemer, 2019). The functions for H1 and H2 are presented as examples for extraversion and agreeableness. Again, for the remaining personality traits, the same principle applies:

H1:

$$Y_{\text{extraversion}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{prototype leader fit extraversion} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{gender} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{age} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{highest e.q.} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{currently registered} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{institution} + \beta_7 \cdot \text{level of study} + \beta_8 \cdot \text{subject of study} + \beta_9 \cdot \text{months of professional experience} + \beta_{10} \cdot \text{current employment} + \beta_{11} \cdot \text{past job search} + \beta_{12} \cdot \text{current job search} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{agreeableness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{prototype leader fit agreeableness} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{gender} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{age} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{highest e.q.} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{currently registered} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{institution} + \beta_7 \cdot \text{level of study} + \beta_8 \cdot \text{subject of study} + \beta_9 \cdot \text{months of professional experience} + \beta_{10} \cdot \text{current employment} + \beta_{11} \cdot \text{past job search} + \beta_{12} \cdot \text{current job search} + \varepsilon$$

H2:

$$Y_{\text{extraversion}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{job seeker fit extraversion} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{gender} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{age} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{highest e.q.} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{currently registered} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{institution} + \beta_7 \cdot \text{level of study} + \beta_8 \cdot \text{subject of study} + \beta_9 \cdot \text{months of professional experience} + \beta_{10} \cdot \text{current employment} + \beta_{11} \cdot \text{past job search} + \beta_{12} \cdot \text{current job search} + \varepsilon$$

$$Y_{\text{agreeableness}} = A + \beta_1 \cdot \text{job seeker fit agreeableness} + \beta_2 \cdot \text{gender} + \beta_3 \cdot \text{age} + \beta_4 \cdot \text{highest e.q.} + \beta_5 \cdot \text{currently registered} + \beta_6 \cdot \text{institution} + \beta_7 \cdot \text{level of study} + \beta_8 \cdot \text{subject of study} + \beta_9 \cdot \text{months of professional experience} + \beta_{10} \cdot \text{current employment} + \beta_{11} \cdot \text{past job search} + \beta_{12} \cdot \text{current job search} + \varepsilon$$

4. Results

This chapter first off presents a descriptive overview of the survey results (4.1) with the purpose of summarizing the features of the survey sample. In a second step, the results are presented as correlations and regressions with corresponding charts (4.2). Subsequently, the results are applied to control the hypotheses. The hypotheses will be discussed based on the statistical results (4.3).

4.1 Descriptive Results

The total sample counted 573 (gross value) survey participants. However, this number includes participants who opened the survey formula but did not proceed. Out of all participants who opened the form, 344 started to fill out the survey and 227 participants completed it. These numbers indicate a finishing rate of 39.62%. Most participants who started the survey but did not finish, already quit while on the introduction page (n=230). The 227 completed questionnaires were checked for any possible disqualifiers. The response behavior was analyzed to exclude salient subjects. First, the condition that survey participants must be registered as students was checked. Eight participants indicated that they were not or no longer registered as students and were therefore excluded from the analysis. Additionally, two participants who indicated being Ph.D. students were also excluded, because the sample definition was restricted to bachelor and master students. Then the duration for the completion of the survey was analyzed and checked for subjects that finished the survey in an unrealistically short amount of time (Boßow-Thies & Gansser, 2022). No subject stood out with regards to the duration. However, for a few participants, the program did not capture the duration of completion. For this reason, another 16 subjects were excluded from the survey, because it was not possible to check the duration. Afterwards, the remaining subjects were checked for any salient response patterns (Boßow-Thies & Gansser, 2022). Three subjects were excluded, because their responses showed repetitive patterns or did not contain any variation. Last, one participant was excluded because they stated in the comment section that their responses may have been biased because of a language barrier. Consequently, the final sample size was a total of 197. Because all questions were mandatory, there were no missing values.

As visualized in [Table 2](#), for the demographic CVs it can be stated that 67.5% (n=133) of participants indicated as female, 29.9% (n=59) as male, 1.5% (n=3) as non-binary and another 1% (n=2) did not indicate their gender. This indicates that females were overrepresented in the sample. On average, subjects were 24.39 years old (SD: 2.95) and the age which occurred most frequently was 25 years (n=43). The youngest participants were 18 years old and the oldest participant was 42 years old. The most prominently indicated highest educational qualification was a bachelor's degree with 60.9% (n=120), followed by Higher School Certificate (*Matura*) with 29.9% (n=59) and Federal Vocation Baccalaureate (*Berufsmaturität*) with 4.6% (n=9). 3.6% (n=7) of the participants have already obtained at least one master's degree.

Frequencies of demographics.

	Frequency	%	Mean
Gender			
Female	133	67.5	
Male	59	29.9	
Non-binary	3	1.5	
No response	2	1	
Age			24 years
Highest e.q.			
Federal Vocation Baccalaureate	9	4.6	
Federal Vocation Baccalaureate and Passarelle	1	0.5	
Higher School Certificate	59	29.9	
BA	120	60.9	
MA	7	3.6	
Others	1	0.5	

Table 5: Frequencies of the survey results for the demographic control variables.

Anyone who participated in the survey but did not indicate that they were currently registered as students were removed prior to further analyses. Therefore, all 197 subjects were registered at the time of the survey, which means that there is a standard deviation of 0 for the first CV (currently registered). Out of all the participants, 8.1% (n=16) are enrolled at a teacher training college, 14.7% (n=29) at a school of applied

sciences and 77.2% (n=152) at a university. 38.1% (n=75) are currently pursuing their bachelor's degree, whereas 61.4% (n=121) are pursuing their master's degree. One subject (0.5%) was in the process of accomplishing a non-university gap year. The groups of subjects that were most frequently represented are economics and business studies (n=31), social sciences (n=28), medical studies, nursing, health sciences and dietetics (n=28), pedagogics and educational science (n=18), law (n=15), linguistics, literature or communication sciences (n=15) and natural sciences (n=15). 42.6% (n=84) of all participants have gathered up to half a year of full-time work experience. 22.3% (n=44) have gathered up to one year of full-time work experience. 67% (n=132) of the participants are currently employed (full time or part time). 33.5% (n=66) are currently searching for a (new) job. 83.2% (n=164) have searched for a job at least once.

To summarize the distributions of the scores for prototype leader personality, the means of all scores for each personality trait were calculated. The graphics below ([Figure 3](#)) demonstrate the distributions of personality throughout all subjects' ideal prototype leaders. Conscientiousness was the personality trait with the highest mean of 4.64 (SD: 0.39). However, the slope looks different compared to the subjects' own personality scores. For the prototype leaders, the scores for conscientiousness keep increasing towards the very high values. The value of 5 even achieved the most scores (n=69). The trait with the second highest mean was extraversion with a mean of 4.22 (SD: 0.53). The slope shows that scores increase with higher values. Low scores exist only for the very low values. Extraversion is followed by agreeableness with a mean of 4.1 (SD: 0.63). Scores are rather low for low and very low values and increase towards the higher values. Towards the very high values, it slightly decreases again. The mean value for PSM was 3.79 (SD:0.64). There are low values for both the very low and very high values. The highest scores are gathered around the medium to high values. Openness overall scored a mean value of 3.64 (SD: 0.64). Relatively few scores fall between very low to medium values. Scores increase for the higher values, but again decrease for the highest values. The mean value for neuroticism was 1.59 (SD: 0.46). Here, the lowest scores were achieved for the medium values. All very low and low values registered very high scores. For the very high values, there were no scores at all.

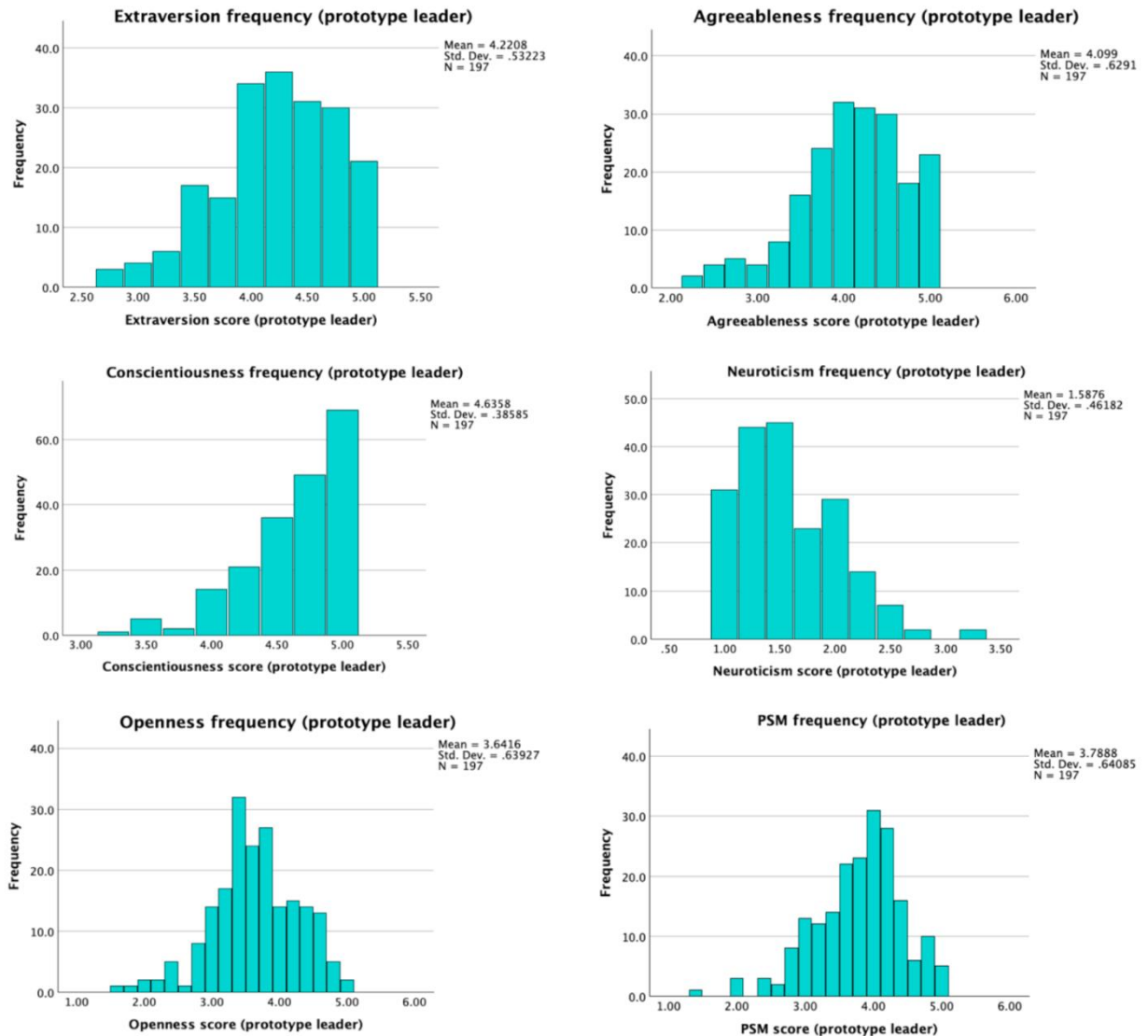


Figure 3: Frequencies of the prototype leader personality scores.

To give an overview of the distribution of personality, the means of all subjects' scores for each personality trait were calculated. Each one of the graphics subsequent to this paragraph (Figure 4) shows the scores of how high subjects ranked for each personality trait. For the measurement of subjects' personality, values between 1 and 5 were possible and a high value indicates that the subject scored high on the scale of the considered personality trait. Therefore, a high mean indicates that the personality trait on average received high scores. For all personality traits, there were rather few scores for the maximum and minimum values. With regards to the subjects' personality traits, with a mean of 4.04 (SD:0.62), conscientiousness was again the one that on average scored the highest. The histogram for conscientiousness shows that there were rather few scores for both extremes, but many scores around the values of 3 and

4. Even though the slope again declines towards the very high values, it does not go as low as it does for the very low values. The distribution was similar for openness; however, the scores were distributed a bit more evenly. Again, there are few scores for the very low values and a bit more for the very high values. The mean value for openness was 3.78 (SD: 0.79). This was followed by extraversion with a mean of 3.62 (SD: 0.83). The highest scores for extraversion were rather spread around 3 and 4 but also obtained scores for the highest value 5. The lowest scores were achieved between 1.5 and 2.25. The highest scores achieved for PSM were between 3 and 4 with large differences between the highest and the lowest scores. The mean for PSM was 3.54 (SD: 0.71). Agreeableness mostly scored high on the value 4. The mean was 3.53 (SD: 0.0.74). As opposed to the other personality traits, which were rather shifted towards the right or the middle, the histogram for neuroticism is shifted towards the left. Lower values around 2 scored the highest and declined from there. The mean was 2.83 (SD: 0.87).

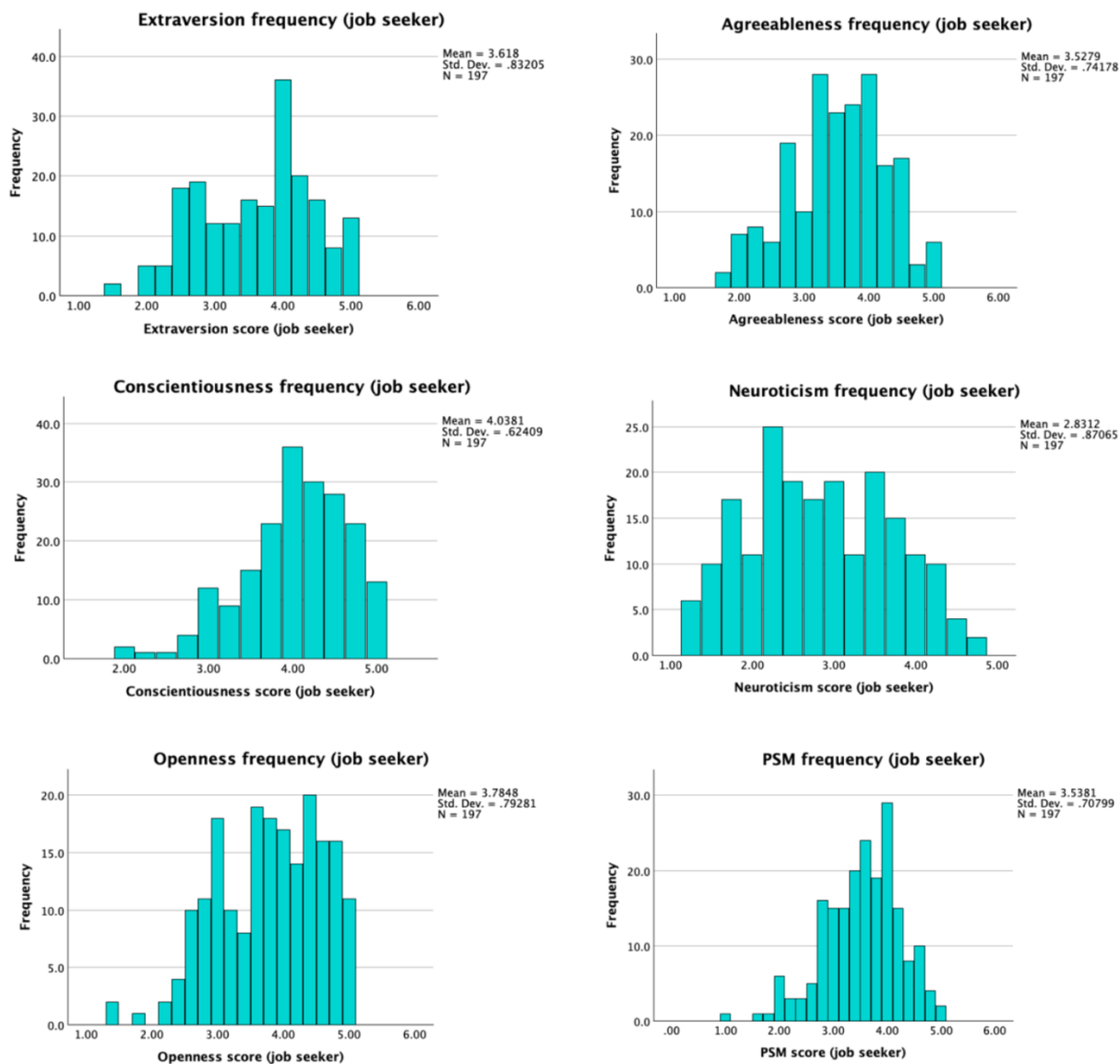


Figure 4: Frequencies of the job seeker personality scores.

Regarding the intention to accept, as visualized in [Figure 5](#), the scenario which corresponds to agreeableness was the one that on average scored the highest results. It was rated with a mean of 4.42 (SD: 0.76). Only 5 subjects rated their intention to accept as very low (1) or low (2). From there, the slope keeps increasing up to the value of 5, which achieved 106 scores. The intention to accept for the scenario that corresponds to extraversion was rated with a mean of 4.35 (SD: 0.84) and therefore on average also achieved a high score. Altogether, 99 subjects indicated that their intention to accept a job offer would be very high (5) and 81 indicated that it would be high (4). Only 17 subjects indicated their intention to accept as lower than 4. The mean for the scenario corresponding to conscientiousness was 4.09 (SD: 0.89). It was rated

as very likely or likely by 158 subjects. Relatively few subjects (n=39) rated the intention to accept for this scenario as smaller than a value of 4. Conscientiousness was followed by the vignettes for PSM with a mean 3.93 (SD: 1). The score which was achieved the most frequently for PSM was 4 with 77 scores, followed by 5 with 64 scores and 3 with 39 scores. Only few subjects (n=17) rated the intention to accept as unlikely or very unlikely. Openness was rated with a mean of 3.46 (SD: 1.14). The score that was achieved the most was a value of 4 (likely). Much fewer subjects rated the intention to accept as very high (value = 5) or lower than 4. The leader scenario which on average scored the lowest was the vignette corresponding to neuroticism. 14 participants indicated that they would accept a job offer with a high or a very high likelihood, but many more indicated to be unlikely (n=96) or very unlikely (n=45) to accept a job offer. 42 indicated to be neutral.

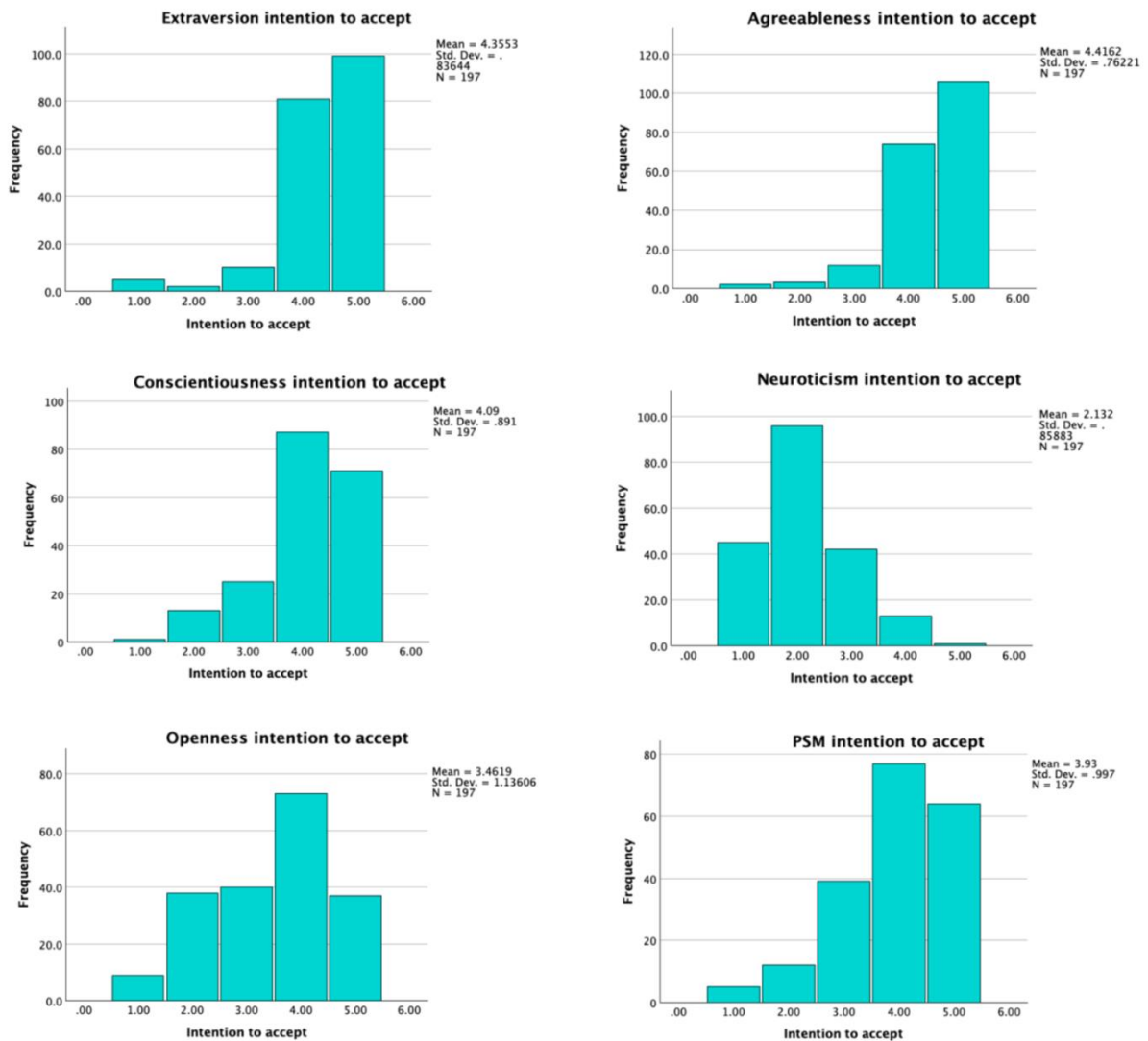


Figure 5: Frequencies of the scores for intention to accept.

4.2 Correlations and Regressions

4.2.1 Correlation Results

In a next step, a correlation matrix was created. First, correlations for H1 were investigated. Therefore, the mean values for the variables intention to accept for each personality trait and prototype leader personalities were entered. There are several significant results, however many of them are not relevant for this master thesis' hypotheses. Relevant relationships are correlations between job seekers' mean values for each personality trait and the intention to accept for the corresponding personality trait. In the correlation matrix for H1, all relevant correlations are significantly positive on the 0.01 significance level. This shows that a certain effect between the variable

pairs does exist. However, the correlation analysis does not deliver any information about the direction of the relationship and therefore no statements considering the hypothesis can be made at this point of the analysis.

Then the same procedure was performed for H2. For this correlation matrix, prototype personality was replaced with the mean values for the subjects' own personalities. Again, some of the significant results consider variables relationships that are not relevant for this hypothesis. There is a positive correlation between the job seekers' scores for extraversion and the intention to accept for extraversion. However, this correlation is not significant. The same applies for the correlation between job seekers' scores for agreeableness and the intention to accept for agreeableness. The correlation between job seekers' mean values for conscientiousness and the corresponding intention to accept is significantly positive at the 0.01 significance level. The same applies for the correlation between job seekers' mean value for openness and the corresponding intention to accept and the correlation between job seekers' mean value for PSM and the corresponding intention to accept. Another significant correlation is the relationship between job seekers' mean value for neuroticism and the corresponding intention to accept. This correlation is significant on the 0.05 significance level. This shows that, except for extraversion and agreeableness, effects between the variable pairs exist. Again, this does not allow any statements regarding the hypothesis since the correlation analysis does not say which of the two variables is the cause of the relationship. In order to gain further information about the correlations, regression analyses were conducted in the next step.

4.2.2 Regression Results

To test the hypotheses as defined in chapter [2.3](#), two kinds of regressions were conducted. Corresponding to the arguments discussed in chapter [3.4](#), the hypotheses were in a first step tested with linear regressions. The linear regression was performed in order to test for correlations between the DV and the IV (Stockemer, 2019). In a second step, both hypotheses were tested with multiple linear regressions, where the model additionally to the DV and the IV also contained the CVs. This allowed to test for possible influences other than the perceived person-supervisor fit (Stockemer, 2019). For each personality trait, the correlations between the corresponding results for the perceived person-supervisor fit and for the intention to accept were tested.

The minimum sample size of 128 was exceeded and therefore the intended power of 0.8 and the significance level of 0.5 were achieved. On account of the sample size, the probability of conducting a Type I error could, as targeted, not exceed 5%. R^2 values for the multiple linear regressions range from 0.005 up to 0.348, which indicates that there are high differences between the models for the different personality traits. Next, all predictor variables were tested for multicollinearity by evaluating the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each model. VIF values range from 1.11 to 2.018. Even though they are slightly higher than 1, all values are located within the lower range of a moderate correlation (Daoud, 2017). Therefore, no variables were excluded from the analysis. With regards to the significance, the alpha is set at 5% and therefore regression results are significant if they are smaller than 0.05.

In a first step, the relationship between prototype leader personality and the intention to accept was measured with a linear regression. The relationships were measured for each pair of prototype leader personality and the intention to accept for the corresponding leader description. The objective of this analysis was to test if the intention to accept increases if the subjects' prototype leader personality for the corresponding personality trait is higher. The subsequent graphs illustrate these correlations with the x-axis indicating the DV and the y-axis the IV. A scatterplot was created for each variable pair to visualize first results regarding the strengths and directions of the correlations. R^2 values range from 0.043 up to 0.3. This indicates that there is a high range between the different models but that none of them show very high R^2 values. According to the ANOVA significance value and the confidence intervals, all models are significant. However, despite the significant results, the β -coefficients are different for the effects of each personality trait. This indicates that there may be relevant differences between personality traits with regards to this master thesis' research question. The impacts of these findings on future research will therefore be further discussed in chapter [6.2](#). It also must be stated that the values for R^2 differ between the six personality traits. However, they are low for most of them. This means that in the models discussed, most of the regression lines only manage to explain a small amount of the data points in the scatterplots. However, it can be stated that the directions of all six models match the hypothesized direction of correlation. [Figure 6](#) visualizes the linear regression results with the help of scatterplots and

regression lines for all six relationships between prototype leader personality and the corresponding intention to accept. Because the models contain only two variables, the lines can be interpreted directly and therefore serve as an interpretation help. The detailed results of the regressions are summarized in regression tables, which can be found in the [appendix](#).

The regression for extraversion (β : 0.218; Sig.: 0.002; SE: 0.11) shows a positive effect. The CI does not include zero indicating that the result is significant. The results indicate that the score for the intention to accept for the scenario that corresponds to extraversion increases with higher scores for extraversion with regards to the prototype leader. The model shows a low R^2 value, indicating that the regression line only manages to explain 0.43% of the dispersion.

For agreeableness (β : 0.283; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.73), the results show a positive effect, and the CI does not include zero. The effect is significant on a 0.01 significance level. This indicates that the intention to accept for the scenario corresponding to agreeableness is higher if the scores for the corresponding prototype leader personality are higher. Again, the R^2 value is very low. The regression line explains only 0.76% of the dispersion.

The results of conscientiousness (β : 0.437; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.8) also show a significant positive effect. The CI does not include zero. Compared to extraversion and agreeableness, the effect strength is higher for conscientiousness. As shown in the scatterplot, the regression line inclines towards the right. This corresponds to the predicted relationship that a higher score for prototype leader personality is correlated to a higher intention to accept. The regression line is situated in the upper part of the plot, indicating that there are overall fewer low scores for prototype leader personality. With a value of 0.187, the R^2 value is much higher than for extraversion and agreeableness.

The findings for neuroticism (β : 0.296; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.82) show a positive effect which is significant on a 0.01 significance level. The CI does not include zero. The effect strength is slightly higher than for extraversion and agreeableness but smaller

than for conscientiousness. As shown in the scatterplot, most dots are rather located in the lower part of the plot, indicating that the scores for prototype leader personality are all rather low for neuroticism. The intention to accept is higher if the prototype leader personality score is also higher for this personality trait. The low R^2 value indicates the regression line only manages to explain 0.83% of the dispersion.

Out of all personality traits, openness (β : 0.551; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.95) is the one with the highest β -coefficient. The CI does not include zero and the effect is significant on a 0.01 significance level. The relatively high β -coefficient is visualized in the scatterplot, where the regression line is steeper than for the other personality traits. It also inclines towards the right, which supports the expected direction of the effect. This indicates that the intention to accept increases with higher scores for prototype leader personality with regards to openness. This is the effect with the highest R^2 value: The regression line explains 30% of the dispersion.

Even though the β -coefficient for PSM (β : 0.46; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.91) is lower than for openness, it is relatively high compared to the others and therefore the regression line in the scatterplot is rather steep. The CI does not include zero. The regression shows an effect which is significant on a 0.01 significance level. As the scatterplot shows, the regression line inclines towards the right. This once more supports the expected direction of effect. The intention to accept is higher if the prototype leader personality score is higher. With an R^2 value of 0.16, the regression line explains 16% of the dispersion.

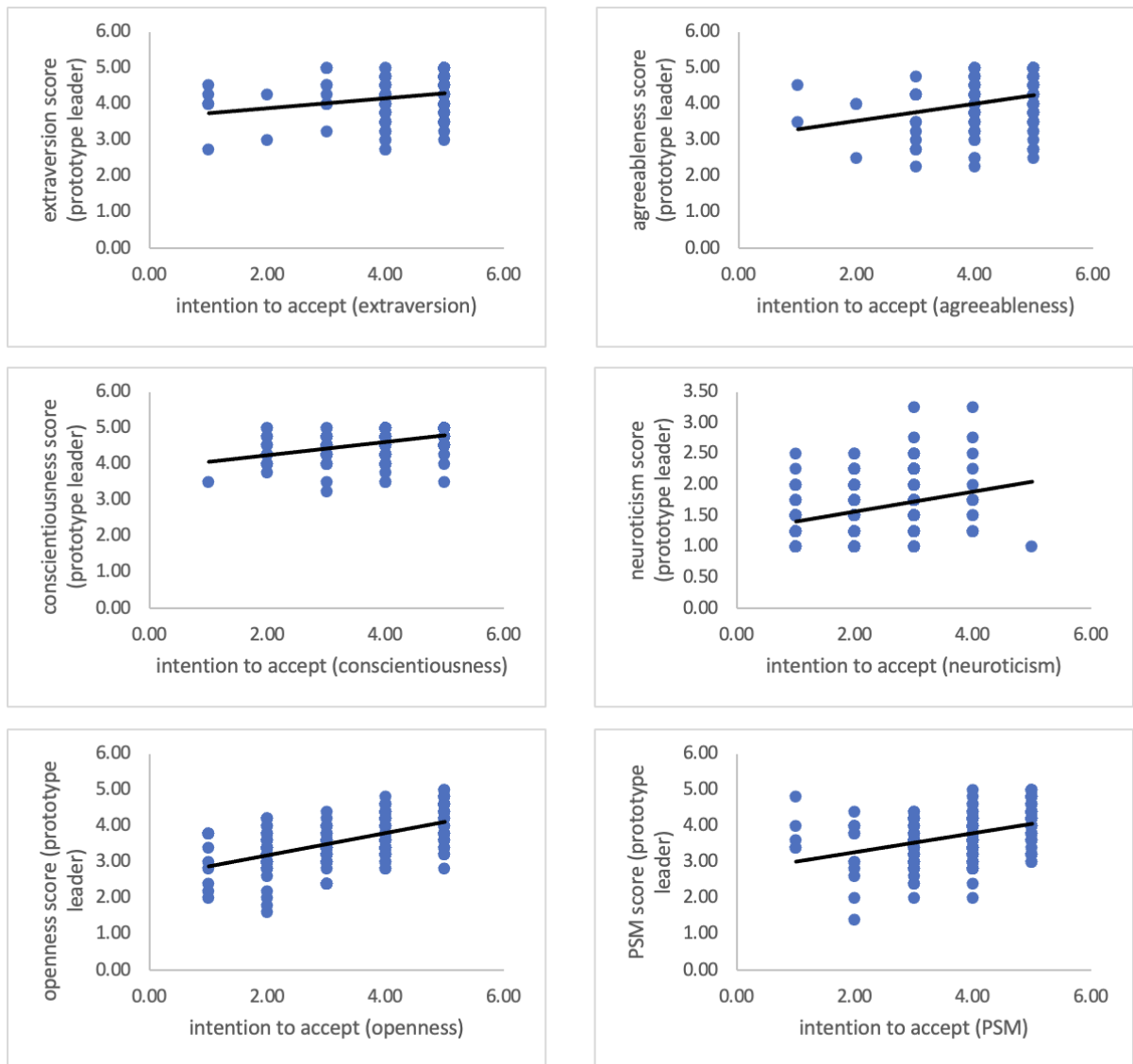


Figure 6: Visualizations of the linear regression results for H1.

The same analyses were performed for H2. The relationship between the subjects' own personality traits and the corresponding intention to accept was measured with a linear regression analysis in order to analyze whether there is a higher intention to accept if the subjects' own personality is higher for the corresponding personality trait. Because the correlation effects for extraversion and agreeableness were not statistically significant with respect to H2, no linear regression analysis was performed for those two personality traits. In the following graphics, the DV is located on the x-axis and the IV is located on the y-axis. With the help of a scatterplot, first observations of the predicted relationships were made. [Figure 7](#) presents visualizations of the linear regression results for the four relationships that were further investigated. As these

models only contain two variables, the regression line delivers information that can be interpreted directly as an interpretation help.

The graphic for conscientiousness (β : 0.375; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.83) shows a steeper line compared to those for extraversion and agreeableness. Again, it inclines towards the right, supporting the predicted effect direction. The effect is significant. The CI does not include zero. In this case, R^2 is still relatively low, but the line explains at least 19.5% of the dispersion.

For neuroticism too (β : 0.144; Sig.: 0.043; SE: 0.85), the regression line inclines to the right, which shows that higher values of neuroticism for subjects are associated with a higher intention to accept for neuroticism and therefore supports the predicted direction of effect. However, the low R^2 value indicates that the line only explains 0.16% of the dispersion.

For openness (β : 0.522; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.97), the line is again steeper, and the β -coefficient is higher than for any other personality trait. It therefore shows the strongest effect. The regression line is inclined to the right. This indicates that higher values of openness for subjects are associated with higher intention to accept for openness. The effect is significant on a 0.01 significance level. The CI does not include zero. According to the R^2 value, the line manages to explain 25.7% of the dispersion.

The regression results for PSM (β : 0.388; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.92) show one of the highest β -coefficients. As predicted, the regression line inclines towards the right, indicating a positive influence of higher PSM values for subjects on the intention to accept for PSM. This effect is statistically significant on a 0.01 significance level. The CI does not include zero. According to the R^2 values, the line explains 13% of the dispersion.

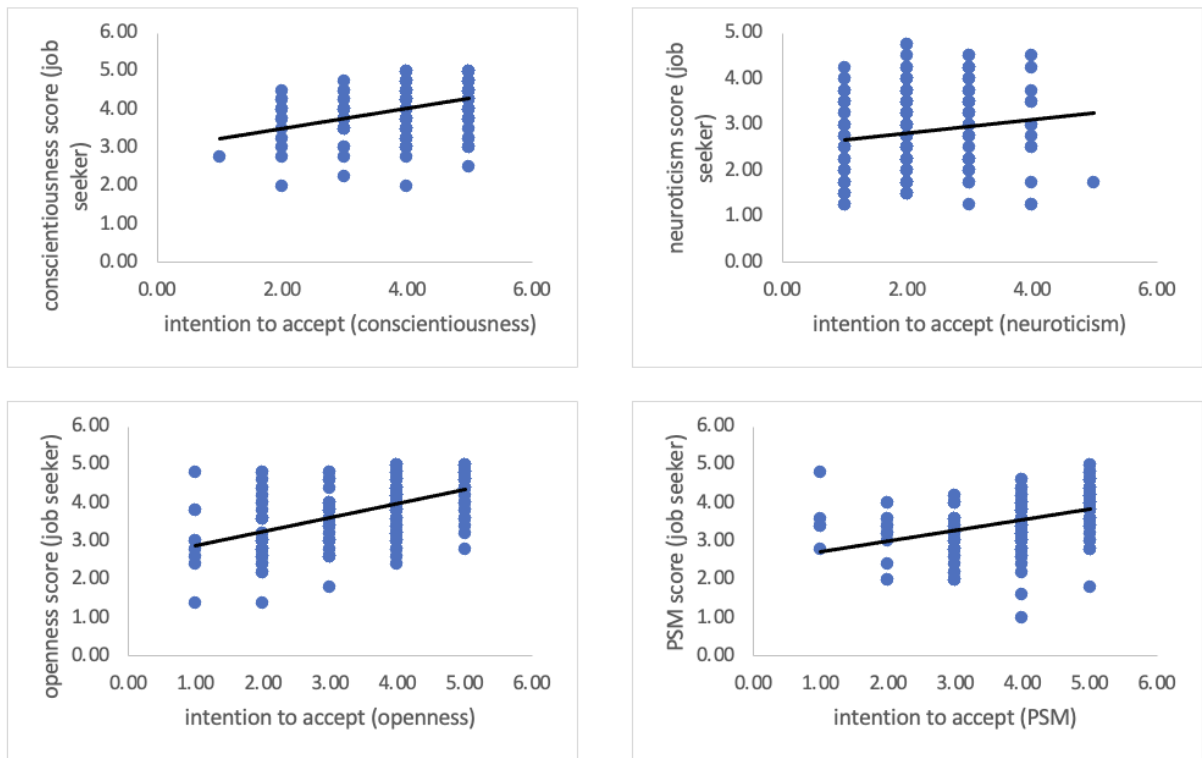


Figure 7: Visualizations of the linear regression results for H2.

The linear regressions and their results that were discussed above already show some support for the hypotheses. For H1, all effects are oriented towards the predicted direction and are significant. For H2, all effects are oriented towards the predicted direction. According to the correlation analysis, the correlations are not significant for extraversion and agreeableness. Therefore, there is only partial support for H2. However, CVs were not yet included. In order to draw a final conclusion, multiple linear regressions were performed.

First, the regressions for H1 were conducted individually for each set of prototype leader personality scores and the corresponding scores for the intention to accept. In accordance with the results of the linear regression, the multiple linear regression shows a significant positive relationship between prototype leader personality and the intention to accept for extraversion (β : 0.194; Sig.: 0.007; SE: 0.112). According to the positive β -value, the intention to accept is higher if there is a higher extraversion score for the prototype leader personality. Additionally, results are significant for age (β : -0.311; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.024). The CI does not include zero for all variables. This CV

is negatively correlated with intention to accept. However, there is only a low R^2 value of 0.081 for the extraversion model.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
extraversion score	0.194	0.112	0.085	0.525	0.007	0.005	0.081
age	-0.311	0.024	-0.135	-0.041	<0.001		

Table 6: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the extraversion model (H1).

The multiple linear regression model for agreeableness is also significant. The IV and two CVs show significant results. The effect of agreeableness (β : 0.253; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.081) for the prototype leader personality shows a significant positive influence on the corresponding intention to accept. On the contrary, age (β : -0.38; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.021) is negatively correlated. Higher age therefore has a negative effect. The level of study (β : 0.206; Sig.: 0.025; SE: 0.14) is positively correlated to the intention to accept. For all three variables, the CI does not include zero. Compared to extraversion, R^2 is higher with a value of 0.18.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
agreeableness score	0.253	0.081	0.147	0.467	<.001	<0.001	0.18
age	-0.38	0.021	-0.138	-0.057	<.001		
level of study	0.206	0.14	0.041	0.593	0.025		

Table 7: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the agreeableness model (H1).

The multiple linear regression model also shows a significant positive effect for the relationship between the prototype leader personality score for conscientiousness (β : 0.418; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.159) and the corresponding intention to accept. The overall model shows a significance of <0.001 as well. The CI does not include zero. However, no CVs show a significant influence on the intention to accept.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
conscientiousness score	0.418	0.159	0.652	1.278	<.001	<0.001	0.178

Table 8: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the conscientiousness model (H1).

For neuroticism (β : 0.311; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.132), the model is also significant. The β -value shows a positive influence of the prototype leader personality on the intention to accept for the neuroticism scenario. The CI does not include zero, therefore the effect is significant. However, R^2 is very low again with a value of 0.076. There are no significant influences of CVs on the intention to accept.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
neuroticism score	0.311	0.132	0.319	0.839	<.001	0.007	0.076

Table 9: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the neuroticism model (H1).

The multiple linear regression results for openness (β : 0.538; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.11) show a significant positive influence of the prototype leader personality on the intention to accept. The CI does not include zero. The overall model is significant according to the ANOVA significance value and it shows a relatively high R² value compared to the other models. The only CV that shows a significant effect is age (β : -0.162; Sig.: 0.029; SE: 0.028). Age is negatively correlated to the intention to accept.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
openness score	0.538	0.11	0.739	1.172	<.001	<.001	0.304
age	-0.162	0.028	-0.118	-0.007	0.029		

Table 10: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the openness model (H1).

Last, the multiple linear regression model for PSM is also significant. The prototype leader personality for PSM (β : 0.42; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.107) has a significant positive influence on the corresponding intention to accept. The CI does not include zero. The CV subject of study (β : 0.171; Sig.: <0.017; SE: 0.015) shows significant positive results as well. The CI also does not include zero for this variable. The R² value for this model is not as high as for openness, however the regression explains at least 16.4% of the dispersion.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
PSM score	0.42	0.107	0.443	0.864	<.001	<.001	0.164
subject of study	0.171	0.015	0.007	0.067	0.017		

Table 11: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the PSM model (H1).

In a second step, the same analyses were conducted for the job seeker personality in order to generate multiple linear regression results for H2. Again, the models were tested individually for each pair of job seeker personality and the corresponding intention to accept. First, the model for extraversion was investigated. Whereas the model for extraversion was not significant in the correlation analysis, the multiple linear regression shows a significant effect. The relationship between the job seeker personality for extraversion (β : 0.141; Sig.: <0.046; SE: 0.071) and the corresponding intention to accept is significant positive. The CI does not include zero. A higher score

for job seeker personality with regards to extraversion therefore leads to a higher intention to accept regarding the scenario that corresponds to extraversion. Additionally, age (β : -0.345; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.024) is a significant CV. The CI does not include zero and β shows a negative value. With a value of 0.065, R^2 is again low.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
extraversion score	0.141	0.071	0.003	0.281	0.046	0.015	0.065
age	-0.345	0.024	-0.145	-0.5	<0.001		

Table 12: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the extraversion model (H2).

Next, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed for agreeableness. In accordance with the correlation analysis, effects are not significant for agreeableness (β : 0.122; Sig.: 0.074; SE: 0.07). The CI includes zero. However, the ANOVA significance shows a significant value. The effects for two CVs are significant. Age (β : -0.386; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.021) is negatively correlated to the intention to accept. The level of study (β : 0.208; Sig.: 0.028; SE: 0.144) has a positive influence on the intention to accept.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
agreeableness score	0.122	0.07	-0.012	0.264	0.074	<0.001	0.132
age	-0.386	0.021	-0.141	-0.058	<0.001		
level of study	0.208	0.144	0.035	0.605	0.028		

Table 13: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the agreeableness model (H2).

For conscientiousness, the model is significant as well as the effect between job seeker leader personality and the intention to accept. Conscientiousness (β : 0.36; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.101) shows to have a significant positive influence on the DV. Therefore, a high score for the job seeker personality increases the intention to accept. The CI does not include zero. R^2 shows that the model explains at least 13.4% of the dispersion. None of the CVs show significant effects.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R^2
conscientiousness score	0.36	0.101	0.315	0.714	<0.001	<0.001	0.134

Table 14: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the conscientiousness model (H2).

Whereas the model for neuroticism was significant in the linear regression, the multiple linear regression does not show a significant model. Even though there is a significant positive effect for the job seeker personality regarding neuroticism (β : 0.162; Sig.:

0.031; SE: 0.074), the ANOVA significance shows a non-significant result for the model. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected with regards to this effect.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
neuroticism score	0.162	0.074	0.015	0.306	0.031	0.368	0.005

Table 15: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the neuroticism model (H2).

On the contrary, the model for openness is significant. For openness (β : 0.553; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.09), the job seeker personality appears to have a significant positive influence on the corresponding intention to accept. The CI does not include zero. Also in this model, age (β : -0.262; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.029) is a significant CV. It is negatively correlated to the intention to accept. The CI does not include zero. With a value of 0.348, R² is relatively high for this model.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
openness score	0.553	0.09	0.616	0.97	<0.001	<0.001	0.348
age	-0.262	0.029	-0.157	-0.044	<0.001		

Table 16: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the openness model (H2).

Also, for PSM, the multiple linear regression approves the results of the linear regression. The job seeker personality with regards to PSM (β : 0.402; Sig.: <0.001; SE: 0.096) shows a significant positive effect. The CI does not include zero. Therefore, a high job seeker personality score for PSM increases the corresponding intention to accept. In accordance with the linear regression, this model also shows subject of study (β : 0.19; Sig.: 0.009; SE: 0.015) to be a significant CV. It has a positive effect. The model at least manages to explain 15.5% of the dispersion.

	β	SE	Low CI	High CI	Sig.	ANOVA Sig.	R ²
PSM score	0.402	0.096	0.377	0.756	<0.001	<0.001	0.155
subject of study	0.19	0.015	0.01	0.071	0.009		

Table 17: Relevant results of the multiple linear regression for the PSM model (H2).

4.3 Implications for Hypotheses

H1 was derived from the ILT and assumed that a job seeker's intention to accept a job is higher if the potential leader's personality is similar to the job seeker's ideal prototype leader's personality. Therefore, the assumption was made that the better a leader's personality corresponds to the prototype leader's personality, the higher the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. For this hypothesis, six models were analyzed

in linear regression and in multiple linear regression analysis. For all six models, the regression results were significantly positive. According to these results, prototype leader personality has a positive influence on the corresponding intention to accept for the personality traits extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness and PSM. Additionally, age was a significant CV in the models of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness. In these cases, the effect of age was always negative. This indicates that the older the subjects are, the weaker the relationship between the dependent and the IV. Level of study was a significant CV in the agreeableness model and subject of study was a significant CV in the PSM model. Both effects were also positive. For H1, it can be concluded that the results for all six models confirm the hypothesis, because all effects were directed as predicted and all of them were statistically significant. However, R^2 values were rather low for most models and especially low for extraversion and the neuroticism. Yet H1 is supported by statistically significant evidence and is therefore confirmed. The null hypothesis can be rejected.

H2 was derived from the SAT. It proposed that a job seeker's intention to accept a job offer would be higher if the potential leader's personality was similar to the job seeker's own personality. Therefore, the assumption was made that the better a leader's personality corresponds to the job seeker's personality, the higher the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. Except for agreeableness and neuroticism, all multiple linear regression models showed statistically significant results supporting H2. For agreeableness, the influence of the job seeker personality on the intention to accept was not significant. However, age and level of study were significant CVs in this model. Age has a negative effect, whereas the effect of level of study is positive. For neuroticism, the entire model was non-significant and therefore had to be rejected. Even though they were not statistically significant, the effects of agreeableness and neuroticism are both positive and therefore correspond to the predicted direction. For extraversion, conscientiousness, openness and PSM, the effects correspond to the predicted direction and are also significant. The majority of the models showed significant results with an effect in the predicted direction. Yet the null hypothesis cannot be generally rejected because the results for the agreeableness and

neuroticism models were not significant. Therefore, H2 is only partially supported by the study results and cannot be confirmed.

5. Discussion

As its main objective, this master thesis aimed to gain additional knowledge about the process of recruiting new employees. As according to Hongal and Kinange (2020), well performing employees are a requirement for an organization's high performance. In the context of the War for Talent (Chambers et al., 1998), employers are challenged to align their employer brand with the people they want to attract in order to recruit desired employees. In order to do so, an employer needs to identify its target groups and understand their characteristics (Chambers et al., 1998). This master thesis' frame was positioned at a point of time in the recruitment process where a job seeker has met the potential future leader in the context of a job interview. The main objective was to analyze the relevance of a leader's personality in the job seeker's decision-making process in the case that the job seeker receives a job offer after the interview. By analyzing the role of the person-supervisor fit in this process, the thesis aimed to contribute to closing the research gap concerning the relevance of a personality-fit between leader and job seeker for the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer.

The hypotheses were derived from two different theories. H1 is based on the ILT, which, according to Lord et al. (2020) assumes that individuals create mental categories of ideal images of a prototype leader. They use these categories to compare actual leaders to the ideal prototype leader and evaluate them (Lord et al., 2020). Therefore, H1 suggests that a job seeker's intention to accept a job offer increases if the potential leader is similar to the job seeker's prototype leader with regards to personality. H2, which predicts that the intention to accept a job offer increases if the job seeker and the leader are more similar with regards to their own personalities, was derived from the SAT. This theory suggests that individuals with similar characteristics are drawn towards each other (Van Hove & Turban, 2015). The hypotheses were tested by conducting a statistical analysis. The data was gathered with the help of an online survey that was sent to students throughout Switzerland. The survey contained three sets of questionnaires: Two standardized questionnaires to test Big Five characteristics and PSM and one questionnaire with six vignette descriptions. These corresponded to the Big Five characteristics and PSM and were used to describe leaders in hypothetical job interviews scenarios. To analyze the results of the student sample, linear and multiple linear regressions were performed. The regressions were

conducted for each pair of prototype leader personality, respectively job seeker personality and intention to accept for each personality trait. Therefore, as an addition to testing the relationships between each pair's variables, the differences between the personality traits can be analyzed as well. Indeed, there were some noticeable differences between the models. The R^2 values and the β -values were the highest for the openness models (β : 0.538; R^2 : 0.3 for H1, β : 0.553; R^2 : 0.348 for H2) for both hypotheses. Neuroticism (R^2 : 0.076 for H1; R^2 : 0.005 for H2) was the model with the lowest R^2 value for both hypotheses. For H1, the lowest β -value was the one for the extraversion model. For H2, the agreeableness model was the one with the lowest β -value. Therefore, openness has the best indications for a steady effect between perceived person-supervisor fit and intention to accept. With very low R^2 values, the effects are much less diagnostic for the neuroticism models. The large differences between the models show that generalizing conclusions about the strengths of relationships cannot be made. The differences of effect strengths need to be further investigated.

To sum up, as predicted, the results for H1 showed significant positive results for all six pairs. Based on the linear and the multiple linear regression analyses, the null hypothesis for H1 can be rejected. For H2, the null hypothesis can only be rejected for extraversion, conscientiousness, openness and PSM. Therefore, the hypothesis cannot be generally confirmed. There is only partial evidence for H2. With regards to the research question, it can be stated that as according to the predominantly significant positive effects, there appears to be a tendency that a high fit of perceived person-supervisor fit increases a job seeker's intention to accept a job offer.

5.1 Implications for Theory

Even if statistical evidence was not found for all predicted effects, the results of the analysis confirm the assumption that personality traits are of some importance in the job seekers' decision-making process. This corresponds to the theories that were applied to derive the hypothesis. Therefore, the results deliver further scientific findings to support the ILT and the SAT. According to Lord et al. (2020), the ILT is defined as a cognitive structure that plays a role when the characteristics of a leader are processed by individuals. By creating mental categories for prototype leaders, individuals can rate

behaviors of a new leader more easily. Followers rate their leaders by comparing them to their prototype leaders. The perception of a leader's behavior from the follower's point of view is crucial for the person-supervisor relationship. Whether a leader is perceived as such has an influence on leadership effectiveness and potential (Lord et al., 2020). Past leadership research (e.g. Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019; Kong et al., 2021) has found scientific evidence for a positive effect of a congruence between prototype leader and actual leader on factors such as job performance and employee well-being. The significant effects that were found in this master thesis' analysis support this existing research. These new results add an additional perspective to the accumulation of prior findings. They demonstrate that the perceived fit between leader and job seeker with regards to prototype leader personality probably plays a role in the job seeker's job acceptance decision-making process. This also speaks for the importance of the way in which the leader and the fit is perceived by the follower. It can be concluded that according to the analysis results, the perception from the follower's perspective plays a role in the decision-making process.

According to Van Hoye and Turban (2015), the SAT is built on the assumption that attraction between two individuals arises when they are similar regarding aspects such as personality characteristics. This is supported by L. R. Goldberg's (1992) research results. They show that there seems to be an influence of similarities between individuals on work outcomes (L. R. Goldberg, 1992). This master thesis' research results support prior findings to a certain degree. Because H2 cannot be generally confirmed, the results cannot be applied as generalizable evidence supporting past research results. Yet the results for H2 show that there probably is a tendency leading in the predicted direction and in favor of prior studies that show similar results. There may be several reasons for the mixed results. First, as mentioned before, the effects are different for the individual personality trait pairs. This leads to the assumption that the perceived similarity fit does not have the same importance for all personality traits. A reason may be a positive or a negative connotation of the personality trait. This would be a possible explanation for the non-significant results for neuroticism. Individuals with high scores for neuroticism may prefer a leader that is not similar to themselves in order to give them stability and security and to create a more stable environment. On

the other hand, the openness model was the model with the highest β -values and R^2 values for both hypotheses. Values for neuroticism, especially the R^2 values, were low for both hypotheses. This indicates that there may be significant differences between the individual personality traits with regards to the research question. However, this is only an assumption based on patterns that were observed and they need to be further investigated. Second, the perceived similarity between job seekers' and leaders' personalities may simply play a less important part than the perceived similarity between prototype leaders' and leaders' personalities. The intention to accept may rather depend on the vision of an ideal leader and to what extent the potential leader meets these expectations.

With regards to CVs, two variables particularly seemed to have a moderating effect on the relationship between the perceived person-supervisor fit and the intention to accept. In the extraversion, agreeableness and openness models, age was a significant CV for both H1 and H2. There was a negative effect for all of them. Therefore, as age increases, the intention to accept depending on the perceived person-supervisor fit decreases in said models. This indicates that with higher age, the perceived person-supervisor fit has a weaker influence on the intention to accept. Another interesting finding is the significant effect of subject of study in both PSM models. As discussed in chapter [2.2.3](#), according to Perry and Wise (1990), PSM is a predisposition, which is linked to motives that mostly arise in public sector organizations. Various research has investigated the role of PSM in the work context and in organizational settings (e.g. Christensen & Wright, 2011; Crewson, 1997; Miao et al., 2019; Naff & Crum, 1999; Vandenabeele, 2009). As an example, Crewson's (1997) results support the assumptions that motivations and expectations of public sector employees differ from those of private sector employees. The effect of subject of study in the PSM models draws on Crewson's (1997) results. Logically, it can be assumed that certain subjects have stronger links to PSM than others. Because some subjects of study such as public administration are rather designed for public sector jobs, this assumption is in accordance with Crewson's (1997) results, as long as the moderating effect of subject of study for PSM models is presumed to be stronger for subjects with a connection to the public sector. However, this has not been verified. In

order to test this assumption, future research needs to identify the subjects that are responsible for the moderating effect of subject of study.

5.2 Implications for Practical Purposes

As mentioned in this thesis' introduction, the lack of skilled and qualified employees is a global issue (Collings et al., 2019). As defined by Chambers et al. (1998), War for Talent results from the struggle to recruit enough executive talent. As according to Hongal and Kinange (2020), recruiting qualified employees is crucial for a company's success. Employee resources influence the competitive advantage. Therefore, good talent management strategies are crucial. There is high competition between businesses for qualified staff. Thus, employers need to develop strategies that allow them to attract and recruit the best employees. In the hiring and acquisition process, one major step towards success is the identification of people that fit the organization (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Besides work-related skills, this also includes personal characteristics and values (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Pudjiarti and Hutomo (2019) agree with Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) by stating that a high fit not only depends on skills but also on personal characteristics between the employee and the employer. Based on these research results, this master thesis' objective with regards to business practice was to further investigate personality factors in the context of the recruitment process. Deeper knowledge about the relevance of personality in the recruitment process can help employers understand how the first impression of a potential leader affects the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. The results, which predominantly correspond to the predicted relationships between perceived person-supervisor fit and intention to accept support the assumptions that personality traits play a role in the job seeker's decision-making process. By considering personality traits in the recruitment process, employers can more easily manage to create high fits. Thus, if job candidates are assessed for employee-leader combinations that potentially create a high perceived person-supervisor fit, there is a better chance that the candidate will accept a job offer.

By including personality fit in the recruitment process, resources can potentially be economized. If a high perceived person-supervisor fit increases the intention to accept a job offer, employers can benefit from assessing job seekers that have a higher

chance that they will accept a possible job offer. This way, the number of candidates who are unlikely to accept a job offer can be reduced. Employers can save resources by assessing candidates that are more likely to confirm in the case of a job offer. This helps employers to develop a more efficient recruiting strategy. It is self-explanatory that the intention to accept not solely depends on the perceived person-supervisor fit. Yet it is another factor that can be included in the choice of job interview candidates. As the results show, the perceived person-supervisor fit is especially relevant with regards to the prototype leader. These findings can especially support multi-step job assessments. If job seekers' expectations regarding their ideal leader can be detected in a first interview, this information can be applied to create prototype leader profiles for each candidate. This data can then support the choice of second round candidates.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Limitations and Reflection

As for the limitations of this master thesis, the first group of shortcomings arises from the construction of the data gathering. First and foremost, it needs to be emphasized that the experiment does not represent the reality in all its facets. Even though a scenario-based role-playing experiment (SBRP) helps replicate realistic situations (Rungtusanatham et al., 2011), this experiment must not be understood as an aspiration to render the examined process as a complete replication of the reality. In this case, the SBRP only confronted the subjects with one particular aspect of the process. Therefore, it needs to be considered that the situation is partially taken out of context and that the subjects are asked to make a decision based on a short description of a person. To receive more reliable and more generalizable results, the SBRP needs to be expanded with more information in order to approach reality. It is self-evident that a written description of a person cannot deliver the same amount of information as meeting a person at first hand. For instance, the SBRP could barely take any non-verbal communication into account. Also, it is determined by the construction of the experiment that each vignette description corresponds to only one of the six personality traits. This does not correspond to reality, where usually multiple personality traits are present for the same individual. A person's individual mix of personality traits may be more crucial than the one predominant personality trait.

Another limitation arising from the construction of the data gathering is caused by the lack of a factor that allows to specifically calculate the person-supervisor fit. The personality values retrieved from the survey did not allow to directly calculate the fit between prototype leader and actual leader, respectively the job seeker's and the actual leader's personality. However, a high fit was automatically given if the personality of the leader described in the vignette corresponded to the personality of the prototype leader, respectively the job seeker. Each vignette description corresponded to only one personality trait and each leader described in the vignette was described as if there was only one personality factor present. For the example of extraversion, this would mean that the higher the prototype leader's, respectively the job seeker's value for extraversion, the better it corresponds to the leader in the

vignette and the higher the fit between the two. However, a more statistical approach would have been the inclusion of a separate factor indicating the person-supervisor fit. A possible way to do so will be further described in chapter [6.2](#).

Additionally, the subjects' responses to some questions may have been distorted by negative connotations. For instance, multiple items of neuroticism are formulated in a negative way. However, the items were deliberately not adapted in this master thesis, because standardized and validated questionnaires were applied. Therefore, they were adopted one-to-one to avoid any mutations. Another option to elude this issue would have been the removal of any negatively connoted items. However, for some personality traits, this would have led to an elimination of multiple items. Because vigorously shortened versions of the original questionnaires were applied, further contractions of the questionnaires were abstained from. Another possible weakness of the questionnaire are the following three biases: First, there may have been detectability of the constructs behind the items for some subjects. Subjects who are familiar with the concepts of Big Five and PSM may have recognized them. This possibly caused a bias with regards to their responses. Another bias may have been caused through social desirability. Another possible cause for distortions may have been language barriers. Perfect understanding of the German language was not asked for as a requirement to participate in the survey. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that all subjects have enough language skills to properly understand all survey questions, items, and vignette descriptions. Future research can bypass this flaw by either testing the subjects' ability to understand complex German questions or by providing the survey in multiple languages. Lastly, the indications of the five-point Likert scale (*very likely*, *likely*, etc.) may have induced a bias because of the ways individual subjects interpreted the indications. This may lead to distortions when making comparisons between individuals.

The second group of shortcomings arises from the methodologies that were chosen for different tasks. On the one hand, this concerns the sample that was chosen. As was pointed out in chapter [3.2](#), student sample are considered as controversial (Hanel & Vione, 2016). It is questioned whether results that are based on data gathered through student samples are representative and generalizable. Biases based on strong

cognitive skills and less critical attitudes are associated with student samples (Hanel & Vione, 2016). Therefore, it is questionable whether the results of this master thesis can be transferred to the entire population of job seekers in Switzerland. According to (Hanel & Vione, 2016), some indications suggest that estimations for the general public that are based on student samples are moderately accurate. Yet the generalizability of the results presented in this master thesis should be considered cautiously. There may be other factors influencing the results that were not taken into consideration, such as cultural differences or differences between language areas.

With regards to the methods applied for the data analysis, it must be stated that they have been associated with some controversies as well. This begins with the controversial discussion about the proper level of measurement of Likert scales. Some opt for an ordinal, others for an interval scale (Carifio & Perla, 2008). In order to make use of the strengths of parametric analyses, the choice of analysis methods is based on the position in favor of an interval scale. Even though there is literature which justifies this position, it should still be pointed out that it is part of an ongoing discussion. Even though there are voices supporting the point of view that the chance of coming to a wrong result can be neglected for the benefit of the advantages that come with parametric tests (Sangthong, 2020), the results for this thesis should be regarded with awareness that there still is minor probability that the choice of tests may have influenced the results. The *five-eighty convention*, which has been criticized by researchers such as Ellis (2010), was applied in this master thesis. When defining desired power and significance level, ideally one should find an individual balance that fits each research (Ellis, 2010). Another possible bias which may have influenced the results is based on past experiences. Subjects who have experienced leaders similar to the ones in the vignette descriptions may have rated the intention to accept rather based on experiences associated with certain individuals than solely based on their personality.

Last, it needs to be noted that the CFA showed some results for the tested models that did not correspond to the cutoff values indicating a good or an acceptable model fit. Even though Hu and Bentler's (1999) guidelines have been criticized as conservative and stringent with a danger of leading to Type I errors (Marsh et al., 2004), the models

that were applied in this master thesis may have possibly led to wrong research results. To avoid false statements, it needs to be presumed that the models are not ideal fits. Before further research is conducted based on these results, the model needs to be investigated in more detail in order to find a better fitting model. Ideally, the study will first be replicated with the help of a more suitable model to validate the results before using it as a base for new research projects. Possibilities to draw on this research in the future will be discussed in the following subchapter.

6.2 Research Gap and Future Research

As was mentioned in chapter [6.1](#), the setting of the experiment only represents a small amount of the abundant information that a job seeker would usually receive in a job interview. Subjects were asked to make a decision based on only one factor. A written text cannot manage to provide the same information as a job seeker would receive in a real-life interview. Facial expressions or gestures were for instance not considered. Ideally, the results of this master thesis can be further investigated by testing them in a richer setting. The analysis does show certain tendencies. They can be further investigated through future research by conducting experiments that are closer to reality. A possible way to perform similar experiments in a more tangible manner are in-person experiments to simulate a real-life job interview scenario. Additionally, future research needs to consider that individuals possess multiple personality traits that add up to an individual combination for each person. This experiment did not consider this, because the leaders were presented as if they completely matched one of the six personalities in the vignette descriptions. The correlations and regressions were performed individually for each personality trait. This can be taken further by constructing scenarios for different combinations of personality traits within one person.

Besides a realistic setting, future research must also consider the research model's logic with regards to the measurement of the IV. As presented in chapter [6.1](#), a more statistical approach to include the person-supervisor fit in the model would have been a separate factor indicating the IV. A possible way to consider this is to add a second set of questions to the survey section with the vignette descriptions. Instead of merely asking the respondents to rate their likelihood of job offer acceptance, they can also

be asked to rate the perceived personality of the leader. They can for instance be asked to rate as how agreeable they perceive the leader described in the vignette. This can then be used as a factor to define the leader's personality on a Likert scale. With this additional factor, the difference between the actual leader and the prototype leader's, respectively the job seeker's personality can be calculated.

As discussed in chapter [5.1](#), results show some substantial differences between the models for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness and PSM. Thus, the detected effects are not consistent when compared between the individual models. For instance, β - and R^2 values feature a large range of values. Some effects that were significant for one model were not significant for another model. As will be discussed subsequently, significant CVs varied between the models. Some models did not contain any significant CVs at all. This shows that it is not possible to draw one unifying conclusion that fits all models. Since it was no substance of the hypotheses, the differences between the models were not further investigated. This can be a subject for future research. New hypotheses can be derived based on these results. The relationships can additionally be investigated with respect to potential moderating variables. Also, the difference between the relevance of job seekers' own personality traits and their prototype leaders' personality traits may be an interesting subject for further research. As the results of this thesis show, prototype leader personality appears to be a relevant factor in the decision-making process, whereas this is only partially the case for job seekers' personality. Future research can take this into consideration by performing more in-depth analyses concerning the two factors to compare their importance. Future research may further investigate the relevance of personality in the job seeker's decision-making process, specifically with regards to PSM to perform deeper research regarding the subject of study as a moderating variable. As the findings show, subject of study has a significant positive effect on the relationship between the perceived person-supervisor fit and the intention to accept. This may indicate that for students of subjects that are linked to PSM predispositions, personality traits that are allocated to PSM are more relevant in the decision-making process than for other students. This master thesis did not conduct any analysis to further investigate this manner. Therefore, the findings present an opportunity for future research to include subject of study as a moderating variable and to investigate what

subjects are significantly linked to the model. Research then needs to detect what subjects are linked to this effect and what the cause of the effect is.

Last, future research must be advised to take into consideration that the CFA showed a lack of fit with regards to the model. When performing research that draws on this master thesis' research results, a more appropriate model or a sample that is more suitable for the model need to be applied. It may even be necessary to first replicate the experiment with a more appropriate model in order to verify the results.

6.3 Summary

Recruiting new employees is a relevant process, because, as according to Mahapatro (2010), employees are a company's most important source of competitive advantage. In this context, employees are an asset for the employer. As stated by Pudjiarti and Hutomo (2019), in order to recruit the right people, organizations have an advantage if they manage to attract employees with personal characteristics and values that match the ones of the organization. This is supported by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), who state that having a good fit between employer and employee with regards to their characteristics is a qualifier. To draw on these existing insights, this master thesis aimed to contribute to research literature concerning the recruitment process. It investigated the impact of the perceived person-supervisor fit on the job seeker's decision-making process after having received a job offer. An answer to the following research question was to be found:

Does a high perceived person-supervisor fit between job seeker and potential leader increase the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer?

As discussed in chapter 5, the first hypothesis was confirmed by statistic results. This indicates that the perceived person-supervisor fit regarding prototype leader personality has a positive effect on the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. For the second hypothesis, results were not significant for the agreeableness and the neuroticism models. This means that a generalizing statement is not possible. Yet four out of six models were significant, and all effects (including the non-significant effects) match the predicted direction of the effect. Therefore, there at least appears to be a

tendency into the predicted direction. Because of the mixed results, the findings cannot be generalized to conclusively answer the research question. Even though it cannot be said with certainty that a high perceived person-supervisor fit between job seeker and potential leader increases the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer, the results certainly speak for the existence of a tendency into the predicted direction. However, the student sample was rather restricted and may therefore not represent the overall population of job seekers in Switzerland. The results should rather be interpreted as descriptions of students' decision-making processes. Future research can draw on these results to investigate the effects in various settings in order to make more general conclusions for the population of job seekers in Switzerland. Additionally, it should consider cultural differences across the country.

To conclude, the results of this master thesis concern only minor factors of the recruitment process. Yet they contribute to creating a broader perspective of influences on the job seeker's intention to accept a job offer. In combination with past and future research results they can help employers improve their understanding of the job seeker's decision-making process. The sum of knowledge of this process can help employers develop tailored strategies to increase their chances to successfully compete in the War for Talent.

Declaration of autonomy

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich diese Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäss aus Quellen entnommen wurden, habe ich als solche kenntlich gemacht. Mir ist bekannt, dass andernfalls der Senat gemäss dem Gesetz über die Universität zum Entzug des auf Grund dieser Arbeit verliehenen Titels berechtigt ist.

Bern, 11. Februar 2024



Anika Ruppen

Declaration of consent

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich der Veröffentlichung der von mir verfassten Masterarbeit im Falle einer Benotung von 5.0 oder höher auf der Homepage des KPM zustimme. Die Arbeit ist öffentlich zugänglich.

Bern, 11. Februar 2024



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