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Gen Z & Social Sustainability – A Need for Adaption

An exploratory study of generation Z's preferences of social sustainability when entering the labor market and an investigation on how SMEs within the foodservice distribution industry answer to these preferences.

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Abstract

Background: In today's global world, corporations face a huge demand for executive talents due to advanced technology and increased level of high education which has led to a rapidly changing business environment. Companies need to distinguish themselves from one another to gain a competitive advantage in the market, to recruit the best talents on the labor market. The strategies of employment branding have emerged to be important ways to attract new talents to work for an organization, and there is a need to update them accordingly to the targeted group. As sustainability has risen to be one of the major trends, this could be a way for the organizations to remain competitive and an attractive employer.

Purpose: The study aims to examine the impact on social sustainability when generation Z is looking for a company to work with and examine how these preferences can be met by SMEs within the food distribution industry with help of employment branding strategies.

Method: The study is following an interpretivist approach as an exploratory study. A multimethod approach has been used to collect quantitative and qualitative data with help of a survey and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data has been analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS and qualitative data has been analyzed through a coding procedure. The research elaborates on existing theories with a deductive approach.

Conclusion: This research suggests that social sustainability is important for generation Z with a higher degree of education when looking for a company to work with. However, their willingness to enhance social sustainability is slightly lower. SME companies within the food distribution industry are answering to these expectations to some extent, however there is a lack of actual strategies and more can be done to attract the new workforce of generation Z.

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1. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce background information and key concepts about the researched topic. Problem statement, research questions and purpose are presented as well as definitions used throughout the study.

In today's global world and rapidly changing business environment, there has been a dramatic change in the labor market during the last decade, due to advanced technology and increased level of high education (Barrow & Mosley, 2011). The challenge that corporations face is a huge demand for executive talents. These talents are needed to stay competitive in the market. The challenge lies in the identification and attraction of talent and such a workforce is scarce in today's competitive environment. The shift towards so-called talent management was first acknowledged in McKinsey's research already in 1990's when a group of researchers published "war for talent" in 1997. The report highlights the increased demand and competition between companies regarding their needs to recruit and retain talents (Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001).

Companies need to distinguish themselves from one another to gain a competitive advantage in the market. Thus, a need for continuous change is critical to secure companies' survival. This means that companies need to develop accurate plans and put efforts to attract the best possible candidates available, as well as retaining the current employees within the company. Due to these mentioned reasons, employment branding as a strategic tool to attract employees and define the employer image has become part of companies' strategies, and it is emerging widely within different industries worldwide (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014).

Since employment branding strategies are targeted to potential candidates, there is a need to update them accordingly to the targeted group. Since every generation has different characteristics and

preferences (Pandita, 2021), firms have to consider changes when trying to attract new potential talents. However, to change their strategies the companies need to understand the new workforce. Globally, there is a change in the workforce entering the work environment, and the new generation, generation Z that is starting to enter the workforce is generally more highly educated meaning that they are currently studying or have recently graduated university, achievement-oriented, and diverse than any other generation before them (Schrot, 2019).

In today's world, sustainability has risen to be one of the major trends in the field of business. Sustainable development research is being carried out in education already from the elementary level to higher education institutions (Kundu, Mor, Kumar & Bansal, 2019). Therefore, generation Z, including people born between 1995 and 2010 is more aware of its importance, and thus appreciates it more when finding a company to work with (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021). Due to these changes in expectations, companies need to demonstrate their commitment to societal challenges, such as sustainability, climate change, and people's wellbeing. As generation Z expects the companies to take real actions concerning these aspects, companies must act following their values and beliefs in terms of ethics, and this has to be the top priority in their processes for prospective employees of generation Z (Gomez, K.; Mawhinney, T.; Betts, K., n.d.). Additionally, companies who apply strategies of sustainability to their processes will have major business benefits, which include employee satisfaction, retention, and better productivity (Baldwin, 2015).

One of the industries that are under high pressure to improve their sustainable strategies is the food industry. Within the food industry, there is potential to improve their sustainable strategies, however, the industry falls short within this area and causes both social and environmental damage (Baldwin, 2015). The primary social issues that the food industry is facing today are rural economic development, toxic material, safety, and food nutrition (Baldwin, 2015).

However, in this study, the focus will be on the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within the food industry, which are specified in trading the branded consumer food, and taking care of the post-production activities of the food. Based on their staff headcount, which is less than 250 employees, they are considered as small or medium (European Commission, ND). These companies buy food from both national and international suppliers to later sell to grocery stores or

restaurants in the region where they operate. These companies form a “sub-industry” of the food industry, so-called “foodservice distribution industry”. To keep up to date with the trends of sustainability, and to stay competitive in the market, companies within the foodservice distribution industry are dependent on attracting the best talents on the market, in terms of accounting, finance, consultancy, and other experts. Thus, the employment brand strategies need to be well planned, and the expectations of the new generation must be taken into consideration.

1.1 Problem

As generation Z enters the labor market, literature has started to study the generation's characteristics and preferences. Literature shows that generation Z has a strong need for security, this is reflected in their expectations to find a job with a generous salary as well as a secure work situation (Iorgulescu, 2016). Research also shows that generation Z is generally higher educated than any other generation before them (Schroth, 2019), due to the awareness of sustainability rising in society, sustainable development has been more included in educational institutions (Kundu, et, al., 2019). Earlier literature also shows that individuals with higher education tend to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly (Mayer, 2015). For example, higher educated individuals are more likely to re-cycle (Callan & Thomas, 2006) and more likely to buy organic and eco-label products (Mayer, 2015). Furthermore, earlier research within older generations has also shown that women tend to be more socially responsible than men. (Anderson, Hansen, and Panwar, 2010; Babania, Kahreh, Mirmehdi & Tive, 2014).

According to Gale (2015), companies should focus on attracting generation Z, which is increasingly entering the labor market. Even though earlier research could suggest that due to the sustainability awareness among generation Z and the sustainable characteristics of higher educated individuals, generation Z would consider sustainability as an important aspect when choosing an employer. However, the impact of cognitive dissonance must be considered. Meaning that even though the individual is aware of the sustainability problem and has an active concern that is not directly related to certain practices, those practices and concerns will remain the same (Hobson, 2006). Furthermore, the lack of research around generation Z's expectations about sustainability is because generation Z is now on the stage of completing their education and beginning professional careers. Yet, there is not enough information about their expectations, because of the

young age of the group. And if there is any, the articles rarely discuss the characteristics in the context of sustainability. Therefore, the gap in the research is recognized, and a connection between sustainability, in terms of social sustainability, and generation Z's expectations need to be researched further.

Companies within the foodservice distribution industry need to adopt new practices to their supply chains and explore innovations throughout their processes to provide a benefit not just for a sustainable food supply but also for the overall benefit of the economy, environment, and society. Another benefit of these sustainable actions is improved employee satisfaction and productivity (Baldwin, 2015). However, when looking at the social aspects of sustainability, which will be in focus in this study, the literature is rarely handling the topics around it. This is due to its complexity and lack of an integrative approach (O'Hara & Toussaint, 2021). The main concern of sustainability within the food industry is the environmental part of it, which has been researched much further and deeper. This disparity indicates concern and an important limitation for future research on social sustainability. Thus, the authors have recognized this gap, hence want to examine this topic further, and discover how the companies in the food trade industry are acting around social sustainability in their processes.

Discovering these strategies of social sustainability, which includes the aspects of how businesses manage and identify the positive and negative impacts on people, the relationship with stakeholders as well as the direct and indirect effect on humans and the society where the company operates. And how this affects a company's attractiveness from the perspective of the potential new employee is essential to get a deeper understanding of the topic. Furthermore, understanding how the foodservice distribution companies practice corporate social sustainability (CSR) helps in the identification and development of a picture of how companies handle CSR and how they attract recruits. The knowledge gained from the investigation of CSR in food distribution companies helps in conceptualization. Additionally, the topic is worth researching because there is a societal trend toward the expectations of organizations' responsibilities. It is also vital for companies to recognize their potential employees' preferences for CSR, to attract them, which creates another aspect why this research is worth conducting (Bustamante, et. al., 2021).

1.2 Purpose

This study aims to examine what impact social sustainability has when generation Z is entering the workforce and choosing a company to work with. And further, how businesses in the foodservice distribution industry possibly could change their strategies, with help of employment branding to attract new talents.

1.3 Perspective

The perspective of this study is to examine if the management of the SMEs within the foodservice distribution can use social sustainability within their employment branding strategies to attract new employees from generation Z.

1.4 Research question

To meet the purpose of this study, it is driven by the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: *“What kind of impact does social sustainability have on generation Z with a higher degree of education when choosing a company to work with?”*

RQ2: *How do the SME companies within the foodservice distributor industry answer these expectations?*

1.5 Delimitation

This study is limited to focus on the food industry, more specifically small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within the foodservice distribution industry. The companies interviewed for this study operate mainly in a B-to-B function. Furthermore, since these companies are SMEs, they are not obligated to have specific ways of dealing with sustainability, such as conducting sustainability reports, which are required by Swedish law for large companies (Bolagsverket, 2021).

Furthermore, the examination of the social sustainability preferences of generation Z when choosing a company to work for are limited to focus on university students that are currently studying business and economics or have recently finished the degree.

1.6 Definitions

CSR - Corporate social responsibility, a management concept where businesses integrate environmental and social concerns in their operations cooperation with stakeholders (UNIDO, ND).

Employment branding - A process of establishing a unique employer identity, or, more precisely, the promotion of a distinct and attractive employer image (Theurer et al., 2016).

Foodservice distribution companies - Companies that buy food from producers and store the food to later sell it to other companies as grocery stores, restaurants etc. (Goldstein, 2021).

Generation Z - The Post-Millennial generation, a generalization of a worldwide demographic group of people who are born between 1995-2010 (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

SME - Small and medium sized companies with less than 250 employees, a turnover less than 50 million and or a balance sheet total less than 43 billion (European commission, ND).

Social sustainability - Managing and identifying business positive and negative impacts on people, relationship with stakeholder, direct and indirect effect on humans and society where the company operates as well as manage impact proactively (United Nation Global Nation, ND).

2. Frame of reference

The purpose of this chapter is to present relevant theoretical background within the area of social sustainability, employment branding and generation Z. As well as presenting relevant theories that can be used to analyze the findings within the area of generation Z's relation to social sustainability. Firstly, the method of frame of reference is presented.

2.1 Method for frame of reference

In order to present a relevant overview of the topic, within employment branding, sustainability in the food industry or the preferences of generation Z, authors have used a systematic approach in order to go through all the relevant literature. The first step in this process was to discover valuable journals and databases, for which *Google Scholar* and university's online library *Primo* was used. The research was mostly done through using the following keywords: “*employment branding*”, “*generation Z*”, “*characteristics of generation Z*”, “*organizational identity*”, “*social sustainability*”, “*CSR*”, “*social sustainability within the food industry*”, “*CSR within the food industry*”, “*cognitive dissonance*” and “*Maslow's pyramid*”. These keywords were combined with each other, to find articles combining all these aspects. New relevant keywords and synonyms could be discovered based on the initial key words.

To ensure the high quality among the articles used for the research, peer-reviewed literature and articles or books published in academic journals were used. Additionally, another important aspect for the authors was that the literature used was up-to-date. However, the search was not limited to any specific time-frame, since the topics and concepts around employment branding and generation Z are relatively young. However, in several concepts, it was also beneficial to include earlier literature to provide information to the greatest extent. Additionally, literature that had been cited in multiple different articles were considered as worth mentioning. However, one needs to consider that information concerning the generation Z or employment branding are relatively new

concepts, thus extra critical thinking needs to be done in order to conduct the research. Also, when discovering the articles within the generation Z, it is important to remember that the articles are generalizations about the generation as a whole.

All the relevant theories around the topics have been discovered, and the most accurate ones described. Lastly, based on the theories gathered from previous literature, the authors have developed a framework based on the employment branding process.

2.2 Social Sustainability

Sustainable development was first introduced in 1987 in the Brundtland report, and the commonly accepted definition of sustainable development is known as “*Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (United Nations, 1987). A sustainable business finds a balance and harmony between profit, environmental responsibility, and social responsibility (Dyllick & Muff, 2013). It can be split into three dimensions, which are economic, environmental, and social, which all affect each other. Social sustainability encompasses the humanitarian context of business, such as the values or beliefs of the consuming public (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). Social sustainability practices include such as philanthropic work, community engagement, work towards better human rights, or partnering with non-profit organizations (“Social Sustainability | UN Global Compact”, 2022).

Even though sustainable development was introduced more than three decades ago, social sustainability is a relatively new concept (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017) since it earlier has been included in the development and economic growth (Dixon, Perkins, Vallance, 2011). This has led to the definition and the concepts of social sustainability have over the time been confused with other concepts within sustainable development (Dixon, Perkins, Vallance, 2011).

According to the United Nations, social sustainability is about managing and identifying both the negative and positive impacts the business causes people. There are several critical parts included in social sustainability - relationships and engagement with stakeholders, what happens to employees in the value chain, local communities, and customers as well as proactively managing

the business's impact (UNIDO, ND). Further, it also covers human rights for specific groups such as children, women, and people with disabilities. It also includes social sustainability issues that affect workers such as health and education (UNIDO, ND). Further, social sustainability handles problems such as power, well-being, the needs of humans, and justice (KTH, 2021).

The literature agrees that social sustainability lacks a theoretical framework (Griessler & Litting 2005) which results in that social sustainability lacks unity in its area of coverage and definition (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017). However, Shirazi and Keivani (2017) argue that due to the lack of a blueprint definition of social sustainability researchers can develop a place-specific or case-specific interpretation of social sustainability. This is seen as an advantage due to the complexity of all elements included in social sustainability (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017).

The issue of a gender-diversified approach has been discussed in the literature around sustainability. Historically, a woman is seen as the person who takes care of the household, children, and family health while the man has control of the labor of the household. This may be explained by the fact that women give birth and have historically been considered too weak and emotional to take the same kind of responsibility as men. However, in terms of social sustainability, this has given women a different view due to their awareness of the limited resources (D'souza & Gebremedhin, 1998).

2.2.1 CSR

Living up to the duty of preventing, minimizing, and managing a negative impact on the society and environment is commonly known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR enhances both society and the brand image of the company. Demonstrating and communicating an organization's sustainable goals and CSR activities signals to its stakeholders about its commitment to responsibility, which can be linked to positive corporate performance, as well as competitive advantage and improvements in employee recruitment and retention (Haugh & Talwar, 2010). Thus, companies need to pay attention to these practices to retain their attractiveness and stay competitive in the market, especially regarding the aspects of employee attractiveness (Bustamante, et. al., 2021). According to the European Union, companies can be socially responsible by integrating environmental, ethical, social, and human rights concerns into

their business strategies and visions as well as by following laws. CSR is considered important for the transition to a more sustainable economy since the values of CSR help to build a more cohesive society (European Commission, ND).

CSR can be divided into two different parts, internal and external CSR. External CSR focuses on actions that target customers, local communities, and the natural environment. Actions targeted to communities may include donations to charities to support the communities' development and humanitarian causes where the company operates. Further, CSR related to the environment includes investments to ensure a sustainable environment for the next generation such as decreasing pollution and ensuring clean water. CSR that targets the customers focuses on ensuring the quality of the product or service as well as protecting the customer (Jia, Yuan, Liu & Huang, 2019). Internal CSR focuses on the employees and how to satisfy the employees' expectations. The idea of internal CSR is to benefit the employees by improving and fulfilling organizational fairness as well as ensuring development and growth for the employees. It also includes offering the employees a safe work environment. Furthermore, it is closely related to physical and psychological well-being (Jia, et. al., 2019). Internal CSR may be beneficial for companies since it promotes exchange between the company and the employee. Even though CSR is voluntary, and the employee is not obligated to return anything to the company when working for a company with a well-functioning CSR. Most often a good work environment, safety, development opportunities, and fair treatment makes the employees feel supported by the environment, which often results in more engagement and better results from the employees (Jia, et. al., 2019).

Some literature has investigated the impact that strategic CSR decisions have on a company's reputation. Dutton et al. (1994) and Lichtenstein et al. (2004) demonstrated that CSR has a beneficial effect on corporate reputation, which in turn influences perceptual corporate advantages, by analyzing customer or employee perceptions of a firm.

2.3 Employment branding

Branding originated as a technique to distinguish tangible products from one another, but it has since expanded to include people, locations, and businesses (Peters, 1999). The employment brand emphasizes the company's unique employment opportunities and environment (Backhaus &

Tikoo, 2004). According to Sullivan (1999), employment branding is about creating an image, which makes people willing to work for a specific organization, which enables the individual to learn and self-develop. It is the company's targeted, long-term strategy to derive the awareness of its employees and potential employees. The most cited definition for employment branding, among all the literature on the topic, is defined by Ambler & Barrow (1996), as they define employment brand as “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”. Further, these authors argue that the benefits of employment branding are similar to a conventional product the brand offers to its customers. Therefore, it offers the same functional (developmental and/or useful activities), economical (material or monetary rewards), and psychological (feeling of belonging) attributes, but instead of consumers, to its potential and current employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

2.3.1 Employment branding process

Employment branding can be described as a three-way process (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Firstly, the company must develop a value proposition, which is intended to be a presentation of what the firm offers to its employees - a core statement about the brand's values that it sends out (Eisenberg et.al., 2001). Secondly, the employment brand has to be marketed to the right target audience - the potential employees or the recruiting agencies. This step is also known as external marketing of the employment brand, which should be planned in a way that drives the same values as the target group (Sullivan, 1999). The third stage of the process is the internal marketing of employment branding. The company needs to carry the promise made about the organizational culture and set of values to the newcomers as well as the other employees, to commit the staff to the organizational culture and goals of the company. Further, in order for this process to happen, it is vital that the employer brand is developed consistent with the company's set of values, and the corporate brand (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

2.4 Organizational identity

An important aspect for a company to establish its position both in the competitive market and among employees and future employees is to establish its organizational identity. Organizational identity is the result of its distinct attributes, corporate communication with internal and external

stakeholders, and employer behavior (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007). Organizational identity is defined by shared values, a clear purpose, and articulated organizational characteristics (Duncan, 2019). Further, organizational identification is directly influenced by social identification when individuals define themselves as a member of a specific organization (Leivensen, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007). The identification of members of the organization is the first step when evaluating an organization's identity since the members' identification identifies affective, evaluative, and behavioral components within the organization. These components later form the core identity of the organization (Leivensen, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007).

2.5 Generation Z

Stauss and Howe (1997) argue that a generation shares beliefs and behaviors. Furthermore, a generation has an “age location in history”, meaning that during the generation’s childhood or young youth they have experienced major historical events (Stauss and Howe, 1997). Generation Z has grown up in a more globalized world than any generation before them since they have been exposed to the internet from an early age (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Several studies have been done on generation Z’s characteristics and preferences in terms of work-related questions. Literature shows that generation Z is the most achievement-orientated generation this far. Further, the generation is also generally higher educated, more economically well-being, and more racially and ethnically diverse than the generations before them (Schroth, 2019). Research has also shown that generation Z lacks work experience when entering adulthood which according to Schorts (2019) has left the generation with unrealistic expectations of the work environment. This results in those companies being left with lower commitment and higher turnover and companies need to communicate both positive and negative aspects of the job. Research also highlights that due to a high degree of anxiety problems and depression among generation Z only 15 % of the generation worldwide would take on leadership responsibilities in the workplace. This is due to the stress that comes with leadership responsibilities (Schorts, 2019). Further generation Z expects to be mentored by its superiors as well as develop good relationships within the workplace (Iorgulescu, 2016).

According to McKinsey's research from 2018, generation Z is more conscious of brands, their quality, and the realities behind them. The generation can easily access information and use it to develop their perspective quickly. Therefore, the truth is a viable factor among the generation, hence decisions are usually made analytically and pragmatically (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Similar research conducted by Deloitte highlights that employees from generation Z seek transparency from their leaders and corresponding transparent organizational culture (Gomez, K.; Mawhinney, T.; Betts, K., n.d.). These mentioned characteristics support strong evidence that generation Z appreciates ethical and well-structured management, thus aspects of social sustainability can be directly linked to these qualifications (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021).

When discovering the differences between the genders, in the context of young individuals without professional expertise, there is a lack of literature. The research published and conducted so far explores mostly managers with professional experience, who are not part of generation Z (Rzemieniak & Wawer, 2021). However, gender differences have been seen in earlier studies regarding other generations, several findings show that women are more ethically concerned when it comes to business decisions (Babania, Kahreh, Mirmehid & Tive, 2014). Furthermore, Burton and Hegarty (1999) found that female students are more CSR-oriented than men and are therefore more likely to take more ethical and socially responsible decisions. Anderson, Hansen, and Panwar (2010) also suggest that there is a difference in how men and women perceive social responsibility.

2.6 Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The theory of cognitive dissonance was first published in 1956 by Festinger. The theory recognizes the fact that people tend to act in a particular way even though the individual holds better knowledge (Cooper, 2007). Cognitive dissonance arises when an individual's perception is followed by another that is the opposite of the first one (Cooper, 2007). The constant cognitions are cognitions that are followed by each other (Harmon-Jones & Miller, 2019). Cognitive dissonance can be measured in a magnitude meaning that the magnitude of dissonance is greater if two cognitions are further from each other. This also means that the individual can reduce the dissonance by changing behaviors or attitudes. However, literature shows that it is harder to change one's behavior than to change one's attitude (Cooper, 2007) which gives the individual the opportunity to justify the behavior with a change in attitude.

The theory of cognitive dissonance has been developed several times since it was first published and several “sub-theories” have been developed - self-consistency model, self-affirmation model, aversive consequences, self-standards model, and action-based model. The different models describe situations where the individual experiences dissonance. Self-consistency model considers the situation where a person feels dissonance when acting in a way that conflicts with the person's sense of self since the person wants to be seen as consistent and competent. Self-affirmation models suggest that one experiences dissonance when the positive self-concept is threatened. Aversive consequences propose that an individual feels dissonance since he or she considers themselves personally responsible for a negative outcome. Self-standards models suggest that the self-consistency model, self-affirmation model, and aversive consequences overlap each other since the dissonance of the individual experience is dependent on which standards are salient. Action-based models suggest that people experience dissonance when two action tendencies are cognitions (Cogliser, Gardner, Gullifor, Hinojosa & Walker, 2016).

Cognitive dissonance theory has been used in management research to understand workplace behaviors (Cogliser et. al, 2016). Several management studies have shown that when employees experience dissonance within the workplace it results in lower work satisfaction (Cogliser et. al, 2016). However, research also shows that people tend to change their attitude when working in an environment where they experience cognitive dissonance to be able to perform their job (Cogliser et. al, 2016).

2.7 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Multiple researchers and practitioners, such as Appleby (2013), believe that motivation is the most significant factor in determining individual and organizational performance. Maslow’s theory of *Hierarchy of Needs* is a psychological motivational theory that consists of a five-tier model of human needs, which is shown as hierarchical stages within a pyramid (Mcleod, 2018). Individuals must first fulfill lower-level deficit needs before moving on to higher-level growth requirements (Maslow, 1943).

The first two stages of the pyramid consist of physiological needs and needs for safety, which can be categorized as “basic needs” at the bottom of the pyramid. Individuals' physiological needs include oxygen, food, clothing, and a warm place to dwell (Hagerty, 1999). When the need is met, the individual's primary concern becomes their safety and security, such as personal security or health (Mcleod, 2018).

According to Maslow, the second and third levels of the pyramid consists of the needs for belongingness and love and the needs for esteem, which together are categorized as psychological needs (Maslow, 1943). This means that one needs to feel loved and connected to others, as well as feel respected and recognized. The need could also be accomplished by feeling acceptance from a certain group (Hagerty, 1999). According to Maslow, an individual will feel valued and have contributed to their surroundings (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003).

Lastly, the top level is called self-actualization which can be considered as a need for self-fulfillment. These needs refer to one’s desire to become the most that one can be. It also includes self-fulfillment, personal progress, and peak experiences which are all things that people strive for. This stage makes individual development possible (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003).

The theory can be applied to an employee's motivation and describe why an individual acts or feels as they do. Employees are more likely to choose job security and a reasonable income over more 'luxury' traits, implying that these two attributes are more highly respected by the typical person (Başlevent et. al., 2013). Additionally, the theory can also be applied to sustainability, since the categories of needs can apply to sustainability, if considered in the right order, due to their similarity to the widely accepted idea of sustainable development in science and politics. For example, according to the Brundtland report, the physiological and safety needs in Maslow's pyramid must be met as basic rights. When applying these needs to social sustainability, these physiological and safety needs could be human and work rights (Janker, Mann & Rist, 2019).

2.8 Developed framework based on existing theories

When considering the company’s CSR activities and employment branding, Edwards (2005) states that the company, which implements organizational strategies of CSR, is more attractive in terms

of employment branding and attractiveness compared to others (Edwards, 2005). Additionally, the research by Business in Community (2003) argues that responsible business practices can be used to help improve the employer brand, resulting in organizations that are more desirable to recruits. In this research, the authors state that when it comes to choosing a place to work, new graduates are increasingly interested in the organization's values and how socially responsible it is.

Based on the process of employment branding, the authors have developed a framework that combines the most relevant theories and concepts. The framework is developed to suggest how companies can attract generation Z by using strategies of social sustainability and human psychological theories.

1st step: Development of the value proposition

As previously mentioned, Duncan (2019) states that organizational identity is defined by shared values by the company. Employment branding activities include an emphasis on organizational values; as a result, CSR-related concerns are likely to drive growing interest in employment branding (Edwards, 2005). As generation Z values transparency within the organization and ethical leadership styles, strategies based on the values of CSR by the companies are vital when the organizational identity is created.

According to the process of employment branding, the first step the organization needs to develop is to have a consistent value proposition. The purpose of the value proposition is to attract the right talents to the organization (Cliffe, 1998) and can be described as the factors that make the organization attractive, where the corporate image is an important factor (Barber, 1998). Corporate images are what the audience sees when exposed to the corporate logo or name (Balmer & Gray, 1998). Moreover, as Kim & Park (2011) state the quality of CSR has a significant impact on the perception of whether a company's ethical values are aligned with the individual, it can be linked to the corporate image of the company. Further, a person tends to be socially identified with the organization where he or she works. To avoid cognitive dissonance explained as self-consistency, there is a need to align the organizational value with the individual since cognitive dissonance has an impact on the satisfaction among employees of generation Z. It is also important to fulfill Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to make the employees feel satisfied with their position at work.

2nd step: The value proposition marketed to the right target audience

The second step of employment branding is to market to the right target group. As already mentioned, truth is an important factor among generation Z and the generation tends to make analytical and effective decisions. Since the generation easily finds information from many different sources, the organization is not the only factor that affects their preferences when gathering information about organizations' social sustainable strategies and practices. Also, this means that the companies need to practice what they say, which takes the focus out of the traditional market strategies of benefits such as salary. This makes it more important for companies to have a consistent socially sustainable strategy and focus on marketing improvements as well as realistic goals within this area since generation Z values transparency, which affects their decisions.

Further, since the group of generation Z with a higher education degree can assume that all the basic elements of their needs are already fulfilled, such as the certainty of a good salary or assurance of an intermediate level a job, the generation has started to focus on new kinds of issues arising in the society, which are aspects of social sustainability and CSR. Bustamante et. al. (2021) states that the perceived importance of CSR is dependent on one's educational level - recruits with higher qualification for the job value CSR higher compared to others, probably because they have more options to choose from (Bustamante et. al., 2021). When applying this to Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, if the organization wishes to attract potential people of the generation Z with a degree of higher education, they need to focus on including and marketing new kinds of elements in their value proposition based on the preferences and wishes of generation Z.

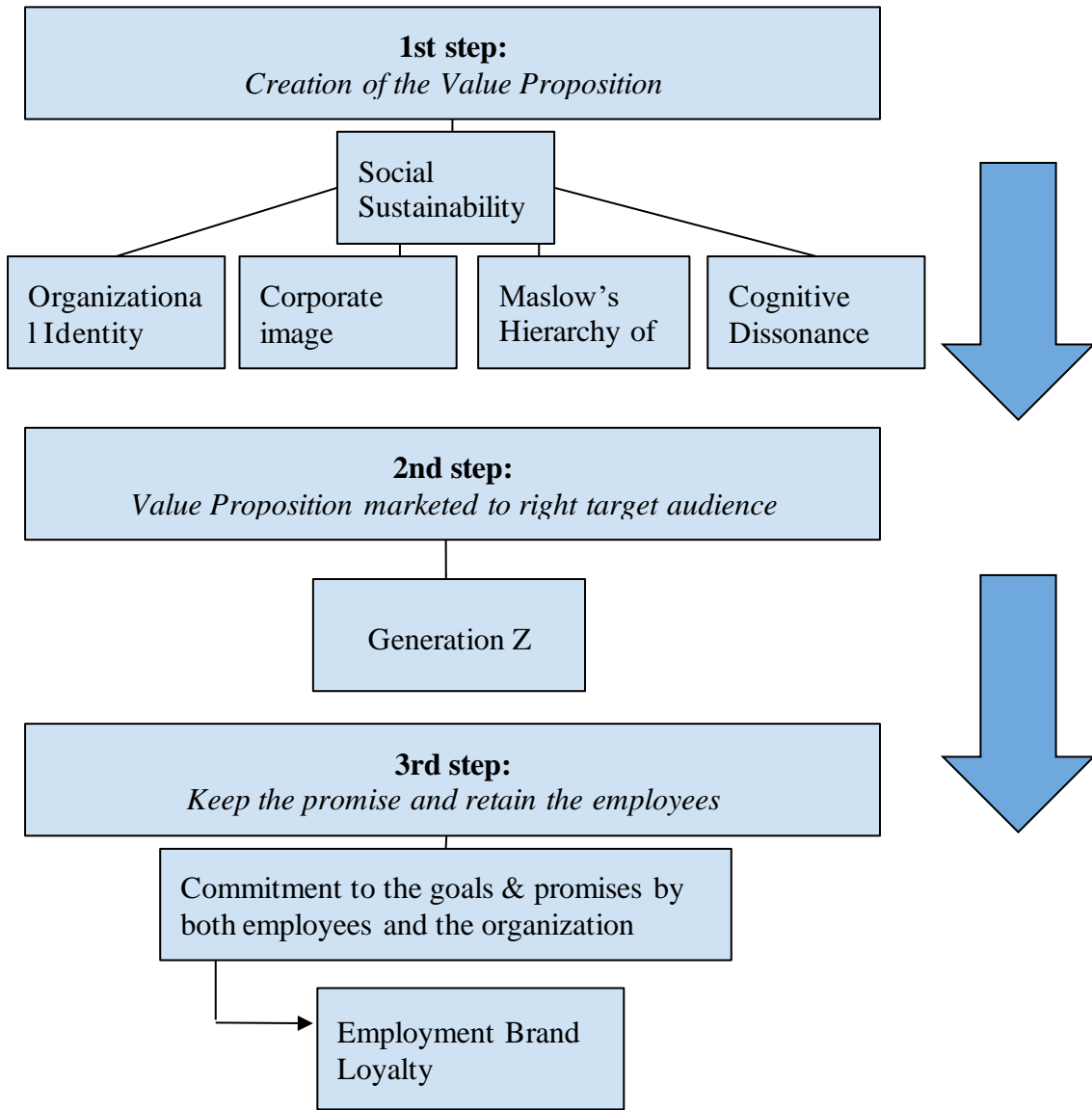
3rd step: Keep the promise and retain the target group

The third step of employment branding is to keep the promise and retain the target group. When an organization commits to its values, goals, and promises, the organization tends to get a higher employment brand loyalty, which later results in better performance among the employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Backhaus and Tikoo state that employment brand loyalty can be defined as the commitment from the employee to the organization and the representation the employee does as a part of the organization. Thus, the company will gain a competitive advantage

since they have committed employees, hence a healthy organizational culture and high-performance standards.

Organizations need to retain the employment brand loyalty by constantly developing according to the employees' expectations since if there is a lack of employment brand loyalty, employees might start to consider other employers that meet their values and standards. To retain this, organizations need to develop good internal marketing. Internal marketing must include how and when the organization is meeting the standards and value proposition that is promised to the employees. If succeeding with this the brand loyal employees tend to stay with the organization even during times when conditions normally would push employees to leave the organization.

Figure 1 - Picture illustrating the Employment branding process



3. Methodology & Method

This chapter presents the methodology and method. It starts with methodology where the research paradigm, research approach and research design are included. Further, the chosen method is discussed by addressing the structure of the multimethod including quantitative and qualitative research, the research context, sampling process and analysis of the data. Lastly, the chapter ends with a discussion on trustworthiness and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research paradigm and approach

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that clarifies the conduct of scientific research and outlines the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. The two most common paradigms are positivism and interpretivism and they represent two opposites on a continuum of paradigms that will lead to various types of studies (Collins & Hussey, 2014). This study follows an interpretivism paradigm for two reasons. Interpretivism finds that reality is shaped by the individual's perspective and is developed from the belief that reality is subjective. Additionally, interpretivism focuses on studying the complexity of social phenomena (Collins & Hussey, 2014). To get an understanding of the impact of social sustainability concerning generation Z and companies within the food distribution industries, the authors also must interact with both the population of generation Z as well as companies operating within the food distribution industry. According to Collins and Hussey (2014), when interacting within a research area the investigation will have an effect on the area investigated since it is impossible to separate the researcher's knowledge and previous experiences from what exists in the society.

3.1.2 Research approach

Inductive and deductive are the two general approaches when conducting a study (Hyde, 2000). Inductive study is aiming to develop a theory from observations, meaning that one moves from specifics to generalizations (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The deductive study is the opposite meaning that general theories are tested for specific studies (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This research study is following a deductive approach since the study is testing theory and a generalization for a specific population (Hyde, 2000). The first stage of this research is to develop a hypothesis to investigate if there are any gender differences in generation Z's preferences for social sustainability and choice of employer. Secondly, the answers from the survey are analyzed with help of IBM SPSS. Further, the study aims to analyze these results with help of existing theories to explain the outcomes of the research. The second stage of the study is to get a deeper understanding of the company's perspective and how social sustainability can affect employment branding when targeting generation Z. This will be done through interviews where the researchers aim to get an understanding of the company's present and future strategies within social sustainability.

3.2 Research design

The research is an interpretive study in line with a deductive approach. The authors have decided to use a multimethod to get a broader understanding of the impact of social sustainability when generation Z decides to work with a company. The study uses a quantitative approach to examine the population's preferences and to get an insight into what aspect of social sustainability is more important. Further, a qualitative study is used and developed from the results of the quantitative study to examine these results linked together with the industry of research. The data collection is divided into two parts where the authors decided to collect the quantitative data with help of an online survey and the qualitative data with help of semi-structured interviews developed from open questions. The rationale for this choice is explained in the following sections.

3.3 Method and data collection

An exploratory study is described to be a study conducted within an area that has been studied by few or never before (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Since the studies on generation Z as a workforce is limited and the area of this concerning social sustainability and even more limited the authors are

conducting an exploratory study. Further, the aim of an exploratory study is not only to test a hypothesis but rather to look for patterns or ideas and gain insights and knowledge within the subject to be able to do a more careful investigation of the subject in a later stage (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

To get an understanding of the area of study the authors have used secondary data to develop an insight both into the characteristics of generation Z and how theories can explain human behavior. In addition, primary data has been used to develop a deeper understanding of social sustainability and the different aspects of the phenomena of social sustainability by collecting quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data, developed as a survey, is aimed to get an understanding of what kind of impact social sustainability has on generation Z, and what aspects have a larger impact. The qualitative data is conducted to get an insight into the current situation of the industry researched, and how the companies currently stand in comparison to the qualitative studies as well as investigate the opportunities for development concerning employment branding.

3.3.1 Survey

Surveys are traditionally linked to a positivist paradigm, however, it is possible to use this method to collect primary data in an interpretive study. Authors acknowledge that the study is biased since when using a survey in an interpretive study participants from the authors own network may participate it (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The survey has been developed from findings within the empirical framework, where the authors have looked at earlier research on generation Z that determines characteristics among the generation. Further, this has been connected to different theories within social sustainability, such as internal and external CSR and organizational identity.

The questions were formed using the authors' knowledge gained by conducting the frame of reference and investigating secondary data. The questions were formed in a way that the conceptual frameworks would be tested. The survey was divided into four different parts, the first part being personal information, where the participants gave the authors their information about age, gender, and education. The second part was handling questions related to the participants' preferences of social sustainability as an employee within a company. The third part was developed to investigate the participants' preferences of social sustainability concerning the workforce of

suppliers for the company and the fourth part was generalized questions of preferences that would affect the individuals chosen to work with an organization. The outline of the survey items can be found in Appendix 7.1.

The survey was developed with help of *Google Forms*, this form was chosen since the authors were familiarized with how the software works, as well as the convenience of easy design. The authors were also able to create a QR-code, which made it easy to ask people to participate in the survey when interacting with them. Further, a pilot study was done, where voluntary participants were asked to answer the questions and give feedback to the authors to ensure the clarity of the questions. This led to a few changes in the formulation of the questions, as well as some of the questions being taken away due to the length of the survey. However, the authors found it necessary to keep most of the questions to be able to analyze what aspect of social sustainability was more important for generation Z.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with the help of digital channels, such as *Zoom* or *Microsoft Teams* to attain insightful primary data, and to gather a deeper understanding of companies' strategies of social sustainability as a part of their strategies for attracting new employees. The interviews were done through digital channels since the authors and interviewees were located at different locations. The food distribution industry was chosen since the authors have previous contacts within this specific industry. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way, which allowed a more open conversation between the authors and interviewees. Arksey and Knight (1999) argue, that employing semi-structured interviews as data collection provides so-called "rich data", and is concerned with exploring "data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common", which can be considered as benefits for data collection (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Thus, to accommodate the challenge of subjectivity and to understand the context from which respondents create their replies, semi-structured interviews were considered ideal.

The semi-structured interview questions were also divided into four different categories, to ensure that the data collection was systematic and clear for the participants. The categories were

employment branding, social sustainability within the company, social sustainability in the aspect of the suppliers, and general questions based on the survey. The interview questions were formed as open questions, closed questions, hypothetical questions as well as comparison questions. Probes were used as well to enable the accurate gathering of details (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The questions were formed based on the authors' investigations of secondary data, as well as based on the findings of the survey. The outline of the interview questions can be found in Appendix 7.2.

3.3.3 Context

The research of earlier literature revealed a general lack of information on companies' strategies within social sustainability, which proved the authors to do further research on the topic. Further, it also revealed a lack of theoretical framework within social sustainability (Griessler & Litting 2005) which gives the individual the opportunity to develop their own definition (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017). This also gives the authors the opportunity to create a case-specific definition of social sustainability in the specific context of this exploratory study with help of the primary data collected.

The study focuses on generation Z since this generation is generally higher educated and holds a degree from higher institutions (Schroth, 2019). Further, earlier studies have found a relationship between higher degrees and taking more sustainable decisions (Mayer, 2015; Callan & Thomas, 2006). In addition, sustainable development is highly integrated into the generation's education (Kundu, et. al., 2019) which suggests that generation Z should take more careful consideration in supporting companies depending on the companies' social sustainable strategy. Furthermore, focusing on the foodservice distribution industry gives the authors an opportunity to research the industry with external suppliers, which makes it possible for the authors to evaluate the different aspects of social sustainability.

Finally, the geographics of the study are limited to companies with headquarters in Sweden. There are two reasons for this choice, first, the participants from generation Z who have taken part of this study have a Swedish connection, either being Swedish citizens or studying at a higher institution in Sweden. Second, the authors are located in Sweden, which makes it more convenient to reach out to companies that operate in Sweden.

3.3.4 Sample

The sample criteria were divided into two different aspects due to the choice of multi-method for this study. Firstly, considering generation Z, due to the different definitions of what age group consists of this generation, the authors set the age span from people born in 1995 to people born in 2010. However, since the study considers individuals who have started or finished higher education, the sample is limited to people born between 1995 to 2003. The second criterion is that higher education is within the field of business.

Secondly, the sample of companies interviewed needed to operate in Sweden and import products from external suppliers which were later sold for example to grocery stores or restaurants. There were no criteria of what kind of food products since this gave the authors a larger range of companies to interview.

3.3.5 Sample procedure

3.3.5.1 Sample procedure survey

In this research, the unit of analysis is students of generation Z with a higher degree of education, and since the size of this group is relatively large, it was not possible to collect empirical data on the entire population. Therefore, the authors focused on reaching out to the network around them and specified to determine the target population to be business and economics students of Generation Z.

The two most used approaches for sampling are probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). Probability samples are based on statistical information and the likelihood for each individual within the sample frame to be picked is known and unbiased, whereas non-probability is based on statistical information, and the likelihood for each individual within the sample frame to be chosen is not known and unbiased. In this study, the use of non-probability sampling was considered to be the most appropriate since participation in the survey is voluntary and due to limited resources. However, the non-probability sampling method has a significant disadvantage in that it cannot be utilized to draw conclusions based on data about the entire population. Nevertheless, the relationship between generation Z and their perceptions of

social sustainability can be drawn and analyzed, even though it is statistically impossible to represent the full population. The results can still generate helpful indications for the authors and are preferably a good base for future research (Saunders et al., 2016).

In general, in a quantitative study, the sample size should be as large as possible to provide a higher level of accuracy to the results. Different types of studies require different amounts of samples in order to make statistical analysis (Osborne & Costello, 2004).

3.3.5.2 Sample procedure semi-structured interviews

In order to conduct semi-structured interviews, the authors adopted snowball sampling or networking. This method was seen as appropriate since it is essential to interview people with experience with the phenomena being studied (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The authors started to reach out to contacts within their own network by phone calls to people working within the food distribution industry. Which resulted in five different contacts with possible participants. Initially, the researchers reached out to all possible participants that could be suitable for the interviews. The contacts ended up in three interviews, two were taken away since one contact was seen unsuitable for the research, and one did not answer.

Rowely (2012) considers qualitative research to include six one-hour-long interviews. However, Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi (2012) point out that when conducting interviews, the sample size, research design, available resources, and analytic approach should be taken into consideration. Since the authors are conducting an exploratory study with a multi-method approach, three interviews were considered suitable since the aim is to gain insight and knowledge within a field that has been investigated by few before (Collis & Hussey, 2014). All the interviewed participants were CEOs of the company. The authors decided not to mention companies or the interviewed people's names, and the companies presented in the study will be discussed as companies A, B, and C.

Table 1 - Sample of interviews

Company	Date of the interview	Duration of the interview
---------	-----------------------	---------------------------

A	March 20th, 2022	53:41 minutes
B	March 20th, 2022	60:00 minutes
C	March 21st, 2022	25:54 minutes

3.4 Data analysis and Coding structure

3.4.1 Quantitative data

The software of IBM SPSS has been used to analyze the collected quantitative data and the data first has been analyzed with help of a Chi-Square test. When examining the relationship between two variables, the Chi-Square test is appropriate. It is used to compare observed results with expected results. Additionally, since the sample size was relatively small, the Chi-Square test was found as the most relevant way to analyze the collected quantitative data. However, since more than 20% of the count was less than 5, likelihood ratios were used to determine the p-value and accept or reject the null hypothesis. Furthermore, the chi-square test also provided the expected count and the actual count, which could be analyzed further. The goal of the collected quantitative data was to look at whether social sustainability had an impact on participants from generation Z. Hence, the authors did find it interesting to investigate whether there were any differences between the genders to gain a deeper understanding of the generation. The data has been analyzed from two hypotheses that have been applied for all different questions to see if there is any significant difference between the two independent variables, man and woman:

H1: There is a significant difference between the mean of men and women.

H0: There is no significant difference between the mean of men and women.

Moreover, the questions where the researchers have found a significant difference have been further analyzed, and the means have been compared.

After the chi-test, the authors also analyzed the data with an SPSS frequency test which provided them with the mean, mode, and median for each question as well as the frequency of each dependent variable. This was done to analyze the most common answers for each question. Further, the researchers have compared the questions regarding the individuals' potential workplace and the potential workplace suppliers. The survey was developed to examine the same questions for the different situations to see what was most important for the individual when considering social sustainability in a workplace.

As mentioned earlier, the survey questions were divided into categories, the questions could be analyzed regarding the different categories, which allowed the authors to compare the answers better and find common themes in them (Appendix 1). First, the respondents could choose the most suitable answer of their gender from “man”, “woman” or “prefer not to say”. After this, the year of birth, nationality, university, and degree was asked as open questions. Following this, the three categories of questions were presented - the survey participants were able to choose the best answer scaled from 1 to 6, meaning that 1 was referred to as “strongly disagree”, whereas 6 was referred to as “strongly agree”. The coding structure is demonstrated in a codebook in appendix 2.

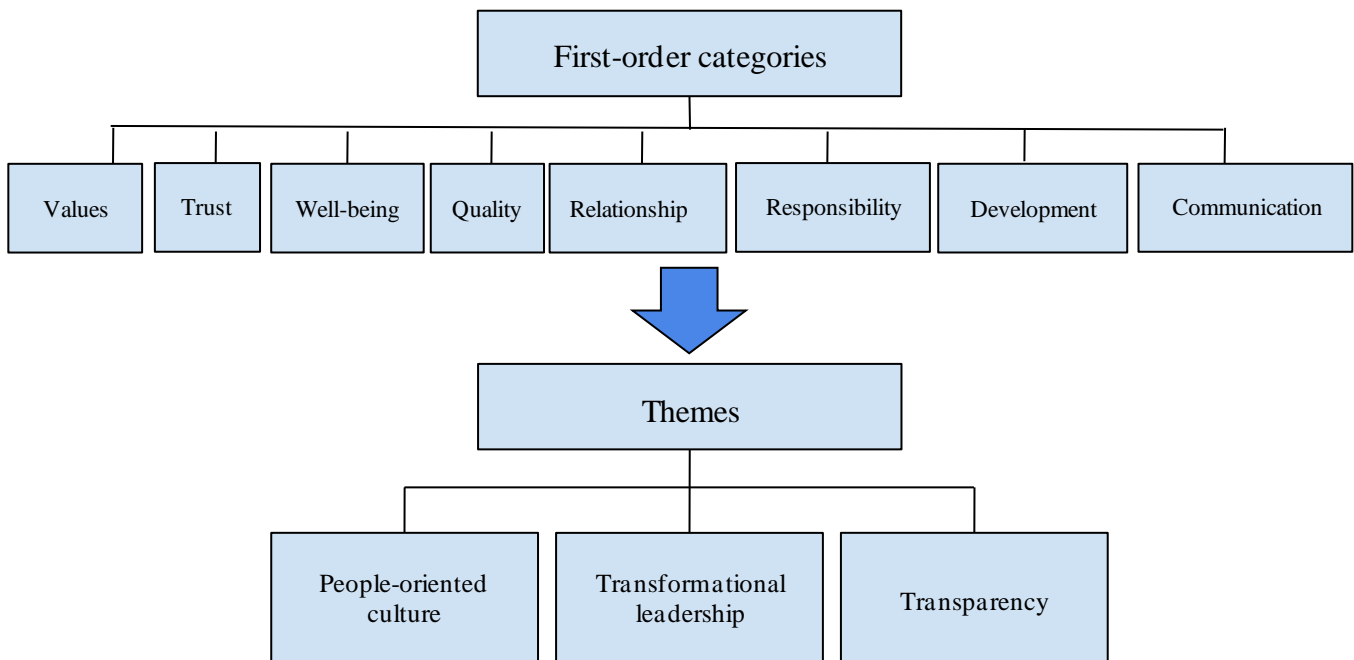
However, to conduct the Chi-Square test, the answers had to be combined on three different scales, instead of six. Thus, strongly disagree and disagree were combined, somewhat disagree, and somewhat agree were combined, and strongly agree and agree were combined as well. Hence, the answers were interpreted on a scale of 1-3, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree”, and 3 meaning “strongly agree”.

3.4.2 Qualitative data

The process of collecting and analyzing the qualitative data has been conducted followed by the general analytical procedure published by Miles and Huberman (1994). This procedure provides a systematic way to analyze the collected data. Three distinct activities are presented: 1. Reducing data, 2. Displaying the data and 3. Drawing conclusions and confirming the validity of such conclusions (Collis and Hussey, 2014). This method was used because of its convenience as a tool to analyze the interviews and draw common conclusions based on them.

Firstly, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted in English, which made it easy for the authors to analyze them further without any translations. This would also increase the trustworthiness of the study since the answers would be the same as how the interviewees said them. Coding of the data was the next step in the procedure, to select the relevant data (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Transcripts were divided and coded separately, resulting in a large number of codes. These codes were compared and combined to be reduced to eight first-order categories based on their similarity. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that this meets the requirements of the first and second stages of the analytical process since it manages to select, discard, and reorganize the qualitative data, but also helps to draw later conclusions in the third stage (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Lastly, three main themes were identified as a result of the coding process. These themes were attached to the concepts presented in the theoretical framework. Furthermore, all the interviews were cross analyzed, meaning all the different companies' answers were compared to find similarities and relations but also differences. This way, conclusions would be done, and findings identified.

Figure 2 - First-order categories and themes



3.5 Ethical considerations and trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that an interpretive study should follow four criteria regarding ethical consideration. These four criteria are *Credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability*. Furthermore, there are many studies published on ethical guidelines for researchers. However, this study follows the guidelines from Bell and Byrman (2007) which consist of a list of ethical principles. Among many aspects, it involves offering the participants the possibility to be anonymous. This was fully applied in the quantitative research as well as the alternative was presented to the interviewees at the beginning of the interviews. The authors also gave the participants of the survey the background information on why the questions were asked and what the aim of the survey was. Further, at the beginning of the interviews, the interviewees were informed with background information about how the study was conducted as well as the aim of the study and their parts as participants in the study. However, results from the quantitative study were not a part of this information since the authors considered the risk of the interviewees being biased toward the quantitative results. Regarding the trustworthiness of the quantitative study the authors considered the aspects of reliability and validity. The aim of these considerations was to ensure that the study provided trustworthy data.

3.5.1 Credibility

In research, credibility refers to whether the subject of the study was appropriately recognized and described (Collis & Hussey, 2014). To increase credibility, the triangulation method has been used in the research, by using different collection methods of data. According to Bell and Byrman (2007), in interpretive studies, the challenge that social reality influences the subjectivity of participants must be addressed. The data triangulation through conducting semi-structured interviews and a survey provides a wider picture of the phenomenon under research, which solves this difficulty and enhances trust. Moreover, credibility has been enhanced as well by ongoing peer debriefing of the study with authors' colleagues, which has allowed the authors to get new insights on the topic and helped them throughout the process to construct the study.

3.5.2 Transferability

The question of transferability is whether the results can be transferred to a situation that is sufficiently comparable to enable generalization (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Using nuanced and rich samples increases the transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which the authors have tried to enhance to remain transferable. However, since interviews are conducted, which will not be beneficial for the transferability of the study due to the small sample size and the research within a specific industry.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability concerns whether the research process is well documented, systematic, and rigorous (Collis & Hussey, 2014), meaning that the same findings as repeated in the research are presented. To increase the dependability of the study the researchers have used systematically discussed findings from both the survey and interviews. Further, the quantitative analysis of the survey was documented, and the variables were stated already at the first step of developing the survey. During the research process, the researchers also had a dialogue and open discussion where the study was examined with help of both the tutor and fellow peers.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to whether it is possible to assess the findings from the data as well as if the research process is fully described. According to Guba (1981), the major technique to establish confirmability is the audio strategy. This includes that an external auditor follows the research process with the purpose to understand why decisions are made. The external auditor takes part in the findings, interpretations, and considerations of data during the process. Further, if the external auditor has a comparable conclusion of the research context the confirmability is considered high. To increase confirmability for this research, the tutor has carried out the role of an external auditor through meetings as well as seminars during the whole research process. Furthermore, to ensure trustworthiness and transparency the study was examined by fellow peers during the process.

3.5.5 Reliability

Reliability can be explained as a part of the credibility of the study and refers to the precision of measurement. A study with high reliability should be able to be repeated without any differences (Collis & Hussey, 2014). To ensure reliability, replications of the study are suggested (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This has not been done in this case since the area researched has not been investigated by many others.

To increase the reliability of the quantitative research the authors have developed the questions from the findings and other researchers' statements that are presented within the theoretical framework, to compare the empirical findings with secondary sources. However, since the questions are designed to explain a relation between generation Z and their preferences on social sustainability, the results may differ since the findings these questions were developed from were designed to explain different relationships.

3.5.6 Validity

Validity is concerned with the concept the authors are measuring and how they measure captures this concept (Collis & Hussey). To ensure validity in the study the survey was developed to explain the importance of different aspects of social sustainability as well as the individual's preferences and reasons behind the importance of social sustainability. Further, to avoid participants choosing the middle answer all questions had an even number of answers which gives the authors a distinct understanding of all answers. The survey also included educational background which ensured the authors that the participants of the survey were qualified to participate in the research.

4. Empirical Findings and Analysis

The findings from the survey and interviews are presented and analyzed with help of existing theories below. This will address the research question of this study and fulfill its purpose. The findings and analysis have been categorized into quantitative data and qualitative data to later be combined.

4.1 Introduction to Empirical Findings of the quantitative data

After conducting the survey, the Chi-Square test showed that there was a difference between the answers of men and women in only one question. Therefore, the authors thought it would be interesting to look at the questions' means as well and compare them with each other. This gave the authors a larger understanding of what aspects of social sustainability are most important for generation Z when choosing an employer. Thus, both the Chi-Square test as well as the comparison of the means of each question were used to provide relevant data for analysis. It is important to note that the questions in the survey were subjective. Subjectivity means that the questions measure respondents' attitudes or perceptions (Taylor & Stevenson, 2007). As mentioned earlier, the survey questions were divided into three different themes, thus the answers will be presented and analyzed in three separate categories.

4.1.1 The Chi-Square Test Procedure

As mentioned previously, the hypotheses were the following:

H1: There is a significant difference between the mean of men and women.

H0: There is no significant difference between the mean of men and women.

Since the significance level used was 95 %, to reject the null hypothesis the p-value had to be lower than 0.05. The null hypothesis was rejected for question 18, meaning that there was a difference between men and women. The question asked about respondents' preferences to take leadership roles to make decisions that positively affect the organization's stakeholders. Authors discovered that men were more willing to take leadership roles than women, to make decisions that positively affect suppliers and the community. Even though women might be considered more environmentally concerned in comparison to men (D'souza & Gebremedhin, 1998), there are differences between the genders' preferences in taking leadership roles, which has been proven throughout history. Evolutionary psychologists argue that the genders' differences related to leadership have evolved over the centuries of human history because of adaptations to reproductive pressures (Buss & Kenrick, 1998). Further, in Sweden, in 2020 approximately 41 % of all the managerial positions were held by women (International Labour Organization, ND), which indicates that men are more likely to take leadership roles compared to women. The most significant barrier to taking leadership roles for women is the difficulties to balance working and family life (Ferreira dos Santos et al., 2019). Additionally, Ferreira dos Santos et al., (2019) state that the lack of credibility by society and fear of criticism discourage women from taking leadership roles.

4.1.2 Category 1 - Social sustainability in the aspect of individual within the organization

Questions 1-10 focus on social sustainability in terms of the individual preferences for the organization where the individual is employed, such as equality among genders, ethical and value-based decisions, and transparency within the management. The chi-square test did not provide any significant difference between the genders.

As seen in Appendix 4 the frequencies test showed that the means for these preferences are slightly higher than the categories two or three, with means between 4,87-5,45. The results indicate that social sustainability within the organization is of high importance for generation Z when deciding to work with a company, this may be explained with help of organizational identity. Organizational identity is a way for the individual to identify themselves with the organization as well as a way for society to identify individuals as an employee of an organization (Leivensen, Van Hoyer &

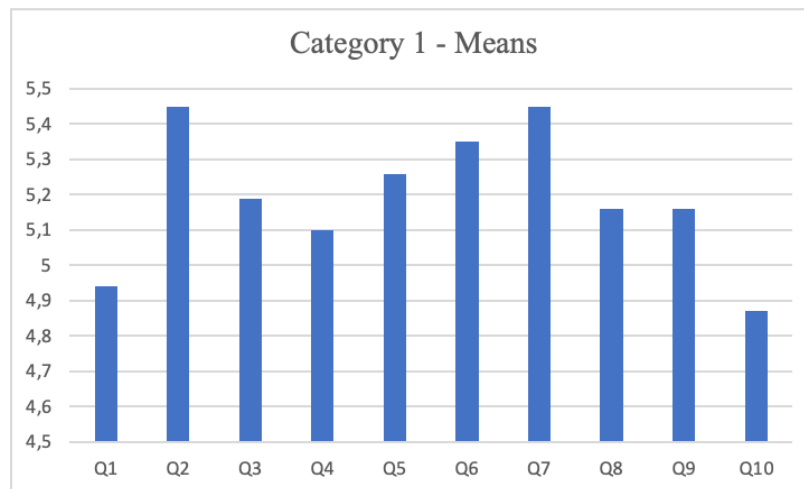
Anseel, 2007). Due to the rising awareness of sustainability one can assume that it becomes more important for the individual to identify themselves with a sustainable organization. In terms of social sustainability, the organization one works for might be a way to express one's values, such as equality between genders, transparency, and the importance of wellbeing among individuals. Further, if social sustainability is highly important for the individual, and practiced by the organization the individual does not experience cognitive dissonance in the relation to their workplace. Cognitive dissonance is seen to have a negative effect on the individual's performance (Cogliser et. al, 2016) and well-being since experiencing cognitive dissonance often result in state anxiety (Hawkins & Menasco, 1978). In order to enjoy working at a workplace, one can consider that well-being within the organization is of high importance. Also, the literature review showed findings on a high degree of anxiety and depression among generation Z (Schorts, 2019). However, the authors asked the participants about the importance of the employer offering a well-being program meaning, offering help when the employees' ability to work is limited, which was considered least important regarding social sustainability within the organization. This indicates how important it is for an organization to avoid cognitive dissonance among the employees of generation Z due to the relation to anxiety.

The importance of social sustainability within an organization may also be explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For an individual to reach their full potential, the organization must provide possibilities to do so. One way of providing this is to offer the individual a safe work environment with good relations between employees, which offers the individual to fulfill the second level which is physiological needs such as being accepted by the group and feeling belonging within a group. The relationship with other employees was also seen as one of the most important factors for generation Z with a mean of 5,45. Further, looking at the parts where the individual gets their voice heard in different decision making considers the individual, as well as the organization, offers good relations between management and employees. This can be considered essential for employees to develop and reach their higher potential within the work environment since the organizations need to provide them with the tools to do so.

Another observation from these questions is that question 1 had the second-lowest mean 4,94 which handles the salary preferences while question 2 has one of the highest means 5,45 which

handles salary equality. This indicates that other actions within the organization such as equality among gender may be considered more important than the salary. However, a salary is necessary to fulfill the most basic needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. One may consider that due to the educational background of the participants of this questionnaire they have insurance that they will be provided with a good enough salary to fulfill these needs.

Figure 3 - Means for the questions in category 1



4.1.3 Category 2 - Social sustainability in the aspect of stakeholders

Questions 11-17 focused on social sustainability in the aspect of stakeholders. The chi-square test did not provide any significant difference between the genders within this category. Further, the means tended to be slightly lower than the questions focused on social sustainability within the organization. However, a mean over 4 for all the questions indicates that the participants find the questions within this area somewhat important.

This questionnaire assumes that the participants have a basic knowledge of social sustainability due to their educational background because sustainability is integrated into educational studies from an early age (Kundu, et. al.2019). Further, another assumption is that generation Z values transparency and makes analytical decisions in terms of supporting an organizational brand

(Gomez, K., et. al., n.d.; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). This indicates that in some cases generation Z may act against their better knowledge of social sustainability in an organization. This can be explained by cognitive dissonance, according to Cooper (2007) it is easier to change one's attitude than one's behavior. When investigating the results for questions 11-17 it is possible to believe that the social sustainability in the aspect of stakeholders for an organization has less impact on generation Z than other aspects that the organization is offering them as an employee. One may also consider that even though social sustainability is important, the concept is fairly new and has been proven to be missing a theoretical framework which results in that social sustainability can be interpreted in different ways (Dixon, et. al., 2011; Griessler & Litting 2005). Further, since it is such a new concept, the awareness of the time it takes for companies to change and adapt to the practices of social sustainability may also consist among generation Z. This could mean that social sustainability among stakeholders is of high importance, but generation Z is aware that the goals of working with socially sustainable suppliers may not be reached when the generation is entering the labor market.

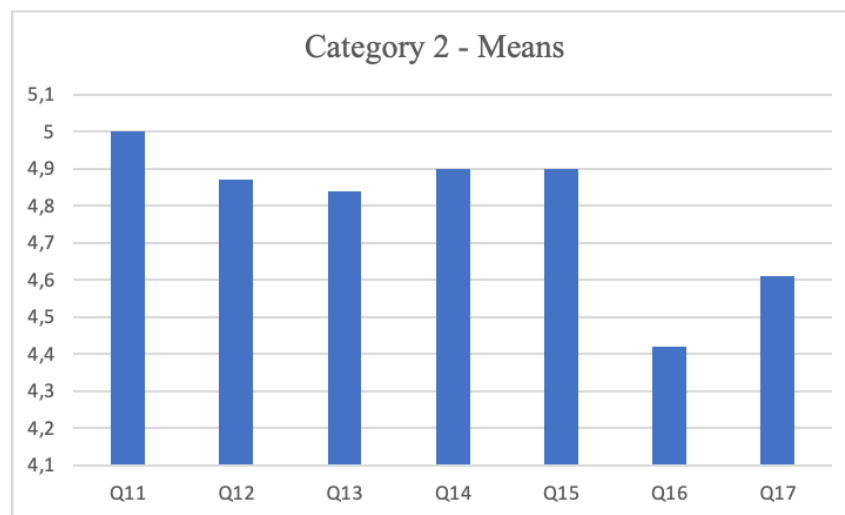
However, the stakeholders' sustainability strategies need to be considered, due to the result of the questionnaire provided. One may discuss why this aspect is less important since when looking at Maslow's pyramid of needs, one can assume that for social sustainability to be important this must be highly valued by the individual. Social sustainability may be a part of the second level, as feeling respected or accepted within a group, however, this depends on the individual's social circumstances and other value perceptions. If the individual values sustainability and social sustainability highly, however, contributing to the society in a good way with active decisions and actions can be seen as a way to access the third level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and to reach one's full potential.

Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the authors also found the result of question 11 interesting, since this is the most important aspect for the participants in this category. Question 11 focuses on the salaries of stakeholder's employees with a mean of 5,0 hence it is considered to be more important than other aspects. A fair salary compared to the society where one lives is a condition to fulfill the most basic needs of Maslow's pyramid. One can assume that with everything else equal it is important for generation Z that the stakeholders of the organization take

their responsibility to provide their employees with good conditions to have a worthy life. Thus, it is understandable why this question has the highest mean in the category.

Considering the aspect of organizational identity concerning stakeholders' social sustainable strategies it is possible to assume that because organizational identity has many different components, this aspect has less impact since organizational identity depends on distinct attributes, employer behavior, corporate communication, and internal and external stakeholders (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007) and all of this is important to develop a good organizational identity. It is possible to consider that the individual first identifies oneself with the organization where one works before including all the stakeholders, meaning that the employer organization's core brand image has such a stronger impact on how others perceive it than for example how sustainable the organization's suppliers are.

Figure 4 - Means for the questions in category 2



4.1.4 Category 3 - Individual preferences and actions

The last category of the survey was addressing the questions of concrete actions that the respondent would be willing to do in order to enhance social sustainability within an organization. This way, the authors could see if the respondents would be actually willing to take action in terms of it and

not just “say” they would. Moreover, this would also measure how important social sustainability actually is to the respondents - is it just words that sound good and make the organization more attractive, or does it matter for the respondents how much effect it has on the surroundings of the organization. As previously mentioned, question 18 showed a significant difference between the genders, which was discussed further at the beginning of this chapter.

When comparing the means of this category, question 20 was interesting for the authors to examine, whether the respondents would only be interested in the image that the organization gains from being socially sustainable, or would it matter for the respondents that the actions affect the society. Moreover, question 20 would be compared to other questions in this section, since it creates a contrast to the other questions in this section because of its different format compared to others.

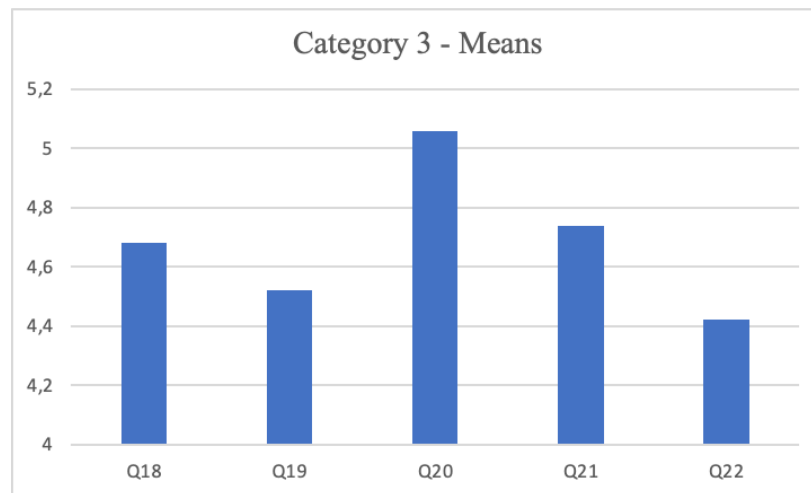
Before analyzing the answers any further, the authors assumed that if the means of the questions 18, 19, 21, and 22 in this category would be any lower than the means of earlier categories, or the question 20, the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance might be prominent. As discussed earlier in the frame of reference, cognitive dissonance refers to the phenomenon when an individual's perception is followed by another that is the opposite of the first one (Cooper, 2007). Thus, this theory may be valid in terms of the preferences, since for an individual it is easy to say one thing and another question is if their actions would be aligned with it. Additionally, the actions within social sustainability have over time been confused with other concepts within sustainable development (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017), which could be reflected in the answers in this survey.

As expected, there was a decrease in the means of this category's questions, especially if compared to the first category of the survey. However, the decrease was not significant, but could still be recognized. This might imply that the authors' assumption about the cognitive dissonance might be correct, thus the authors wanted to discover this more in the next stage of the study which is the interview. Moreover, question 20 had a much higher mean - 5,06, which could be interpreted that it might not matter for the respondents which way the social sustainability is enhanced, as long as it has a reflection of its brand image. Whereas in question 21, respondents were asked about how likely they would work for a company with socially sustainable actions because this way they

could contribute to society positively. For this question, the mean was 4,74, which proved that the respondents might not be as interested in the suppliers' socially sustainable actions as they were in the organization they work for, which was proved also in the previous category. Thus, the importance of the company's brand image was interpreted as a highly important factor in choosing an employer to work with among the respondents. As it was discovered in the earlier literature, generation Z, in general, is more aware of brands, thus, it was also proved in the survey conducted in this study. A company's brand image may have a significant impact on an individual's organizational identity. When working for a company with a good brand image, an individual might think it reflects their image as a person also outside the workplace, in their personal life. Thus, one may feel like they are accepted better in society when they work for a company with a good brand image. This can be linked to Maslow's hierarchy of needs since acceptance in the social context is another aspect of fulfilling the psychological needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Further, in question 18 the authors asked how likely the respondents would take responsibility roles to enhance society. Even though the mean of 4,68 had no significant difference from the means in this category, it was still lower than the overall means of the questions in the first category, which handled individuals' value perceptions within the organization. When compared to this category's means, it was seen that the respondents would not be that willing to take responsibility roles within the organization, which also refers to cognitive dissonance theory. Further, this could be explained by what authors discovered earlier in their research in the frame of reference since generation Z lacks work experience when entering adulthood, which leads to generation Z having unrealistic expectations of the work environment. Thus, the authors found it interesting to research this further and ask companies' opinions on this. Additionally, as discovered in the literature review of generation Z, only 15 % want to take leadership responsibilities among the generation (Schorts, 2019), which supports the answers to this question as well.

Figure 5 - Means for the questions in category 3



4.2 Introduction to Empirical Findings of the Qualitative data

After the survey results were reviewed and analyzed, the interview questions were formed, based on the authors' gained knowledge of the frame of reference, as well as the analysis from the survey. The findings from the interviews resulted in 3 main themes that could be seen as common factors across the companies, being- *People-oriented culture, Transparency, and Transformational leadership*, each of these themes will be analyzed further and common concepts will be tied to these themes. After the themes are analyzed further, improvements will be discussed, where the authors combine both quantitative and qualitative findings, which will be analyzed in combination to the authors' developed framework of employment branding process.

4.2.1 People-oriented culture

The first recognized theme among the companies was people-oriented cultures. In the interviews, it was very clear that all the companies prioritized good relations both within the companies as well as going back and forward in the value chain. Considering the relations within the companies among employees and managers, this was highly driven by internal CSR, meaning that the prime goal was to create a good environment for the employees, which is fair and equal (Jia, et. al., 2019). However, the interviewees also highlighted the differences between people and the companies'

responsibility to recognize these differences to make all employees seen, heard, and respected. This also meant that the best possible work environment for one person might differ from another, since people may value different things within an organization. Internal CSR is closely related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs since a safe working environment and acceptance are included in the physiological needs. This can be considered essential for maintaining employees within an organization since one needs to fulfill the different steps within Maslow's hierarchy of needs to develop one-self and well-being.

When it comes to the relations within the organization, all the interviewees highlighted that it was their responsibility to create an environment, where all the employees feel included in the team: *"We have an open landscape office, and we have a very close team, so we have monthly meetings with lunch where everyone can say what they are doing and get feedback and we also have conferences with... I mean our work is social. We have lots of tastings and after work. So yes, it's very inclusive."* - Company C

Moreover, the employee voice was mentioned to be an important factor when thinking of ways to make employees feel well within the organization and develop themselves. This means that employees could affect management's decision-making process which was achieved by having a low hierarchy within the organization. By doing this, the employees have an opportunity to develop themselves together with the organization.

Both good relations within the organization and encouraging employee voice could be considered a way to avoid cognitive dissonance among the employees. Encouraging employee voice is one way to make sure that the employees have a way to express their values and having this as a natural part of the communication within the organization makes it easier to address more difficult problems within the organization. This could mean that whenever employees disagree on something regarding their values, they feel safer speaking up. From the companies' aspect, this could also be seen as a way to increase performance among employees, both since they reduce the effect of cognitive dissonance, and the employees have the chance to influence and be a part of larger decisions. Also, as the interviewees agreed, there is a need to share values to create good relations.

To be able to create a fair and equal environment for the employees, companies included the employees in the decision-making processes, for example, one company said that they included employees in product tastings when deciding which products to launch soon. By doing this, the companies could ensure that everyone would be committed to the same goal. This way, the employees would also feel they are influencing where the company is heading, thus, it could be linked to having a stronger organizational identity, which reflects how the employees feel about their employer and how they promote the company to their surroundings. One of the companies specifically told that the most important factor is that the employee feels they have a say in the decision-making process and have their responsibilities:

“I don’t want to build a structure where most decisions are taken within the management team or within the management. The decisions need to be taken among employees holding hands with each other to really create value and make a difference.” - Company B

Further, the authors found that the CEO’s of the companies prioritized employees’ personal development: *“I will say it like this: we always have a part in the budget for this, that employees can ask money to develop their knowledge which will be beneficial for the company of course (...) Yes, it is the opposite. The younger people do not want to educate themselves. It is the older people who want to get educated more. Younger people have some suggestions with ridiculous ambitions about what they want to educate themselves which is not beneficial for the company. So it needs to help the company...” - Company A*

However, as earlier literature has found, the expectations of generation Z are not always in line with the actual work environment due to the lack of earlier work experience (Schorts, 2019). This can create a conflict between the individual employee and the company. This was mentioned in one of the interviews, as the interviewee of company A told that some employees of the younger generation had high expectations of how they could develop themselves, which was not aligned with the company’s plan. Thus, this also highlights the importance of good relations and communication between employees and management where the management clearly communicates all different aspects of the work. This could lead generation Z to set more realistic

expectations in the workplace to develop themselves. The motivation to develop oneself better is a positive thing, and the companies should take more advantage of this also since self-development will reflect the employees' motivation to work. Moreover, developing oneself is also part of Maslow's pyramid, which helps one's well-being, thus if the company provides the ability for self-development, generally the employees will enjoy working for the company, thus stay within the same employer as long as they feel like they can fulfill this need.

4.2.2 Transformational leadership

A second theme that emerged from the interviews is the transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership refers to a leadership theory, in which the leader gives the employee freedom to work independently, providing a vision to guide them in the right direction. Also, a transformational leader treats each employee individually by giving personal attention (Bass, 1990). This was common with the leadership styles among all three companies, since they were highlighting how important it was for them to provide an open culture in which the employees would be encouraged to work independently without micromanaging. The companies wanted to give space and responsibilities to each individual since they all highlighted that the most talented employees have higher expectations than only salary in terms of work satisfaction. According to the companies, the open work environment and leadership style would lead not only to the best work environment but also it would attract the right employees to the company, as well as lead to the best results in terms of work performance. The employees would be treated with respect and would be motivated through inspiration. The following quote summarizes the leadership style well:

“For me it has been very important to let people do their own business, I am not looking at what people are doing, I give them responsibilities for what they want to do, and we are always there to support, and they can do their own thing.” - Company C

This can be closely related to internal CSR, since internal CSR highlights the importance of an exchange between the company and the employee, to create this exchange there needs to be mutual respect. Furthermore, management inspiration and coaching help the individual to develop themselves within the company which also is a criterion to create a good internal CSR (Jia, et. al., 2019).

“I would say for me it is very very important to run a company where everyone feels what should I say, (...) I think you try to adapt the package towards what that employee needs and I don't think that's an age thing really.” - Company A

Additionally, one emerging aspect in terms of transformational leadership was that all the companies told how important it was for them to have individual relationships with each employee. This is linked to internal CSR, thus it is a way to enhance employees' psychological and physical well-being (Jia, et. al., 2019). Individual relationships can also be considered a way to create respect and acceptance among employees, which is also needed to create good relations. Further, this could be considered a way to increase the employees' willingness to use their employee voice, since respect and acceptance within a workplace is a way to increase safety. This would mean that with help from these relationships the companies ensure to fulfill two of Maslow's basic needs - safety and acceptance. Further, this also creates a good organizational identity, since the organizational identity is built upon different parts of the company, one being the employee behavior. When an organization builds a culture where there is mutual respect between different departments, it reflects in a safe work environment, which will have a reflection on the organizational identity, which is a part of the employment branding strategy.

Because companies were aware of each individual employee's differences, each employee would be treated differently. This meant that individual discussions of development, work progress, or well-being were considered an important factor in companies' employment strategies. This can be considered to be a way for a company to retain their employees since it ensures a discussion of self-development, which is an essential part when the individual is trying to reach higher levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The younger generation's preferences in terms of self-development were considered to be different from the older generation's preferences. However, this was not affecting their employment branding strategies - all the companies said having the same employment strategies for all generations. Further, women were considered to be more aware of their health-being and the company's actions in terms of social sustainability, than men. However, the genders were treated equally among all the companies regardless of their preferences.

4.2.3 Transparency

As a third theme, the authors decided to use transparency, because the importance of this subject was highlighted throughout almost all the answers of each interview. Transparency enhances the company's stakeholders' trust in the management team. Thus, by being transparent about a company's decisions or results, the company can offer the best possible work environment, and be the best possible partner to its suppliers. As truth was a viable factor for generation Z, companies can promote this by being transparent, as these concepts are closely linked to each other.

Moreover, this theme was relevant because external CSR activities could be highly driven by transparency of an organization. External CSR refers to how the environmental and social practices enhance the company's reputation among its external stakeholders, such as its suppliers or the society (Jia, et. al., 2019). All the interviewees highlighted the importance of choosing the suppliers based on the people behind them and based on the good relations they wanted to preserve. Additionally, sharing the same values with the suppliers was considered to be an important factor to make the collaboration work with them. However, the value perceptions are not the first question to ask about, but it is seen through the relationship. To make this relationship happen, the companies need to be transparent with each other.

By being transparent the companies can retain the best possible quality and high standards, which the stakeholders require. The companies agreed that quality is one of the most important values they drive for, which reflects all the parts of the business. The high quality was also a characteristic the companies mentioned to be their competitive advantage in their employment branding strategies. They highlighted how they wanted their employees to be proud of the company they work for, because of the high-quality products they provide: *“Yes, and you can be proud of your company. I think proudness is important; “I am proud to work here”, and people can say “oh wow great!”.” - Company C*

The contributions to the society around the organization are considered to be a part of external CSR. The companies wanted to contribute to the society around them, for example by giving money to charity, hiring disabled people, and making sure for example their suppliers' animals and nature would be treated fairly. According to the companies, this was mostly done to leave an

actual footprint on society, not just for the company's brand image. Two of the companies did not find it important to promote these kinds of activities anywhere, since they wanted to do it to leave an actual footprint, and not for the sake of the brand image. However, there were some exceptions, since one of the companies wanted to promote their activities within social sustainability by telling it on their website. However, this could be considered as a way to increase transparency within the company, which authors found important. This interviewee described the promotion of the activities as follows:

“We promote it, like e.g., on our website. We have a new website that isn’t launched yet, unfortunately. But there you can really do storytelling and e.g., it’s not the staff but it is a big sustainable question if our Portuguese supplier, which is the biggest supplier now, has sheep and donkeys and they take very good care of them and the nature. So it’s important.” - Company C

Organization's actions of external CSR are also a way to create an organizational identity, since it can be considered a way to communicate with the external stakeholder. By leaving a footprint, the communication has a direct effect on the community of which the company is a part. Further, this will have a reflection on the society's perception of the company which may further impact the individual when identifying themselves with the company and creates pride among the employees.

4.3 Improvements - combining the quantitative and qualitative findings

The authors recognized that even though the companies take many actions in terms of social sustainability, based on the findings of the quantitative data, there is still more that can be done. Further, the authors also recognized a lack of actual strategies within the companies, and the social sustainability was mostly based on “unwritten rules” developed by relations both within the companies’ but also going up and down the value chain. This might lead to misunderstandings of what is the value proposition of the company, which could lead to increased cognitive dissonance among the employees. Hence, the employee performance might be affected by increased cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, without a clear strategic approach, it is more difficult for the organization's management to include the employees in improving social sustainability. However, differences between the companies were recognized, which can be connected to the age of the companies. The younger company started in 2014 and had higher expectations of social

sustainability among stakeholders, which was more in line with generation Z's preferences. This may be explained by the fact that the company started operating during the same time period that generation Z has grown up and within the same societal context. This also indicates that the main issue for the older companies is not to attract generation Z but to adapt to societal changes, which automatically will help to attract younger generations.

The developed framework was constructed in the frame of reference based on the employment branding process, which included three main steps: the creation of the Value Proposition, marketing the Value Proposition to the right target audience, and lastly, keeping the promise and retaining the employees. Helps the authors to analyze the combined quantitative and qualitative findings and to develop an understanding of the current situation of employment branding in relation to social sustainability, and how this can be developed further to attract generation Z.

Today, the interviewed companies build their Value Proposition based on quality and relations, which makes the companies an attractive place to work already today. However, companies are lacking strategies of social sustainability since social sustainable goals might not be clear for all the stakeholders, especially people who are looking to be employed. The quantitative findings showed that having good relations among employees was one of the most important aspects of social sustainability, which means that the companies are already helping generation Z to fulfill the second step of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as feeling belonging within the organization. However, in terms of other actions of social sustainability, the lack of strategic plans, leaves the generation with an uncertainty whether the organization's value proposition is in line with their own values, this may increase cognitive dissonance and cause anxiety among the generation. Thus, developing a clear strategic plan might help them to have all the components to create a good value proposition that attracts generation Z, since this could give a clear picture of how companies could work on both external and internal CSR. Moreover, by having well-planned and coherent strategies of social sustainability, and by being transparent about them to the stakeholders, it will have a reflection on the company's corporate image, which will make it a more attractive employer for the generation Z. Further, by having well-planned strategies it is easier for a company to communicate its Value Proposition to the target group.

During the interviews, the companies were asked whether they saw differences between the generations, in terms of values and perceptions. All the companies agreed that there were differences between the younger and older generations, but regardless of that, the companies had the same strategies to attract these different generations, in terms of employment branding. This may be explained by the lack of research on generation Z, without a broader knowledge on their characteristics, values and perceptions companies' may find it difficult to adapt strategies to this specific group. The second step of the employment branding process is to target the value proposition to the right target audience. Based on the answers from the survey, for Generation Z, more focus could be put on what are the real actions that the companies do in terms of social sustainability.

As authors discovered in the frame of reference when developing the employment branding process framework, the companies should focus on other things than salary which was also supported by the empirical findings when attracting the generation Z. In the interviews all the companies highlighted they were already doing this, which was positive in terms of meeting the generation's preferences. This indicates that both the generation and the companies assume that the most basic needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are already fulfilled, and that focus should be on fulfilling the second and third level. However, in terms of employment branding strategies, the companies could put even more focus on how they promote their actions within social sustainability to this generation. The two companies said they do not want to promote these activities since they did not find it necessary, since they only practiced these actions to feel good. Promoting this could be a way to increase transparency which could be a way to target this group better. Based on the findings of quantitative data, the authors discovered that a company's brand image was an important factor among generation Z when choosing an employer to work with. Therefore, promoting the companies' actions within social sustainability could also strengthen the company's brand image as an employer with a good reputation, which would attract the generations Z even better. Further, it also reduces the risk of experiencing cognitive dissonance in relation to the brand image, since the generation Z can point out actions that are done by the company. If the company is not transparent about its actions of social sustainability, the employee might not be sure about whether the actions are aligned with his/her values, and this might increase

cognitive dissonance. This on the other hand might decrease the attractiveness of the company as an employer.

To retain the employees and create brand loyalty among the employees the promise of the value proposition must be held. During the interviews, the authors found that the employees were involved in the decision-making process which was also found important among the generation Z. When involving the employees in the decision making, the company is increasing transparency, since the employees have to understand why the decisions are made. This can also increase the satisfaction of the internal CSR, which enhances employee loyalty. This also increases the organizational identity which makes the employees more satisfied to identify themselves with the organization and may increase one's willingness to stay within the organization.

However, improvements could be done also within the area of keeping the promise, which can be connected to the suggestion in the first step of creating a social sustainable strategy. With a clear strategic plan and goals that are communicated well to the employees, companies can increase transparency, which is highly valued among generation Z and could lead to better employee loyalty among generation Z.

5. Conclusion

In this section the research questions are answered with help of the presented key findings to meet the purpose of the study.

This study aimed to explore the phenomena of social sustainability and what kind of impact it has on generation Z when entering the labor market. Further, the companies' current activities in terms of employment branding and social sustainability within the foodservice distribution industry were investigated to contrast them with the generation's preferences. The overall findings show great awareness of social sustainability among generation Z, and social sustainability is of importance when choosing a company to work with. However, the research indicates that generation Z nurtures the brand image more than the contribution to society. This could be seen to be the opposite for the companies, this indicates that even though there is a great awareness of social sustainability within generation Z they have still not practiced it in real life and the identification with a good organization is more important than the actual contribution.

RQ1: *“What kind of impact does social sustainability have on generation Z with a higher degree of education when choosing a company to work with?”*

The findings suggest that social sustainability has a significant impact on generation Z's value perceptions, when investigating the organization where an individual would want to work in. Since the study was focused on individuals of generation Z who have a higher degree of education, it meant that the future basic needs in terms of finding a job were already fulfilled, such as salary or a pleasant job description. Thus, social sustainability was considered to be a somewhat important factor for this group already at the beginning of the research by the authors, due to its presence within today's education. The generation perceived social sustainability to be an important factor in the strategies of their potential employees, however, the generation's willingness to take action

to enhance social sustainability was slightly lower. This could be explained by the cognitive dissonance theory. Moreover, the generation's opinions about the strategies of the potential employer's stakeholders in terms of social sustainability were also researched. The findings suggest that the importance of having socially sustainable suppliers as partners for the employer organization was not considered as important as the category regarding the organization where the individual works in. This could be explained by the findings which suggest that generation Z's interest is more about the brand image than the contribution to the society. This implies that the suppliers' social sustainable strategies are not considered to be as important as the potential employer.

RQ2: How do the SME companies within the foodservice distributor industry answer these expectations?

The companies within the foodservice distribution industry have a good awareness of the phenomena of social sustainability and are taking real actions according to it. However, there is a lack of social sustainable strategies within the SMEs which may be explained by the lack of theoretical framework within the area of social sustainability. Social sustainability is a relatively new concept and has earlier been included in the development and economic growth, but confused with other concepts within sustainable development, which can explain the lack of strategies. Since it became its own concept, discussions and awareness have risen and both companies and individuals have realized that more can be done within this area. To conclude, the companies within the foodservice distribution industry answer to generation Z expectations to some extent, but there is still more that can be improved. The generation Z and their preferences are formed by the social context where they live which also sets expectations on the companies, but one can consider that it takes less time to form a person than to change an organization which can explain why the companies do not already meet the generation Z in all their preferences.

6. Discussion

This final chapter discusses the contributions to literature regarding generation Z preferences of social sustainability regarding the food distribution industry. As well as limitations of the research and suggestions for further research within the area investigated.

6.1 Contributions

This research provides two key contributions, firstly since literature suggests that social sustainability can be case-specific (Shirazi & Keivani, 2017) this research provides an interpretation of social sustainability preferences among the new workforce of generation Z. The generation's preferences for social sustainability add to the already existing research of their characteristics and aims to give a greater understanding of the generation as an employee.

Secondly, the research aims to investigate generation Z from a new kind of perspective, in response to the lack of earlier literature on the topic of the influence of social sustainability on the generation's perceptions. Further, the research aims to examine the companies' employment branding strategies from a new perspective, including a new point of view - social sustainability - and how they could provide a coherent image of themselves to this generation. Additionally, it gives an understanding of the importance of social sustainability strategies when employing generation Z. Since social sustainability is important to the generation, social sustainability strategies need to be important for the employers. This can help the companies to recruit the right talents to stay competitive in the market.

6.2 Implications

The initial intention of the research is to suggest a new kind of perspective for SME companies' employment branding strategies, by providing a new kind of employment branding approach. This approach takes into account earlier theories and frameworks around human psychological behavior and social sustainability and combines them into a coherent framework. The aim is to suggest an employment branding approach that adapts and develops as the generation of the workforce changes and responds to societal changes.

The research argues that social sustainability is an important aspect when generation Z is looking for a company to work with. If using an employment branding approach that takes social sustainability and human psychological behavior into account, companies could gain a better understanding of generation Z's preferences as an employee for a company. This could also lead to the organization establishing an improved organizational identity which will attract a greater number of talents and ensure their competitiveness in the market.

6.3 Limitations

Scope. This research has been limited to Sweden due to the location of the authors, the participants of generation Z had a Swedish connection and the companies interviewed were operating mainly in Sweden. Due to this, the findings cannot be generalized to a whole world population.

Sample. It is important to note that the industry chosen for this study was limited to SMEs within the foodservice distribution industry in Sweden. The interviews aimed to gain understanding within this industry, not to conduct a deeper investigation of the whole industry. However, if the circumstances would have been different, it could have affected the result of RQ2. However, the authors believe that with the developed employment branding framework they would have come to a similar conclusion. Further, the sample size of the quantitative research was not as large as the authors hoped for, however, the authors could see patterns and could draw indications of the results.

Language. Because the authors have two different nationalities, they had to communicate in their second language, English. This has not been a significant obstacle, however, the interviews were conducted in English which could have an impact on the interview flow, since it was the interviewees' second language. Sometimes, Swedish words were said during the interviews which later had to be translated into English.

Subjectivity of the survey. Since the amount of the questions was limited because the authors wanted to keep the survey as short as possible for the respondents' convenience, the questions might seem biased in the sense that they might lead the respondent to think in a certain way. Thus, this might be affected in the results shown and analyzed.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

Since this study argues that social sustainability is important when individuals of generation Z with a higher education are looking for a company to work with, the authors developed two suggestions for further research. Firstly, in terms of generation Z, the researchers suggest research that investigates if there is a difference in terms of social sustainable preferences when looking for a company to work with between individuals with a higher degree of education and individuals who lack a higher degree of education. This research solely investigates individuals with a higher degree of education, with the assumption that social sustainability has an impact on them due to the integration of sustainable development in their education. This would investigate what kind of impact the integrated education on sustainable development in terms of social sustainability actually has.

Secondly, in terms of the industry chosen for this study, there may be more industries to which the developed framework could be used in future research. This study only researched one specific industry and researched their strategies within employment branding and social sustainability. Other industries could benefit from the same framework as well. Further, investigating if another industry has more advanced existing strategies in terms of social sustainability could be an interesting topic to do further research about. In this specific research it was discovered that much more could be done in terms of social sustainability - however, some other industries could have

these strategies at a more advanced level. Thus, it could be interesting to examine different industries around the same topic and compare them to each other.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1 - Survey items

	Gender?
	Year of birth?
	Nationality?
	University?
	Degree?
	Category 1: The following questions handle you as an employee in an organization:
	<i>It is important to me that...</i>
Q1	The organization offers me a generous salary.
Q2	The organization has salary equality among genders.
Q3	The organization's management makes ethical and value based decisions.
Q4	Management is transparent with the decisions made within the organization.
Q5	Communication between management and other employees is transparent and honest.
Q6	I have my voice heard in the decision making (concerning the department I work in) within the organization.
Q7	My relations with other employees are good.
Q8	Employees' relations with management are good.
Q9	The organization I work in has a well-structured management.
Q10	The organization I work in has a well-being program (meaning: helping employees in situations where their ability to work is limited).
	Category 2: The following questions handle stakeholders of the organization
	<i>It is important to me that...</i>
Q11	Suppliers of the organization I work for pay their workforce a good and fair salary.
Q12	Suppliers of the organization I work for have salary equality among genders.
Q13	Communication between the organization I work for and its suppliers is transparent and honest.
Q14	The organization I work for has good relations with its suppliers and is continuously engaged with them.
Q15	The organization I work for has a positive effect on the community it is part of and is continuously engaged with them.
Q16	The suppliers of the organization I work for have a well-being program (Meaning: helping employees in situations where their ability to work is limited.)

Q17	The suppliers of the organization I work for have a well-structured management. (Meaning: the company has a clear organizational chart and it is clear to everyone who is responsible to whom.)
	Category 3: Individual preferences and actions: "why it is important"
Q18	I prefer to have leadership responsibilities in order to make decisions that positively affect the stakeholders of the organization.
Q19	I prefer to work in a flat organization where responsibility is divided over several managers.
Q20	Social sustainability actions within the organization and its suppliers are important for me because of its reflection to the company brand and image.
Q21	Social sustainability actions within the organization and its suppliers are important for me because this way I am contributing to society positively.
Q22	It would affect my decision to work in a certain organization if it used suppliers which do not take any actions to enhance social sustainability.

8.1.2 Appendix 2 – Codebook

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree

1	2	3
Woman	Man	Prefer not to say

8.3 Appendix 3 - Chi-square test

Participant * Question_1

Crosstab

		Question_1			Total
		1	2	3	
Participant	Woman	Count	1	5	15
		Expected Count	.7	5.4	14.9
	Man	Count	0	3	7
		Expected Count	.3	2.6	7.1
Total		Count	1	8	22
		Expected Count	1.0	8.0	22.0

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.579 ^a	2	.749
Likelihood Ratio	.879	2	.644
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_2

Crosstab

		Question_2		Total
		2	3	
Participant	Woman	Count	2	19
		Expected Count	2.7	18.3
	Man	Count	2	8
		Expected Count	1.3	8.7
Total		Count	4	27
		Expected Count	4.0	27.0

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.662 ^a	1	.416		
Continuity Correction ^b	.058	1	.810		
Likelihood Ratio	.625	1	.429		
Fisher's Exact Test				.577	.387
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.29.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_3

Crosstab

		Question_3		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	1	20	21
		Expected Count	2.0	19.0	21.0
	Man	Count	2	8	10
		Expected Count	1.0	9.0	10.0
Total		Count	3	28	31
		Expected Count	3.0	28.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.800 ^a	1	.180		
Continuity Correction ^b	.478	1	.489		
Likelihood Ratio	1.663	1	.197		
Fisher's Exact Test				.237	.237
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .97.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_4

Crosstab

		Question_4		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	2	19	21
		Expected Count	4.1	16.9	21.0
	Man	Count	4	6	10
		Expected Count	1.9	8.1	10.0
Total		Count	6	25	31
		Expected Count	6.0	25.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.031 ^a	1	.045		
Continuity Correction ^b	2.315	1	.128		
Likelihood Ratio	3.793	1	.051		
Fisher's Exact Test				.067	.067
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.94.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_5

Crosstab

		Question_5		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	3	18	21
		Expected Count	4.7	16.3	21.0
	Man	Count	4	6	10
		Expected Count	2.3	7.7	10.0
Total		Count	7	24	31
		Expected Count	7.0	24.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.562 ^a	1	.109		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.302	1	.254		
Likelihood Ratio	2.433	1	.119		
Fisher's Exact Test				.172	.128
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.26.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_6

Crosstab

		Question_6		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	1	20	21
		Expected Count	2.0	19.0	21.0
	Man	Count	2	8	10
		Expected Count	1.0	9.0	10.0
Total		Count	3	28	31
		Expected Count	3.0	28.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.800 ^a	1	.180		
Continuity Correction ^b	.478	1	.489		
Likelihood Ratio	1.663	1	.197		
Fisher's Exact Test				.237	.237
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .97.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_7

Crosstab

		Question_7		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	1	20	21
		Expected Count	2.0	19.0	21.0
	Man	Count	2	8	10
		Expected Count	1.0	9.0	10.0
Total		Count	3	28	31
		Expected Count	3.0	28.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.800 ^a	1	.180		
Continuity Correction ^b	.478	1	.489		
Likelihood Ratio	1.663	1	.197		
Fisher's Exact Test				.237	.237
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .97.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_8

Crosstab

		Question_8		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	3	18	21
		Expected Count	4.1	16.9	21.0
	Man	Count	3	7	10
		Expected Count	1.9	8.1	10.0
Total		Count	6	25	31
		Expected Count	6.0	25.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.072 ^a	1	.301		
Continuity Correction ^b	.301	1	.583		
Likelihood Ratio	1.020	1	.312		
Fisher's Exact Test				.358	.284
N of Valid Cases	31				

- a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.94.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_9

Crosstab

		Question_9		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	3	18	21
		Expected Count	4.7	16.3	21.0
	Man	Count	4	6	10
		Expected Count	2.3	7.7	10.0
Total		Count	7	24	31
		Expected Count	7.0	24.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.562 ^a	1	.109		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.302	1	.254		
Likelihood Ratio	2.433	1	.119		
Fisher's Exact Test				.172	.128
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.26.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_10

Crosstab

		Question_10		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	5	16	21
		Expected Count	6.8	14.2	21.0
	Man	Count	5	5	10
		Expected Count	3.2	6.8	10.0
Total		Count	10	21	31
		Expected Count	10.0	21.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.126 ^a	1	.145		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.097	1	.295		
Likelihood Ratio	2.070	1	.150		
Fisher's Exact Test				.222	.148
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.23.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_11

Crosstab

		Question_11		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	7	14	21
		Expected Count	6.1	14.9	21.0
	Man	Count	2	8	10
		Expected Count	2.9	7.1	10.0
Total		Count	9	22	31
		Expected Count	9.0	22.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.585 ^a	1	.445		
Continuity Correction ^b	.116	1	.733		
Likelihood Ratio	.610	1	.435		
Fisher's Exact Test				.677	.375
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.90.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_12

Crosstab

		Question_12			Total	
		1	2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	1	6	14	21
		Expected Count	.7	6.1	14.2	21.0
	Man	Count	0	3	7	10
		Expected Count	.3	2.9	6.8	10.0
Total		Count	1	9	21	31
		Expected Count	1.0	9.0	21.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.492 ^a	2	.782
Likelihood Ratio	.795	2	.672
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_13

Crosstab

		Question_13		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	8	13	21
		Expected Count	8.1	12.9	21.0
	Man	Count	4	6	10
		Expected Count	3.9	6.1	10.0
Total		Count	12	19	31
		Expected Count	12.0	19.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.010 ^a	1	.919		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.010	1	.919		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.611
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.87.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_14

Crosstab

		Question_14		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	6	15	21
		Expected Count	6.1	14.9	21.0
	Man	Count	3	7	10
		Expected Count	2.9	7.1	10.0
Total		Count	9	22	31
		Expected Count	9.0	22.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.007 ^a	1	.935		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.007	1	.935		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.625
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.90.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_15

Crosstab

		Question_15		Total	
		2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	4	17	21
		Expected Count	6.1	14.9	21.0
	Man	Count	5	5	10
		Expected Count	2.9	7.1	10.0
Total		Count	9	22	31
		Expected Count	9.0	22.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.150 ^a	1	.076		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.827	1	.177		
Likelihood Ratio	3.038	1	.081		
Fisher's Exact Test				.105	.090
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.90.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_16

Crosstab

		Question_16			Total	
		1	2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	0	10	11	21
		Expected Count	.7	11.5	8.8	21.0
	Man	Count	1	7	2	10
		Expected Count	.3	5.5	4.2	10.0
Total		Count	1	17	13	31
		Expected Count	1.0	17.0	13.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.413 ^a	2	.110
Likelihood Ratio	4.788	2	.091
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_17

Crosstab

		Question_17			Total	
		1	2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	0	7	14	21
		Expected Count	.7	7.5	12.9	21.0
	Man	Count	1	4	5	10
		Expected Count	.3	3.5	6.1	10.0
Total		Count	1	11	19	31
		Expected Count	1.0	11.0	19.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.492 ^a	2	.288
Likelihood Ratio	2.664	2	.264
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_18

Crosstab

		Question_18			Total	
		1	2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	0	10	11	21
		Expected Count	1.4	7.5	12.2	21.0
	Man	Count	2	1	7	10
		Expected Count	.6	3.5	5.8	10.0
Total		Count	2	11	18	31
		Expected Count	2.0	11.0	18.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.264 ^a	2	.026
Likelihood Ratio	8.227	2	.016
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .65.

Participant * Question_19

Crosstab

		Question_19			Total	
		1	2	3		
Participant	Woman	Count	0	9	12	21
		Expected Count	.7	8.8	11.5	21.0
	Man	Count	1	4	5	10
		Expected Count	.3	4.2	5.5	10.0
Total		Count	1	13	17	31
		Expected Count	1.0	13.0	17.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.176 ^a	2	.337
Likelihood Ratio	2.340	2	.310
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_20

Crosstab

		Question_20			Total
		1	2	3	
Participant	Woman	Count	0	3	18
		Expected Count	.7	4.7	15.6
	Man	Count	1	4	5
		Expected Count	.3	2.3	7.4
Total		Count	1	7	23
		Expected Count	1.0	7.0	23.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.248 ^a	2	.073
Likelihood Ratio	5.340	2	.069
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

Participant * Question_21

Crosstab

		Question_21		Total
		2	3	
Participant	Woman	Count	9	12
		Expected Count	9.5	11.5
	Man	Count	5	5
		Expected Count	4.5	5.5
Total		Count	14	17
		Expected Count	14.0	17.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.140 ^a	1	.709		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.139	1	.709		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.503
N of Valid Cases	31				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.52.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Participant * Question_22

Crosstab

		Question_22				
		1	2	3	Total	
Participant	Woman	Count	0	10	11	21
		Expected Count	.7	9.5	10.8	21.0
	Man	Count	1	4	5	10
		Expected Count	.3	4.5	5.2	10.0
Total		Count	1	14	16	31
		Expected Count	1.0	14.0	16.0	31.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.195 ^a	2	.334
Likelihood Ratio	2.359	2	.307
N of Valid Cases	31		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

8.3 Appendix 4 - Frequencies

		Statistics									
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
N	Valid	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.94	5.45	5.19	5.10	5.26	5.35	5.45	5.16	5.16	4.87
Median		5.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Mode		5	6	5	5	6	6	6	5	6	5

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22
31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.00	4.87	4.84	4.90	4.90	4.42	4.61	4.68	4.52	5.06	4.74	4.42
5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
5	6	4 ^a	5	5	4	5	4 ^a	5	6	4	5

8.4 Appendix 5 - Interview questions

Employment branding

1. What do you think is the main benefit of choosing your company as an employer?
2. What is included in your employment branding strategies?
 - a. Do you see a difference in what older generations value compared to Gen Z? If yes, do you use different strategies to attract these generations?
 - i. Do you prefer to use different strategies for these generation? Do find it helpful?
3. Do you try to find ways to differentiate from your competitors in terms of employment branding?
 - a. If yes, what are the main ways to do it?
4. When head hunting, how can you convince the potential employee that your company is the best possible job, if the salary is not considered as a benefit?

Sustainability

5. Does your company have different ways of handling the concerns about environmental and social sustainability? - is any of this more prioritized
6. How does your company enhance social sustainability and corporate social in your strategies?
7. What are the pillars you build your strategy on, and what is the goal of it? - skipped this
 - a. Is the goal more about the image or actual footprint you leave? On a scale of 1-10?

Suppliers side

8. Do you consider that your suppliers have a reflection on your company's reputation as a company?
9. If the product quality is not considered, what are you looking at when choosing a supplier to work with?
 - a. How important is it that the supplier has the same values in terms of social sustainability as your company?
10. If the supplier you work with has similar values as your company, Is it important for you to promote it?
11. How big is your influence on suppliers' social sustainability strategy?
 - a. Do you set expectations for them to change *if you consider that their strategy is not good enough* and could you consider stop working with them if they do not change?

Questions based on the survey

12. How involved are the employees in the management decisions considering the employers work within the organization? - If so, how do you involve them?
13. How do you work in order to provide a good work environment, where people feel safe and belonging? - Any team working activities or external activities?
14. Do you see any differences in social sustainability preferences between men and women? - In that case are there any aspects where this is seen more?
15. Do the organization consider it important to give the employees the tools to develop and is this driven by the employees themselves or the management?
16. Do you contribute to the society where you are operating? - If so, how do you contribute?

8.5 Appendix 6 - Additional quotes from the interviews

Theme:	Second order category:	First-order category:	Supporting quote:
People oriented culture	Relationship	Responsibility, Agility	<i>I would say as I explained before our brand towards our customer is to stand out and that also in terms of the employment brand we are quite small company and we try to make things and run the company easy and to run quick with a lot of responsibility and mandate to our employees I think we are more oriented in long term relation then our competitors which are more focused on short sale maybe but long term relations is really a key thing for us when we when we sale and build our selling structure and competitors many competitors they are lager they are more structured when it comes to sales then you need to do this many sales and this many calls we don't measure sales like that we don't measure sales like that we don't measure - Company B</i>
		Employee well-being, Communication	<i>Couple things are very important; it doesn't matter what you do, but there's a saying that you have three types of legs; one for work, one for free time and one for health. You need to have all these parts. The company needs to assure these, even though it might be hard for the company sometimes, it doesn't matter if you say that you need to be home for six months or what it is. But there's a thing that you need to look positive on it, because a tired employee is not a good employee. We as a company are not able to talk</i>

			<i>about the private lives but if you have a good communication, you need to tell people what you do and have a good communication. That is very important thing. I don't think that material or money is that important. The salary is coming very far down, usually as number five or six. Other things are more important. That the soft part is taken care of. - Company A</i>
		<i>Trust, People</i>	<i>I mean that it's an honest, good company that cares about people and care about us, when they come to Sweden to visit, they care about the restaurants. They care about people in every way. - Company C</i>
Transformational Leadership	Development	Technology	<i>Mostly, because we have an open hierarchy, in which we do not care about the times people go to work or if people have holiday or not. Most important thing is that you produce what you produce. We have an open culture. Today's technology makes it easier nowadays. But sometime the devices might make you work too much. - Company A</i>
		Directions	<i>I would say as a manager or as a member of the management team our most important task is to actually bring opportunities and abilities to the ones that need to take the decision and create value and of course that needs, what is needed then it is clear goals a clear direction where to go and how to go there so at say and I would also say that the values in the involvement of the employees is also really important because being brave self-going that is also need to be communicated in values and in doing things so the management task is more to give opportunities and directions and goals and also to crate the opportunities to everyone to create value around them. - Company B</i>
	Inspiration	Own responsibility	<i>No, it's the same. We work to have a dynamic company and we also have younger people doing practices with us which has been very successful. For me it has been very important to let people to do their own business, I am not looking at what people</i>

			<i>are doing, I give them responsibilities what they want to do, and we are always there to support, and they can do their own thing. - Company C</i>
			<i>I would say that to learn new things to develop and actually grow as an individual this is really important for every employee to take a big responsibility towards but of course as an employer and the CEO, I think it's really really important to really discuss this together with each employee and also to have an agenda and a plan together - Company B</i>
Transparency	Values	Shared values	<i>No, I wouldn't say that. I say that it is very important, we have stopped working with producers whose values are not correct. - Company C</i>
			<i>it's getting more and more important and of course if you are very different doing business building relation it would not work because we are a relation-oriented company also towards our suppliers so that I wouldn't say that we look for the suppliers values and consider if we could find that a match but overtime i would say it is important that you connect. - Company B</i>
			<i>It is important but also, we are working in so many different countries, one way is to respect the cultural differences. What is social for us, might not be social for another person from different culture. But the value of humanity needs to be shared regardless of the culture. I wish it was possible to have the same rights in every country, e.g., staying home for 12 months after giving birth. But this is not the same in all countries. - Company A</i>
		Trust	<i>Yes. And it is also a question about trust. If we didn't feel that they had the trust. We really think it is important that they trust us for doing the right thing. - Company C</i>
			<i>Yeah, yes it is. They know that they can trust us as a</i>

			<p><i>company. Normally, people want to work with us, so we do not need to head hunt them. If you need to convince someone with a good salary, then you have done something wrong with your company. - Company A</i></p>
			<p><i>Many of the suppliers of has been with us for years and years many of them are really big companies now both I would say we want to do business with suppliers that we want to spend midsummer with. Yeah, it's a commitment that goes both ways, lot of trust and common goals I would say as well. - Company B</i></p>