



Doctoral Thesis in Business Studies

The impact of motivation and person- job fit on employee turnover among Swedish real estate brokers: A mixed method approach

MARTIN AHLENIUS

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Doctoral Thesis in Business Studies

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Stockholm 2022

Abstract

Residential real estate is a vital part of the economy, and homes are important for individuals for both financial and emotional reasons. Residential homes change owners for numerous reasons, and there is a need for these transactions to be secure and efficient from both the economic and individual perspective. The general idea of residential real estate brokerage is to facilitate these transactions securely and efficiently. Real estate brokerage has therefore captured both media as well as scholarly interest. Some scholars even argue that brokerage is a relevant research and literature field of its own. Like other occupations within sales, the brokerage industry suffers from problems connected to recruiting and retaining employees, as put forth by several spokespersons within the industry and scholars alike. Prior studies argue that there is a need for further studies that describe the occupational life cycle of brokers and employee turnover antecedents, such as intrinsic motivation. Hence, the overarching purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyze occupational turnover and its antecedents among Swedish real estate brokers.

This thesis sprung out of a firsthand occupational experience of Swedish brokerage, curiosity, and an abductive stance toward knowledge creation. It is primarily explorative, and the embedded articles consist of different types of methodologic approaches and therefore also different ways of gathering data such as interviews, surveys, and registered data. All data solely involves Swedish real estate brokers.

Results of the four articles show that the occupational life cycle of brokers is significantly longer than expected and that Swedish brokers display high levels of work-related intrinsic motivation, occasionally rooted in affective commitment towards customers and gained trust from sellers. Furthermore, being driven by gained trust and customer relations has a positive effect on person-job fit which in turn reduces turnover intentions.

A majority of the results within the four articles are not in line with prior studies, which is interesting and prompts speculation. The service landscape of brokerage, and particularly Swedish brokerage due to the broker's intermediary role and personal responsibility for the entire transaction, arguably drives intrinsic motivation and reduces turnover. This is enhanced by the high educational threshold for becoming a broker in Sweden. This thesis contributes to the literature field of brokerage by providing insights about what motivates brokers and the theoretical field of person-job fit by suggesting ways of improving the operationalization and the validity of person-job fit.

Keywords: Real estate brokerage, person-job fit, motivation, employee turnover, occupational life cycle

Sammanfattning

Ägda privatbostäder är en viktig del av ett lands ekonomi. En bostad är även viktig ur ett individperspektiv eftersom bostaden är förknippad med såväl känslor som pengar. Behovet av och typen av bostad förändras under livets gång, vilket leder till bostadsbyten. Det ligger både i samhällets och individens intresse att dessa överlåtelser sker så säkert och smidigt som möjligt. En fastighetsmäklares primära uppgift, sett ur ett samhällsperspektiv, är just att underlätta säkra och smidiga överlåtelser. Givet den emotionella och finansiella betydelsen av bostäder är det inte konstigt att fastighetsmäklari har både medias och forskares uppmärksamhet.

Flertalet forskare argumenterar för att fastighetsmäklari är ett viktigt och intressant ämne för forskning. Precis som andra branscher inom försäljning, har branschen svårt att anställa och behålla mäklare. Tidigare studier visar att det finns ett behov av ytterligare studier som undersöker hur länge mäklare stannar kvar i yrket och vad som ger en mäklare inre motivation samt eventuella samband mellan dessa faktorer. Denna avhandlings övergripande syfte är att beskriva och analysera antalet år i yrket samt de påverkande faktorerna.

Denna avhandling utgår från egna upplevelser av branschen, nyfikenhet och ett abduktivt förhållningssätt till kunskapsproduktion. Avhandlingen är till största delen utforskande och artiklarna som ingår är baserade på olika typer av data som inhämtats genom intervjuer, enkäter och registerdata. All data som används i avhandlingen innefattar svenska mäklare.

Resultaten av de fyra artiklar som ingår i avhandlingen visar att mäklare är kvar i yrket betydligt längre än vad branschen och forskare trott och att mäklare finner yrket inre motiverande och att denna motivation ofta är rotad i ett positivt känslomässigt engagemang för kunderna och önskan att få kundernas förtroende. Att vara inre motiverad av kundernas förtroende påverkar i sin tur positivt hur väl mäklarna själva anser att de passar i yrket. Vilket i sin tur starkt påverkar sannolikheten att de stannar kvar i yrket.

Majoriteten av resultaten från de fyra artiklarna är inte i linje med tidigare studier, vilket är intressant och skapar utrymme för spekulation. Det kan vara så att det personliga ansvaret för hela överlåtelserna, mellanmansrollen och den förhållandevis höga utbildningen som karaktäriserar den svenska mäklarkåren inverkar positivt på den inre motivationen, vilket i sin tur ökar antalet år i yrket. Avhandlingen bidrar till litteraturfältet *fastighetsmäklari* med insikter om mäklare och till det teoretiska fältet *person-job fit* med förslag som kan förbättra operationaliseringen och validiteten av person-job fit.

Nyckelbegrepp: Fastighetsmäklare, person-job fit, motivation, år i yrket

Acknowledgments

Starting as a practitioner within brokerage and becoming a scholar within the same “field” is not easy. This is in part because some fundamentals differ in annoying ways. For example, practitioners and scholars might speak about the same thing yet they do not understand each other. It’s like putting a cow and a chicken together and not only assuming that they can talk to each other, but also assuming that they are likely to come up with some joint results. It is noteworthy that this has mainly been an inner ongoing process, which of course is borderline insanity. Nevertheless, I am grateful for my practical background since it has helped me with problematizations grounded in real-life situations. This hopefully has and will result in studies that can be used to increase knowledge about brokerage and ultimately improve things.

A Ph.D. journey is a humbling yet strengthening experience, as stated by several prior students. The journey is anything but a straightforward trip from point A to B in my opinion. Rather, in retrospect, I see the Ph.D. journey as more like a roller-coaster ride with loops, nausea, excitement, thrills, and an almost overwhelming feeling of ease, yet also gratitude for the ride and the fact that it’s over. Pursuing a Ph.D. is from one perspective a voyage conducted in solitude, heavily depending on individual persistence. Therefore, I would like to refer to the famous and everlasting words of Snoop Dogg, *“I want to thank me for being me.”*

Joking aside, the journey would not have been possible without my supervisors Björn Berggren, Jonas Kågström, and Lars-Johan Åge. I am sincerely grateful for all the time, effort, laughter, tolerance, support, and contagious curiosity that like a beacon has guided my journey and our common research projects. I am grateful to Svensk Fastighetsförmedling and the University of Gävle who funded my Ph.D. Furthermore, I am grateful to several organizations and brokers within the industry for letting me interview them, helping me gather data, and helping me distribute questionnaires. Many of my colleagues at the University of Gävle deserve my gratitude for numerous reasons. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues Mats Lövgren and Tommy Gerdemark for initiating the idea of having a Ph.D. focusing on brokerage at the University of Gävle. Special thanks are directed towards my Ph.D. combatant Vincent Fremont who has boosted my confidence over the years with unforgettable phrases like *“Just write, man.”*

I’m not sure if being a Ph.D. is a lifestyle in the same way as being a broker is argued to be. However, I have found it hard to ignore my Ph.D. studies from time to time, which has put a strain on my family and friends. I have felt enormous support from my family and friends, above all my wife and daughter, during these years, for which I am forever and profoundly grateful.

Gävle, October 2022

Martin Ahlenius

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Part I

1 Introduction

Secure and smooth real estate transactions are vital for both individuals and the economy at large (Palm & Andersson, 2021; Yavas, 1994a, 1994b). The residential real estate market is characterized by complex, confidential, and infrequent market transactions, heterogeneous products, and high transaction costs (Elder, Zumpano & Baryla, 1999). It is in this type of market that institutionalized intermediaries, such as real estate brokers¹, typically arise (Elder et al., 1999; Yavas, 1994a). The mediating role of residential real estate brokers (brokers) is important in the real estate transaction process for several reasons (Yavas, 2007). The idea that mediating leads to secure and smooth real estate transactions is arguably the most important one, since buying or selling a home is the largest financial transaction most individuals do in their lifetime (Berggren et al., 2019; Mulder & Wagner, 1998; Salzman & Zwinkels, 2017; Yavas, 1994 a).

Given the importance of homes, both as a function and investment, it comes as no surprise that most people know what residential brokerage means (Langseth-Eide & Vittersø, 2021) nor that brokerage has caught scholarly and media interest, for example, Million Dollar Listing, Selling Sunset or House Hunters and more (Koutroumanis, 2021; Sauter & Sauter, 2019; White, 2013). Regarding scholarly interest, some scholars see brokerage as a relevant research topic and a literature field of its own, and academic research has mushroomed since Yinger's (1981) classic study (Benjamin, Jud & Sirmans, 2000a, 2000b; Zietz & Sirmans, 2011), resulting in about 1700 articles from the seventies to the present². Most of these studies use an economic perspective and often investigate the efficiency of the service in various ways, or legal aspects of the agency. Far less focus has been given to individual brokers' perspectives or occupational characteristics.

Two characteristics of brokerage are the handling of large sums of money and working in a service landscape that is often influenced by customers' deeper feelings derived out of attachments to their homes, moving in together, births, divorces, and deaths of relatives (Besbris, 2016; Benites-Gambirazio, 2019; Salzman & Zwinkels, 2017). Hence, it is fair to argue that financially successful and persistent brokerage consists of more than just a technical function designed to ease real estate transactions as previous studies show that customers prefer warmer, more empathetic brokers (Salzman & Zwinkels, 2017; Seiler et al., 2008). Put differently, successful and persistent brokerage demands displaying empathy and trustworthiness to make customers feel at ease regardless of their life situation. The combination of large sums and customer's sometimes complex feelings/life situations is unique compared to other professional service providers.

¹ Real estate brokers (brokers) are used as an axiom for residential real estate brokers/agents/salesperson in this thesis, regardless of which term is used in referenced articles. The reason for doing this is to reduce confusion and to make comparing between countries/studies easier.

² See section 2.

Since prior studies conducted within brokerage usually do not use Sweden as the empirical setting, a brief national comparison and description are in order since Swedish brokerage differs in various ways and is used in this thesis as the empirical setting. Some recent dissertations emphasized Swedish brokerage, such as Engström (2022), Jingeryd (2012), and Lindqvist (2011). These dissertations have contributed to the literature and research field of brokerage. However, these dissertations and the embedded articles primarily focus on the legal aspects of Swedish agency/brokerage or the cost/efficiency of Swedish real estate transactions. While these aspects are both important and interesting, they are not the focal areas of this thesis.

All Swedish brokers are registered by the governmental agency the Swedish Real Estate Broker Inspectorate (INSPECTORATE). The role of the INSPECTORATE is to handle registrations, as well as review, supervise and sanction real estate brokers if they violate the rules or regulations. Most of the real estate, condominium, and single-family house transactions in Sweden are sold through real estate broker-assisted auctions (Hungria-Gunnelin, 2013; Hungria-Gunnelin, Kopsch & Enegren, 2020). The average Swedish broker is highly educated in national comparisons and is involved in ten times more transactions compared to the average U.S. broker (INSPECTORATE, 2021; Ingram & Yelowitz, 2019; Webb & Seiler, 2001). Most Swedish brokers are employed yet work entirely on a commission-based salary (The Association of Swedish Real Estate Brokers [ASREB], 2021, 2022). This means that Swedish brokers have more in common with sole proprietors than they have with sales personnel with fixed or semi-fixed salaries. Henceforward, they are seen as hybrids.

In Sweden, there are “only” brokers, which per se have much in common with U.S. brokers, yet they are much more likely to work full time and are authorized besides being obligated to do more than U.S. brokers (Benjamin et al., 2007; Ingram & Yelowitz, 2019). To clarify, Swedish brokers are obligated to act as intermediaries besides being personally responsible for the entire real estate transaction, including drafting and overseeing the signing of contracts (Lindqvist, 2011; ASREB, 2021). Hence, the Swedish setting is different as Swedish brokers are both market intermediaries as well as intermediaries between sellers and buyers. The Swedish “type” of intermediary is unusual in national comparison (Engström & Söderberg, 2021). Jingeryd (2008) argues that Scandinavian brokers play a more important role in real estate transactions than their European counterparts due to their intermediary role. In many other countries, there is a need for a notary and another broker in every transaction. Since this is not the case in Sweden, the Swedish transaction system is seen as efficient. Working as an intermediary instead of representing the seller or the buyer arguably shifts focus for Swedish brokers from being a hired negotiator to a hired mediator. This shift does not however diminish the brokers' agenda to make sales (Davis, 2013), as Swedish brokers are only paid a commission if the real estate is sold.

There are problems within all occupations, and brokerage is no exception. For example, the brokerage industry suffers from increasing competition among brokers/organizations, low per capita income, and employee turnover (Johnson, Nourse & Day, 1988; Larsen & Coleman, 2003; Seiler et al., 2008; Webb & Seiler, 2001; Zumpano, Elder & Anderson, 2000). These studies are conducted in the U.S., but the same problems appear to exist in the Swedish brokerage industry as well, as will be elaborated below.

Regarding competition, the number of brokers³ and the number of real estate, condominium, and single-family house transactions per year in Sweden has increased in the last decade (Swedish Real Estate Broker Statistics, 2022). However, transactions do not appear to be equally dispersed. To illustrate, a majority of the brokers⁴ are members of the professional body ASREB, on which the following data are based (ASREB, 2021). Among these brokers, about half claim that they are conducting between 25-50 transaction per year, whereas a fifth claim that they are conducting more than 50 transactions per year. This results in a third of the brokers being involved in an average of three transactions⁵ per year. Hence, competition among Swedish brokers exists and, given this data, some brokers are involved in far more transactions than others for some reason(s) which given the commission-based salary system results in a skewed distribution as neither income nor numbers of transactions are normally distributed.

Low incomes appear to prevail in some segments since about half of the brokers have a lower annual income than the average annual income in Sweden (ASREB, 2021; Statistics Sweden, 2022). On the other hand, the same statistic indicates that the other half of the brokers earn more than the average annual income and that 7% of the brokers make more than SEK 1 million/year. The income spread can also be found among brokers in other countries and has many reasons, for example, experience and skill (Seiler, Seiler & Webb, 2006; Sirmans & Swicegood, 1997, 2000; Webb & Seiler, 2001). The main reason for large income fluctuations among Swedish brokers is however arguably the mere existence of commissions and a commission-based salary system.

This thesis emphasizes the individual broker and is anchored in the literature field of brokerage and real-life complications, more precisely the problem of employee turnover. This will be elaborated upon in the following section.

1.1 Problematization

The question of why employees voluntarily leave their jobs has captivated researchers for over a century (Hom et al., 2017). The literature on employee turnover is divided into three groupings:

³ There were 6,722 registered brokers in 2011 and 7,232 in 2020 (INSPECTORATE, 2021)

⁴ These 85% are assumed to be representative for all Swedish real estate brokers.

⁵ This result might be much lower as calculations have been done based on that 44% of the brokers are conducting “only” 25 sales/year and that 21% of them are conducting “only” 50 sales/year.

sources of employee turnover, effects of turnover, and strategies to minimize turnover (Ongori, 2007). Employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labor market; between firms, jobs, and occupations; and between the states of employment and unemployment (Abassi & Hollman, 2000). This thesis focuses on sources of voluntary employee turnover and more precisely the underlying facet of sources of occupational turnover. Employee turnover and occupational turnover is used interchangeably henceforth in this thesis.

Voluntary employee turnover is often neither wanted nor expected initially by the worker or the organization. Rather it is often a consequence of some kind of disjunction between i) the anticipated skills of the employee and occupational/organizational demands (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Larsen & Coleman, 2003), and ii) the employee's needs and what the work supplies (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, the individual's decision to leave does not necessarily depend on the occurrence of a single factor at a specific point in time but could in many cases rather be seen as a result of individual and organizational/occupational factors interacting over time (Eriksson, Vulkan & Dellve, 2022; Hom et al., 2012).

Employee turnover within professional services like brokerage is problematic (Larsen & Coleman, 2003; Lewin & Sager, 2008; Rosenberg, Gibson & Epley, 1981; Webb & Seiler, 2001), and is often explored from an organizational perspective, mostly emphasizing negative organizational effects such as i) losing specialized and productive workers as it decreases income/knowledge; ii) costs and time needed for replacing the worker; and iii) customers being loyal to the departing salesperson and not the company (Boles et al., 2012; Holtom et al., 2008; Palmatier, Scheer & Steenkamp, 2007; Weitz & Bradford, 1999).

Some previous studies estimate turnover costs to be 200% and even up to 400% of salary within sales (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2010; Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Richardson, 1999). Employee turnover has consequences and costs for the employee as well (Zimmermann, Swider & Arthur, 2020). The worker's perspective on employee turnover is somewhat neglected however as scant attention has been given to it in previous studies within brokerage. There are expectations like Larsen and Coleman (2003) who use both an organizational and individual perspective. The lack of employee turnover studies that focus on the individual serves as a reason for choosing the individual perspective in this thesis.

Spokespersons for the professional body the Swedish Real Estate Broker Association (SREBA) and scholars argue that brokerage in Sweden is a "pass-through" occupation leading to only 50% of graduates remaining after two years (Civilekonomen, 2021; Engström & Persson, 2020; SREBA, 2021). Similar statements can be found in U.S. studies where turnover among brokers is argued to range from 50% within two years to 98% within five years (Lee et al., 2014; Webb & Seiler, 2001). The high turnover rate of brokers, particularly new brokers, is a concern to industry leaders, individual brokers, and new/future brokers (Larsen & Coleman, 2003). Despite this concern, little formal research on this issue has been published (Larsen & Coleman,

2003). There is a particular need to examine the antecedents of employee turnover (Mosquera, Soares & Oliveira, 2020; Ongori, 2007). Previous studies within brokerage emphasizing the antecedent of employee turnover have explored the effects of personality (Crant, 1995), insecure and low incomes/unrealistic work expectations (Webb & Seiler, 2001; Larsen & Coleman, 2003), burnout (Snyder, Claffey & Cistulli, 2011), job satisfaction/work-family life conflict (Lee et al., 2014), competition/gender/education among brokers (Larsen & Coleman, 2003), leadership (Jaramillo et al., 2010), real estate market fluctuations (Mosquera et al., 2020; Sims & Boytell, 2015), job substitutes (Crellin, Frew & Jud, 1988), goal orientation (Sims & Boytell, 2015), and motivation (Mosquera et al., 2020; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). It is noteworthy that prior studies emphasizing turnover within brokerage have not given attention to recovery and emotional labor, which are often used in other occupational settings involving employee's interaction with clients/patients (Eriksson et al., 2022; Goodwin, Growth & Frenkel, 2011).

1.2 The research field

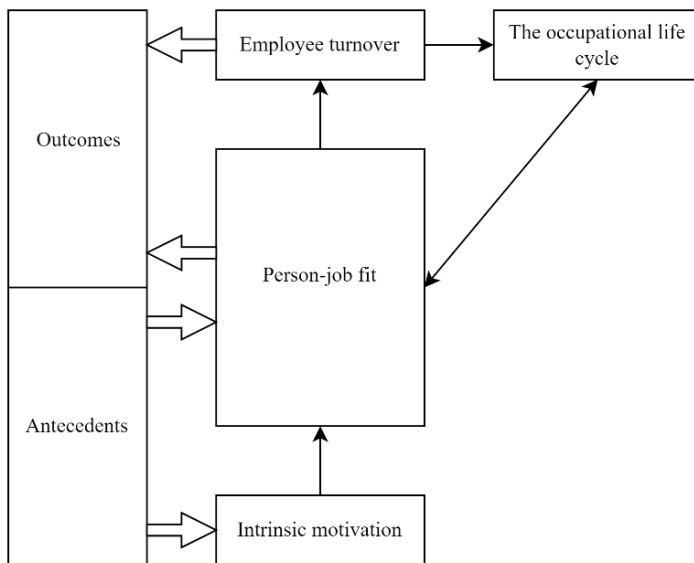
Another more holistic way to approach *antecedents of employee turnover* is by focusing on person-job fit theory which is a two-dimensional conceptualization, consisting of a match between job demands and abilities of the employee and the match between job supplies and employees' needs (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Edwards, 1991). Increased level of fit between worker and job characteristics increases motivation, job satisfaction, and individual competitiveness, which in turn reduces employee turnover (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Larsen & Coleman, 2003). Person-job fit (PJF) has been used in various occupational settings, e.g., bankers, accountants, therapists, and call-center workers (Brkich, Jeffs & Carless, 2002). However, the person-job fit theory is not commonly used in prior studies among brokers. Some scholars argue that person-job fit is a crucial variable that needs to be investigated in the brokerage context because of the nature of the tasks, which are complex, demanding, and stressful, and can easily lead brokers to feel that they do not fit with the job (Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022). Furthermore, there is a need for additional studies within sales to get a better understanding of what "fitting in" actually means to salespeople and the mechanisms that stimulate fit (Vilela, Gonzales & Ferrin, 2008). Given that positive customer relations are of utmost importance for brokers (Snyder et al., 2011), then liking to work with people (i.e., relational motivation) is arguably a mechanism that stimulates PJF that is worth exploring.

Person-job fit theory with its individual focus is an appropriate theory to use when addressing the problem of voluntary occupational turnover as many antecedents to occupational turnover among brokers are closely tied to the individual, for example, level of salary/competitiveness and work-related motivation. This thesis focuses on the individual and therefore does not use PJF's commonly used embedded organizational/managerial perspective

(e.g., Cable & DeRue, 2002, Ru, 2011). Person-job fit is nevertheless a broad construct. This thesis concentrates on the needs facet of person-job fit as it incorporates motivation and therefore also relational motivation. Focus is also given to the time aspect of person-job fit by exploring the occupational life cycle of brokers as both fields, i.e., person-job fit and occupational turnover require data about the occupational life cycle to have something to compare with, a baseline. Increased awareness about the occupational life cycle and motivation within brokerage are beneficial for the brokerage industry, educators, students, and scholars as it addresses the problem of occupational turnover.

Person-job fit theory is however in need of a more dynamic and longitudinal perspective. For example, people evolve, and their life situation changes, while job demands and supplies are usually more stable. This means that PJF might change. Two ways of obtaining a more dynamic and longitudinal PJF perspective is to give more attention to the occupational life cycle and intrinsic work-related motivation connected to occupational characteristics, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Theory synthesis



Person-job fit is seen as both an antecedent and outcome in Figure 1. For example, the person-job fit is affected by intrinsic motivation, whereas employee turnover is affected by person-job fit. The occupational life cycle is somewhat more complex as it is an outcome of

employee turnover on an aggregated level, yet its connection to person-job fit is more symbiotic in nature. To be more precise, the individual's perception of person-job fit is not directly affected by the occupational life cycle. However, when the person-job fit is used to assess employee turnover, the occupational life cycle is highly relevant as it provides a baseline of how long brokers tend to stay within the occupation, regardless of attention given to turnover antecedents.

Prior studies stipulate that there is a crucial need for future studies within brokerage that i) provide an occupational life cycle for brokers (Webb & Seiler, 2001); ii) explore what intrinsically motivates brokers (Mosquera et al., 2020; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022, Rosenberg et al., 1981); and iii) explore what type of customer relationships brokers/service providers prefer, and why (Dalela et al., 2018; Humphrey, Ashforth & Diefendorff, 2015). Hence, this thesis uses brokerage as an empirical setting when addressing these gaps in the extent of PJF and brokerage literature.

1.3 Purpose of the thesis and research questions

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyze occupational turnover and its antecedents among Swedish brokers.

Occupational turnover is addressed through person-job fit theory in several ways in this thesis. First, by exploring and describing the occupational life cycle of brokers. Second, by exploring and analyzing work-related intrinsic motivation and in particular relational motivation which is part of the needs facet of PJF. The overarching purpose is operationalized and concretized through the formulation of three research questions.

Research question 1. There is as previously stated a lack of studies within the brokerage industry that describe the occupational life cycle. This leads to the formulation of the first research question: *What does the occupational life cycle look like for Swedish real estate brokers?*

Research question 2. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, is essential in a work setting as it increases job satisfaction, which in turn lowers turnover intentions and ultimately actual turnover. Most prior motivational studies within brokerage focus on extrinsic motivation and not intrinsic motivation, which leads to articulating the second research question: *Are Swedish real estate brokers driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation?*

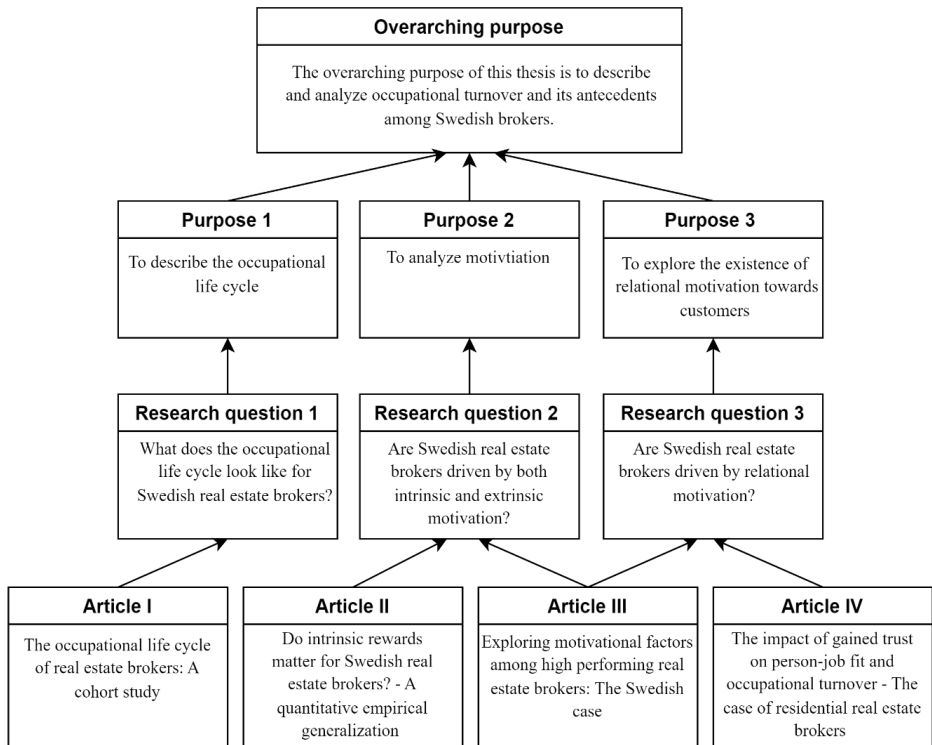
Research question 3. Obtaining, developing, and maintaining positive customer relationships is a demand/job characteristic within brokerage. Brokers who are more suited for working with customers are therefore less likely to quit. These relationships vary in time, intensity, and warmth, partly depending on the circumstances and partly on individual characteristics. However, there is a lack of studies that explore to what extent these necessary

relationships are perceived as motivating or not. This serves as a foundation when formulating the third research question: *Are Swedish real estate brokers driven by relational motivation?*

The connections between purpose, research questions, and articles are displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The purpose, research questions, and articles



Article I addresses research question 1 by describing the occupational life cycle based on the following of ten cohorts of Swedish real estate broker students after registration.

Article II addresses research question 2 by exploring if working as a broker in Sweden is intrinsically and/or extrinsically motivating, and if so, if motivation is correlated to job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Article III addresses both research questions 2 and 3. It addresses research question 2 by exploring overarching motivation and it addresses research question 3 by exploring where brokers are motivated by customer relations.

Article IV addresses research question 3 by exploring if Swedish brokers are driven by gained trust and if gained trust is connected to person-job fit and turnover intentions.

1.4 Thesis organization

This thesis consists of seven chapters, which begin with a brief introduction to the research field and identification of research gaps resulting in the formulation of purposes and research questions.

- Chapter 2 continues with a literature review of the real estate brokerage field.
- Chapter 3 describes the theoretical framework of person-job fit and its embedded facets – the occupational life cycle and motivation.
- In Chapter 4, the stance towards research paradigms and knowledge creation is described. This chapter also describes the mixed methods used in this thesis.
- Chapter 5 provides a summary of the results for Articles I, II, III, and IV separately.
- Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the results based upon which research question the article addresses.
- Chapter 7 sums up the thesis by presenting the limitations, theoretical and practical implications of the research, and some concluding remarks regarding future research avenues.

2 Literature review

2.1 Literature review approach

There are different approaches to literature reviews, for example integrative, systematic, and semi-systematic (Snyder, 2019). Which type of approach is more appropriate is connected to the purpose and the quality of execution (Snyder, 2019).

Articles about brokers/brokerage are published in various disciplines, yet the topics have been conceptualized differently, which according to Snyder (2019) makes it impossible to conduct a systematic review. This literature review does not aim to describe or advance the theoretical field, which is common for integrative studies (Snyder, 2019). An embedded reason for not choosing an integrative approach is that brokerage is not a theoretical field of its own. Brokerage is instead a relevant research and literature field (Benjamin et al., 2000a, 2000b; Zietz & Sirmans, 2011). Semi-systematic literature reviews are quite common in business journals and appropriate when having a broad scope and mapping themes (Snyder, 2019). While covering broad topics and different types of studies, the semi-systematic approach holds that the research process should be transparent (Snyder, 2019).

This qualitative literature review has a broad scope and is to be seen as semi-systematic and thematic as different themes have been extracted through semantic analysis. This review follows the guidelines of Snyder (2019). Furthermore, the search strategy and include/exclude criteria have been strict in this review, similar to a structured review. The purpose of this review is to provide an overview of the research/literature field of brokerage. Three focal areas were set to focus the review:

- Focal area 1: *What are the characteristics of studies in real estate brokerage, more precisely country of origin and field of study?*
- Focal area 2: *What are the major topics covered in research within real estate brokerage?*
- Focal area 3: *How are the articles distributed based on the unit of analysis (individual, firm/organization, and market) in research within real estate brokerage?*

Respective focal areas were chosen as each of them is a common way of dividing articles within business studies. Units of analysis were particularly interesting since a pre-review indicated that the market perspective is much more common than the firm's or individual broker's perspective. This literature review is conducted by three collaborators⁶. The reason for collaboration is the mutual goal of a future publication.

⁶ For a more thorough description see section 4.

2.2 Previous literature reviews within real estate brokerage

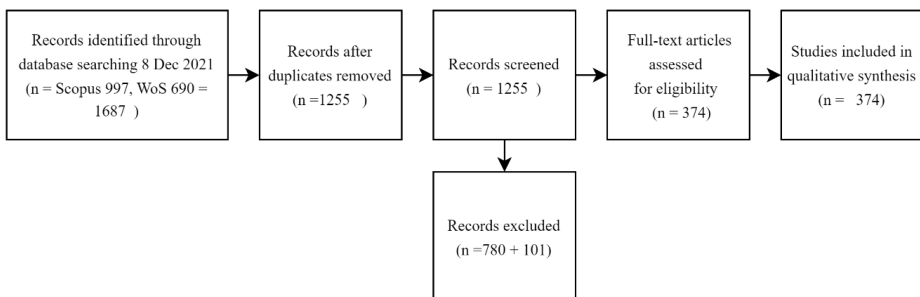
As of today, no semi-structured overview of the research undertaken within real estate brokerage has been done. Rather there have been a few literature reviews describing topics within real estate brokerage (Benjamin et al., 2000a, 2000b) and emerging trends within the research (Zietz & Sirmans, 2011). But the lack of transparency in the method and analysis in these reviews makes them hard to replicate. This problem is not specific to brokerage as a lack of thoroughness and rigor in literature reviews is common throughout the business research area (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield, Denver & Smart, 2003).

2.3 Operationalization

Due to national, legal, and cultural differences, different terms are used to refer to individuals operating as intermediaries between buyers and sellers within real estate. Some examples are real estate agents, real estate brokers, real estate salesmen/women, and realtors. The same goes for the firms operating in the same context, for example real estate brokerage and real estate business. The search string was therefore formulated as follows: "real estate brokerage" OR "real estate brokers" OR "real estate agency" OR "REAL estate brokers" OR "REAL estate salesmen" OR "REAL estate saleswomen" OR "REAL estate saleswoman" OR "REAL estate salespersons" OR REALTORS OR "REAL estate agents" OR "REAL estate business" OR "BUYERS' agents". This search string was used in both Scopus and Web of Science on December 8, 2021 resulting in a total of 1,687 articles⁷, where 997 came from Scopus and 690 came from Web of Science, see Figure 3 for a flowchart. It is noteworthy that Scopus and Web of Science are systems based on retrieving information about articles from the title, author/s, abstract, and keywords.

Figure 3

Flowchart



⁷ Conference papers, books, etc. were excluded.

These articles were imported from Scopus and Web of Science respectively into Zotero, which is a reference manager program. In Zotero, duplicates were removed resulting in 1,255 remaining articles. These were then imported into Rayyan, a web tool for conducting systematic reviews and other knowledge synthesis projects. In Rayyan, it is possible to use a blind function between collaborators. This function was used by the three collaborators on two occasions. The first occasion was when articles were labeled as include, exclude, or maybe. The collaborators' respective labels were then compared, and inconclusive articles were discussed and jointly labeled. This resulted in 780 articles being excluded, meaning that 475 articles remained. The criteria chosen for including were: English abstract, journal article, and that the article should either be directly linked to brokers/firms/market (or other phrases) or in articles where brokers/firms/market is used as an empirical setting for accessing other problems/phenomena, etc. outside brokerage, then the result and/or analysis needed to incorporate brokers/firm/market.

Each article was then searched for readability in both Scopus and Web of Science when logged in through the library of the University of Gävle. This led to 101 articles being removed due to not being available in full text, resulting in 374 articles. The second “blind” occasion was when the remaining 374 articles were divided according to a unit of analysis: individual and/or firm and/or market. After an initial reading of 10 random articles each, it became clear that many of the articles were hard to divide under just one unit of analysis since the analysis was primarily conducted from several perspectives. This resulted in the articles being divided under six “units” instead of three, meaning that one article might be labeled as both market and firm, for example. The collaborators' respective units were then compared, and inconclusive articles were discussed and jointly labeled. These articles were read in full text and topics were synthesized through semantic analysis within each unit. Before describing each of the main units, market, individual, and firm/organization, an overview of the real estate brokerage research field is needed to portray the whole research field.

2.4 Overview of the real estate brokerage research field

About 90% of all articles in this review can be found in Scopus. Figures and tables extracted from Scopus were therefore used to portray the real estate brokerage field. It is noteworthy that section 2.4 is based on the initial sample of articles and not the final 374 articles that are used later. The reason for using the initial sample is that it provides an overarching picture that is based upon a given search string, yet not affected by include/exclude criteria for this specific review.

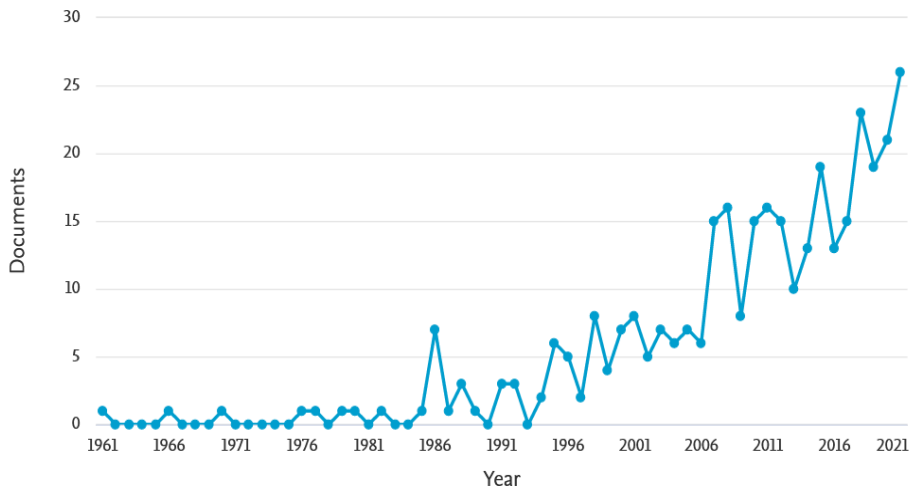
Searching for articles focusing on brokerage in Scopus⁸ reveals increasing interest in the research field, adding up to a total of 997 articles as of December 8, 2021. This is in line with

⁸ Scopus/Web of Science search string: "real estate brokerage" OR "real estate brokers" OR "real estate agency" OR "REAL estate brokers" OR "REAL estate salesmen" OR "REAL estate saleswomen" OR "REAL estate

the statement by Benjamin et al. (2000a) that the research field of brokerage has mushroomed since 1980. The increase of published articles has increased at an even faster pace between 2000 and the present as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Articles per year about brokerage.



Source Scopus

Articles about brokerage are not only being produced at a higher rate, they are also being cited more (Scopus, 2022). This indicates scholar-to-scholar relevance, at least at an aggregated level.

Most of these articles started to appear and continue to do so in U.S.-based economic journals within the real estate domain, such as *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*, *Real Estate Economics*, and *Journal of Real Estate Research*⁹ (Scopus, 2022). The brokerage literature field is not a big research field and is an integral part of the research field of real estate (Zumpano et al., 2000). For example, Johnson, Roulac, and Followill (1996) identified the most frequent topics in articles presented under ARES (American Real Estate Society) conferences/meetings from 1985-1994 and concludes that 6.5% were about brokerage. Another example from the real estate domain is Winson-Geideman and Evangelopoulos (2013) who used

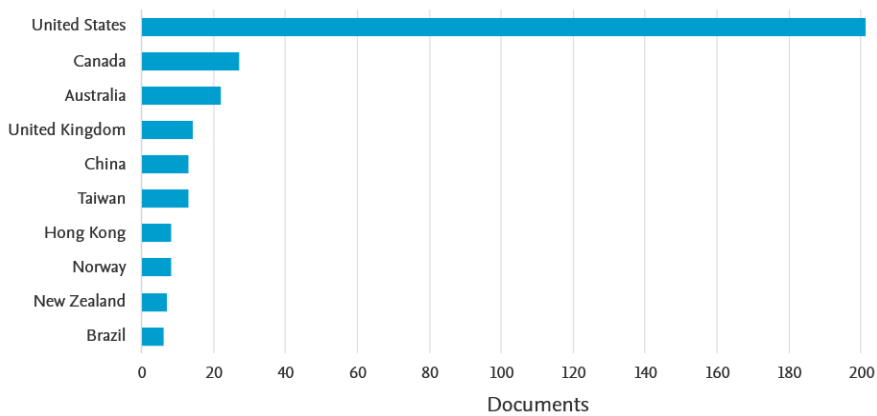
saleswoman" OR "REAL estate salespersons" OR REALTORS OR "REAL estate agents" OR "REAL estate business" OR "BUYERS" agents "

⁹Source Scopus. Articles about brokerage per year and journal, between 1986 and 2021: *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics* 30, *Real Estate Economics* 28, *Journal of Real Estate Research* 11, *Journal of Housing Economics* 9, *Property Management* 9, *Journal of Real Estate Practice and Education* 8, *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis* 6, *Urban Studies* 6, *Housing Studies* 5, *Journal of Business Ethics* 5.

semantic analysis and concluded that brokerage articles represent 8.2% of the articles published in top tier U.S. real estate journals (JREFE, JREER, and REE) between 1973 and 2010.

Real estate brokerage differs between countries due to legislation, the existence and extent of educational requirements, business culture/customs, etc. However, most studies focusing on brokerage are conducted in the U.S, see Figure 5. This means that the research field of brokerage is heavily influenced by the real estate domain and the empirical setting of U.S. brokerage.

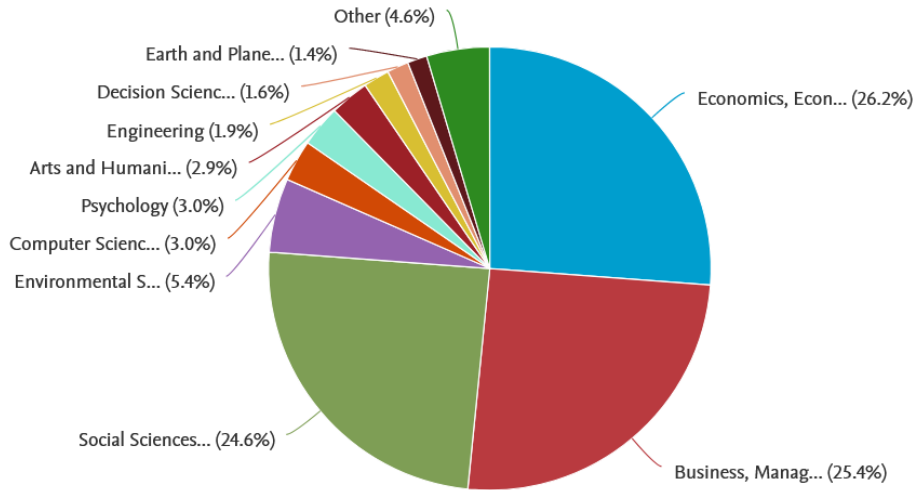
Figure 5
Origin of articles about brokerage between 1961-2021



Source Scopus

Another way of exploring the research field is by dividing the articles based on their subject areas, see Figure 6. This way of dividing the articles reveals a slightly more nuanced picture as the subject area of economics encompasses only one-fourth of the articles, which is interesting given the economic focus of the U.S. real estate journals. Existing articles about brokers/brokerage are published in various subject areas, which points to a diverse research area. One explanation for this is that the research field of brokerage is new. However, the diversity might also be a consequence of the fact that brokers and the brokerage function are important too, and affect individuals, firms, and the economy in general. This is mainly a consequence of the magnitude and impact real estate has on society.

Figure 6
Articles by subject area



It is noteworthy that Scopus uses multiple subject areas for some articles (e.g., Northcraft & Neale, 1987 [psychology and business/management/accounting] and Hsiung, 2012 [business/management/accounting and economics/econometrics/finance]) which results in odd percentage numbers for each discipline. Source: Scopus.

The starting point of many articles in this literature review is not problems/phenomena within brokerage, yet brokers/brokerage are often used as an empirical setting or function when addressing other problems. For example,¹⁰ i) within *Economics/Econometrics/Finance* brokers/brokerage is used when assessing clustering in real estate prices (Palmon, Smith & Sopranzetti, 2004), the influence of home values and market conditions on sale price/marketing time/limited service listings (Benefield, Pyles & Gleason, 2011), and time on the market and price change (Han & Song, 2016); ii) within *Business/Management/Accounting* brokers/brokerage is used when assessing identifying key determinants of housing sales and time on the market (Ferreira & Jalali, 2015), organizational control systems as a managerial tool (Flamholz, 1979), and gender differences in strategy and human resource management (Verhaul, Risseuw & Bartelse, 2002); and iii) within *Social Sciences* brokers/brokerage is used when assessing how newcomers construct identity (Blåka & Filstad, 2007), the interaction between cultural and social capital (Bridge, 2001), and if market cycles affect marketing linguistics (Robertson & Doig, 2010). It is noteworthy that Scopus sometimes puts articles in more than one overarching subject area.

When sorting the articles according to most cited, another picture is revealed as none of the most cited ones are published in real estate journals, see Table 1. Noteworthy in Figure

¹⁰ Based on how Scopus divides articles into subject areas, see Figure 6.

5 and Table 1 is the shift between business/management and economics/econometrics/finance. It should also be noted that psychology is much more common among the most cited articles.

Table 1
Origin of the 10 most cited articles

Citations	Subject	Author/Title/Journal
591	B, P	Northcraft, G. B., & Neale, M. A. (1987). Experts, amateurs, and real estate: An anchoring-and-adjustment perspective on property pricing decisions. <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i> , 39(1), 84–97. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(87)90046-X
405	P	Crant, J. M. (1995). The Proactive Personality Scale and objective job performance among real estate agents. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 80(4), 532–537. https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.80.4.532
286	C, E	Tseng, M.-L. (2009). A causal and effect decision making model of service quality expectation using grey-fuzzy DEMATEL approach. <i>Expert Systems with Applications</i> , 36(4), 7738–7748. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2008.09.011
216	EE, S	Levitt, S. D., & Syverson, C. (2008). Market distortions when agents are better informed: The value of information in real estate transactions. <i>Review of Economics and Statistics</i> , 90(4), 599–611. https://doi.org/10.1162/rest.90.4.599
176	B, EE	Hurst, E., & Pugsley, B. W. (2011). What do small businesses do? <i>Brookings Papers on Economic Activity</i> , 2, 73–118. https://doi.org/10.1353/eca.2011.0017
155	B, EE	Rutherford, R., Springer, T., & Yavas, A. (2005). Conflicts between principals and agents: Evidence from residential brokerage. <i>Journal of Financial Economics</i> , 76(3), 627–665. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2004.06.006
151	A, B, EE, S	Hsiung, H.-H. (2012). Authentic Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior: A Multi-Level Psychological Process. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 107(3), 349–361. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1043-2
146	P	Chen, X.-P., Liu, D., & Portnoy, R. (2012). A multilevel investigation of motivational cultural intelligence, organizational diversity climate, and cultural sales: Evidence from U.S. real estate firms. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> , 97(1), 93–106. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024697
138	B, EE	Osiyevskyy, O., & Dewald, J. (2015). Explorative versus exploitative business model change: The cognitive antecedents of firm-level responses to disruptive innovation. <i>Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal</i> , 9(1), 58–78. https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1192
109	S	Bridge, G. (2001). Estate agents as interpreters of economic and cultural capital: The gentrification in the Sydney housing market. <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i> , 25(1), 87–101. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.00299

If all the articles are sorted by most cited and subject areas, the following order reveals: B = business/management/accounting (26.3%), EE = economics/econometrics/finance (26.3%), P = psychology (15.8%), S = social science (15.8%), C = computer science (5.3%), E = engineering (5.3%), A = arts and humanities (5.3%). Source: Scopus.

The inconsistency between real estate journals and the most cited articles could be caused by the sheer number of articles in the real estate journals which increases the chance of higher topic congruence/citations spread between articles. Nonetheless, scholars outside the real estate journal domain are interested in brokerage and are being increasingly cited (Scopus, 2022).

Another reason for the diversity is that brokers/brokerage are often used as an empirical setting in studies with focus areas outside the brokerage domain. For example, a study by Langseth-Eide and Vittersø (2021) emphasizes work demands and uses students' perceptions to access the work demands for brokers and nurses.

There are of course other ways to divide articles. One of these is thematic analysis. However, thematic analysis becomes more interesting if themes are extracted among smaller and well-defined units of analysis.

2.5 Analysis

As previously stated, this literature review uses the market, the individual broker, and the firm/organization as units of analysis since this is a common way of dividing articles in similar reviews.

2.5.1 Market level

The majority of the articles published within the field of real estate brokerage have a market or societal perspective, and most have been conducted in the U.S. This means that the focus of the research is not on the real estate broker per se, but on how the real estate broker affects the market or society (Hsieh & Moretti, 2003; Zumpano et al., 2000). As some of the more prominent, and well-cited, researchers within the field have a background in economics, it is no surprise that some of the most cited articles have analyzed various dimensions of how efficient the market for real estate brokerage is (Delcours & Miller, 2002). A lot of research effort has been put into the effect of real estate brokerage on price (Waller & Jurban, 2012), time on market (Turnbull & Dombrow, 2007), agency issues (Agarwal et al., 2019), and contractual issues (Anglin & Arnott, 1991).

A perennial issue within brokerage has to do with the effect of the real estate broker on the final price of the property. Some researchers have concluded that the impact of the broker on the price is significant (Waller & Jurban, 2012; Lopez, 2021), whereas others have the opposite position (Stelk & Zumpano, 2017). Some authors have also concluded that hiring a broker, instead of selling the property yourself, has a positive impact on the final price (Stelk & Zumpano, 2017).

A common way to view the market is by using the lens of agency theory (Ross, 1973). In this world view, the agents maximize their own utility at the expense of the principals (cf. Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Therefore, it is not surprising that many articles have used this perspective in real estate brokerage research. Agency issues and the use of different types of incentives have been investigated by Munneke and Yavas (2001) as well as by Levitt and Syverson (2008). Overall, there seems to be evidence from research within the U.S. that there are agency costs associated with using a real estate broker, and that real estate brokers put more effort when selling their own properties.

Contractual theory is a research field unto itself, so therefore it is not altogether surprising that contractual issues have received some attention within real estate brokerage. Chinloy and Winkler (2010) investigated the effect of broker effort and contract design, and Arnold (1992) likewise discussed the design of the optimal contract. It should be noted that a lot of research within this strand of research is conceptual and theoretical in nature, rather than empirically driven.

Another strand of research has analyzed the role of real estate brokers in discrimination and segregation (Ross & Turner, 2005). The bulk of the research has been

undertaken in North America, primarily in large cities in the U.S. (Ondrich, Ross & Yinger, 2003), but more recently in Europe as well (see Verstraete & Verhaeghe, 2019). Research has shown that real estate brokers do discriminate against minorities, but that the discrimination has decreased over time (Zhao, Ondrich & Yinger, 2006). It should be noted, however, that some of these studies cover the rental market as well (see e.g., Flage, 2018).

2.5.2 Individual level

A minority of the articles published within the field of real estate brokerage focus on the individual broker. These articles are published in journals within a variety of fields such as real estate economics (Benjamin, Chinloy & Winkler, 2009), psychology (Jacobsen et al., 2011), property management (Agboola, Ojo & Amidu, 2012), communication (Dion & Notarantonio, 1992) and ethics (Tesfom & Birch, 2011). It is noteworthy that some articles address more than one topic and that the low number of articles makes studies with conflicting results less likely.

Articles written within brokerage focusing on the individual primarily emphasize one of four topics: performance, ethics, outcomes on/for customers, and outcomes for brokers/work characteristics. Outcomes for brokers/work characteristics are most common, followed by performance, outcomes on/for customers, and lastly ethics.

Outcomes for brokers/work characteristics can be found in Benites-Gambirazio (2020), who describe how brokers work in the market. It can also be found in a study conducted by Love et al. (2011) which explores the influence of demographics on burnout, or in Snyder and Cantor's (1979) study which explores which personality types are most suitable for brokerage.

Performance can be found in Crant's (1995) article, which argues that personality affects performance or in a study by Johnson, Zumpano, and Anderson (2007) where listing specialization is found to affect performance.

Outcomes on/for customers are present in Arndt et al. (2013), who argue that brokers' gender, pathos, and attractiveness affect customer perception. It can also be found in Besbris' (2016) article where customers' emotions connected to homes are affected by brokers, and in Tower-Richardi et al. (2014) study which indicates that brokers use customers' social status when matching potential buyers to houses.

Ethics can be found in Furst and Evans' (2017) study which indicates that rental brokers are affected by a potential rental criminal record, or in Agboola et al. (2012) who argue that gender affects ethical behavior. Ethics can also be found in Boyle's (2000) study which indicates that brokers' ethical judgments are affected by customers.

Summarizing the articles written about individual brokers besides dividing them according to topics is not an easy task based on diversity. However, the topics point to focus being given primarily to trying to understand what causes performance, how customers are affected,

and that ethics is problematic within brokerage. Very little is written about what brokers actually do, or how brokers perceive and feel about brokerage in terms of job satisfaction and well-being, for example. A lack of description of the empirical setting for brokers (e.g., Mosquera et al., 2020) is also noteworthy, as is a lack of description of how big the ethical problem is (e.g., Agboola et al., 2012). As previously stated, brokerage differs between countries. Hence it is crucial to acknowledge and describe the empirical setting.

2.5.3 Firm/Organization level

In comparison to market level and individual level categories, the firm/organizational level seems to be somewhat of a “playground” for researchers of various disciplines. Reviewing the researcher discipline revealed there were around 20 different disciplines identified in the firm/organization group. The majority of these emanated from the U.S. This implies that researchers view the real estate brokerage industry to be a rich source of information that can potentially advance theory within the field of interest, which may be a result of the diverse nature of the industry (for examples see Tuzovic, 2008; Osiyevskyy & Dewald, 2015).

Technology is one area that featured prominently. The advent of the internet and mobile apps has been the subject of review, although not extensively given their prominence in modern commerce. In numerous cases, these articles aimed to measure the effectiveness of the technology to users more so than the business itself (for example see Lu & Mooney, 1989; Cherif & Grant, 2014; Chiu et al., 2017). It was interesting to observe that there did not appear to be an increase in the frequency of technology-focused publications with time. In other words, it is considered reasonable to have expected greater interest in technology applications in the real estate business sector due to the proliferation of such technologies and their touted benefits to business efficacy.

Real estate firms were also of interest to researchers in the field of economics, although this took numerous forms including real estate economics, finance and economics, and entrepreneurship, to name a few. In terms of topics studied, researchers applied their skills to developing models and reporting on important issues such as the effectiveness of a firm’s reputation within the market (Arvin & Murphy, 1996), the introduction of new products (e.g., legal services) into the firm’s remit (Benjamin et al., 2008), sales staff remuneration strategies (Hsiung, 2012), and the value of franchise affiliation (Jud, Rogers & Crellin, 1994).

Considering the topics researched regarding timelines, it was interesting to note that no one theme emerged more strongly than another, although there appeared to be emergent shoots of “soft” topics appearing in more recent publications. For example, Byrne and Thatchenkery (2019) studied the effectiveness of mindfulness on creativity in the firm and Boaventura et al. (2016) considered the impact of governance structures on trust within the

organization. Prior to this, the focus was very much on business metrics and outcomes. Given the global impact of Covid-19 upon mental health and the increased focus on work/life balance, this topic may develop as researchers investigate what is traditionally known to be a stressful industry and how firms can manage staff retention and performance.

In terms of frequency of publications, management is another area of interest for researchers investigating real estate firms and again, many of these are utilizing these firms as a unit of analysis rather than a specific area of interest. Examples of topics are decision-making by small businesses (Osievskyy & Dewald, 2015), division of labor within agencies (Giustiziero, 2021), internal interactions between management and peers (Hu & Shi, 2015), managing disruptive technologies (Osievskyy & Dewald, 2015). The topic of management was particularly diverse and spread throughout the timeline of the review.

In summary, the literature review revealed that research regarding firm/organizational level was very broad regarding topics and as expected, many were focused on business metrics and performance. However, technology and important “soft” topics seemed to be gaining interest, although not as much as expected.

2.5.4 Methods used

Most articles within the brokerage field are deductive and quantitative. However, there are exceptions, for example, some studies use a strict qualitative approach such as Sihi (2018), who uses interviews, or Furst and Evans (2017), who use qualitative analysis of phone calls, or Bryson (2017), who used different qualitative approaches. There are also examples of mixed methods being used such as Dabholkar and Overby (2005), who used both in-depth interviews and surveys, processing data thorough content analysis and statistical tests, or Besbris and Faber (2017), who used a mixture of regression methods and interviews, or Flint-Hartle and de Bruin (2011), who used interviews and surveys.

2.6 Conclusions

The literature and research field of brokerage are diversified both in terms of problems addressed, topics, theoretical underpinning, and journal outlets. The U.S. context of brokerage heavily influences the literature and research field since it is the origin of most studies and authors. This needs to be recognized and dealt with in future studies since the national context affects brokerage and brokers, both as a function, and also how brokerage and individual brokers are seen by various stakeholders.

Regardless of which unit of analysis is used the most common focus is how brokerage/brokers affect factors such as time on market, customers, and revenues of the firm, and

not vice versa. This is particularly interesting given that a broker's work is autonomous and acknowledged as a vital part of the real estate transaction process. One could therefore expect that more studies were conducted focusing on what drives brokers and/or what makes an individual more suitable for that role. There are exceptions to this as motivation has received some scholarly interest (e.g., Mosquera et al., 2020; Crant, 1995; Munneke & Yavas, 2001). Most of these studies emphasize extrinsic rewards leaving intrinsic motivation almost unexplored. The focus given to extrinsic rewards might contribute to the reason why there are a lot of assumptions about brokers in prior studies, for example, that they are only driven by money and are less altruistic than people within other occupations (e.g., Langseth-Eide & Vittersø, 2021). A common way to indicate who is suitable for a job is to use person-job fit reasoning. This is not the case within the literature field of brokerage since person-job fit has received very little attention as only one article (Harris et al., 2013) in this literature review incorporates it. It is notable that Harris et al. (2013) are "only" using person-job to theoretically explain the effects of job resourcefulness on performance.

Another important area where one could assume that more studies were conducted is the broker's perception of the acknowledged necessity/job demand of numerous positive relationships with customers. These studies are scarce, and the ones that exist generally assume that customer relations are a demand that could lead to burnout and work-family conflicts (e.g., Snyder et al., 2011). Furthermore, turnover and turnover intentions are as stated in the first section of this thesis described as troublesome within brokerage, which is reflected in this literature review. It is notable however that turnover is described as a problem of magnitude within brokerage, yet there are not very many studies that focus on turnover or the occupational life cycle, and even fewer of these explore the individuals' perceptions and characteristics as turnover antecedents.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Person-job fit

Humans have a strong tendency to strive to fit in with the environment (van Vianen, 2018). A fit between a person and the environment (P-E fit) is beneficial as it reduces friction which in turn leads to favorable outcomes (Edwards & Shipp, 2007). This concept has been prevalent in management literature for almost a century (e.g., Ekehammer, 1974; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005; Lewin, 1935; Murray, 1938; Parsons, 1909; Pervin, 1968), making it one of the more venerable lines of psychological theorizing (Dawis, 1992). P-E fit has been conceptualized in various ways. In its most general sense, P-E fit can be broadly defined as the congruence, match, similarity, or correspondence between the person and the work environment (Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Person-environment fit is a multidimensional concept encompassing other types of fit, such as person-job fit, person-organization fit, person-work group fit, and person-supervisor fit (Andela & van der Doef, 2019). However, all person-environment fit theories share the following assumption: People seek out and create environments that allow them to behaviorally manifest their traits (e.g., dominant individuals seek leadership positions); the extent to which people fit their work environments has significant consequences (e.g., satisfaction, performance, stress, productivity, turnover), with better fit associated with better outcomes; and P-E fit is a reciprocal and ongoing process whereby people shape their environments and environments shape people (Rounds & Tracey, 1990; Su, Murdock & Rounds, 2015).

Person-job fit involves identifying the level of fit between what a job demands and supplies in addition to workers' abilities and needs (Edwards, 1991). Put differently, PJF determines in large part whether people find their jobs stressful and unpleasant, or fulfilling and beneficial to personal well-being (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Previous research clearly states that an increased PJF is compelling for both organizations (if existing) and the worker as it affects efficiency, profit, job satisfaction, motivation, turnover intentions/actual turnover, burnout syndrome, managerial workload, etc. (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Person-job fit reasoning among organizational scholars is not new as it is seen in the works of Taylor (1911); Fayol (1916); Follett (1918); Mayo (1933), yet not as prominently in the later works of Barnard (1938); Selznick (1957); March and Simon (1958); Cyert and March (1963) and Crozier (1964). This makes sense as Taylor and Fayol were practitioners focusing on efficiency and the latter ones more “full-blood” scientists focusing on the organization to a much greater extent. The starting point of early studies using PJF reasoning like Taylor (1911) is not the worker's perception of fit. Rather it is the supervisor's perception of fit, as the starting point

is examining why certain workers are more productive¹¹ (Sekiguchi, 2004) and then trying to increase productiveness with the selection of men and physical workspace alterations and inventions.

Person-job fit is a broad and elusive concept, heavily influenced by context (Judge & Ferris, 1992; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This means that assessing person-job fit for specific occupations needs explicit knowledge about what the job demands and what it supplies as these might differ between jobs/occupations (Judge & Ferris, 1992). There are however as previously stated in the literature review very few studies conducted among real estate brokers emphasizing PJF per se. Some studies have been conducted that focus on some of the four facets of PJF, i.e., demands, abilities, supplies, and needs. For instance, *demands* are explored by Dabholkar and Overby (2006) and Ferreira et al. (2017), *abilities* are explored by Crant (1995) and Benites-Gambirazio (2020), *needs* are explored by Mosquera et al. (2020) and Lee et al. (2014), and *supplies* have been explored (Sok et al., 2017), although supplies are primarily explored as monetary/salary (Munneke & Yavas, 2001; Crant (1995). There is a lack of studies within brokerage that clearly define what the occupation demands and supplies, which makes comparing demands/abilities, and supplies/needs troublesome.

One way of approaching problems with turnover, besides income and competition, is by focusing on the other side of the continuum, namely what makes workers productive, happy, and have job longevity. Even though understanding what makes professional service providers like real estate brokers productive, happy, and have longevity has been studied (Boles et al., 2012; Crellin et al., 1988; Dunlap, Dotson & Chambers, 1988; Rosenberg et al., 1981; Winkler & Huguen, 2012), there is still no consensus. To be productive, happy, and have job longevity is sometimes theorized and incarnated as a “happy, productive worker” (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Zelenski, Murphy & Jenkins, 2008). One could argue that two entangled reasons for being a happy productive worker are *motivation* and *coherence* between the individual’s needs/abilities and what the occupation supplies/demands.

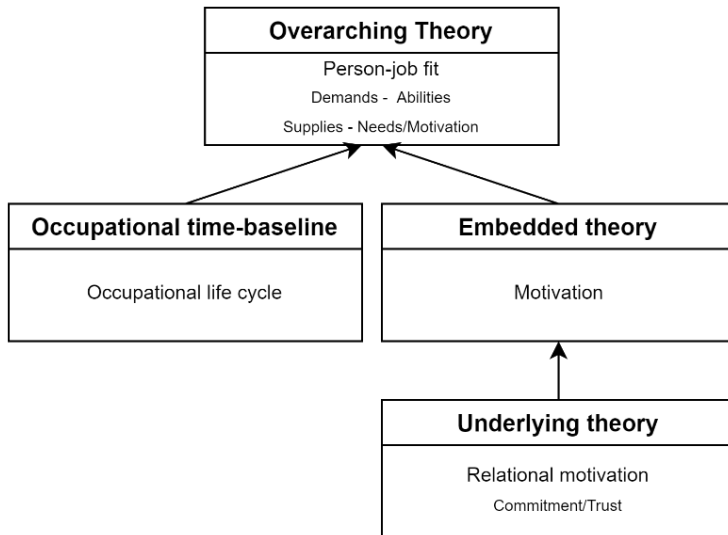
Unsatisfying levels of productivity, happiness, and turnover are problematic from the perspective of individual brokers, managers, and organizations alike. On the other hand, high PJF within brokerage has a possible positive impact on: i) individual/employees’ job satisfaction thru instinct motivation (Rudolph et al., 2017, Simon, 1991); ii) managers' workload due to decreased actual and intended turnover (Hambleton, Kalliath & Taylor, 2000; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001); and iii) the organization itself due to reduced costs connected to staff hiring/learning and turnover (Hambleton et al., 2000; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Hence, the focus is given to the coherence/fit between the occupation and the broker as previous studies indicate that coherence (i.e., person-job fit) is an originator of productivity, happiness, and

¹¹ Leading to the scientific selection of men theory.

intention to stay (O'Reilly III, Caldwell & Mirable, 1992; Edwards, 1991; Erdogan & Bauer, 2005; Hecht & Allen, 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Person-job fit is used as the theoretical framework in this thesis as it encompasses both motivation and the occupational life cycle, see Figure 7, as well as addresses the problem of employee turnover.

Figure 7
Theory structure



The embedded and underlying theories in the theory structure are primarily connected to the need facet of person-job fit as previously stated.

3.1.1 The occupational life cycle

A crucial aspect of PJJ is time, both within a specific organization and the total time spent within the occupation. Assuming that “longevity” is preferred by both individual brokers and firms, it is necessary to define/specify longevity. One way of defining/specifying longevity is to relate to an occupational life cycle. Knowing how many years brokers on average spend as brokers provides a baseline/norm, which can be used to decide what is longevity and what is not. Knowledge about the occupational life cycle is important for PJJ reasoning as it gives an average “expiration date” beyond/beside the predicted force of PJJ. Alternatively formulated, the characteristics of brokerage tend to result in x years as a broker when not giving PJJ specific attention.

The occupational life cycle differs between occupations and is not static. It is for example much more common today to change not only employer but also occupation compared to 30 years ago (Bolles, 2006). Given that several scholars and the industry itself argue that turnover is problematic within brokerage one can assume that the occupational life cycle is short, or at least shorter than desired. This is however not necessarily true as both practitioners and scholars emphasizing turnover among brokers use an organizational perspective on turnover instead of an occupational one (e.g., Lee et al., 2014; Rosenberg et al., 1981). Another consequence of the often-used organizational perspective on turnover is a lack of studies and discussions about the individual broker's perspective. For example, a high-performing broker (i.e., high PJF) that decides to leave a firm/organization due to perceived low person-organizational fit might be very happy to do so while the firm/organization is not (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

3.1.2 Motivation

Another way of addressing occupational turnover is by using principal forces/theories such as motivation as previous studies stipulate that almost all human behavior depends on motivation (Atkinson & Birch, 1978; Pinder, 2011). Cable and DeRue (2002) argue that most prior studies emphasizing PJF have done so by measuring abilities/demands but not needs/satisfaction. It is necessary to include needs/satisfaction as the fulfillment of needs is highly motivating, which leads to powerful work-related outcomes like job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and well-being (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 2014). This line of reasoning is in line with Edward (1991) who argues that motivation is a vital part of PJF's needs facet. Similar arguments about the PJF's needs facet and outcomes can be found within motivational studies, for example:

One reason the concept of needs has been so appealing is that it has substantial heuristic utility for delineating dimensions of the environment that would be expected, a priori, to lead to positive versus negative work-related outcomes (Baard, Deci & Ryan, 2004, p. 2045).

This thesis draws on self-determination theory (SDT), which is based upon the assumption that workers strive for the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs, namely competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Furthermore, SDT distinguished between different types of motivation based upon which goal drives the action (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Put differently, intrinsic motivation is driven by forces from within the employee while extrinsic motivation is driven by outside forces (Giancola, 2014).

Brokers usually work on commission, which undoubtedly is an extrinsic reward. However, a commission is also a sign of competence which indicates that receiving a commission might be both hedonic and eudaemonic in nature (Deci et al., 2017). Another way of framing this is by arguing along the same line as Fjindrud, Tronvoll, and Edvardsson, (2018), who state that “intrinsic motivation is the primary driver of activity and is moderated by extrinsic motivation” (p. 503). Applied to a brokerage context, this could mean that persistent brokers are more likely to be intrinsically driven to engage in customer interactions, which sometimes results in commissions, which in turn is perceived as both an extrinsic and intrinsic reward. This line of dependent and intertwined relationship reasoning between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be found in prior motivational studies, for example, Ingram and Bellenger, 1983; Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford, 2014.

Regarding the previously described connection between needs, work characteristics, and work-related outcomes, the following can be said. To be motivated by an occupation is arguably the same as being motivated by the characteristics of an occupation, based upon PJF reasoning (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). One key characteristic of brokerage is to establish, develop and maintain customer relations (Seiler et al., 2006; Sok, Sok & Luca, 2017; Yavas, 1994). Establishing and maintaining positive and long-lasting relationships with customers is often seen as a marketing/managerial tool executed by pursuing high levels of enduring customer satisfaction (Frey, Bayón & Totzek, 2013). Hence, previous studies, primarily within service marketing and management, heavily emphasize customer satisfaction and how the customer perceives the service, quality, and service provider (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This of course makes sense from both a theoretical and practical perspective, as it is the customers who ultimately decide to buy more and/or recommend the firm/service provider. Service providers are acknowledged to have a crucial impact on customer satisfaction, attitudes, and behaviors according to previous studies (Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998; Saxe & Weitz, 1982). A recent meta-study stipulates that service employees may enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty through emotional contagion, trust, and reciprocity (Hogreve et al., 2017).

Financial incentives, such as commissions, drive brokers (Crant, 1995; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022), arguably even to display emotional contagion, trust, and reciprocity to generate more sales. However, financial incentives are not directly connected to intrinsic motivation, whereas genuine emotions, trust, and reciprocity might be (Deci & Ryan, 2014). One could therefore argue that brokers who are better at, or at least less reluctant to, “display” emotional contagion, trust, and reciprocity are better suited for brokerage, i.e., indicate a higher person-job fit (Abelson, Kacmar & Jackofsky, 1990; Beatty, 1996; Humphrey et al., 2015; Hogreve et al., 2017) as they are more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

That salespeople, such as brokers, are affected by their customer relationships is not a new revelation as it was incorporated in measurements of job satisfaction already in 1974 by Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1974). However, it all boils down to the question of *why service providers are satisfied, or not* during customer interactions. It's a simple question, yet not easily answered. Some scholars argue that brokers might perceive emotional demands (connected to customer interactions) as something outside their core job tasks that will hinder them from achieving their work goals (Langseth-Eide & Vittersø, 2021). Bryson's (2017) argumentation follows the same line as customer relations are seen as "draining to establish." On the other hand, other studies indicate that there are benefits of emotional labor/customer interactions as well, given that service providers are not surface acting, but that they are deep acting or "performing" spontaneous and genuine emotional labor (Ashford & Humphrey, 1993; Humphrey et al., 2015). The relational perspective of professional service providers has received little attention (Dalela et al., 2018; Frey et al., 2013). There are some exceptions like Banerji, Singh, and Mishra (2019), Donovan, Brown, and Mowen, (2004), Frey et al. (2013), Greyson, (2007), Halpern, (1996), and Rosenbaum (2009). It is notable that none of these studies were conducted within brokerage.

4 Method

4.1 Research paradigm

In brief, a paradigm is an overall conceptual framework within which a researcher may work, that is, a paradigm can be regarded as the “basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). In essence, a paradigm reflects a researcher’s understanding of the nature of existence that is beyond “logical” debate because each paradigm is “rational” within its own constructed logic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sobh & Perry, 2005). This means that there are no objective grounds for choosing a paradigm (Sobh & Perry, 2005). All that one can do is to work within a paradigm that is consistent with the researcher’s own presumptions, presumptions that cannot be tested on any empirical or logical basis (Sobh & Perry, 2005). There are four different philosophical assumptions that support four different paradigms of science: positivism, realism, constructivism, and critical theory, see Table 2. Underlying these four paradigms is the question of knowledge creation: how can the findings of one research project be generalized to other situations (Sobh & Perry, 2005)?

Table 2

Paradigm

Element	Positivism	Constructivism	Critical theory	Realism
Ontology	Reality is real and apprehensible	Multiple local and specific “constructed” realities	“Virtual” reality shaped by social, economic, ethnic, political, cultural and gender values, crystalized over time	Reality is “real” but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it
Epistemology	Findings true – researcher is objective by viewing reality through a “one-way mirror”	Created findings – researcher is a “passionate participant” within the world being investigated	Value mediated findings – researcher is a “transformative intellectual” who changes the social world within which participants live	Findings probably true – researcher is value-aware and needs to triangulate any perceptions he or she is collecting
Common methodologies	Mostly concerned with a testing of theory. Thus mainly quantitative methods such as: survey, experiments, and verification of hypotheses	In-depth unstructured interviews, participant observation, action research, and grounded theory research	Action research and participant observation	Mainly qualitative methods such as case studies and convergent interviews

Source: Sobh and Perry, (2005), which is based on Perry et al. (1999), which itself was based on Guba and Lincoln (1994) from which the quotations come. Note: Essentially, ontology is “reality,” epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher and methodology is the technique used by the researcher to discover that reality (Sobh and Perry, 2005).

There are scholars, such as Wilmott (1993), who argue that the four mutually exclusive paradigms are founded upon polarized assumptions about science and society which place unnecessary constraints on theory development. Not only might it put constraints on theory development, but it also puts constraints on the curiosity which is much more troublesome as it is a driving force of researchers (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

I am a positivist/realist when it comes to ontology as I believe that reality is real and comprehensive and that the world exists independently of my observation (Greener, 2008). However, I'm influenced by the research paradigm of realism when it comes to epistemology as I don't believe it's possible to be a fully objective researcher.

It is particularly troublesome being objective for me since I have superior knowledge about the empirical setting for this thesis due to operating within two organizations in the brokerage industry, both as an employee and employer for over a decade before pursuing my Ph.D. Another reason for being influenced by realism is that a "pure" positivist stance requires that the researcher and phenomenon remain independent of each other (Rashid et al., 2019). My preunderstanding of the empirical setting has generated research questions through problematization based on self-experienced phenomena such as relational motivation. Hence, I can't say that the phenomenon and I are independent of each other. This becomes particularly obvious when conducting and analyzing in-depth interviews as done in Article III.

4.1.1 Knowledge creation

Knowledge is produced in different ways within social science. Induction and deduction are two common approaches used in social science research for creating knowledge (Rashid et al., 2019). Induction has its point of departure in empirical data and deduction in theory (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018). There is a third less common research logic coined by Peirce in 1902 called abductive research logic. Abduction is quite common in social science research (Graebner, Martin & Roundy, 2012; Kovacs & Spens, 2005). Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) classified abduction as an approach to producing knowledge, which occupies the middle ground between induction and deduction. Abduction generates ideas and tentative theories that serve as hypothetical concepts (Thomas, 2010). Unlike induction, abduction accepts existing theory and is flexible enough to allow a less theory-driven research process than deduction (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018; Rashid et al., 2019). An outcome of abductive research is a framework that provides a tentative idea of what theory can look like (Rashid., 2019). Drawing on work by various authors on research logic, Rashid et al. (2019) presented a table with an overview of different research phases and appropriate strategies for each phase, see Table 3.

Table 3*Research logic*

	Abduction (Systematic combining)	Deduction	Induction
Aim	To understand social phenomena in terms of social actors' motives and understanding	To test theories, to eliminate false ones, and to corroborate the surviving ones	To verify the theory by searching for the facts and to establish descriptions of the patterns
Start	Related theories, observations of everyday accounts	Deduce hypothesis from a tentative theory	Tested theory
Finish	Tentative theory/framework	Hypothesis testing/theory testing	Theory verification and generalization/universal law
Researcher stance	Inquiry from inside	Inquiry from outside	Inquiry from outside
Researcher account	Respondent's view explained by the researcher	Researcher's viewpoint	Researcher's viewpoint

Based on Rashid et al. (2019) which in turn is synthesized from Blaikie (2000), Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010), Dubois and Gadde (2002), Dubois and Gadde (2014), and Thomas (2010).

I am abductive in my stance as it has allowed me to use a transferal theoretical framework and deductive coding when necessary. The abductive approach is also suitable for me as this thesis consists of articles with different methods which would have been harder to do with a stricter epistemological stance. Yet another reason why an abductive approach is suitable relates to the maturity of research conducted on a phenomenon, as some phenomena are explored yet not extensively, meaning that neither an inductive nor deductive approach might be the best way to further explore the phenomena and build/expand/verify a theory. Hence, my stance is in line with Järvensivu and Törnroos (2010) who argue that the abductive approach occupies the middle ground between induction and deduction.

A downside with an abductive approach and starting from real-life problems is that the gap between empirical findings and theory might be bigger compared to conducting research with a deductive or inductive approach.

4.2 Research process

The research process of this thesis is heavily influenced by i) my abductive stance; ii) my preunderstanding of the empirical setting; iii) the lack of research within real estate brokerage about the occupational life cycle and relational motivation; and iv) methodological curiosity. Its main joint influence can be seen in the variety of methods chosen, and the chronological order of the articles, see Table 4. For example, the first article written (Article III) needed to be explorative in nature as motivation connected to customer relations within brokerage was previously basically unexplored. Still, the article is not inductive in nature as relational motivation is a self-experienced

phenomenon, and existing theories were used to construct interview questions. Article IV (which is the last one written) is also explorative yet quantitative as it uses an adapted existing questionnaire about intrinsic motivation and builds upon the result of Article III, which indicates that brokers are motivated by received trust.

Table 4

Summary of the methods, population, and samples used in this thesis

Article	Year	Method/tool	Population	Sample	Usable sample
Literature review	2021-2022	Thematic synthesizing	Unknown	1687	374
I	2021	Cohort	6089-7232	5312	5304
II	2021	Survey	7493	4497	910
III	2018	Interviews	7193	27	9
IV	2021	Survey	7493	1618	397

The thesis literature review is qualitative and based on data that was gathered through a semi-structured approach and processed with semantic analysis. The reason for collaborating when conducting the literature review was the mutual goal of conducting a semi-structured literature review that is rigid and transparent enough to be published as an article. To obtain rigor there is a need for collaboration since it requires several blind decisions by more than one person.

Article I is a cohort study based upon individual level registry data, Articles II and IV are quantitative and based on surveys. and Article III is qualitative and based on in-depth interviews. For a more thorough description see 4.3.1 – 4.3.4.

One advantage of using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is the creation of a more complete picture of a phenomenon (Shah & Corley, 2006). The downside of using a mixture of methods is primarily connected to a slightly more scattered and shallow individual methodological competence in each methodology. Another downside is that there is a possibility of articles being more scattered. This makes analysis and conclusions more sensitive when comparing articles with different methodologies in this thesis. Qualitative studies within the brokerage research field are less likely to have a big impact within the domain as most prominent real estate journals only publish quantitative studies. This is unfortunate and results in a negative consequence derived from choosing qualitative methods.

4.2.1 Approach to person-job fit

There are three approaches to the study of perceived person-environment fit: (a) atomistic, which examines perceptions of the person and environment as separate entities; (b) molecular, which concerns the perceived comparison between the person and environment; and (c) molar, which

focuses on the perceived similarity, match, or fit between the person and environment (Edwards et al., 2006). This thesis uses a mixture of these approaches since articles use person-job fit in various ways and depth.

For example, Article I is purely descriptive (lacks antecedents) and merely uses PJF as an explanatory theory to employee turnover and therefore lacks PJF approach. On the other hand, Article IV is molecular in its approach since it measures motivation derived out of the work demand gained trust, and its connection to person-job fit. And finally, Article III is molar in its approach since it emphasizes how brokers perceive customer relations, which is an occupational characteristic/demand.

4.2.2 Ethics

Article I describes the occupational life cycle of brokers and is based on the registration and de-registration data of 5,304 brokers during a ten-year period. Data were anonymized by the INSPECTORATE. Therefore, ethical approval was not necessary since no one besides the INSPECTORATE can match an individual with a specific occupational life cycle. Furthermore, the data set does not include opinions or sensitive data.

Article II is partly based upon parts of a survey data set that was collected by students for their bachelor's thesis. These students were supervised by the author and a colleague. Data were collected and processed using the guidelines below. These guidelines can also be found in the work of Rashid et al. (2019), for example.

- Firms were not named in the report.
- The privacy and confidentiality of firms and individuals were protected during and after the research process.
- Participants were provided with consent forms and information sheets.
- There was no deception at any stage in the research process. Participants were made fully aware of what was expected.

Article III is based on interviews conducted by the author. Data were collected and processed using the same guidelines as above. Since the questions asked in the interviews are not sensitive ethical approval was not seen as necessary.

Article IV is based on survey data that was gathered with more data than used in this article. Some of that other data is sensitive so ethical approval was applied for and given before collecting data.

4.3 Description of data

As this thesis consists of four different data sets it is better to describe each article and its method/data separately rather than trying to describe all data.

4.3.1 Article I

Voluntary employee turnover is described as problematic within brokerage literature. Nevertheless, there is a lack of prior studies emphasizing the occupational life cycle among brokers. The purpose of this article is therefore to describe and analyze the occupational life cycle of Swedish real estate brokers. The most appropriate method for approaching the occupational life cycle is through a cohort study. Cohort studies are not as commonly used in business studies compared to studies within epidemiology and sociology.

All brokers in Sweden are registered at the Swedish Real Estate Broker Inspectorate, which makes it possible to make a cohort study using data received from the INSPECTORATE. The studied population consists of the records on gender balance, and registrations of all Swedish brokers between 2011–2020 (N=6689-7232 depending on the year), as well as individual-level registry data on the date of registration and de-registration (N=5312). There are no dependent variables in this study which makes it descriptive in nature. All data was anonymized by the Inspectorate. This data allowed us to follow the respective yearly cohorts of registered brokers between 2011 and 2020 in full at an individual and aggregate level.

A total of eight records out of 5312 were incomplete regarding gender and/or municipal level and were recorded as missing data, putting the useful sample at 5304. To be able to corroborate possible relationships between the number of years a broker has been registered, the gender of the realtor, and their survival in the occupation logistic regression is conducted using JASP.

4.3.2 Article II

Most studies conducted within brokerage focusing on motivation argue that brokers are primarily driven by extrinsic rewards such as money. However, a recent study conducted by Mosquera et al. (2020) among Portuguese brokers stipulates that brokers are also driven by intrinsic rewards and that there is a need for further studies exploring brokers' perceptions of intrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation in particular. The purpose of this study is therefore to evaluate the role of both satisfaction with intrinsic rewards (SIR) and satisfaction with extrinsic rewards (SER) in job satisfaction and turnover intentions among Swedish brokers. Given that this study is an empirical generalization it applies the same quantitative method.

This data set originates from a bachelor's thesis for which the author co-supervised two students. These students had established contact with 15 brokerage companies which to some extent makes it a convenience sample. However, to increase the number of respondents an additional six brokerage companies were contacted, resulting in the online questionnaire being sent to 21 brokerage companies reaching a total of 4,497 brokers. The population of brokers in Sweden, at the time of questionnaire distribution, was 3,440 women and 4,053 men, for a total of 7,493 brokers (Inspectorate, 2022).

These companies list mainly residential properties for sale. The response rate was 20.7% resulting in a total of 932 answers from respondents, of which 910 were valid, where 461 were women (50.6%), 446 were men (49%) and three did not want to communicate their gender (0.003%). About half of the respondents (453) were between age 18 and 35 (49.7%), and the other half (457) were age 36 or older (50.2%). To comply with anonymity guarantees, more personal data were not collected. The number of valid respondents makes generalization possible since the population of brokers "only" requires 370 valid responses (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

The questionnaire used in this study is used for collecting more data than used in this study. Therefore, the sections do not come in order as in Mosquera's article. The first section is composed of demographic variables, namely age and gender. In Mosquera's study, there is a question about the level of education. This question was not asked since starting in 1999 a two-year university education devoted to aspects of brokerage is required in Sweden in order to work as a broker (Proposition 1994/95:14). The second section consists of questions about SIR/SER. One SER question that has to do with paid overtime was deleted as paid overtime does not exist for Swedish brokers. The fourth section consists of questions about job satisfaction and turnover intentions. All interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

SIR and SER are measured by a 19-item scale developed by Oyoo et al. (2016). Of these, 10 items measure SIR, and the other nine items measure SER. Job satisfaction is measured by five items of the Hackman and Oldham (1980) Job Diagnostic Survey. Turnover intention is measured by a three-item scale developed by Cammann et al. (1979), which is included in the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was used, where (1) corresponds to "totally disagree" and (5) to "totally agree." The scales were originally in English and were translated into Swedish and then translated back into English, to ensure item similarity in the two languages (Brislin, 1986). Translation into Swedish was made with Mosquera's article in mind to obtain comparability (Choi & Pak, 2005). A pre-test was conducted to ensure the precision of the instrument.

The replication included the same items as Mosquera (2020) and the data were scrutinized for items of poor reliability. Two items concerning job satisfaction were thus omitted from further analysis. This meant that the analysis included the same and/or more items than the original analysis. Outer loadings between 0.4–0.7 were also subject to a comparison with the

average variance extracted (AVE), and such loadings were all above 0.5, thus not requiring to be omitted (Hair et al., 2017). For further information regarding descriptive analysis, reliability, validity, model estimations, etc. see Article II in Part II of this thesis.

The study analyzes a conceptual framework and tests hypotheses by using partial least square (PLS) using SmartPLS version 3.3.3. As this study is explorative in nature, choosing PLS for structural equation modeling (SEM) is better as it has provided reliable estimates in a situation where other SEM methods have failed (Hensler et al., 2014). The choice of PLS was reinforced as the large majority of the original variables in this study do not follow a normal distribution (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015).

4.3.3 Article III

Prior studies argue that customers generally prefer warmer relations with service providers and that positive customer relations are of utmost importance for brokers. However, there is a lack of studies that explore what kind of customer relationships brokers prefer and why. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of relational motivation for high-performing real estate brokers in Sweden. This study is rooted in practice and focuses on a context-specific problem: the existence of relatedness among brokers. This focus ought to have a qualitative, inductive research approach according to Weick (1992) and Bansal, Smith, and Vaara (2018).

The theoretical framework guided the research before collecting data, particularly when formulating interview questions. Interview questions are based upon prior studies that target i) service encounter or a service relationship (Guttek et al., 1999); ii) work-related motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000); iii) calculative and financial commitment towards customers (Rosenbaum, 2009); and iv) relatedness (Weinstein & De Haan, 2014). All interview questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Interviews lasted between 35-50 minutes and were conducted online using Zoom, which is a recordable interview/conference tool. The population of brokers when conducting the interviews in 2018 was 7,193 (Inspectorate, 2022). The focal firm was selected due to its size and its management's willingness to assist and contribute in different ways such as actual sales data. The selection of respondents was based on individual sales data. Out of 27 (15 women and 12 men) brokers approached, nine were willing to participate (eight women and one man). Some of the possible participants did not respond to the invitation at all and some declined due to time issues.

Since the nine participants in this study are all high-performing employees in the same organization, it was possible to conduct a single case study. This article follows the guidelines of Lincoln and Guba (1985) as well as Shah and Corley (2006) for increasing credibility/transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The interviews were thematically

analyzed following Pearse's (2019) guidelines for deductive thematic analysis. The coding process was done in three phases resulting in following both emerging transcending themes as well as theoretical themes.

4.3.4 Article IV

The brokerage industry suffers from employee turnover. One way of addressing employee turnover is by focusing on motivation. What motivates brokers has caught a lot of scholarly interest. Most of these studies argue that extrinsic rewards are what primarily motivate brokers. However, other studies argue that brokers are driven by intrinsic rewards (Ahlenius et al., in press; Mosquera et al., 2020) such as affective commitment, relatedness towards the customer, and gained trust (Ahlenius, Berggren & Kågström, 2021). Seeing and evaluating trust as a bi-directional phenomenon with benefits and consequences for both parties in a B2C setting like brokerage is an under-researched area (Levine et al., 2019; Safari & Albaum, 2019). There are indications in a previous study that high-performing brokers are motivated by receiving trust from customers (Ahlenius et al., 2021). Hence, being driven by gained trust might contribute to person-job fit since the occupation demands trustworthiness. The purpose of this study is to explore if received trust is intrinsically motivating and if it is associated with person-job fit and employee turnover in the setting of Swedish brokerage

The questionnaire used in this study is used to collect more data than used in this study. Therefore, sections do not come in order and use different scales. The first section is composed of demographic variables, namely gender. The fourth section consists of seven questions about being intrinsically motivated by the gained trust from sellers. These questions are based upon self-determination theory, more precisely the seven questions that make up the *interest, enjoyment subscale*, which is part of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI). These questions were altered to fit brokerage settings and the purpose of the study. For example, in the original the first question is "I enjoy doing this activity very much." This was altered to "I enjoy receiving trust from my sellers very much." The fifth section consists of nine questions about person-job fit that originate from Brkich et al. (2002). Turnover intention is measured with one question ("I am often considering changing occupation") with a five-point Likert scale, whereas gained trust and person-job fit were measured with a 0–100 scale. All questions were translated into Swedish and then translated back to English to ensure validity. All questions can be found in Appendix 3.

The population of brokers in Sweden, at the time of questionnaire distribution, was 3,440 women and 4,053 men, for a total of 7,493 brokers (FMI, 2022). The sample is to be seen as a convenience sample since the four brokerage organizations that are approached with this

survey are the same organizations that have participated in previous surveys¹² sent out by the University of Gävle. The questionnaire reached 1,688 brokers which resulted in a usable sample of 397. The representativity of the collected data is inferred from the descriptive data matching overall demographics, and the usable sample also exceeds the minimum levels (370) stipulated for the population in Krejice and Morgan (1970). The study analyzes a conceptual framework and tests the hypothesis by using JASP.

¹² Mäklarlivet, which is a larger/omnibus survey conducted yearly among Swedish broker since 2019.

5 Results

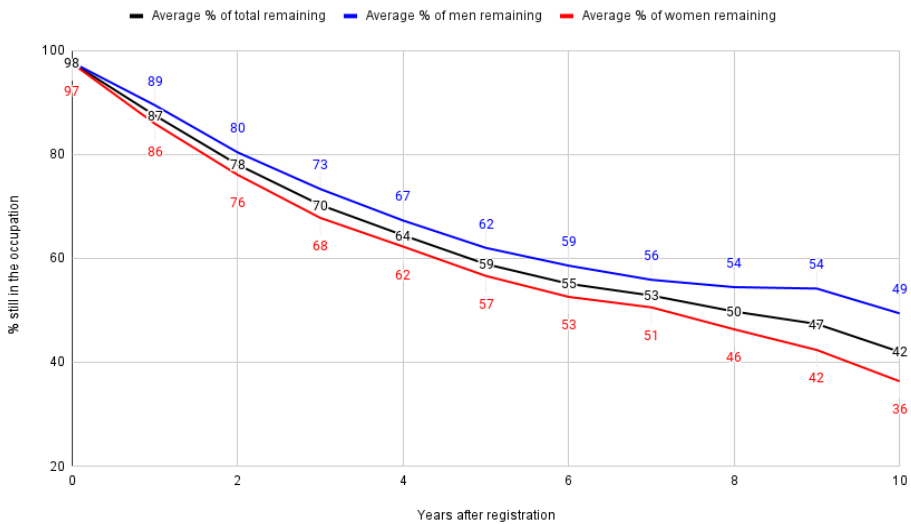
The results of the articles¹³ that this thesis builds upon are presented in the same order as previously.

5.1 Article I - The occupational life cycle for Swedish real estate brokers

Results of Article I show that the decline of real estate brokers is almost linear resulting in an average of 70% remaining after three years and 42% remaining after 10 years, see Figure 8. The decline is steeper in the first years after registration. There are gender differences as females leave the occupation to a greater extent than men do. The biggest differences related to gender can be seen (Figure 8) after being registered 7–9 years as men's tendency to leave the occupation is reduced whereas women's increases.

Figure 8

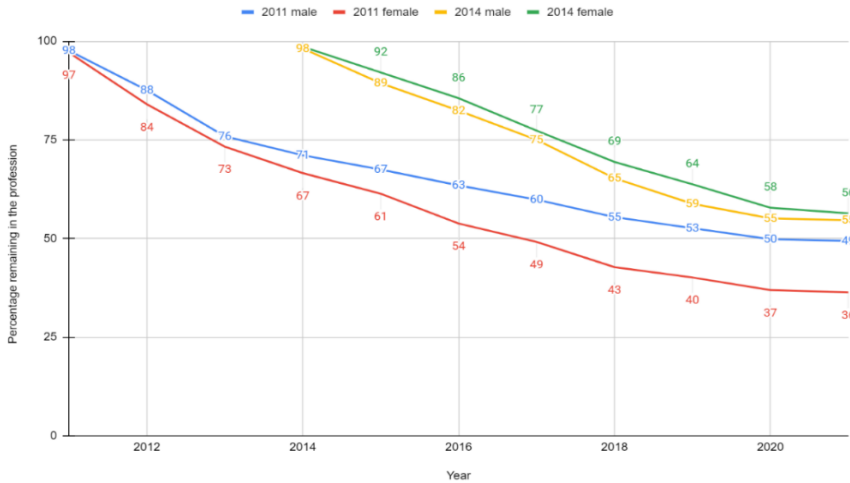
The average percentage of brokers in the profession, years after registration, men and women.



¹³ Tables with reliability, validity, structural model etc. can be found in respective article in Part II.

Figure 9

Best relative year for male and female brokers, percentage of brokers in the profession, years after registration



The difference is not consistently in favor of male brokers as the cohort of 2014 shows that female brokers have fared better than their male counterparts, see Figure 9. The differences here are more marked, with a mere 36% of the female brokers of the cohort of 2011 remaining in the profession today, versus 49% of the men. Regarding the cohort of 2014, the tables have turned and the women not only surpassed the survival rate of the men of the cohort of 2011 seven years into the profession (55%), but they are also slightly more likely than the men of 2014 to remain within the profession (56% versus 55%). Current trends in recruitment into educational programs might further mitigate this, and the current influx of female brokers could possibly change this pattern in the years to come.

If we analyze the cohorts with the highest occupational turnover, it is clear that the female brokers in the cohort from 2011 face a substantially higher turnover rate than men. Only females of the class of 2016 have equal or worse numbers than those registered in 2011. Just over a third, or to be more precise, 36% of the female real estate brokers from the class of 2011 remain in the profession after ten years as compared to 49% of the men. The difference is significant ($p < .001$) and the effect size is also substantial ($d=1.714$ 95% CI [1.75-2.64]).

If we then turn our attention to the cohorts with the lowest occupational turnover, we can see that male brokers from the class of 2012 have remained in the profession to an unusually high extent, leveling out at 61% after seven years, and then 59%, years 8 and 9. This level of retention is on par with the levels reached by female brokers after 3–4 years in the classes of 2015 and 2016 ($p < .001$ $d=2.88$ 95% CI [1.42-4.31]). The female brokers from the cohort of 2014 are of special interest as they have remained in the occupation at a rate that even exceeds

most years for male brokers. Years 0 through 4 are especially high, with 77% remaining four years after the registration. Only in 2012 did male brokers have higher levels after seven years (56%). The difference compared to the male brokers of 2014 is significant ($p < .001$) as is the effect size ($d = 2.05$ 95% CI [.77-3.29]).

Finally, the cohort of 2017 saw both male and female brokers keeping their registrations at a high level, with 99% remaining after the first year. Male brokers from this class also remain in the profession at significantly higher levels than females four years after their registration (73%) ($p = 0.02$ $d = 1.68$ 95% CL [0.23-3.08]). Logistic regression was conducted using JASP, which further corroborated the results.

5.2 Article II - Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among Swedish real estate brokers

Since the analysis of the measurement model shows evidence of reliability and validity, the structural model was analyzed with SmartPLS to test the hypothesis (Henseler et al., 2009).

- *Hypothesis 1* is validated as SIR has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.
- *Hypothesis 2* is not validated as SER does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction.
- *Hypothesis 3* is not validated as SIR does not have a significant effect on turnover intention.
- *Hypothesis 4* is validated as SER has a significant effect on turnover intention.
- *Hypothesis 5* is validated as job satisfaction has a significant effect on turnover intention.

The results of this study are therefore partly in line with the studies by Mosquera et al. (2020) and Hofman, De Gieter & Pepermans (2013). There are however three interesting areas where significant differences in path coefficients between the samples admit speculations.

First, the strength of the path coefficient between SIR and job satisfaction (H1) is significantly stronger in the Swedish sample ($b = 0.869$; $p < 0.000$) compared to Mosquera et al.'s study ($b = 0.328$; $p < 0.000$).

On the other hand, the path coefficient between SER and job satisfaction (H2) is significantly weaker ($b = 0.0015$; $p < 0.000$) in the Swedish sample compared to Mosquera et al.'s study ($b = 0.526$; $p < 0.000$), which is not in line with prior studies (Crant, 1995; Snyder et al., 2011).

Second, the strength of the path coefficients between SIR/SER respectively on turnover intentions (H3, H4) is even smaller in the Swedish sample, and in the case of SIR and turnover, it is even insignificant.

Third, the strength of the path coefficient between job satisfaction and turnover intention is significantly higher in the Swedish sample ($b = 0.696$; $p < 0.000$) compared to the Portuguese ($b = 0.326$; $p < 0.000$).

Since this is an empirical generalization of Mosquera et al.'s (2020) article, data were further explored likewise by dividing it according to demographic characteristics of gender and age. The age of the broker is not to be seen as the same as experience as it is possible to start working as a broker in Sweden at the age of 20 or 21, given the educational requirements. However, it is more likely that brokers over age 36 have more experience than brokers under 35 since the average age of brokers getting their licenses is about 24. There are four interesting areas where significant differences in path coefficients between the groups admit speculations.

First, SER affects job satisfaction more among men. This result is similar to Mosquera et al.'s results, yet the differences between gender are much bigger in the Swedish sample. Contrary to studies by Mosquera et al. (2020) and Gieter and Hofmans (2015), SER has a stronger effect on job satisfaction among younger brokers. It is noteworthy that SER has a negative effect on job satisfaction among women, which is not in line with Mosquera et al.'s study.

Second, SIR has a stronger effect on job satisfaction among women, which is in line with Mosquera et al.'s study. SIR has a stronger effect on job satisfaction among older brokers, which is not in line with Mosquera et al.'s study.

Third, SER has a much stronger effect on turnover intention among women. This is particularly interesting as it seems contradictory since SER affects job satisfaction negatively among women as previously stated. Prior studies argue that extrinsic rewards such as wages increase with experience (Benjamin et al., 2009).

Fourth, SIR has a much stronger effect on the turnover intention of women. Notably, SIR affects almost all outcomes more than SER, regardless of demographic characteristics. This is interesting since it is not in line with assumptions made in prior studies (Crant, 1995; Munneke and Yavas, 2001; Snyder et al., 2011; Winkler and Hughen, 2012).

5.3 Article III - Motivational factors among high-performing real estate brokers

The result of this study indicates that Swedish brokers are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, which is based on the nine respondents' answers to the question of what motivates them as a broker. It is noteworthy that it is twice as common for the respondents to talk about what is intrinsically motivating compared to what is extrinsically motivating.

Terms such as personal development and competition are often used together when respondents discuss driving forces within the brokerage industry. Respondents often talk about selling more, becoming more efficient, and developing a better reputation through satisfied

customers when they discuss personal development. Competitiveness is not primarily directed towards other brokers, but rather, they mainly strive to improve their own previous results. All respondents stated that listings and rewards for high achievers are a driving force in themselves. These statements might seem contradictory. However, respondents often accentuate that making fewer sales than in the previous period is upsetting, whereas selling fewer properties than other brokers is not mentioned at all during interviews. Working with customers is described as a fundamental and overall positive part of brokerage by all respondents.

Notably, four of the 29 motives specified by brokers indicated that working with customers is a motivational factor, and two of the 29 motives indicated that sales in itself are a motivational factor. The respondents (two of nine) who are motivated by sales are also motivated by either meeting and working with people or kicks/competition.

Having a commission-based salary and making money are not commonly used together. When referring to commission-based salary, respondents often use the words “ability” and “impact/influence” in a positive manner. Making money is stated in a more neutral manner and is repeatedly used when respondents are describing occupational hygiene factors such as the ability to control and schedule one’s days. The possibility to work from home and having flexible hours to make one’s own schedule is often mentioned throughout the interviews in a positive yet neutral manner. However, this is not mentioned when discussing motivational factors. Notably, motivation is discussed under more than one question, such as in the results presented above.

The result of the article also reveals that high-performing brokers are committed to their customers in both financial and affective ways, as well as feeling related to their customers. All respondents stipulate throughout the interviews that positive customer relations are of the utmost importance in becoming a financially successful broker. The necessity of positive customer relations for financial gain is frequently found in respondents’ statements. Positive customer relations are often used together with words/expressions such as returning customers, good reputation, and recommendations. However, some respondents discuss customer relations in a more neutral manner; for example, one respondent explains that he often has a specific goal with a customer relationship and that he wants to foster this relationship in the future. Another respondent says that customer relations can be very rewarding and nurturing, while others are draining. Respondents display a wide range of views/opinions as well as feelings related to customer relations. One broker put it this way:

You can come from a meeting quite euphoric and be very happy. Or you come out feeling like you want to resign and start working at a grocery store or something like that instead.

It is noteworthy that the responses to the question, “*Are customer relations important to you?*” are generally not answered in terms of the same financial outcomes as for the question, “*How do you view customer relations?*” For example, instead of using financial outcomes, respondents are more likely to use words and phrases such as personal, disappointed, satisfied, it’s in my nature to have good relations with people and the like. One of the respondents elaborated on this aspect:

After working 8.5 years as a broker, I can still get very upset if a customer feels that I have let them down. It is buried somewhere deep inside that you don’t want to disappoint or upset people.

When respondents discuss whether their view of customer relations has changed over the years, they generally describe some sort of shift that takes place after being a broker for a couple of years. At the beginning of their careers, the focus is more on actual sales and building a customer base. As time goes by, their views on customer relations sometimes change; for example, one respondent uses the phrase “*out of benevolence*” when discussing a shift in his perceptions of customer relations.

There are, as mentioned, financial incentives in the respondents’ answers associated with customer relations. However, some respondents’ answers reveal a complexity regarding their commitment to customers, which means that most respondents find it easy to be open and personal with customers, yet most of them are not driving and/or pushing commitment; rather, they are mirroring customers’ levels of openness. Other statements from respondents are more reflective concerning emotional incentives and outcomes, i.e., affective commitment towards customers. One of the respondents discussed this:

The more we talk about it, the more I understand that I enjoy customer relations on a personal level also, now that we sit and talk about it, I realize that the customer relationship itself drives me.

The above quote is somewhat significant for most respondents, as it highlights the result that respondents are generally not as aware of their emotional connections to their customers or what positive and/or negative effect those relations might have on them. These results are more interesting when compared with the motivational factors previously presented. However, during some of the interviews, the respondents reflected on not only the necessity of customer relations but also the upsides and downsides of being personal with customers, as highlighted by the quote below:

This is not an ordinary job. If you do not realize that, you will not last very long. You have to like these specific customer relations and seeing them as having an extended value.

Several respondents mention boundaries when talking about personal interactions with customers, in that customers are more than welcome to share personal information, but there is no need for brokers to discuss their own personal lives with customers. Other respondents do not appear to have the same boundaries, describing themselves as open books who tell their customers everything. Calculative and affective commitment is often visible at the same time when respondents discuss customer relations. Time is often discussed as a restraining factor, both in regard to increasing performance and in terms of the necessity to be very professional towards customers in order to be efficient. All of the respondents show signs of being emotionally involved in their customer relations. To be involved is often expressed as interest and/or caring. However, the amount of interest and caring towards customers varies among respondents.

Before presenting the results connected to relatedness, it is useful to summarize the previous results in Article III, as relatedness is embedded in that respondents i) prefer warmer relationships; ii) believe that customers prefer warmer relationships; iii) believe that customers think the relationship is warmer than the brokers do; iv) perceive the business setting for brokerage as extensively influenced by customers' emotions correlated with, e.g., money, births, deaths, and separations; and v) show signs of both calculative and affective commitment. None of the respondents expressed problems or hesitations about being personal with customers. In contrast, respondents generally like it. For example:

I'm doing it out of free will. I'm not forced to say anything about myself and it does not bother me at all, it's the exact opposite.

One respondent said that being personal is good because it builds trust. Trust is not a topic derived directly from interview questions, rather, the respondents discuss trust gained from customers as a necessity for brokerage, i.e., a hygiene factor. However, two respondents talked about the trust gained from customers as a motivational factor in itself. Becoming friends with customers is discussed in various interview questions. Respondents are generally reluctant to become close friends with customers. The reasons for not engaging in friendships are often argued to be decreased professionalism, lack of time, and a desire to separate work and private life. However, many respondents have former customers who have become friends and/or customers whom they get together with casually for lunch or coffee. The respondents are generally affected by their customer relations. However, what affects them and to what extent varies, meaning that some respondents are more affected by good customer relationships compared to bad ones and

vice versa. Affective commitment is seen as a proxy for relatedness in this study. However, some respondents talk about their relationships with customers in a more profound and complex way:

I really care about my customers- I've sat and cried with them, I really feel for them.

5.4 Article IV - The impact of gained trust on person-job fit and occupational turnover

None of the questions measuring person-job fit or intrinsic motivation connected to gained trust shows poor item reliability.

Since this is an explorative study correlation and mean values are of some interest. There are significant correlations between person-job fit (PJF) and to be intrinsically motivated by trust (TM) (0.297*** $p < .001$) besides between person-job fit and turnover intentions (TI) (-0.677*** $p < .001$). The high mean values in combination with fairly low deviations as presented below, regardless of gender, point to the fact that brokers as a group are homogenous when it comes to their perception of gained trust from sellers and person-job fit. It is noteworthy that there are gender differences on average, yet they are not statistically significant.

The scatterplot with the correlations between PJF and TM indicated that the regression line is not linear. That the data is not normally distributed was confirmed by the significance in the Shapiro-Wilks test result. To further examine the data an independent t-test was performed to check for normality and equality of variances. Neither the test of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney nor Levene's are significant which in Levene's case means that there is no difference in the variance, therefore the assumption of homogeneity is not violated, and in the case of Mann-Whitney means that the dependent variable person-job fit is approximately normally distributed for both groups.

The value of the predictor variable trust motivation was therefore first standardized and thereafter also squared. To corroborate the result of the correlations between PJF and TM a linear regression was conducted with the usage of a squared trust motivation (predictor variable) to acknowledge the nonlinear regression.

- *Hypothesis 1* is corroborated since motivated by trust explains 8.5% of the variance in person-job fit. If trust motivation increases by 1 then person-job fit increases by 5.554, meaning that being driven by gained trust from sellers is a vital part of person-job fit within brokerage.
- *Hypothesis 2* is corroborated as person-job fit explains 45.7% of the variance in turnover intention. If PJF is increased by 1 then turnover intention is decreased by -0.749. This means that PJF are a vital part of what affects turnover intention.

6 Discussion of results

The discussion of each article, and the description of the empirical setting of Swedish brokerage in section one, is done according to which overarching research question in the thesis is addressed.

6.1 What does the occupational life cycle look like for Swedish real estate brokers?

This research question is addressed by Article I and some of its antecedents are described in the introduction of the thesis. Since Article I is descriptive in nature the discussion is more hypothetical as there are no dependent variables used.

While previous studies on occupational turnover (e.g., Lee et al., 2014; Larsen & Coleman, 2003; Webb & Seiler, 2001), and for that matter, the public debate in Sweden as well, have claimed that the turnover of real estate brokers is particularly high in the first years in the occupation (Engström & Persson, 2020; SOU 2018:64), no such trace can be seen in our data. On the contrary, the decline of real estate brokers seems to be almost linear. This baseline for further discussions and studies is the most important contribution of this study. Occupational turnover among Swedish brokers must in some way be seen as a problem for the industry itself as it generates a constant loss of experience and a need for new brokers, which is in line with prior studies (Boles et al., 2012; Larsen & Coleman, 2003; Weitz & Bradford, 1999). It is possible that the high numbers of occupational turnover that have been put forth by both scholars and practitioners are actually based on organizational turnover numbers.

There are both similarities and differences between brokers' baseline and the results of previous occupational studies. For example, engineers where 29–39% leave the occupation within three years, nurses where 2% leave the occupation within five years and engineers where 60% of engineers have left the occupation after ten years (Frehill, 2010; Rudman et al., 2010). One explanation for the differences between occupations and occupational turnover might be a mismatch between the individual's perception of person-job fit and the reality, as indicated in a study among newly graduated nurses (Laschinger et al., 2016). There are studies within brokerage that point to occupational misperceptions among new graduates as an antecedent to occupational turnover (Larsen & Coleman, 2003). A similar conclusion is made by Ingram and Yelowitz (2019) who argue that an important issue is the learning new brokers uncover about their own abilities.

Some of these misconceptions such as income are inflated by media, which is particularly troublesome for new brokers, as extrinsic rewards act as an obvious lure into the occupation (Cooke, 1999; Rosenberg et al., 1981, Snyder et al., 2011), yet income for new U.S. brokers is low (Webb & Seiler, 2001). There are similar indications among Swedish brokers since 16% of them earn less than SEK 300,000 a year (ASREB, 2021). For occupations where the salary is fixed or semi-fixed then knowledge/skill and more importantly time spent within the

occupation/organization will more automatically lead to higher income whereas within full-commission contexts like brokerage knowledge/skill will have much more effect on income compared to time spent within the occupation/organization. This means that PJF within brokerage has a larger effect on occupational turnover due to commission-based salaries (i.e., survival-of-the-fittest syndrome).

Another factor that affects occupational turnover is the number of brokers compared to the number of available real estate transactions. If all brokers in Sweden were given an equal number of transactions, then the equation adds up given the increased revenues. However, some brokers are involved in far more transactions than others which drives occupational turnover almost regardless of average revenues.

On the other hand, the prolonging of brokerage education will arguably decrease the number of brokers (Larsen & Coleman, 2003) and perhaps increase salaries (Barker, 2008), motivation, and job satisfaction even more among Swedish brokers, which in turn reduces turnover intentions.

6.2 Are Swedish real estate brokers driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation?

This research question is mainly addressed in Articles II and III. This thesis does not clearly state that Swedish real estate brokers are driven by extrinsic rewards to the same extent as it shows that they are driven by intrinsic rewards, which is not in line with previous studies (Crant, 1995; Mosquera et al., 2020). However, satisfaction with extrinsic rewards reduces turnover intention. Also, the possibility for a high income and being able to influence the amount is described as a positive aspect of brokerage in Article III. Given that commission-based salary is an occupational characteristic for most Swedish brokers and that it takes several years to become a broker in Sweden it is highly unlikely that extrinsic rewards are not connected to job satisfaction. In fact, it is possible that SIR and SER measurements used in Article II are measuring facets of job satisfaction. Respondents in Article III are very aware of the financial gains of customer relations which leads to calculative commitment, though being motivated by extrinsic rewards is not often mentioned throughout the interviews. It is therefore interesting that job satisfaction is five times more affected by satisfaction with extrinsic rewards in the Portuguese sample compared to the Swedish one, whereas job satisfaction is affected more than twice as much by satisfaction with intrinsic rewards in the Swedish sample compared to the Portuguese. This could indicate that:

- i) intrinsic rewards are much more prevalent within Swedish brokerage (leading to SIR). One explanation for this is that education, being a personally responsible intermediary and the status of the occupation become motivational forces in

Sweden whereas the same conditions in other countries (e.g., Portugal) might be the opposite which leads to lower SIR;

ii) Swedish brokers are more driven by intrinsic rewards (leading to SIR) compared to Portuguese brokers;

iii) extrinsic rewards are not as prevalent (leading to reduced SER) within Swedish brokerage as in Portuguese brokerage;

iv) Portuguese brokers are much more driven by extrinsic rewards (leading to increased SER).

Another way of explaining these path coefficients in Article II is to argue that SER fluctuations are primarily a consequence of a commission-based salary and individual effort in a Swedish context. To receive a commission is an extrinsic reward. However, it is also a recognition of individual competence. This means that commissions are part of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. This would be in line with prior motivational studies (Ingram and Bellenger, 1983; Cerasoli et al., 2014) and in line with the result of Article III. There is a lack of empirical description in Mosquera et al.'s (2020) replicated study which makes comparison hard when it comes to the possible influence of education, salary system, etc.

The strength of the path coefficient between job satisfaction and turnover intentions is higher in the Swedish sample compared to the Portuguese. This could be a consequence of a higher person-job fit (Edwards, 1991) derived from more accurate work expectations and knowledge due to the targeted brokerage education. Higher person-job fit ought to increase job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. This is partly in line with prior studies (Crellin et al., 1988; Larsen & Coleman, 2003). However, it might also be consequential to overall working conditions as previously touched upon, and other job possibilities.

This thesis clearly indicates that Swedish brokers are driven by intrinsic rewards/motivation. For example, the strongest path coefficient in Article II is between SIR and job satisfaction, and the joy of brokerage and excelling/evolving as a broker are described as highly motivational factors in Article III. Another string of relevance is the liking and preference of working in professional service with people in sometimes acknowledged emotionally demanding settings (Besbris, 2016; Benites-Gambirazio, 2019; Salzman & Zwinkels, 2017). To prefer warmer long-lasting service relationships instead of service encounters indicates person-job fit, since long-lasting relationships with customers are an occupational demand (Edwards, 1991; Salzman & Zwinkels, 2017; Seiler et al., 2008). However, it also indicates that Swedish brokers are driven by intrinsic motivation. Another indicator that Swedish brokers are driven by intrinsic motivation can be found in Article IV where most brokers perceive gained trust from sellers as intrinsically motivating, which in turn is correlated to person-job fit and ultimately reduces turnover intentions.

6.3 Are Swedish real estate brokers driven by relational motivation?

This research question is addressed by Articles III and IV. This thesis indicates that Swedish high-performing brokers are driven by relational motivation since they prefer being personal with their customers and seeing the relations in themselves as an extended value.

The participants in Article III often defined themselves as social and described customer relations by using phrases such as feeling happy, extended value, amazing, fun, and personal; some even argued that customer relations are a driving force for becoming a broker. The presence of emotions connected to customers is arguably an antecedent of various amounts of emotional attachment to the relationship, as stipulated by Fullerton (2005), who argues that emotional attachment is an antecedent of affective commitment. To be driven by customer relations could therefore be seen as positively influencing one's intentions to engage in new customer relations due to increased motivation. Based on the arguments put forward by Weinstein and De Haan (2014) – that all relationships matter when striving for relatedness – both calculative and affective commitment are seen as potential indicators of motivation as a catalyst between intentions and action (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011).

Another sign that Swedish brokers are driven by relational motivation can be found in Articles III and IV as received trust is motivating. To be driven by gained trust is interesting, as gained trust might help to fulfill the basic psychological needs of competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is in line with prior studies conducted among health workers (Okello & Gilson, 2015). To be driven by gained trust might also be an antecedent of the intention to engage (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011) in a new customer relationship. Furthermore, Article IV provides insights into the connection between being driven by gained trust and person-job fit and ultimately turnover intentions. To be driven by trust is a part of the person-job fit within brokerage which clearly indicates that Swedish brokers are driven by relational motivation.

7 Conclusions and future research avenues

Prior studies stipulate that there is a crucial need for future studies within brokerage that: i) provide an occupational life cycle for brokers (Webb & Seiler, 2001); ii) explore what brokers are intrinsically motivated by (Mosquera et al., 2020; Pattanawit & Charoensukmongkol, 2022, Rosenberg et al., 1981); and iii) explore what type of customer relationships brokers prefer, and why (Dalela et al., 2018). This thesis echoes these research proposals, and the overarching purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyze occupational turnover and its antecedents among Swedish real estate brokers.

Occupational turnover is primarily described by providing the occupational life cycle which serves as a baseline for future studies addressing organizational and/or occupational turnover within the brokerage industry. It is noteworthy that gender affects the occupational life cycle mostly in favor of men, yet not always which is interesting and worth further research. Another area for future studies is the need for a longitudinal study that describes the organizational life cycle(s) within the brokerage industry and compares it/them with the occupational life cycle.

One conclusion of this thesis is that the occupational life cycle of brokers is similar to the life cycle of other occupations, in some cases even longer. To what extent external and/or internal factors affect the occupational life cycle is beyond the scope of this thesis since that kind of causality requires a longitudinal study with multiple dependent variables. Future studies could focus on the longitudinal perception of brokerage and person-job fit among students/brokers as the occupational turnover in the first years is extra problematic given the occupational threshold.

However, Articles II and IV provide indications that turnover intention among Swedish brokers is reduced due to satisfaction with extrinsic rewards, job satisfaction, and person-job fit. Article II also demonstrates that Swedish brokers are very satisfied with their intrinsic rewards, which in turn strongly affects job satisfaction. Articles III and IV provide insight into the existence of relational motivation toward customers, which arguably affects both job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Relational motivation is visible through a preference for warmer relationships and being driven by gaining trust, which contributes to affective commitment, person-job fit, and ultimately relatedness. Another conclusion to be drawn from this thesis is therefore that working with customers is part of what is, and arguably needs to be, intrinsically motivating to obtain persistence within brokerage. Future studies could emphasize other parts of brokerage that are perceived as intrinsically motivating. Another interesting area worth future studies is to further uncover what other parts of brokerage besides gained trust from customers affect person-job fit. This study concludes that most Swedish brokers are satisfied with their work and that they find it intrinsically motivating.

7.1 Theoretical implications

This thesis makes three theoretical implications which are all connected to the operationalization and validity of person-job fit.

First, person-job fit is commonly measured with four items: “To what extent do your knowledge, skills, and abilities match the requirements of the job?”; “To what extent does the job fulfill your needs?”; “To what extent is the job a good match for you?”; and “To what extent does the job enable you to do the kind of work you want to do?” (e.g., Saks & Ashford, 1997). These questions reveal the workers' perception of fit. However, these types of questions lack the ability to reveal what part of the job is perceived as more fitting or connected to need fulfillment, for example. There are other ways of measuring PJF, such as Brkich et al. (2002), who developed a nine-item scale. Still, this scale also lacks a connection to the empirical setting. This is troublesome when addressing outcomes such as job satisfaction or employee turnover since it provides no guidance to managers or future brokers about which part of brokerage drives satisfaction or dissatisfaction and for whom. Hence, the validity of person-job fit is lower when measured on a higher level of abstraction and does not include actual job characteristics. This line of reasoning is partly in line with Sekugushi (2004) who argues that traditionally PJF was assessed by determining the demand of the job through a job analysis which identifies the essential work tasks that an incumbent performs, and the requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform the work task. It is noteworthy that this description only addresses the congruence between work demands and the workers' abilities. Person-job fit theory has evolved as it nowadays incorporates the congruence between work supply and workers' needs.

Based upon this I argue that job analysis and supply analysis are important not only for practitioners using PJF but also for scholars as job/supply analysis would increase validity. A job analysis is important since it describes what a specific type of work demands, which can be used to better match demands/ability, and to reveal if specific demands are perceived as such or not. A supply analysis is important since it describes what a specific job supplies, which can be used to better match supply/needs, and to reveal what is perceived as supply and what is not. For example, successful brokerage demands positive and long-lasting customer relationships, yet some brokers are driven by customer relations and see them as extended value, meaning that it is also something that the work supplies. Another take on this is that previous studies using motivational work-related theory among sole proprietors and/or brokers have not given notice that customer relations might be a motivational force of its own and even help to fulfill the basic psychological need of competence and relatedness. This means that the empirical setting of professional service is connected to the needs facet of PJF. Including a job and supply analysis is also a way of addressing the necessity to get a better understanding of what “fitting in” actually means to salespeople and the mechanisms that stimulate fit, as put forth by Vilela et al. (2008). A closely related subject to this is the fact that too little attention has been given to intrinsic

motivation and particularly its consistency among brokers and other professional service providers. Work-related intrinsic motivation is more persistent when it is closely connected to stable work demands/characteristics, meaning that the empirical setting and individual preferences affect the fulfillment of the needs facet of person-job fit.

Second, studies that focus on antecedents/outcomes of organizational/occupational turnover should pay attention to the occupational life cycle of the empirical setting, regardless of the underlying theory. It is important to refer to the occupational baseline, particularly when conducting longitudinal studies, yet also when conducting cross-sectional studies, as the explanatory power of variables/constructs being tested needs to be compared with the occupational life cycle.

Third, the occupational life cycle should be a vital part of person-job fit theory as it provides a baseline, meaning that the predictive force of person-job fit on turnover (outcome in time) should not surpass the occupational life cycle at an aggregated level.

7.1.1 Contribution to the literature field of brokerage

This thesis contributes to the literature field of brokerage by describing the literature field of brokerage in a semi-structured and transparent way and by providing the long overdue occupational life cycle.

Another contribution is made by providing strong indications that brokers are driven by different types of intrinsic motivators, such as gained trust and affective commitment, and indicating that received commissions drive both extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction. Brokerage with its commission-based salary system is undoubtedly a good empirical setting when trying to unravel how different types of tangible rewards and pay affect motivation and work outcomes, which is acknowledged to be an area in need of further research (Deci et al., 2017).

Lastly, this thesis contributes to the literature field of brokerage by strongly indicating that brokers' perception of their occupation differs between countries. However, it does not provide evidence of why, which is an area worth future research. The role of the broker, the required education, the national perception and status of brokers, occupational trustworthiness, salary systems, and cultural differences are particular areas worth comparing in future studies. For example, Jingryd (2012) argues that Swedish brokers have much in common with Latin notaries (e.g., Portugal) because i) they are both held to duty by impartiality; ii) they are both held to duty to counsel; and iii) as regards counsel to buyers and sellers in real estate conveyances, including the drawing up of contracts, they are each other's functional equivalent. On a more speculative note, Swedish brokers might have more in common with Portuguese notaries than Portuguese brokers for example.

7.2 Practical implications

The portrayal of brokerage/common perception is slightly misleading, arguably because it is not built upon the perception of the majority of brokers. Rather it is based upon portraying a minority of very high-performing brokers and largely inflated occupational turnover numbers. Brokerage is competitive, based upon the ratio of brokers/real estate sales, and its characteristics are not suited for everyone. However, no occupation is suited for everyone. Still, the brokerage industry with all its embedded actors ought to gain from providing a much more accurate description of brokerage that is based upon facts and not speculation.

There is no consensus about the perception of brokers. Brokers and the industry should therefore take advantage of available statistics that point to the fact that the perception of brokers is in line with other occupations and that the number of complaints compared to the number of transactions being made is low (Inspectorate). It is noteworthy when looking into complaints that Swedish brokers are intermediaries and actually perform the work of three roles (buyers' broker, sellers' broker, and lawyer) when compared to U.S. brokers for example, or other occupations for that matter.

From a managerial perspective hiring brokers that are driven by intrinsic motivation and working with people in sometimes emotional settings is arguably preferable since brokerage demands positive long-lasting customer relations and intrinsic motivation drives job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions. Hence, customer orientation and total commission attained under the organizational life cycle might be a better way of measuring and viewing performance compared to short-term measures.

7.3 Limitations

This thesis has some shortcomings. One of them is the lack of a stricter connection between the person-job fit theory and the empirical setting of brokerage. Person-job fit and its facets are more used as an overarching explanatory/conceptualizing theory when addressing the problem of occupational turnover in most of the embedded articles.

Another shortcoming is that the articles address several topics which affects the cohesion of the thesis. This also has bearing on the scattered contribution to person-job fit theory as well as the literature and research field of brokerage.

Furthermore, this thesis ought to have been able to present more interesting results if job satisfaction or other nearby constructs had been used more often as it would have strengthened the relations between person-job fit and turnover or between being motivated by trust and turnover. This means that job satisfaction may mediate these relationships.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

A five-point Likert scale was used, where (1) corresponds to “totally disagree” and (5) to “totally agree” in Part 2 and 4.

Part 1

- 1 – I am: 18-23, 24-39, 30-35, 36-41, 42-47, 48-53, 54-59, 60-65, 66+ years old.
- 2 – I define myself as a woman, man, do not want to state.

Part 2

SIR

- 1 – I understand the intrinsic rewards the organization offers
- 2 – The organization’s intrinsic reward system promotes commitment
- 3 – The reward system recognizes superior performance
- 4 – My achievements give me the zeal to stay in this organization
- 5 – My achievements are recognized
- 6 – The responsibilities I have motivate me to remain
- 7 – The responsibilities I am given fit my qualifications
- 8 – My efforts are acknowledged in this organization
- 9 – I am proud of my work in this organization
- 10 – I am satisfied with the organization’s reward policy

SER

- 1 – I am satisfied with my pay
- 2 – I am satisfied with the working conditions
- 3 – Benefits provided by the organization are satisfying
- 4 – I am satisfied with the bonuses I get in my job
- 5 – My organization’s pay is benchmarked to the market
- 6 – My organization’s pay is competitive
- 7 – The promotion systems of the organization are fair
- 8 – I am satisfied with the allowance I get at the organization based on my grade
- 9 – My pay and grade are commensurate with what my colleagues in the same job get (I am paid for any overtime I work [excluded])

Part 4

Job satisfaction.

- 1 – Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with my job
- 2 – Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with the kind of work I have to do on my job
- 3 – In my opinion, people with this job are very satisfied with the kind of work they have to do

Turnover intention.

- 1 – I will probably look for a new job in the next year
- 2 – I will likely actively look for a new job in the next year
- 3 – I often think about quitting

Appendix 2

Interview questions

Service landscape for the brokerage

- 1 – Do you say my customer – or a customer?
- 2 – How do you view customer relations?
- 3 – How many of your customers would you say that you have a warm, neutral, or cold relationship with?
- 4 – How do you think your customers feel about you?
- 5 – Is it common that customers become your friends?

Origin of business opportunities

- 1 – Where do your business opportunities come from?

Motivation

- 1 – What drives/motivates you as a broker?
- 2 – Are customer relations important to you and, if so, why?
- 3 – How important is it for you to gain/receive trust?

Preferred relationships

- 1 – Which type of relationship do you prefer: warm, neutral or cold?
- 2 – How do you feel about being personal with your customers?
- 3 – Have your opinion about customer relations changed since starting to work?

Outcomes of preferred relationships

- 1 – Do your customer relations affect you?
- 2 – Is it common that your customers want to socialize with you privately?
- 3 – Does a network of customers exist?

Appendix 3

A five-point Likert scale was used, where (1) corresponds to “totally disagree” and (5) to “totally agree” to measure turnover intentions and a 1-100 scale was used to measure Motivation and Person-job fit.

Part 1

- 1 – I am: 18-23, 24-39, 30-35, 36-41, 42-47, 48-53, 54-59, 60-65, 66+ years old.
- 2 – I define myself as a woman, man, other/neither, do not want to state.

Part 4

Motivation

- 1 – While working, I was thinking about how much I enjoy receiving customers’ trust.
- 2 – I would describe receiving customers’ trust as very nice.
- 3 – Receiving customers’ trust is fun.
- 4 – It is enjoyable to receive customers’ trust.
- 5 – I think receiving customers’ trust is a boring activity.
- 6 – To receive customers’ trust is not interesting.
- 7 – I think receiving customers’ trust is very interesting.

Part 5

Person-job fit

- 1 – My current job is not really me.
- 2 – This job is not really what I would like to be doing.
- 3 – All things considered, this job suits me.
- 4 – I feel like this is not the right type of work for me.
- 5 – I feel that my goals and needs are met in this job.
- 6 – I find my current job motivating.
- 7 – My abilities, skills, and talents are the right type for this job.
- 8 – I’m sure there must be another job for which I am better suited.
- 9 – I am able to use my talents, skills and competencies in my current job.

Turnover intention

- 1 – I am often considering changing occupation.

Part II

