

# **Practical Value of Middle Manager in the Organization**

## Abstract

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Title of the thesis <b>Practical Value of Middle Manager in the Organization</b>		
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Due to the decrease of managers in Europe in recent years, the solution to improve this situation needs more focus. Many students are studying administrative programme and practicing to become managers even though they have many doubts and misconceptions about the manager job. The study helps people acknowledge the practical value of middle management. And also help people understand how middle manager perceive their value in the organization.</p> <p>The thesis work utilized the deductive approach, and using the qualitative method to collect and analyze data. In the theoretical section, firstly, the definition of middle management provided the right conception and the misconception to understand logically. Besides that, there were secondary data which were collected about the challenges and opportunities of middle management, and managerial skills.</p> <p>Primary data in the empirical part was collected in the form of qualitative data from interviews. Five managers from Finland, Germany, and the Czech Republic participated in the interviews.</p> <p>The results of the study indicate that middle managers should understand their role in the organization as a critical link between senior management and lower-level employees. And middle managers influence the effectiveness and productivity of the organization by the impact on upper management and their subordinates</p>		
Keywords Middle manager, value, influence, managerial skills, challenges, opportunities		

## Contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	Background .....	1
1.2	Thesis Objectives, Research Questions, and Limitations.....	2
1.3	Theoretical Framework .....	3
1.4	Research Methodology and Data Collection .....	4
1.5	Thesis Structure .....	5
2	MIDDLE MANAGER .....	8
2.1	Definition of Middle Manager .....	8
2.2	Misconception About the Position Title .....	9
3	CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES .....	11
3.1	Challenges as Opportunities.....	11
3.2	The Pressure of Being Stuck in the Middle and the Benefits.....	11
3.3	Tasks and Relationships.....	12
3.4	The Vision of the Middle Manager .....	15
4	MANAGERIAL SKILLS .....	18
4.1	Self-Management Skills .....	18
4.2	Priorities Management.....	19
4.3	People Management.....	20
5	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	22
5.1	Data Collection .....	22
5.2	Interview Results .....	23
6	FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	28
6.1	Answer to Research Questions.....	28
6.2	Validity and Reliability .....	30
6.3	Suggestion for Further Research .....	31
7	SUMMARY .....	32
	References .....	33

Appendix 1. Introduction Message to the Interviewees

Appendix 2. Interview Questions

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Nowadays, in European Union, the total number of managers is 13.6 million (2019), which makes up 6% of the employed population. This amount of managers has gradually decreased over time since 2005. (CEC European Managers 2019.) The working time of managers is increasing dramatically. Many students are studying administrative programme and trying to practice in order to become managers even though they have many doubts and misconceptions about the manager job. Furthermore, in the practical working environment, there are numerous causes for the decline in the number of managers in Europe. Therefore, this study may help business students and people who are preparing to become managers understand and acknowledge the right concept of a manager job.

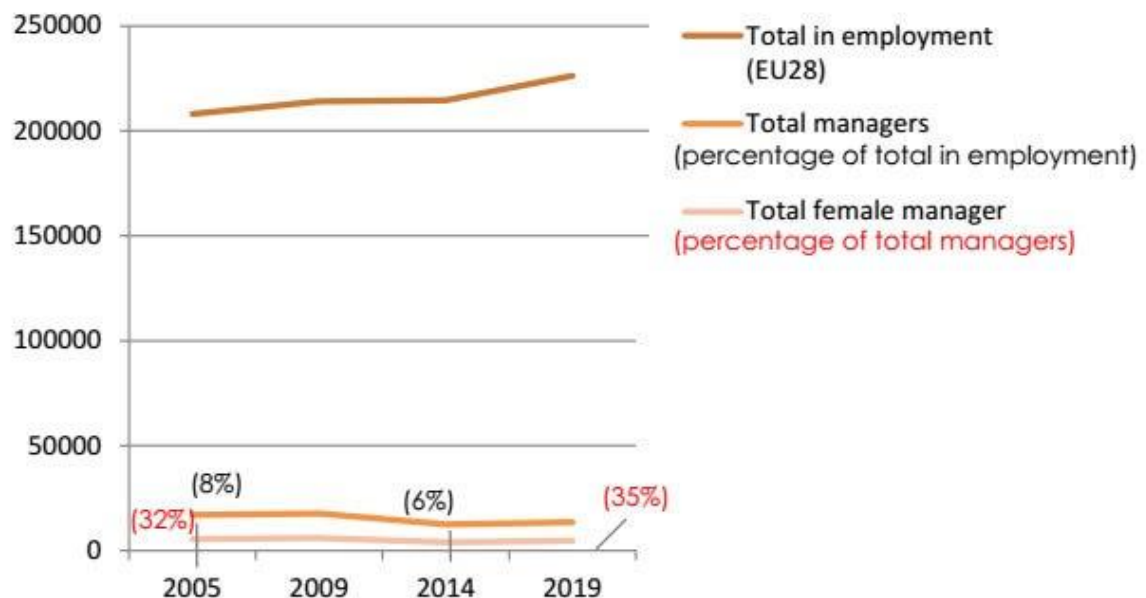


Figure 1: Development of manager population (CEC European Managers 2019)

Every active working environment always has dynamic members who are full of ambition and motivation. One of the huge motivations in work life is a promotion (Herzberg 1987). People have their own positions and responsibilities in the organization which is appropriate to their competencies toward the given duties. The promotion is the reward for the people who perform not only excellently in this current position but also perform that their abilities are more than the requirements in this position. In this case, they deserve a higher position. Simultaneously, promotion is the time to accept more advanced responsibilities and tasks.

In this study, we are also going to look for the answer to the question: What is the appropriate position? And the answers can be found when people understand themselves and understand their targeted positions. The top position is not always the best option for everyone but it is an ambitious goal to be on top of a team or an organization. Many people want to be CEO, leader, or manager. But, do they have the needed qualities to become one? Developing a mindset is what successful people do continuously. Working life is competitive for everyone. Anyone who stops learning and gives up the effort will definitely have no more promotions. When people define themselves correctly in their job, more international opportunities will be opened for them.

The middle manager is a position that not many people clearly understand it. The study helps people to expand their vision through the middle manager's perspective and identify themselves in the complex reality. Understanding which factors are needed to become a good middle manager.

## 1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions, and Limitations

### **Thesis objectives**

The thesis specifically supports the people whose aim is to become middle managers and who are middle managers. It is also helpful for people who want to improve their managerial skills. Well-understanding of the middle manager position is an advantage for the candidate who is going to the interview for the middle manager position. The thesis will define the basic and advanced factors of good middle managers in order to help them perceive the effectiveness of middle management in the organization. Additionally, the thesis report will deeply illustrate the challenges and opportunities, and in the conclusion, the findings will show the value of the middle manager.

### **Research questions**

The main research question is:

- How do middle managers perceive their value for the organization and the community?

Before coming to a conclusion about this study, it is necessary to ask support questions. The following sub-questions are in support of the research question:

- What are the challenges and opportunities of middle management (middle managerial work)?
- What kind of competencies are needed in middle management?

- How do middle managers perceive their role in the organization?

### Research limitations

The study's limitations relate to potential flaws that are typically outside the researcher's control and are strongly related to the research design that was selected, restrictions on the statistical models that were used, financing restrictions, or other variables (Theofanidis et al. 2019). This topic is challenging the researcher with the multidimensional perspectives of middle managers.

The focus of the research is particularly on Europe workplaces. The interviews will occur with international participants who are living and working in European countries. The participants are the author's networks in Europe. The meetings are both remote (via Zoom and MS Teams) and physical. The interviewees will receive the invitation links for the meetings before the appointments. The qualitative data from the interviews will be collected and analyzed in order to discuss this research question.

All of the documents used in this research are in the English language.

### 1.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the thesis will be a detailed examination of the middle manager's managerial skills, challenges, and wide vision of the middle manager. These subjects lay the groundwork for the thesis and give the reader and the study a context.

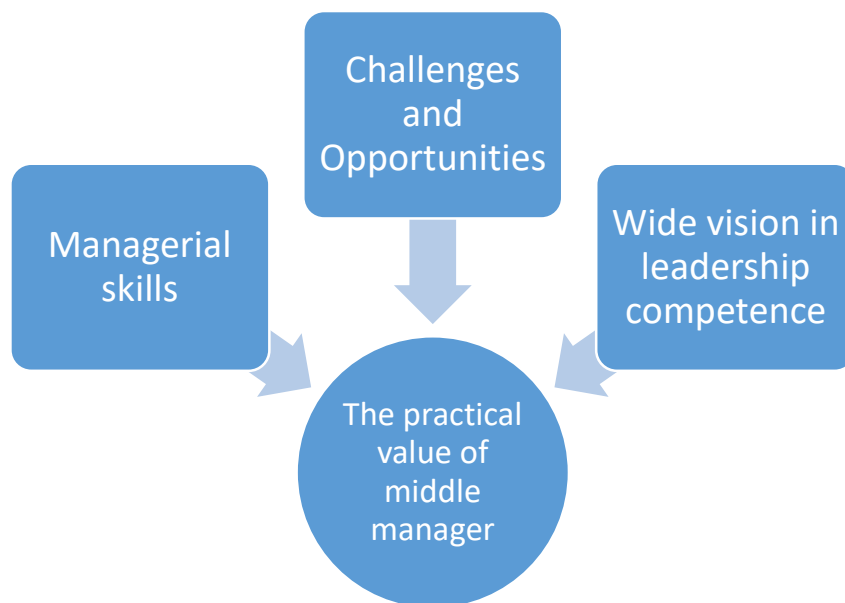


Figure 2: Theoretical framework

Initially, literature was employed to help define the definition of middle managers and also the misconception of position titles. The definition of middle managers will be provided in simple explanations. Then the misconception about position titles will be discussed.

In the next chapter, the study provides the challenges and opportunities of middle management. There are three subchapters in chapter 3 regarding the challenges and opportunities. Firstly, section 3.1, is about the pressure feeling when being stuck in the middle of the organization as well as the advantage when being in the middle level of the organization. Secondly, section 3.2 is about the challenges related to tasks and relationships in the company. Lastly, section 3.3 is about the vision of the middle manager.

Chapter 4 of the thesis, provides the managerial skills needed for a good middle manager. Chapter 4 is the last chapter of the literature review.

## 1.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

### Research approach

The method chosen by the researcher to gather, examine, and interpret data is known as a research methodology. There are three types of research methods: deductive, inductive, and abductive. The inductive method starts by observing the collected data. Once the evidence has been analyzed, a theory is established. This approach is more inclusive and thorough. The deductive approach, in contrast, begins with a theory and uses it as a test to find data that either supports or contradicts it. Comparatively speaking, this method is more precise and quantitative. Abductive research, on the other hand, entails switching back and forth between theory and facts with the goal of offering an explanation (Saunders et al. 2019).

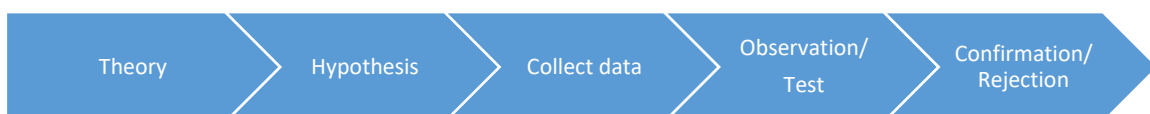


Figure 3: Deductive process (Streefkerk 2023)



Figure 4: Inductive process (Streefkerk 2023)



In the study, the deductive approach is applied to the research process. Since the research topic is based on the existing literature, the results from the interviews will be compared with the existing literature which is collected in the theoretical part. Formulating a new theory would require broader empirical evidence, therefore, the qualitative data from the interviews are the most essential chapter of the study.

### **Research Methodology**

Quantitative methods and qualitative methods are the two basic types of research methodology. Quantitative approaches deal with numerical data, whereas qualitative methods deal with non-numeric data, such as words, photos, audio, and video. These two methods can be separated by the data collecting and analysis methods utilized. As a result, qualitative approaches are typically expressed in themes and generalizations while quantitative methods are typically expressed in variables. (Saunders et al. 2019, 175; Business Research Methodology 2021.) The methodology is known as mixed methods when both methodologies are applied to the same research project.

This study employs the qualitative method as the research methodology. Therefore, this method will be used to analyze the complex data from interviews. The qualitative is used for gathering the managers' answers who are working at the actual companies and organizations. The target participants for the interviews are managers and middle managers who have at least 2 years of experience in this job. The conversations between the author and interviewees will be recorded and then transcribed. Those transcribed dialogues in text form will be collected for the study and then analyzed by qualitative method.

### **Data collection**

The study uses both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data provides new information and it is collected for a specific purpose. Data from primary sources could be gathered through interviews. Secondary data is obtained and recorded as the primary data is made available for use. (Habib et al. 2014)

## **1.5 Thesis Structure**

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Figure 5 below describes a short description of each chapter.



Figure 5: Thesis structure and short descriptions

The first chapter is the introduction to the thesis about middle managers in the complex reality. It starts with the first section about the background of the study. In the next sections, the author provides the objective, research questions, limitations, theoretical framework, research methodology, data collection, and thesis structure. In this introductory chapter, the readers have overall information about the thesis direction. It helps the readers generally understand the outline of the study.

The second chapter provides the definition of middle managers. There are public theories related to middle management which are cited from secondary sources. There is a section in this chapter that mentions the misconceptions about the position title. These explanations regarding the misconceptions may help people who are in the same situation can acknowledge the right concept.

The third and fourth chapters are discussed based on the construction of the theoretical framework. They provide the challenges and opportunities of middle management. And the fourth chapter provides the needed managerial skills for management jobs.

The fifth chapter presents the empirical study. The qualitative data are collected through interviews. After that, the data are analyzed to conclude the answers for the next chapter.

The sixth chapter wraps up the study and provides answers to the research questions. Additionally, the validity and trustworthiness of the study data are verified, and recommendations for future research are made.

The seventh chapter is the last part of the thesis. In this chapter, the author summarizes the progress and ends up the research.

## 2 MIDDLE MANAGER

### 2.1 Definition of Middle Manager

Since at least a fundamental 1977 Harvard Business Review essay by Abraham Zaleznik, which highlighted a clear, explicit contrast between being a leader (an inspirational visionary) and a manager. The image of middle managers as unexceptional, mediocre supervisors, or strategic administrator have been around for decades. A middle manager is basically a manager. In a hierarchical organization, middle management is the intermediate management level that reports to executive management and is in charge of **team leading** and/or **specialized line managers**. Middle management is also responsible for junior staff performance and productivity. (Jaser 2021.)

A good manager carries out both their own good competencies and specific managerial duties. A middle manager acts as a bridge between the company's higher levels of management and its lower levels. Because they are involved in a firm's daily operations, middle managers have the opportunity to give essential information and suggestions from within a company. They are in charge of putting into implementation the guidelines that had been previously established in the top-level management's strategic plans. Middle managers also act as a channel of communication inside the organization by explaining to lower-level employees the main goals of the organization and important management decisions (Marginson 2002). It also strengthens corporate cohesion by enabling staff to work more effectively together.

Regarding the managerial skills of a good middle manager, there are many factors for the standard manager. The list includes, for example, the following: leadership skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, creativity skills, visioning skills, performance management skills, detailing skills, negotiation skills, and collaboration skills. Regardless of the functional department a manager is in charge of, there are common requirements for excellent leadership. For quality managers in leadership positions, there are some particular prerequisites on the following:

- Individual dedication to organizational, product, and process quality
- A deep sense of respect for the efforts and leadership of others
- Skillful integration of a broad base of quality knowledge and comprehension of how to apply this knowledge in functional domains
- Wisdom of both people and things, as well as an awareness of how to combine them to complete tasks.

- Absence of (or control over) temperamental or emotional traits that could hinder the ability to collaborate with others (Westcott, 2014).

In complex reality, within a group of people, leadership skill is performed when this person takes the responsibility for the progress of work, and productivity of team members, and also the final result. The responsibilities are assigned by the upper department or by the board of directors to these managers. Their duty is to deliver the information to their team and distribute the work efficiently. He has responsibility for the result when the tasks are completed. A good manager will know how to handle it by communicating with the team-mate and understanding their capacities in order to assign the work to them. Expanding the vision to become wider and wiser to develop observation and the way to perceive value by themselves. (Buss & Kuyvenhoven 2011.)

## 2.2 Misconception About the Position Title

The top 1 misconception of people have about their position is the title. There's a wrong myth in leadership: we can only lead when we are at the top (Chan 2019). The position must not be at the top of a department or a team to be the leader. In the modern working environment, people can be leaders from any position. The wrong conception is the thought that one must be at the top level to have the power and authority to lead people. In reality, the titles such as CEO, director, chairman, and president do not obviously empower a person to be a leader. Though having a title typically meant more experience in leading and managing in that position, it does not necessarily mean that we require a title to lead (Chan 2019). In a social sense, this happens as a result of a person actively claiming a leadership role through their words and actions, simultaneously, others also accept and grant it to him (Ashford & DeRue 2010). There are more measurements for people about leadership ability. However, it is undeniable that influence is the true measurement of leadership (Dr. Ed 2021).

There are people who always looking for promotion and recognition from their boss. Everything is less important than a good position to them. To this mindset, even though this kind of person is skillful and experienced, if they do not receive a promotion over a long period, they hardly accept and contribute to the company anymore.

Becoming a leader is a decision, not depending on the title. If the person is passionate about leadership, whatever his job in the company, for example, factory worker, seller, or assistant, ... are able to develop to be a leader. (Sanborn 2008.) A low starting point is the same for everyone, the effort, and vision are what classify people. As a middle manager, in

order to improve himself, this person needs to acknowledge this misconception of the position title and try to enhance the influence on people instead of ingratiating the superiors to promote himself. Acknowledging the factors that affect the influence make the potential leaders understand that position title and true leadership conception are mostly different (Sanborn 2008). There are many questions that middle managers have to answer themselves: Is it necessary to be in the top position of the organization to have respect from colleagues? Does that position make your colleagues feel happy to work with you? Does your position title make other colleagues productive in work? These questions help the middle manager develop the mindset of a leader. Helping the middle manager thinks and observes as a leader.

### 3 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### 3.1 Challenges as Opportunities

The manager is a challenging job. Many middle managers are leaving this career because overwhelmed by the challenges. Those challenges particularly happen to the middle managers who are in the middle of the organization. Every middle manager is facing the same problem. Challenges and opportunities always go together. To become good middle managers, they have to deal with the challenge and turn it into an opportunity. They must view the challenges as opportunities to grow. Since good leaders understand that trouble is actually an opportunity wrapped in ugly paper. (Johneades 2022.) The person who is outstanding in the crowd can manage all the challenges in the most effective way. As a good manager, practicing and improving problem-solving skills is very important. In the practical working environment, there are loads of problems that happen every day. Do not hesitate to face and solve those problems.

#### 3.2 The Pressure of Being Stuck in the Middle and the Benefits

One of the most difficult situations as a middle manager is not ensuring where you are in the organization. The middle manager has the power and authority in the hand such as making decisions, assigning the duty to team members, resources using, etc. Simultaneously, there is a limitation on the authority of the middle manager. The middle manager needs to acknowledge its limitation thoroughly and be wise in the middle position. It could be a huge caution to control itself and never do over the limit. The powerful feeling is very close to the line with the powerless feeling. Therefore, the middle manager usually feels pressure in this situation. Even though, the middle manager supposes that their vision and good competencies are able to operate the company and help the organization more productive than the current CEO's operation. That would be a wrong action when the middle manager goes over his authority limit. Regarding this situation, it causes stress for the middle manager always to be aware of the limitation before the action. (Aho & Bennet 2010.)

Moreover, there are more factors that impact the middle manager's pressure. The personalities and abilities of the middle manager who is trying to lead the organization from the middle level must be understood thoroughly because these might be advantages and disadvantages at the same time. (Aho & Bennet 2010.) Personality defines a person in a natural way. This person needs to know what his personality is and control it. Understanding the other is easier than understanding yourself very much. Besides that, the personal ability is different. It could be improved and developed by practicing and training day by day. The humble middle manager who is always willing to learn every day to improve themselves is

more helpful for the company than the lazy middle manager who thinks they have enough experience and no need to learn (Buss & Kuyvenhoven 2011). A highly experienced boss can easily rate the better one and definitely give the opportunity to the humble middle manager.

Middle managers usually do not have a reputation and well-evaluated than CEO. The more ambitious about reputation, the more disappointed. Being a leader in the middle of the organization always feels a lack of recognition. Therefore, there is no solution to this situation, there is a decision people have to make. Now, this middle manager has to consider whether to comfortably keep moving in this position or leave it without regret. Leaving the job is a bad sign for career development. A good leader figures out the problem and improves it. The best idea is to find out ways to ease the pressure on the following:

- Feeling more comfortable with middle management: changing the thoughts that leading the people from the top position is easy. In reality, when the superiors are excellent and experienced, it is very simple for the middle managers to lead the team members from the middle. Good leaders assign work to people and give out motivation to the whole organization.
- Asking for authorization from superiors before doing something to make sure what to do and what not to do. Middle managers have to be responsible for their team members' results.
- Noting down 3-5 questions for the boss before the meeting and asking those questions at one time. Noting down those answers in order to respond to team members. Being productive and proactive in the work by having the questions and answers immediately (Aho & Bennet 2010).

The fortune of a middle manager is working under a good CEO. This is the most ideal environment for the middle manager to develop himself. (Ou et al. 2014.) Middle managers' strengths could be recognized by the CEO's perceptive eyes. By completing all the tasks assigned by CEO, the middle manager can perform the best competence of himself. In this environment, there is significant potential to develop managerial skills and it is also the time to learn the leadership competencies from his good CEO.

### 3.3 Tasks and Relationships

In the complex reality, relationship in the office environment is not easy to verbally described. Especially, the leader's behavior is always at the attention of all team members. A



good middle manager needs to know how to assign tasks fairly, transparently, and appropriately regardless of the relationship. However, it needs to be carefully considered about the relationship before behaving any action. There are four situational leadership styles based on the link between task and relationship on the following:

- High task, low relationship. There is a need for clear instructions and close performance monitoring (a telling mode). For instance, a new or transferred employee may be given a duty for which he has not received any training and will require ongoing supervision until he masters it.
- High task, high relationship. Decisions are explained, and a chance for clarification and questions is provided (a selling mode). For instance, a recently trained operator is attempting to put the training into practice for the task at hand but is unable to grasp the necessity of following the recommended order of actions and needs supervisory guidance.
- Low task, high relationship. Ideas are exchanged, motivation is given, and the leader takes on the role of a coach (a participating mode). For instance, a skilled operator requires encouragement to gain confidence before taking full ownership of the entire assignment given to them.
- Low task, low relationship. The employee is given control over making decisions and carrying them out (a delegating mode). For instance, a skilled operator can handle any operation without direct supervision since they are knowledgeable about what to do, how to execute it, and how to fix a problem if it arises. (Westcott 2014.)

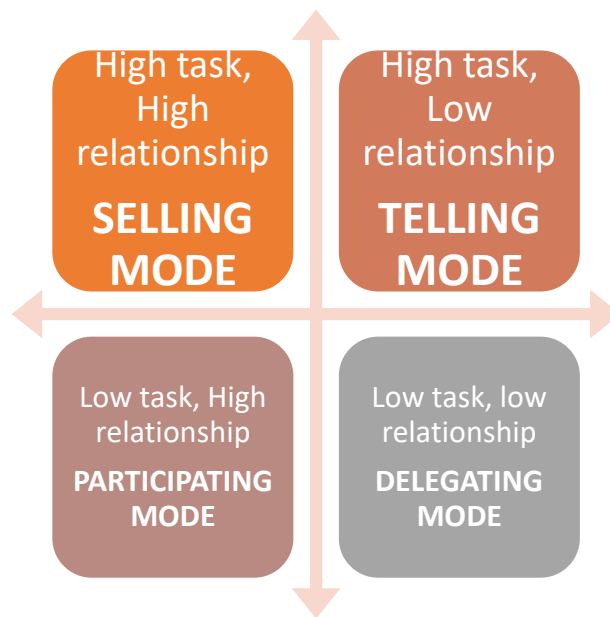


Figure 6: Task and relationship behavior (Westcott 2014)

The last step in defining leadership is to make clear the relationship between leading and following. We should avoid overemphasizing the importance of leaders or undervaluing the contributions of followers by focusing on how leaders and followers work together toward common goals. Unfortunately, we tend to focus more on leaders than followers. (Hackman & Johnson, 2013.) The contribution needs to be recognized fairly and deservedly. One of the based elements in the relationship is communication. Communication is the biggest concern of a manager which is presented for his voice in the organization. This communication subject grows together with the position in the organization. The higher level of the leadership, the higher demand for the communication competence. Managers spend much of their time preparing messages for delivering the information to team members, other managers, the CEO, etc. The different ways of communication depend on the relationship in the workplace. The messages to CEO can not be the same as the messages to inferiority. Middle managers have the authority to assign tasks to their followers. However, middle managers could not do the same to the CEO. Communication impacts the efficiency and productivity of the work in every company. This is the reason people spend much time meeting every week to discuss plans and objectives. Improving communication skill changes the influence on people and create more opportunities for promotions. By improving communication skills, managers and leaders are developing self-value in the organization.

### 3.4 The Vision of the Middle Manager

There is a question for the middle manager about the vision: Do you prefer to see your vision be operated and successful, or to carry out others' vision? Most of the managers' answers are to do for their own vision. This feeling is due to the leading personality of the managers. They always desire to work for the success of their vision rather than for other people unless the others' opinion is too persuasive and fascinating. (Kantabutra 2010.) However, middle managers usually have to follow and protect the strategy of the CEO or managing director. In the reality, except for the leaders of the organization, all people in the organization have to work for a strategic vision that was not defined by themselves.

The challenge of the middle manager is about their own strategy and the leaders' strategy. Middle management makes an important contribution both upward and downwards in strategic change implementations (Buss & Kuyvenhoven 2011). Sometimes middle managers have the feeling that their own strategy is more interesting and creative. But they have to understand that in order to chase their dream in this management career, the first step is definitely producing the best work results base on the CEO's strategy. Making the CEO's dream comes true is the very first essential success in the middle manager's career. There are many different reactions of people when the CEO is presenting his strategic vision that the middle manager is able to observe from their position. The information provides on the following (Maxwell 2011): (the list starting from the most negative)

- Attacking and criticizing the strategy: not all employees believe in the organization's strategy. This happens in reality and the opposers are not the negligent employees. They are the valuable people in the organization who really want to develop the company. Besides that, there are also bad employees belonging to this group of people. The reason for not supporting the CEO's strategy is that they did not participate in the production of the strategy. Nobody likes changing. However, every time someone introduces a new strategic vision, change is unavoidable. If people distributed their opinions on the vision, their behavior becomes more positive. Participation increases trust and motivation. For example, no one washes the rental car and they do not even think about that. People concern about things and events related to themselves. In addition, some people criticize the leaders' strategy just because they do not understand the strategy. People do not want to follow what they do not know. The presentative style of the CEO perhaps could not approach them. A smart leader always delivers their strategy in many different methods and repeats them many times until everyone understands and remembers it.

- Ignoring the strategy and doing their own thing: there are few people who do not show any emotion. They do not criticize or support the strategy at the same time. Instead, they suppose the strategy does not exist and do their own thing. This kind of people gradually destroys the organization. The product of the company will lose efficiency and productivity over time.
- Do not believe in the strategy – leaving the organization: in case the company's strategic vision violates his own principles, as a middle manager with a lack of influence on the company, he might decide to leave the company. This is not a bad idea for a middle manager when he can not show any effort toward the company's vision. Perhaps, leaving with honor is sometimes better than staying suffering. This decision helps the middle manager gets rid of his unacceptable vision and also not stay in the organization and destroy the work of other people. However, the situation of leaving the company is also a caution for a manager's mindset. If a middle manager decides to leave the company for inappropriate reasons, he will be possibly faced with the same problem in the next company. Middle managers must make sure about the reasons that make them leave the company is not because of their own selfishness or ego.
- Adapting to the strategy and figuring out the way to carry out the strategy: a good member of the organization has to figure out a way to adapt to the working environment and the company's vision. The strategic vision might be created by one person. However, it needs to be carried out and completed with the effort of many people. An adaptive middle manager should be friendly and accept the company's vision, and use managerial skills to contribute to the organization's vision. Prioritizing the company's demand, not the personal demand. They also let the work result benefit the company, not only thinking of how to benefit themselves. Adaptive middle manager acknowledges their role of himself in the organization. He is a part of the organization, therefore, the value of the company also represents his value.
- Adding more value to the strategy: the most positive reaction of employees toward strategy is not only to protect but also to add more value to make it more efficient. This action produces more value and opportunity for leaders, followers, and contributors. This is not always an available chance for a middle manager to add their opinion to the company's strategy. The first requirement to have that chance is to protect it in advance. The moment he has the chance to add value to the strategy, he also eliminates the vision challenge of the middle manager that we mentioned

above because he is not protecting the other's strategy anymore, he is protecting the strategy that he contributed.

## 4 MANAGERIAL SKILLS

### 4.1 Self-Management Skills

The manager is a difficult job. Starting point of every manager is always learning and practicing administrative skills. The academic literature in the institute is not sufficient to be a good manager. Besides that, there is so much training and accumulating over the project in school, training, and working in practical companies. There are various managerial skills such as business planning, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, delegation, time management, etc. They always connect together as a collection of competencies that make the managers qualified to handle the situation based on their role in the organization.

The middle manager's duties are managing the process of work, distributing the work to the followers, and observing and coordinating the team members to carry out their duties. Moreover, managing people is equally important as managing themselves. The middle managers have to acknowledge the importance of their attendance in the organization and try to improve their self-management skills. Developing and practicing self-management skills can help middle managers improve their workplace performance and positively impact their career development. The better behave of self-management skills, the better their performance is. Before having good skills in managing people, it is necessary for middle managers to be good at managing themselves. Being self-aware and capable of managing themselves will make the middle manager an invaluable member of his team (MasterClass, 2021). There are several core elements of self-management skills of a middle manager such as problem-solving, decision-making, resource utilization, time management, multi-tasking, advancement, etc.

To develop self-management skills, firstly, prioritize health and well-being in your daily routine (Luintel 2021). The manager performs at his best and interacts with his colleagues in a productive manner when he eats properly and gets enough sleep. Set aside time for self-care and mental health to reduce stress, enhance well-being, and tackle each day's agenda with a fresh mind. While making a calendar for daily tasks, including health and wellness routines. This helps stay accountable and ensures middle managers make time for their health. Take regular breaks throughout the day to stretch, move around, or take a few deep breaths. This helps reduce stress and increase energy levels. Remember, prioritizing health and well-being is not a one-time event, but a continuous effort that requires commitment and dedication. By making small changes to their daily routine, people can take significant steps towards improving their overall health and well-being.

Secondly, knowing personal strengths and weaknesses is an important aspect of self-awareness and personal growth (Holton 2021). Good middle managers have observation skills that are used for managing people. However, before assessing other people's strengths, middle managers have to be able to assess and understand their personal strengths. There are several recommended online tools to take a personality or strengths assessment. They are including Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), CliftonStrengths, or the VIA Character Strengths assessment, which can help understand personality type or highlight strengths.

Moreover, management skills can be improved by developing the organizational system. Making a habit of organizing tasks by using a notebook, apps on the phone, or a to-do list to make sure all the tasks are noted down. This can help manage time, tasks, and resources more effectively. Besides that, setting short-term and long-term goals to make middle managers' life more organized. Establish goals and priorities, then break them into more achievable tasks. Determine what a middle manager needs to accomplish in order to achieve the goals. And making sure that those goals are measurable, realistic, positive, and actionable. (McKay 2022.)

Additionally, self-management skills also include emotional management (Holton 2021). Controlling emotion is difficult. It is important to middle managers because their actions are causing a significant influence on many other people. Good middle managers know the appropriate time to show or postpone the emotion. They sometimes spread out their emotion for sympathy and trustworthy from others. This helps unite the people and contributes toward the organization's orientation. Leaders can observe better than others and go through the emotion before others. When they spread out their feelings to people, they are helping others observe what they are observing.

## 4.2 Priorities Management

Middle managers are multi-talented people. They have extensive and diverse knowledge of many subjects. Since the challenges are diverse, middle managers usually manage those challenges at the same time. Middle managers are assigned tasks by their bosses so they have the duty to complete all of those tasks. Middle managers are working under the authority of their superiors. They can not decide on the tasks or even the schedule of the work. Therefore, good middle managers have to manage the priorities for the tasks based on their and their followers' due dates and timetables. (Lovely & Dubowe 2006.)

Middle managers can also learn how to prioritize their tasks by these steps on following:

1. Compile a list of all tasks

2. Decide what is important: Knowing the ultimate objectives
3. Highlight anything urgent
4. Prioritize tasks based on importance and urgency
5. Avoid competing priorities
6. Consider effort
7. Review constantly and be realistic ( Caitlin 2023).

Perhaps, it is very challenging to apply the methods to work habits. If there are followers who are working under middle managers' authority, good middle managers will distribute the task to their followers who can complete the tasks well. Good managers can assess the strengths of their followers and give them tasks. The followers sometimes can complete the tasks even better than their middle managers. Or the middle managers can exchange tasks with their colleagues if possible. (Lovely & Dubowe 2006.) This can change the efficiency and the final results if people can complete the tasks by using their strengths. Regarding the promotion in the career, the only way to be promoted from the middle level is by transforming from multi-talented into a master of a skill. People always are productive and proactive when they have a chance to use their strengths to apply to the tasks.

Middle managers have to be consistent when deciding to avoid useless activities (Lovely & Dubowe 2006). There are some useless activities that people enjoy doing them. But people should not list them on the to-do list. Only helpful activities which help people develop skills and abilities can be added to the to-do list. And also the tasks which must be handled by middle managers can be added to the to-do list. In these cases, the superiors do not want any other people to handle this task except the middle manager. Middle managers are on the duty to complete the tasks by themselves. Finally, all the remaining are added to the list of things not to do.

### 4.3 People Management

Generally, the manager's job is known as managing people and work. Therefore, managing people is considered the most crucial activity of a manager or middle manager. Middle managers have people in their team as their subordinates. The objectives of the team are always completed together by all team members. The middle managers lead their team members to work efficiently and productively. Moreover, middle managers have to know how to help their team members develop themselves. (Pendell 2022.) The value of the team is contrib-



uted by every single individual's value. Good middle managers are able to build tight connections with their subordinates. Middle managers should have empathy toward their team members. Showing an understanding of their needs and concerns to provide support and assistance when needed.

Furthermore, coaching and mentoring are important skills that middle managers should have. They are able to provide guidance and support to help their subordinates achieve their goals and develop professionally (Pendell 2022). Since there are tasks that needed to be trained before practically carry out, middle managers usually have to pioneer in advance. After that, they have sufficient knowledge to coach and train their subordinates to do the tasks properly.

Communication skills are also indispensable. Effective communication skills are essential for middle managers to clearly convey expectations, provide feedback, and ensure that team members understand their roles and responsibilities (Pendell 2022). If the information is still unclear to the people, middle managers have to quickly realize that and change to another communication method. They have to be flexible with their communication methods and also be patient when repeating the messages until people all understand the tasks. Middle managers have to make sure their information to people is fully understandable before the tasks are carried out.

People management is not a single process. It is a collection of procedures that addresses the processes of talent acquisition, optimization, motivation, and retention, offering ongoing support for the company and direction for employees. (Kukhnavets 2020.)

## 5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Data Collection

The process for the thesis report began in December 2022. After reading the public articles and news about the European manager situation, the author decided to conduct research about the decrease in managers and middle managers in European countries. Therefore, the author had full control of the research design and data collection. As mentioned in chapter 1, using the qualitative method, interviews were conducted for the data collection.

The purpose of the interviews in the study is to define the answer to the research questions through qualitative data. The participants in the interviews were picked based on strict requirements such as two years of experience in a manager position, communication in English at work, and an international working environment. The interviewees are the author's working relationships and acquaintances who were working in the manager position or are currently managers.

The key stages of data collection are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Timeline and process of the data collection

TIMELINE	ACTION	CONTENT
December 2022 to January 2023	Building the theoretical framework	Acquiring the theoretical background of the thesis
February 2023	Interview the participants separately on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 14 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> February	Acquiring responses from the chosen managers
March 2023	Analysis of the received results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data analysis</li> <li>• Formulate the discussions and conclusion</li> </ul>

The interviews occurred via Zoom and MS Team meetings, and physical meetings at Lahti City library's private meeting room. The orientation of the interviews was to have friendly conversations about managers' jobs and also some deep questions about the value of the middle manager position. The meetings happened separately for each person and last for 30-40 minutes. The links and the meetings were arranged and organized separately depending on the locations of both author and interviewees.

## 5.2 Interview Results

Five managers who are working at five different companies in Europe accepted my interview invitations: Nokia Corporation in Finland, Herfinland company in Finland, DTH-Palvelut Oy in Finland, Braun company in Germany, and CS Link company in the Czech Republic. They are working in manager and middle manager positions in different departments in the company. The interviews were conducted separately for each individual. The participants have at least two years of experience in the manager job and one of them has seven years. There are males and females in this interview group. Each participant will be referred to as Manager 1, Manager 2, and so on throughout the study to preserve anonymity, avoiding references to their particular role, department, and gender pronoun. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed into text documents. Following that, an analysis was done to identify key ideas, themes, and thoughts among all interviewees.

### **The challenges and opportunities of a middle manager**

In the first part of the interview, there are two questions about the challenges and opportunities of middle managers. Five managers listed many challenges that they had been undergoing. Among the responses, Manager 2 explained generally and sufficiently the challenges of middle managers.

*Manager 2: Managers face a bunch of challenges in their roles almost every day. Especially middle managers have to manage everything from the middle level of the organization. They must be able to manage people effectively, balance competing priorities, delegate tasks, drive change, and manage performance. Strong communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills are essential for success in this role. But, you know, if you face those problems, the other middle managers are also struggling with them. Those problems frustrate every middle manager until they feel so discouraged. The way I dealt with the problem is always to be fearless and accept challenges every time they happen. Just don't give up.*

Other answers added more problems to the list such as workload, multi-tasking, relationships, leadership skills, etc. Nevertheless, all five participants agreed with the statement: Every challenge is an opportunity. It means encouragement for middle managers to take advantage of every challenge. The problem might be a chance for middle managers to develop and perform their competence. Manager 5 shared some experiences about how good to be in the middle.

*Manager 5: I strongly admit that the middle manager is the best position. I used to be there and developed myself a lot. All of my managerial skills were not excellent at the*

*beginning time, but I didn't stop learning those skills from my boss and other leaders in the company. Of course, I made mistakes. But I had to correct them immediately by figuring out what were the main problems and fixing them properly. And don't be shy to ask for support from your boss or give them questions about the problem. You can even ask your boss how to solve the problem when you are stuck and you don't have any wise solution. Being honest and eager to learn is very important.*

### **What managerial skills are important to middle managers?**

In this part, participants with many years of experience in manager jobs were asked about the important managerial skills of a middle manager. Managers with different mindsets have a variety of viewpoints. This question collected many useful responses and learnable perspectives.

*Manager 1: In my opinion, I have spent about 5 years developing my communication skills. I think it is the most important skill that a manager needs. And I am still practicing it day by day. The purpose is to have clear and effective communication with team members, and superiors. In the practical working environment, people have to communicate verbally, non-verbally, or in written forms such as email, messages, letters, fax, etc. Being well-communicated also makes your words more reliable. Besides that, a good manager has the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide teams toward achieving goals.*

*Manager 2: Regarding middle managers, I would like to suggest them focus on their management abilities: leadership skills, time management, task management, delegation skill, and teamwork. When you are starting at the middle manager job, you represent your team, and your team represents you. So the work results of your team perform the management ability of the manager. Delegation skill helps you assign tasks and responsibilities to team members based on their skills and abilities.*

In summary, the list of managerial skills was collected from the interviewees' responses including communication skills, leadership, decision-making, time management, task management, delegation, teamwork, planning, problem-solving, motivating, performance management, adaptability, people management, self-management skills.

### **What leadership competencies are needed to be a good middle manager?**

This question is more concrete about the job of the manager. And again, communication is the top 1 needed skill for a good middle manager. Besides that, the interviewees mentioned many other needed leadership competencies such as strategic thinking, emotional management, coaching and mentoring, and long-term vision.

*Manager 5: As a middle manager, you play a critical role in bridging the gap between senior leadership and front-line employees. To be successful in this role, you need to have a variety of leadership competencies, not only focusing on one or two strengths. Being adaptive and flexible. Good leaders can command the tasks for the team. He can control the emotion to have appropriate behavior toward a particular person.*

### **The feeling when being in the middle level of the organization**

This part is mainly about sharing experiences as well as the point of view of middle managers. In this position, how do middle managers observe the company's strategy, tasks, and other colleagues' jobs? The responses from the interviewees are equally divided into two sides: positive and negative. Manager 3 and Manager 4 assumed that the middle manager position is a stressful job. They felt a lack of authority in many cases. The middle manager's workload is too much while having the duty with the work result of the team and the tasks assigned by the superiors at the same time. Manager 1 had the opposite opinion. Manager 1 assumed the middle manager position is a big advantage for junior managers. There are many opportunities to improve the weaknesses and received support from other colleagues and bosses. Meanwhile, Manager 2 and Manager 5 had neutral opinions.

*Manager 5: Being in the middle of an organization can be rewarding and stressful. On one hand, you are able to view and understand the organization's entire picture as well as the details of how things operate on a daily basis. Also, you can get the chance to communicate with people at all levels of an organization, from entry-level employees to senior executives. This might give you insightful knowledge about the organization's activities and assist you in gaining a comprehensive understanding of them.*

*On the other side, it can also be difficult to be in the middle of an organization. You might have to balance conflicting requests from senior management and your subordinates while leading a team or department. Also, you might have to deal with interpersonal problems and office politics, which can be difficult and time-consuming.*

*Manager 3: I am having many problems when being in the middle of the organization. My bosses urge me to work on progress almost every day. The deadline for the tasks is going to be due continuous. My team members give me a hundred questions related to everything happening in the company. My daily routine is to organize all the tasks to make sure they will be finished on time. Anyway, I believe that I will become more relaxed when I have well experience and get used to this job. Let's keep moving forward and be positive in the long-term career.*

### **The role of the middle manager in the organization**

After sharing their feeling when being in the middle level of the organization, the interviewees mentioned both positive and negative emotions. In the next question, they were asked about their determination of the middle managers' role in the organization. The responses to this question are partly the final answer for the value of the middle manager in the company.

*Manager 1: Well. I suppose the work result of the company is impacted so much by the middle managers. Since their participation in the process is almost 100%, their effort deserves recognition. Although the team members are primarily doing the work, the middle manager is the one who assigned the duties to them. It's called the delegation skill of the manager.*

*Manager 5: I have mentioned in the previous answers. Middle managers are the bridges in the organization. They are connecting the information to the people at different levels. They have to participate in the meeting with their bosses, receive the tasks, discuss and give questions about unclear things. After that, the second meeting is with their team. Middle managers have to deliver the information to the team and distribute the tasks to each member, reply to the questions from the team. Sometimes, they have one more meeting with the same level manager in the department.*

The idea of Managers 2, 3, 4, and 5 are in the same way regarding the impact of the middle managers is considered as the bridges in the company. Their contribution to connecting people helps the company's operation happens effectively. The tasks are managed by them to be completed in small pieces. Based on the delegation skill, middle managers assign small duties to the team and explain to people the meaning and the direction to solve the tasks. Meanwhile, middle managers have to outline the big picture of the tasks in their own minds.

### **Communication with upper management**

Middle manager position requires them to build a relationship with people from all levels of the company. Since middle managers need to communicate with upper management and also the entry-level in the company, communication skills are important to the middle manager. Depending on the person to whom the middle manager is talking, there are different factors that need to be concerned such as attitude, pronoun, age, job title, etc. The participant had questions about their feeling when communicating with their bosses.

The author received 5 yes answers to the question: Do you feel pressure when communicating with your boss?

Next question: How do you behave when communicating with your boss? All five interviewees expressed the same idea about this question. They behave calmly and formally even though they feel pressure when talking to their boss. However, they agreed and supposed that stressful feelings represent respect. This pressure can come from a variety of sources, including the need to demonstrate their competence and value to their superiors, the desire to avoid making mistakes or delivering bad news, and the fear of being perceived as weak or ineffective. The pressure that middle managers feel when communicating with their bosses is a natural part of their role. Therefore, that is not a big challenge when communicating with upper management.

*Manager 2: Of course, I do feel pressure when talking with my boss. But I know that feeling is showing how much I respect them. So I always keep calm and formal every time I want to discuss a specific topic related to our work. Avoiding unnecessary jokes in any case, except in case I and my boss are having a small fun talk.*

### **Communication with followers**

In the last part of the interviews, 5 managers were asked about their behavior toward their followers. All responses are valued based on their practical experiences and personal opinions. Communication skill is improved by learning and understanding its core factors such as adaptability, visibility, perception, etc. In this case, when communicating with people in lower positions, good middle managers know how to gain respect from their followers.

*Manager 5: Effective middle managers actively listen to their followers and seek to understand their perspectives. I usually ask questions, paraphrase, and summarize to ensure they have understood the message correctly.*

*Manager 4: The most factor that makes the followers respect me is my full respect for them. Showing respect to my followers by treating them as valued members of the team. I provide constructive feedback, recognize their achievements, and show appreciation for their contributions.*

*Besides that, I think empathy helps people feel their thought are listened to by me. I am always trying to understand the emotions and feelings behind the message and respond with sensitivity and understanding.*

*Manager 2: You know the behavior and attitude when communicating depend on the role of the listeners. I think adaptability is very important. Middle managers should adapt their communication style to suit the situations with their followers. They should be able to adjust their approach to suit the situation and the individual, considering factors such as personality, communication style, and cultural differences.*

## 6 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 Answer to Research Questions

The objective of the thesis is to recognize how middle manager perceives their value for the organization and the community. To find out the answers to the main research question, many topics around middle managers were discussed. Firstly, the three sub-questions will be concluded, and the main research question will be addressed last. The findings are collected and analyzed with qualitative data through interviews with reliable participants.

#### **What are the challenges and opportunities of middle management (middle managerial work)?**

Based on the interview results, challenges and opportunities are considered to be together in any case. Every challenge is an opportunity.

The challenges of middle managers are including managing people, balancing competing priorities, delegating tasks, driving change, managing performance, communicating with upper management, communicating with followers, interpersonal, and organizational skills, discouraging, workload, multi-tasking, relationships, and leadership skills. Following Manager 2 statement: *Strong communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills are essential for success in this role.* Communication skills based on the role of the listeners are the biggest challenge that middle managers must concern about. Besides that, the organizational skills of the middle manager are needed to practice and develop.

Manager 5 assumed middle manager is the best position to develop managerial skills even though it is a challenging position. There are plenty of advantages when being in the middle level of the organization. They have a chance to learn and also request support from colleagues at the same level and senior level. It is a comfortable situation when middle managers receive comments from their superiors. And they have the chance to correct their shortcoming after the superiors' comments.

#### **What kind of competencies are needed in middle management?**

Based on the responses of five managers, all of them agreed that communication skill is the most important competence of a middle manager. After that, managerial skills that are needed in a manager include inspiring, motivating, and guiding teams toward achieving goals, leadership skills, time management, task management, delegation skill, teamwork, decision-making, planning, problem-solving, performance management, adaptability, and self-management skills. They are the required abilities in a manager's job. When managers work with their teams, the team members and the leader is one unit. The work result of the



team is the responsibility of the manager. Therefore, teamwork and abilities related to teamwork are significant.

Furthermore, middle managers need to develop these leadership competencies: strategic thinking, emotional management, coaching and mentoring, and long-term vision. Middle managers play a critical role in bridging the gap between senior leadership and front-line workers. They need to be multi-talented. Their leadership competencies need to be diverse due to the flexible situations they will face. And being adaptive in the different environment help middle managers be valued in the organization.

### **How do middle managers perceive their role in the organization?**

Middle managers are the bridges in the organization. They connect the people, the information, and the tasks for the fluent operation of the company. The participation of middle managers in the company's work process is recognized as having a huge impact. The middle managers received a big task from the boss. After that, they split the task into small tasks for the team. In advance, middle managers have to give all the questions to the boss in order to fully understand the duty. The information will be delivered to the team members in clearer and simpler ways. The purpose is to keep the flow of information from the leaders to workers precise and easy to understand. Unless the tasks are managed by the middle managers, the work result of the company would be low efficiency.

The feelings when being in the middle level of the organization are good and bad side at the same time. Managers 3 and 4 are feeling stressed in the middle manager position because they feel like the intermediate destination for people from different levels to come and ask for demand. The workload is overwhelming and upper management usually urges to speed up the progress. The followers request help and respond too much. And they feel their authority is limited by the job title. In some cases, they desire to have more power in their voice.

On the other side, Manager 1 thinks the middle manager position is a big advantage for junior managers to learn and develop. It is a chance to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses. Looking for the missing competencies to fill them up.

Managers 2 and 5 had neutral answers to the question about the feeling when being in the middle of the organization. This job is difficult but there are plenty of opportunities. Manager 5 said *Being in the middle of an organization can be rewarding and stressful*. Middle managers can view and understand the organization's entire picture as well as the details of how things operate. Middle managers can get the chance to communicate with people at all levels of an organization, from entry-level employees to senior executives. This might

give them insightful knowledge about the organization's activities and assist them in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the company. In contrast cases, middle managers might have to balance conflicting requests from senior management and their subordinates while leading a team or department. Also, they have to deal with interpersonal problems and office politics, which can be difficult and time-consuming.

**Main research question: How do middle managers perceive their value for the organization and the community?**

To be good middle managers, they are able to perceive and understand their value for the organization. Based on the qualitative data collected from the interviews, there are essential factors that provide the perception and perspective of experienced managers. Those factors are the perception of middle managers about their role in the organization, the perception of challenges and opportunities, and the impact of middle managers on upper management and their subordinates.

The perception of middle managers about their role in the organization can be summarized as a critical link between senior management and lower-level employees who are responsible for implementing the organization's strategies, managing resources, developing employees, and handling operational issues.

The perception of challenges and opportunities in the middle management job helps the middle managers acknowledge the difficulties in this job. And also the valuable consequences of the effort to consistently face the problems. There will be more opportunities when they believe in the long-term goal of the management career.

The middle managers' influence on the people in the organization is appreciated. They motivate the followers in the work and support their followers to complete the tasks. Middle managers manage their team toward the final goal of the team. Moreover, middle managers accompany the other leaders to participate in the organization's strategy.

## 6.2 Validity and Reliability

A fundamental concept in every study is validity, which is defined as trustworthiness or credibility in a broad sense (Maxwell 2017). Regarding the validity of the study, all the materials are collected from the secondary data by the authors. They are public articles, books, and journals. So the information is valid and authentic. And they can be repeated in other researchers' studies. There is extensive knowledge related to managerial skills and leadership competencies in the study.

The author compiled a list of questions for the interviews. The interviewees are the managers who are working at companies or corporations in European Union countries. Due to the promised privacy between the participants and the author before the interviews, the personal identity of the participants remained anonymous. The names of the companies were accepted to be disclosed to raise the reliability of the research. They are listed at the beginning of section 5.2. Therefore, the responses in the interviews are reliable.

The objective of this thesis is to define answers to the research questions as well as subquestions. The findings and conclusions of the study are collected based on primary and secondary data. And the answers to the research question are conducted by using the qualitative method. They are proof of the reliability and validity of the thesis.

### 6.3 Suggestion for Further Research

In future research, regarding management and leadership topics, the research may enhance the target position in the organization such as Deputy CEO or CEO. What is the perspective of the leaders who operate a big system of people? The ways they perceive their value in the role of the core factors of the company. The study should target deep content insight the administrative jobs. Since the ambitious goal of many people is to promote themselves to those high-level job titles, the perception and knowledge in advance are extremely important to them.

Besides that, executive leadership is also a group that is difficult to approach. Therefore, the studies which approach them to collect their visions and working habits are also interesting topics in this field.

In addition, the same topic of this thesis can be conducted in another area. The working culture in every nation or continent is different. The demand for the job is diverse as well. The researchers have similar ideas to this thesis may help the employment situation of their country improve very much.

## 7 SUMMARY

The purpose of the thesis is to help people well understand middle managers' jobs. The research questions were designed to contribute data for the objective of the thesis efficiently and logically. There are many findings had been found to help middle managers perceive their value in the organization as well as the required managerial competencies were collected in the study.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework, which formulated the content's basement, discussed the concept of managerial work to give the reader an insightful perception of the value of middle managers. The thesis defined the basic and advanced factors of good middle managers in order to help them perceive the effectiveness of middle management in the organization. In the theoretical framework parts, the third and fourth chapters are formed by the compilation of secondary data regarding the challenges and opportunities of middle management and the needed managerial skills of a good middle manager.

The empirical part includes the qualitative data from interviews. The author conducted interviews with the participation of experienced managers. The research collected valuable data from the interviewees. Interviewees have more than two years of experience in management work. Interviewees received an introduction message from the author before the interview appointments to have an idea about the content of the interview as well as the preparation for the answers. The interviews occurred via Zoom (3 times), MS Team (1 time), and a physical meeting at Lahti City library's private meeting room. The results of the qualitative data are then presented, and the findings provided answers to the research questions.

The results of the study indicate that middle managers should understand their role in the organization is valuable as a critical link between senior management and lower-level employees. And middle managers influence the effectiveness and productivity of the organization by the impact on upper management and their subordinates

In summary, the thesis has accomplished its objective by addressing all research questions.

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## Appendix 1. Introduction message to interviewees

Hi,

Thank you for your interest in the study! I am Tri Do, a final-year student at LAB University of Applied Sciences. I am writing this thesis about the value of the middle manager position in the organization. Which is focusing on European Union countries.

The questions in the interview will be about sharing your experience and opinions on middle management jobs. How do you perceive your value as a middle manager while working in a community/ organization?

Please note that by participating in the interview, you agree and consent to the following:

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- I agree to take part in the study.
- I agree to have audio recorded during the interview.
- I agree to the use of anonymized quotes in publications.
- I agree to disclose my company name in the study.
- I confirm that I have read and understand the information for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Interview questions:

- What challenges of middle management job?
- What opportunities of middle management?
- What managerial skills are important to a middle manager?
- What leadership competencies are needed to be a good middle manager?
- How do you feel when being in the middle level of the organization?
- How do you feel about the middle manager's role in the organization?
- Do you feel pressure when communicating with your boss? Why?
- How do you behave when communicating with them?

- How do you behave when communicating with your subordinates?

Looking forward to seeing you in the interview.

With Kind Regards

Tri Do

## Appendix 2. All interview questions

### Interview questions:

1. What challenges of middle management job?
2. What opportunities of middle management?
3. What managerial skills are important to a middle manager?
4. What leadership competencies are needed to be a good middle manager?
5. How do you feel when being in the middle level of the organization?
6. How do you feel about the middle manager's role in the organization?
7. Do you feel pressure when communicating with your boss? Why?
8. How do you behave when communicating with them?
9. How do you behave when communicating with your subordinates?