Annabelle Haas

"And it's just to you, it's not to him, right?"

Challenges women outdoor leaders encounter in the outdoor leadership field

This thesis is worth 30 study points

Abstract

The outdoor leadership field has historically been male-dominated; while there have been positive developments over the past decades, women still face gender-related challenges. This research project explores the challenges women outdoor leaders encounter by collecting their stories. Contributing to the existing body of literature can increase awareness and further the conversation to make the outdoor leadership field more inclusive and equal. To collect stories, seven women outdoor leaders participated in an individual interview. They shared their challenges, how they were treated differently compared to their male colleagues, how gender socialisation influenced how they perceived their competence, and what they thought could be the next step towards inclusivity and equality in outdoor leadership. The main findings showed that most challenges are rooted in gender socialisation and traditional gender stereotyping. The women encounter authority challenges and micro-aggressions and feel they must constantly prove themselves. The participants experienced that people question their competence and physical abilities and that the words of male colleagues are valued higher than their words. Gender socialisation affects how women perceive their competence, causing doubt and unconscious biases. The participants believe that the next steps that should be taken could include: more role models and representation, awareness and education, and support systems. Further research is needed to explore what practical steps could entail and how they can be implemented. Additionally, to increase inclusivity and equality, further research is required to explore outdoor leadership challenges people with different backgrounds encounter regarding race, class, sexuality and ability.

Keywords: outdoor leadership, women, challenges, sociocultural constructivism, gender socialisation, feminism

Contents

Foreword

First, thank you for opening my thesis and making it to the foreword. If the title confused you, do not worry, it will make more and more sense along the way if you decide to continue reading, of course. A quick note: this thesis assumes the reader has a basic understanding of outdoor leadership and feminism.

Continuing the "thank you's", I would like to thank my supervisor Kjartan for his guidance and Icelandic þetta reddast attitude. For those unfamiliar with this Icelandic saying, it more or less means, "It will all work out okay". In my experience, it also does not involve any structure or planning. As a Dutchie used to structure and plan, it helped me balance the stress of my inadequate planning. Especially when you are way behind schedule, there is an overwhelming amount of work to be done, and then two weeks before the deadline, your supervisor tells you, "þetta reddast". Well, I agree to some extent, but I still have to apply some Dutch planning and structure at this point in the process to make it to the finish line. But Kjartan, thank you for telling me "þetta reddast"; it kept me from completely stressing out.

The next one, or event actually, to thank is Brexit; without it making studying in Scotland extremely expensive, I would have been doing a masters in Scotland right now. Luckily, life threw me on this Nofri path; otherwise, I would have never met my wonderful Nofri classmates. I am beyond grateful I got to do this country-hopping study adventure with all of you. And a special thank you to the classmates who have been my housemates for the past two years: Anna, Benne and Osvaldo; thank you for always being there, all the hugs, emotional support, laughs, and many schnapps; all of you feel like family. <3

Can I thank my dog here as well? I will just do it: Viggo, you are the best emotional support dog ever; you deserve some extra treats.

And finally, I want to thank my family for all their support. <3

Annabelle Haas
Bø i Telemark 15th of May 2023

1. Introduction

__Woman outdoor leader (interviewee)__
My friend and I were out yesterday in the Scottish mountains and it was absolutely horrendous weather and we were going up something pretty small, practising her navigation and stuff. And we looked at each other. And she was like "I have so many friends who would be like": "Why are you doing this?" And I was like, "Yeah, this is hard work" because we're both pushing uphill, like, this is hard work and it's muddy and it's rainy. But we just looked at each other and we laughed. We were like, "Wouldn't rather be anywhere else in the world".
__Annabelle__
Exactly. Like, please don't put me in an office.
__Woman outdoor leader (interviewee)__
No, I don't want to sell my soul away.

This is one of my favourite interactions with an interviewee while conducting interviews for this research project, strongly agreeing that an office job is not our jam. We prefer spending time outdoors for recreational and work purposes, simply enjoying the muddy and rainy conditions in the mountains, out of the office, and into nature. And even though it is relatively normal to be a woman exploring the outdoors in the twenty-first century, in the past, women were not always free to move around through nature. The eighteenth-century "Romantic walking movement was saturated with gendered ideas from its inception: freedom to wander for pleasure and adventure was assumed to be an exclusively male prerogative (Gurholt, 2008)" (Gray & Mitten, 2018, p. 132). And some of these gendered ideas remain in outdoor activities, "especially in the hunting, fishing, and mountaineering domains where male stereotypes dominate (Gidlow, Cushman, & Espiner, 2009). The perceived masculinity of these activities has meant that women struggle to fully engage." (Gray & Mitten, 2018, p. 97).

There is still much work to be done, and progress to be made before the outdoors is no longer a male-dominated recreational and career field. An interaction with an outdoor wilderness education organisation confirmed this again. Now the end of this master's is nearing, I often get asked what I will do after. Well, as a woman with a love for the outdoors and someone who "doesn't want to sell her soul away" by working in an office, I am looking for work as a guide or opportunities to expand my skills. In that search, I found an online information flyer about a Wilderness Guide course emphasising leadership skills. As a relatively new guide to the outdoor field who enjoys developing her professional competencies, this wilderness guide course seemed like an

interesting option. The flyer provided information about the course structure, learning objectives, course dates and prices and introduced the reader to what the organisation called their employees, the 'tribe'. Curious about the people who teach this course, I scrolled through the list of tribe members, which men dominated—eighteen people in total, of which just two women. I was disappointed, but honestly not surprised by this imbalance of women and men working for this organisation that educates people to become professional guides and leaders in the outdoor field. When looking at the job titles of the members of the tribe, I noticed that the men had titles such as 'Survival lead guide', 'Wilderness first aid expert', 'Navigation expert' and 'Nutrition expedition expert', while the two women had these titles: 'Financial administration' and 'Learner support & marketing'. So, no women are teaching in this course? And the women working for this organisation occupy supportive positions and are not considered experts while doing so? Frustrated about this whole issue, I realised that this course got significantly less interesting because of the lack of female outdoor leaders and teachers in this program.

This situation inspired me to do two things: 1. Sending an e-mail to this organisation addressing the above-mentioned issues. 2. Deciding to write my master's thesis about women in the outdoor leadership field as a way to spread awareness, put female outdoor leaders in the spotlight, and keep shedding and shed even more light on the challenges women face.

The primary research question, therefore, is:

Which challenges do women outdoor leaders encounter in the outdoor leadership field?

The accompanying secondary research questions are:

1. In which way do women outdoor leaders get different treatment compared to their male colleagues?
2. How does gender role socialisation influence how women outdoor leaders perceive their own competence?
3. Which steps do women outdoor leaders believe need to be taken to overcome the challenges they face and move towards a more inclusive outdoor leadership field?

In order to answer these questions, semi-structured interviews with women outdoor leaders will be conducted.

1.1 Reading guide

In the next chapter, I will discuss sociocultural constructivism, gender socialisation and four different feminist perspectives, followed by a literature review on challenges women in outdoor leadership positions encounter. In Chapter 3, you can find the methods used for this research project. Chapter 4 presents the results; here, you can read the experiences and stories of the seven participants. Chapter 5 discusses the results, implications, limitations and recommendations. And finally, I will conclude this research project in Chapter 6. After the conclusion, you can find the references, list of tables and charts, and annexes.

2. Issue

Through the years, there have been developments to make the out-of-doors more accessible for women. Kirsti Pedersen Gurholdt (2008) mentions the rise of the Sport Reform Dress: "For the Norwegian Women's Liberation Association (founded 1884), the reformation of women's clothing and the making of a special tourist dress became an important issue" (Gurholt, 2008, p. 65). This dress's skirt was shorter, and women wore wider pants underneath them. For women, these changes were "directly linked with enhancing their freedom to breathe and to move their bodies freely, naturally, and expansively" (Gray & Mitten, 2018, p. 135).

In the UK, two significant laws aimed at combating inequality are the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). The Equality Act has since 2010 replaced these laws and has significantly impacted women's progress in society and outdoor activities. Acknowledging and highlighting women's achievements and contributions in various fields, including outdoor activities, has also played a crucial role in advancing gender equality. (Allin & West, 2013)

Even though these developments show some progress has been made, we still have a long way to go before the outdoor leadership field is gender-neutral instead of male-dominated. But before I dive deeper into this connection between gender-related challenges in outdoor leadership positions, I will lay out the theoretical framework. Presenting sociocultural constructivism, gender socialisation and different feminist perspectives.

2.1 Sociocultural Constructivism

Often I hear the phrase "gender is a social construct", and honestly, it took me a while to grasp what that meant. Sociocultural Constructivism helped me understand this phrase and how it influences our view on gender and society. Sociocultural Constructivism is the interplay of sociocultural theory and constructivism; understanding both concepts separately made it easier for me to make sense of the idea as a whole.

Starting with sociocultural theory, David Tzuriel (2021) explains how psychologist Lev Vygotsky believed that their social and cultural environment heavily influences children's cognitive development; these environments are usually provided by the children's parents or other adults, like educators and role models. The theory focuses on the "mediation process by which adults provide children with instrumental and psychological tools. In the learning process, children internalise these tools so that they become able to use them without adult guidance. " (Tzuriel, 2021, p.64).

The constructivism theories are based on Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory which focuses on the interaction of the active learner and the environment. The idea is that "learning is the resulting construction and qualitative reorganisation of knowledge structures." (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p.228). In simpler words, learning through interaction with your environment helps you build, or rather construct, your knowledge base.

As mentioned earlier, the Sociocultural Constructivist approach I use in this thesis is the interplay between both concepts. The mediation tools provided by adults, educators and role models will support the learner in interacting with their environment. Being in different cultural, social and physical environments might cause humans to develop differently (Vygotsky, 1978). Coming back to "gender is a social construct", the view on "gender" of the adults, educators and role models in the cultural and social environment you interact with constructs the knowledge structure you have on the concept "gender". You are socialised to view "gender" in a certain way; this phenomenon is "gender socialisation". (Yieke, 2001)

2.2 Gender Socialisation

Before diving deeper into gender socialisation, I want to explain the difference between gender and sex. While sex refers to the female or male reproductive organs, gender refers to the role someone has in society and how this person understands, perceives and experiences themselves. Gender socialisation is strongly linked to expectations society associates with their sex. More precisely, "Gendered socialisation refers to the way in which boys and girls learn social norms and expectations according to their sex and hence learn their gender identities." (Allin & West, 2013, p.114). "Gender socialisation begins very early on in life and is typically based on and

reinforces stereotypical thinking." (Allin & West, 2013, p.115). Depending on the sociocultural environment people grow up in; people might build different constructs around what "gender" is supposed to be. Since gender socialisation sustains stereotypical gender beliefs, it, therefore, affects the way people perceive the competence of women in different work fields. Gender socialisation results in the continuation of gender inequality as these norms are based on gender stereotypes, ultimately leading to gender discrimination (Hoominfar, 2019). A way to address gender inequality is through feminist research. According to Linda Allin and Amanda West (2013), "Feminist research is an attempt to enhance understanding of women's lives and to challenge gender inequality" (p. 114).

2.3 Feminism

Feminism has the goal of understanding women's experiences and combating gender inequality. However, there are different perspectives in each feminist theory on the matter of gender and gender inequality in society (Allin & West, 2013). Feminist viewpoints could offer a foundation for analysing the character of involvement and leadership objectives in the outdoors (Henderson, 1996). Gaining an insight into different feminist perspectives could enhance understanding of the challenges women outdoor leaders encounter in the outdoor leadership field.

2.3.1 Liberal feminism

A liberal feminist perspective focuses on equal rights and opportunities for women and men (Henderson, 1996; Allin & West, 2013). In the outdoor leadership field, this would mean that women can occupy 50 per cent of the leadership positions, which is currently not the case. Research from Bob Sharp (2001) on outdoor instructors in the UK shows "that women are under-represented compared to men as outdoor instructors, particularly at the highest levels" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 114). The liberal feminist perspective suggests that the reason for the inequality between women and men is rooted in gender socialisation (Allin & West, 2013).

But how does gender socialisation affect the way we perceive women in the outdoors? Boys are often encouraged to play outdoors, run around, climb trees, and engage "in rough and tumble activities" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 115), while girls tend to be encouraged to stay close to the house or do indoor activities. Research from Isabelle

Cherney and Kamala London (2006) shows that girls spend less time doing outdoor activities in their childhood than boys do. The implication is that girls and young women have limited chances to develop their competence and confidence in outdoor settings before entering into outdoor leadership roles. As a result, women may be less inclined to pursue careers as outdoor leaders (Allin & West, 2013). "The lack of role models for women in higher outdoor leadership positions may also lead women to believe that these roles are not achievable for them." (p. 115).

The next hurdle women encounter is the belief that attributes typically associated with women, such as an emphasis on form and harmony, compassion for others, spiritual connection, and appreciation of beauty, have not been traditionally linked to leadership. These gender-based differences in values often lead to distinct perspectives, attitudes, and conduct in various aspects of life, including perceptions of outdoor leadership (Henderson, 1996). We are socialised to associate male values such as authority, logic, and gaining the respect of others (Loden, 1985) with leadership positions.

2.3.2 Radical feminism

Radical feminists highlight the gender inequality caused by patriarchal systems that are in place in our society, "systems of gender social power relations, where men dominate women" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 117). This patriarchal system includes men's control over women's bodies, especially regarding reproduction and physical appearance (Allin & West, 2013). Radical feminists offer a framework for women to choose their models of outdoor leadership, which may differ a lot from traditional male models (Henderson, 1996). Accepting the biological differences between the genders, radical feminists also emphasise women's connection to nature and relationships. Within outdoor leadership, radical feminists would underline the differences between male and female leaders regarding their possession and value of "hard" technical skills versus "soft" interpersonal skills. Critiquing the traditional "male" models of outdoor leadership that promote physicality, competition, strict authority, or aggression and instead encourage more "female" approaches or styles that emphasise collaboration, agreement, and communication. Sharp's study on gender differences in mountain leader training (2001) suggests "that men express greater confidence about their technical ability and value it more highly than women" while "women tend to value knowledge-based activities

such as planning and preparation" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 117). Additionally, radical feminists would bring attention to the use of sexist and sexual language by outdoor leaders, reinforcing male dominance (Allin & West, 2013).

2.3.3 Socialist feminism

Capitalism and patriarchy are mainly the sources of injustice, according to socialist feminists. Karl Marx defined capitalism as the system where a small group, the employers, controls the means of production while the bigger group, the employees, must work to earn a living wage. In this social and economic system, the minority group aims to profit without properly compensating those who work for them (Van Staveren, 2021).

Socialist feminists address how this Marxist perspective affects women in household spheres. Women are involved in reproductive labour within the household, and their work is not considered economically valuable. They perform their duties without receiving any compensation within the home or for their families. (Allin & West, 2013). Since they do not receive any compensation, they cannot afford or have time for a course to become an outdoor leader or a skill development course. Women who already have a career working in the outdoor industry experience various difficulties when they wish to come back after their parental leave. (Allin, 2003) "Without a very strong social network or financial background, finding additional time and resources to take part in qualification courses or consolidate personal outdoor skills can be very difficult." (Allin & West, 2013, p. 119). This exemplifies how capitalism and patriarchy reinforce gender inequality in domestic and professional settings (Allin & West, 2013).

2.3.4 Post-structural feminism

Recognising the different factors that contribute to gender inequality in society and the diverse experiences of women, post-structural feminists aim to challenge what it means to be a woman; they argue "that there is no such person as a 'typical woman'" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 120). Deconstructing gender socialisation, making it more inclusive and intersectional.

Another focus of post-structural feminists is the use of language and the stories that are told. This could be the angle of the dialogue in outdoor leadership and education. Is the dialogue focussing mainly on the male perspective, or is there also attention to the alternative discourses? However, gender socialisation also contributes to the discourses: "A woman can position herself as a physically strong mountain guide and adventurer, but these discourses conflict with dominant discourses of femininity or motherhood" (Allin & West, 2013, p. 121).

2.4 Outdoor leadership

Before diving deeper into the challenges women outdoor leaders face, I will present what outdoor leadership entails shortly. Starting with the title of an outdoor leader, this title can vary, whether the outdoor leader is an outdoor course facilitator, an outdoor adventure guide or an expedition leader; in all those cases, the outdoor leader is the main responsible. The outdoor leader's activities could also differ: glacier guiding, nature interpretation, kayaking, hiking, skiing, climbing, guiding education, sailing, etc. Different activities can be facilitated in various environments such as polar, arid, tropical, Mediterranean and temperate.

As an outdoor leader you need certain competencies to be an effective outdoor leader. Martin, Cashel, Wagstaff and Breuning (2006) describe eight main competencies within outdoor leadership: "foundational knowledge, self-awareness and professional conduct, decision-making and judgement, teaching and facilitation, environmental stewardship, program management, safety and risk management, technical ability" (In Wattchow, 2007, p. 50). Over time, the outdoor adventure field has transformed, and one of the main reasons for this transformation is the implementation of feminist leadership perspectives. Applying values such as nurturing and empathy, using inclusive and respectful language, and promoting collaboration and shared decision-making (Mitten, 1985; Tyson & Asmus, 2008). Most values and competencies play an important role in group dynamics, which could be the group dynamics of participants or co-guides.

2.5 Challenges

When looking at the outdoor leadership field, the main challenge women encounter is that men have traditionally dominated the outdoor leadership field (Warren et al., 2018), and despite the rise in opportunities available for women in outdoor leadership during the last twenty years, they still face significant challenges (Jordan, 2018) and gender disparity persists. Traditional gender stereotyping is embedded in the outdoor leadership field (Culp, 1998; Ghimire et al., 2014). Besides being confronted with traditional gender stereotyping, women outdoor leaders experience micro-aggression (Jordan, 2018), sexual harassment, and questioning of their competence and skill by (male) co-leaders and participants (Warren et al., 2018), and they are often not fully accepted (Jordan, 2018). In the upcoming paragraphs, these challenges will be clarified.

2.5.1 Male-dominated field

The perception that the outdoor leadership field is predominantly male originates from the "colonial ideas of conquering and taming the wilderness, and specifically, using nature as a testing ground to prove competency (Mitten, 1985, 2017)" (Wynn, 2018). Men are additionally perceived as the "stronger" sex. At the same time, the view of the physical capability of women's bodies has "a long history of being understood as a weak body, frail, something breakable and easily "damaged," a body that requires protection." (Newberry, 2003, p. 209). Although societal constructs influence physical ability, they can present challenges due to inherent differences between sexes and biological characteristics.

Another contributing factor to the male-dominated nature of the outdoor leadership field is the underrepresentation of women. Jordan (2018) presents the following example of the underrepresentation of women: "The many exploits of men exploring and conquering the outdoors have been recorded, taught in school, and documented through popular media." (p. 217). Examining wilderness recreation advertisements, McNiel et al. (2012) identified four categories of how women are represented:

1. "Women have low levels of engagement with the wilderness and wilderness recreation activities."
2. "Women are followers who need guidance."
3. "Women's engagement with these activities are meant to either be an escape from the home or a way to mimic the home in the outdoors."

4.   "Women who are highly engaged in wilderness recreation activities are unique and require feminisation."

Jordan (2018) notes that in "the most common advertisement that included photographs of both women and men, the male models were holding maps and pointing the way for their female companions" (p. 218). These findings show examples of traditional gender stereotyping due to gender socialisation.

In an earlier essay (Haas, 2022), I reflected on this topic:

> *This also reminds me of one of my experiences working in a store for outdoor apparel and equipment. A customer, a middle-aged man, was talking with my male colleagues about knives and other kinds of "hardware", as he called it - not interested in my knowledge about the equipment. Instead, he asked me if I could be a "sweetheart" and later help him with some clothing and men's underwear. Not knowing how to react, I just nodded and said: "of course". Afterwards, I reflected on this conversation, and I realised he assumed I didn't know about the "hardware" and could just help him with clothing, a traditional stereotypical assumption: women know about clothing, not about equipment. What I also realised is that I've been "programmed" according to this stereotype; this man said it in such a "logical" way that I thought, "Yes, that makes sense", and a few minutes later, I realised "no, it actually doesn't make sense" and regretted not speaking up about the comment of this man. I wanted to give this example to point out the traditional stereotypical beliefs still embedded deep in our "programming", not just among men but also among women. (p. 4)*

2.5.2 Traditional gender stereotyping

According to Culp (1998) and Ghimire et al. (2014) in Jordan (2018), socialisation and stereotypes are major factors that create obstacles for women who wish to participate in outdoor activities. Society pressures women to fit into traditional gender roles and engage only in activities considered appropriate for women. This pressure is still present today and makes it challenging for women to participate in outdoor recreation. When people view women as outdoor leaders, traditional gender roles can still influence their thinking. This can cause people to judge and treat women leaders differently from men leaders (Jordan, 2018). Male leaders are often viewed (especially by the participants) as the ones who possess and teach essential outdoor skills and hold positions of authority, even when co-leading with female leaders. In contrast, female co-leaders are viewed as having expertise in nurturing and caring aspects and are not perceived as leaders in charge (Jordan, 2018).

People often use the terms "soft skills" and "hard skills" when it comes to skill and competence in outdoor leadership. Jordan (2018) defines these terms as: "Hard skills are those that encompass such things as logistics, planning, and technical skill development; soft skills are those that involve human relations, communication, and social skills" (p. 228). The issue here is how these terms are, incorrectly I believe, connected to feminine and masculine traits where feminine is "soft" and masculine is "hard". In outdoor settings, being perceived as soft or easily giving way to pressure is viewed as an undesirable characteristic. The issue is that these delicate, gentle, soft and giving away under pressure characteristics are connected to "feminine" (Jordan, 2018). Jordan (2018) suggests that, on the other hand:

> *Since the male sex is more highly valued and attributed more status than the female sex, it is easy to see why in the past skills labelled as hard have been more highly valued—they are masculine, and according to social norms, masculine is the way to be. (p. 228).*

According to Jordan (2018), using the "hard and soft skills" terminology not only reinforces traditional gender stereotypes but is also a type of micro-aggression: sexist language.

2.5.3 Micro-aggressions

Women must deal with the "over-simplified and sexist dichotomies such as hard and soft skills" (Pryor, 2018, p. 172). And consciously and unconsciously, language degrades or excludes women sometimes completely. "In the case of sexist language, the communication includes messages of the superiority and worth of one sex (male) over the other (female)."
(Jordan, 2018, p. 225).

Kaskan and Ho (2016) found that women often encountered underlying micro-aggressions and defined that these micro-aggressions can be divided into nine themes. Sexist language included the themes are: "sexual objectification, second-class citizenship, assumption of inferiority, restrictive gender roles, denial of the reality of sexism, denial of individual sexism, invisibility, and sexist humour/jokes" (Jordan, 2018, p. 224). Again making a connection to something I wrote in an earlier essay (Haas, 2022):

I can now label an experience that belongs in two of the micro-aggressive categories defined by Kaskan and Ho. The experience I had was a combination of sexual objectification and sexist jokes. Note that this man was a participant in the group I was guiding, was approximately 40 years older than I am, and made this "joke" in front of the whole participant group. In this case, I froze and didn't know what to say; my co-guides didn't see it or were not close enough to say something directly to this man. I would also mark this experience as a form of sexual harassment. (p. 6)

2.5.4 Sexual harassment

The writers of the article "Challenges Faced by Women Outdoor Leaders" (Warren et al., 2018) describe and reflect on their encounters with sexual harassment while working in outdoor environments. They discuss how the use of sexist language created feelings of discomfort and made them feel unsafe. One of the authors describes a situation where she was in a remote location with no easy way to leave, and she received explicit sexual comments from a male co-instructor left her feeling afraid. The man implied he was going to act upon his words. Through their shared experiences, the authors highlight the unfortunate reality of not being taken seriously by male superiors and instructors, with no effective action being taken to address these issues.

According to Loeffler (1996), "sexual harassment has enormous potential to influence the experiences of both participants and staff in experiential education programs because of the intense, physical, 24-hour-a-day, remote nature of many programs" (p. 214). Paludi and Barickman (1991) note that the experience of sexual harassment can significantly affect the mental and physical well-being of the individual who has endured it. Besides affecting psychological and physical well-being, it can also jeopardise someone's safety. In the case of one of the authors: she was in a remote place. Or the person who is sexually harassed depends on the person who harassed them for navigation and safety. If that is the case, one can speak about unequal power dynamics, which adds to the feeling of un-safety.

2.5.5 Questioning of competence and skill

The questioning of competence and skills is strongly linked to traditional stereotypical gender roles and gender role socialisation. In the eyes of those who hold on to the traditional stereotypical gender roles, women do not have the hard skills, should do housework type of chores, and be the carer. While men are the "conquerors of the outdoors" and are seen as competent. This causes women to have to prove themselves constantly.

The impact of gender socialisation on how women perceive their competence is significant. Loeffler (1995) mentions women "tend to perceive themselves as less qualified or competent than their male colleagues." (Warren et al., 2018, p. 249) even though they might just be as competent or more competent as their male co-leaders. Appling (1989) points out the change in dynamics in outdoor education as a result of gender socialisation: "Women avoiding leadership, being fearful of physical challenge, avoiding assertiveness, manifesting feelings of intimidation or inadequate self-esteem." (p. 11). As a result, women encountered increased challenges in pursuing their careers in outdoor leadership. Warren et al. (2018) address how "women often view their actual competence through a lens of societal perceptions and responses, which are often sexist and degrading" (p. 249). Another reason it is more challenging for women to step into outdoor leadership positions is that the outdoors is perceived as a masculine or gender-neutral environment, which is why men are favoured over women as outdoor leaders (Jordan, 2018).

2.5.6 Leadership challenges

When examining the concept of leadership, The Leadership Theory suggests that leaders must actively take on their leadership role while also earning recognition and acceptance from the followers. As pointed out earlier, male leaders are preferred in outdoor environments, often considered masculine (Jordan, 1988; Wright & Gray, 2013). Even though women outdoor leaders have the right competencies, they might not be granted leadership. At the same time, circling back to having a reduced sense of competence due to gender socialisation, women struggle to claim leadership.

Women may feel the need to outperform their male co-leaders in outdoor activities to prove their competence, which can lead to feelings of burnout (Wright & Gray, 2013). Jordan (2018) points out that a possible reason for that is that

> *Women are judged against male standards and thus are exposed to the*
> *potential of being held to represent the entire sex. If a female leader*
> *makes a mistake, participants (and co-leaders) may judge her as proof*
> *that women do not have a place in the outdoors. (Jordan, 2018, p. 219)*

The challenges women outdoor leaders experience are diverse, and honestly, it makes me feel frustrated. Transformational change might be a way for us to move forward, keeping the different feminist perspectives in the back of our minds.

2.6 Transformational change

In order to create transformational change, there has to be a fundamental shift in, for example, systems, thought patterns and organisational structures. Breaking down old structures, beliefs and practices to rebuild and improve. Gray, Mitten, Potter and Kennedy (2020) state that their purpose is "to raise awareness, offer resources, and promote effective entry points for professionals to further the conversation about gendered practices in outdoor leadership." (p. 104). Starting with sharing their own stories and collecting stories of others, they aim to create transformational change. Avery (2015) highlights that we need a "contribution to the existing body of literature that describes or provides insight into gendered experiences in outdoor recreation leadership." (p. 4). Collecting the stories about encountered challenges by women outdoor leaders is my way to contribute, raise awareness and be part of the transformational change, and honestly, it makes me feel frustrated. Transformational change might be a way for us to move forward, keeping the different feminist perspectives in the back of our minds.

3. Methods

In order to gather stories from female outdoor leaders about the challenges they encountered in the outdoor leadership field, I conducted online qualitative individual semi-structured interviews. Allen Hill, Philippa Morse and Janet Dyment (2020) describe how qualitative interviews are a way for researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the social world (Humberstone & Prince, 2020). Smith and Sparkes (2016) suggest that "the purpose of the interview in qualitative inquiry is to create a conversation that invites the participant(s) to tell stories, accounts, reports and/or descriptions about their perspectives, insights, experiences, feelings, emotions and/or behaviours in relation to the research question(s)." (p. 103). The semi-structured interviews helped me to direct the focus of the interview using an interview guide (annex 1), open-ended questions and potential follow-up questions and redirect if the conversation strayed too far from the topic (Smith & Sparks, 2016). I decided to conduct an exploratory study since exploratory research aims to explore areas the researcher has little knowledge about (Kumar, 2018). Asking 'what'/'which' questions helped me explore my research subject. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to dive into how socio-cultural constructivism influences the experiences and perspectives of female outdoor leaders.

The online nature of the interviews allowed me to interview women in different countries than I am. Salmons (2015) presents another benefit of online interviews and explains that people may be more comfortable sharing personal and sensitive experiences when they take the interview in a familiar space; online interviews allow participants to choose the setting where they want to conduct the interview.

3.1 Participants

The population consisted of seven participants who were selected through purposive snowball sampling. Participants were between 20 and 35 years old. Participants were from all over the world: Poland, France, the United States, South Africa, The Netherlands, Germany and Namibia. Annex 2 provides deeper information on the background of the participants, participants remain anonymous, and the names presented in the table of Annex 2 are pseudonyms. The following inclusion criteria were applied: women currently working as outdoor leaders, female outdoor leaders

with at least one year of experience in outdoor leadership positions, and women who teach in guiding schools. The outdoor leadership positions include head/lead guides, which means the guide with the ultimate responsibility. This could be both in a setting with a team of guides which guide a group of participants and a guide who teaches other guides. The exclusion criteria were: women who only work in outdoor education in primary and secondary education.

3.2 Interview design

The interviews were divided into four parts (Annex 1: Interview Guide). The first part was an introduction of myself and the research project. Followed by getting to know the interviewee with some background questions on nationality, time worked as an outdoor leader, types of activities they lead, and how they became an outdoor leader. The third part was the four main questions; I kept the questions broad in a conscious effort to avoid nudging the interviewees in a certain direction when answering. When necessary, follow-up questions were asked to gain a deeper understanding or expand on an answer. The main interview questions were based on the research question and secondary questions. In the last part, interviewees got the opportunity to add or ask something. They were asked if it would be okay to reach out to them later to clarify something if necessary and if they would be interested in receiving the final thesis in their mailbox. Finally, I thanked them and ended the interview.

As a part of the interview design, I conducted a pilot interview with a women outdoor leader at the start of the data collection to test my questions and clarify them if necessary. The data gathered from the pilot interview seemed valuable for my research project, and I used this data.

3.3 Procedure

The interviews were conducted and recorded via the conference application Zoom. Before starting the recording, participants had to consent to Zoom for the recording to start. The average length of the interviews was 47 minutes. All interviews were held in English. Interviews were conducted in March 2023; the participants chose the exact dates and times.

3.4 Data collection

The data variables I aimed to collect were stories of the challenges women outdoor leaders encountered and how experiences where they were treated differently in social interaction. Furthermore, I collected reflections on their perceived competence and opinions on the next steps they would like to see in the field. I measured those variables in the analysation process, which I will lay out in the next subchapter.

3.5 Data analysis

The raw data was transcribed with a transcription software called Sonix. After the transcription by Sonix was finished, I went through every transcript to fix minor mistakes the software didn't pick up on correctly. Using intelligent verbatim transcription, I improved readability without changing the meaning. I also added clarifying comments using [square brackets]. To signal that a part of the answer wasn't relevant to the question, I used [...].

After transcribing, I used thematic analysis. All the answers to the interview questions were collected and coded using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). When going through the collected data, I coded what the participants had answered, generating a total of 435 codes. Since the interview questions are directly linked to the research questions, I separated the codes and themes per question. Going through the codes, I tried finding patterns, resulting in the themes presented in Table 3-1.

The "get to know the participants" subchapter did not generate any themes since the purpose of the interview questions regarding the participants' background was to get to know them better, not to analyse their background. The information gathered from those background questions is presented in the results chapter as a way to get to know the women behind the experiences.

Table 3-1 Themes per subchapter

Subchapter	Themes
4.1 Get to know the participants	-
4.2 Challenges	Gender socialisation and traditional gender stereotypes Authority Proving Mirco-aggressions
4.3 Different treatment	Questioning competence Physical abilities Value of words
4.4 Perceived competence	Unconscious biases and doubts Reflections and actions
4.5 Next step	Role models and representation Awareness and education Support systems
4.6 Reflexivity	Biases Awareness of gender socialisation

The literature review helped me analyse the quotes within those themes. Looking at it from a Sociocultural Constructivist perspective, different feminist perspectives and a gender socialisation perspective. Understanding the root of some of the challenges through the existing literature on what is written on challenges women outdoor leaders encounter.

3.6 My role as the researcher

During the process of this research, I had to be aware of my own role in the process. My interest in the topic comes from the fact that I am working as an outdoor leader/ head guide and encountered challenges as well. Combine this with the interaction with the wilderness guiding course, and there I had the idea for this master's thesis. Since I spend time reflecting on my own experiences, this might influence the way I reflect on

the experiences of the women I interviewed. Throughout the process, I tried to stay aware of the way I reflect and the biases I have. I also have to be aware of my personal sociocultural constructs. My sociocultural background could influence my perspective and approach. Being an abled-bodied, white cis-woman from a privileged Western country, The Netherlands, shapes my sociocultural background. In an attempt to not nudge the participants in a certain direction, I formulated open questions that did not suggest answering in a certain direction. Additionally, I tried not to share my own experiences and opinions, but in a conversation, it could be that I unconsciously shared my opinion through a reaction or certain follow-up question. I did sometimes share the frustration that the women illustrated in their stories. Even though I tried to remain as unbiased as possible, I can not consider myself to be completely unbiased; therefore, I did what I could to be aware of my biases.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

Ensuring reliability throughout the research process was done by preparing an interview guide in order to create consistency in all of the interviews. All interviews were conducted according to the same procedure from my side: all interviews were online at a moment chosen by the participant, conducted in English, and all participants received the same information form. To ensure validity, I chose to use individual interviews so the participants could share their experiences with me and did not have to share their experiences with multiple people they did not know, which would have been the case with a focus group, for instance. Throughout the interview and the data analysis, I sought clarification through follow-up questions if necessary. Using a purposive snowball sampling method, I got a participant population that matched my inclusion and exclusion criteria.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Since I collected personal data for a research project that is connected to a university in Norway, I had to notify Sikt (Sikt. n.d.), the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, according to the data collection protocol in Norway. I filled out the Notification Form for data collection, which was then approved by Sikt.

When being reached out to, potential participants would receive an information letter about the project. This letter provided information on the purpose of the project, details about the person responsible for the project, the reason why they were asked to participate, what participation would involve for them, a notion that participation is voluntary, and how they could withdraw their participation and consent, how their privacy would be ensured including information on storage and use of personal data, information on what would happen with their personal data at the end of the research project, information on the rights they have, and finally who they could contact if they had any questions. If they decided to participate, they would be asked to sign an informed consent form.

In the presentation of the results, I chose to use pseudonyms instead of numbering the participants to identify them but keep their real identities anonymous. I believe the use of pseudonyms makes it more personal, especially when personal stories are shared. The pseudonyms are chosen randomly and not in any way connected to the name of the participant; it could, however, be that by chance, the first letter of the name and pseudonym is the same. The only people who had access to the names of the participants were my supervisor, and I. Participants do share information about the locations they worked at, so it might be possible for colleagues to recognise their stories, but I deem this chance quite small since the participants are anonymous and very internationally orientated. The names of organisations participants work or worked for were taken out of the transcription.

4. Results

Before presenting the results related to the research questions, you will get to know the participants in subchapter 4.1. The four research questions form the rest structure of this chapter: 4.2 Challenges, 4.3 Different treatments, 4.4 Perceiving own competence and 4.5 Next steps. Adding a fifth subchapter for 4.6 Reflexivity, which came forth during the data collection and analysis. Within these five subchapters, I will present the different themes that emerged. Participants share their experiences, observations, and reflections.

4.1 Get to know the participants

Every interview started with a few questions to get to know the women outdoor leader sitting on the other end of the "Zoom line". Table 4-1 presents a summary of the background of each participant. In Annex 2, you can find an extensive overview of the participants' backgrounds. Important note: all the names used in the presentation of the results are pseudonyms.

Table 4-1 Participant background summary

Participant Pseudonyms	Background
Beau	Originally from Poland, Beau now lives and works in Svalbard. She has been working in different countries in the Arctic, North America and Asia. Worked as an outdoor leader for 5,5 years, leading different activities, nature interpretation, kayaking, teaching in a guiding school and more. Not too long ago, she stopped working as a guide and stepped into the academic field, doing research on safety in guiding.
Celine	Celine fell in love with the Nordics and moved from The Netherlands to Svalbard. In her projects, she uses art and storytelling while moving through the landscape. She has been an outdoor leader for 5 years and mostly does activities like hiking, sailing and nature interpretation in Svalbard, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

Eva	Eva lives in Norway but is originally from Germany. Specialised in winter guiding; the activities she guides include back-country and cross-country skiing. In the summer, she guides hiking and climbing trips. She has been an outdoor leader for 2,5 years and, since then, led trips in Germany, Austria and Norway.
Tamara	Tamara is from the Eastern side of the United States and has been working all over the country. She also worked in Alaska, Antarctica and the Arctic, leading activities such as glacier mountaineering, climbing, hiking, ship-based guiding and instructing wilderness medicine for around nine years.
Iris	From and currently based in France, Iris has been working as an outdoor leader for a year, doing hiking (multi-day) and pack rafting projects in Belgium and Iceland.
Mila	Originally from South Africa, Mila worked in Zambia at a Christian outdoor centre. Being a Christian is an important part of her life, and working at this company in Zambia showed her how outdoor adventures and Christianity come together. Before coming to Zambia, she worked for a few years in different countries in Asia. Mila wants to pursue her dreams of setting up her own outdoor company in South Africa.
Naomi	Having worked all over the world, Naomi is now in North Wales, quite a long way from her home country Namibia. Having worked in the outdoor field for over 10 years, she lead a wide variety of activities: diving, canoeing, rock climbing, camping, navigation, route finding, mountaineering, abseiling, scrambling, team building, raft building hill walking.

4.2 Challenges

All seven woman outdoor leaders I interviewed encountered or observed different challenges. The themes emerging within those challenges were, in one way or the other, related to gender socialisation and gender-related traditional stereotypes, some of them combined with authority issues, feeling the need to prove themselves or micro-aggressions ranging from sexist jokes to unsuitable equipment.

4.2.1 Gender socialisation and traditional gender stereotypes

This theme encompasses labels women get from fixed thought patterns formed by traditional gender stereotypes and gender socialisation, affecting people's assumptions and expectations of women in leadership positions. Two women speak about parental challenges.

> *Celine: The issues that I think we face is very much based on first impression and looks. You can feel there are a lot of first interpretations, and feelings about that, and behaviour changes because you are a woman or a man. But I think most of those are not spoken about. And people don't even realise that they have that.*

> *Celine: I've been working a lot on a boat in Norway together with the skipper and she's a good friend of mine and she is a very beautiful lady as well. And then of course, people will just in the first ten minutes still kind of keep asking where the skipper is - she is the skipper and I'm the guide. And they both think that "Yeah, the guide maybe can be a female", but definitely they are like, "When is the skipper going to arrive on the boat?" They would actually ask those kinds of things without trying to be rude. It's not on purpose, but it's just so I think that is something while working on boats, there's the assumption that I would never be looked at [as the skipper], I'm also not the skipper, but, like, I can see that there's just by the first look, they kind of put a label on who has which task on the boat and that's often happening.*

> *Beau: Something that I constantly keep coming across because the research [Beau is doing] focuses a lot on competence and safety. And people say like, "Oh, that's you know, soft skills, the girl stuff". So it is still considered that the girl will be the one who will talk to the clients while the guy would be the one that fixes the snowmobile or, you know, fixes this or that.*

> *Mila: And we were about four girls [in the study] that really enjoyed the outdoors and chose the outdoors as an industry to work in. And we were surrounded by very dominant men and especially in the South African or the Afrikaans culture, you get the typical farmer man that thinks, "A woman should only be in the kitchen and be cooking and cleaning" and*

I'm definitely not one of those. I do cook and clean, but that's not all I've been made for. And it was just very difficult to try and prove yourself constantly, that I am capable of doing this activity or am capable of leading my own group.

Naomi and Tamara experience that people assume they cannot do something due to expectations or, as Naomi said, "male egos."

Naomi: I've found that being female, sometimes there is a lot of male egos. [...] So I have felt quite defensive and felt like I have to defend myself and my physical strength, my ideas. People have mansplained to me or assumed because I'm female, I'm less capable of navigation or physical tasks.

Tamara: I think one of the issues that we see is, is it's not that women or people who present as women can't do these things. It's that they're put in positions where other people like have very different expectations of them and they don't perhaps respect them or listen to them as much as they would if it was a male guide or instructor.

Tamara gives an example of a male co-leader who noticed how a group of male guests was unconvinced of her competencies and allowed her to step forward.

Tamara: Then it's also like I think people do have different expectations. I remember one of my first years of guiding in Alaska, I was co-guiding with a man, and we had a group of like five male guests. They're a bit older and you could tell that they couldn't care less what I had to say. And so when we got on to the ice, to start climbing, my [male] coworker says to me "I'll talk about all the nature stuff, like the natural history, whatever. You take care of all of the safety stuff, the safety briefings, the technical side of things, because these guys clearly think that you can't do it".

Naomi and Beau mention (potential) challenges for women who wish to start a family at some point in their lives and what that would mean for their career as outdoor leaders.

Naomi: And at some point, if we [she and her partner] decide to have a child that as a woman, I feel within my career, I would encounter more challenges as a result because obviously, I would have to take time out of maternity leave, but it's going to come out of me, so I would have to, you know, handle that. And within the first, I would say six months to a year, I would likely be unable to work. And even beyond that, potentially. With the capacity of child care and the way that our society works, I would likely be out of work for some time. You know, being able to breastfeed and returning to work could be tricky when the child is small.

Naomi: If I were to have a child and then come back into the industry, I guess some avenues that would be obvious would be to go into a more managerial or administrative role, which is not my passion, it's not my area of expertise, it's not my wants. But, being female, that's, you know, the obvious. If you have a child being female, that's maybe the obvious route. Unless you have a willing partner who will opt to do that instead and be a stay-at-home dad whilst I go and, and continue.

Beau: I don't know if this is correct what I think, but I think it's connected to, sadly, that women, when they want to have kids, they just leave guiding. And in Iceland, you can be a guide all year round, because we have unions and then we have different types of guiding and we actually have activities all year round so you can make your life around it. And I know a lot of female guides and they make a living and they have kids and they are still guiding and so on. In Svalbard, it's impossible really to be a female guide having a child.

However, three women mentioned they did not encounter challenges; Eva and Celine related that to geographical locations. Beau said that even though she did not experience gender-related challenges while working as an outdoor leader, she did encounter gender-related challenges when she stepped into the academic work field.

Beau: I actually do not think I have encountered those challenges while being a guide. I can definitely see some attitudes in the environment that I work in, that they are a little bit of macho type of people. But it has never affected me as much.

Beau: It's very interesting because, on this guiding level, I don't think I have [encountered challenges]. [...] But when it comes to academic work, I have only encountered one woman who is doing similar research to me, it's research on guiding and she has actually guiding experience herself like adventure guiding. [...] It is very strange that I move around the male environment [in research] and I have been definitely being pushed down and I'm pretty sure it's because of the gender differences. [...] It seems like I often have been perceived, at least I perceive it like they perceive that I do not have enough knowledge to do that.

Eva and Celine reflected on the difference between the locations they were guiding in. In some locations, they encountered no challenges; both mention Norway.

Eva: But it is very dependent on the country actually because in Norway I haven't experienced so much of that. But I've also mainly guided in [place where she currently lives], which is a very, very small community and a very big bubble in terms of that I think because here everything is, or at least in my bubble here, everything seems very equal, very respectful.

Celine: I would say I have not experienced those things very much in Norway or on the Faroe Islands. So I think for me, I guess I would just take it to the Svalbard situation [where she did encounter challenges].

4.2.2 Authority

Authority challenges were referred to by five out of seven women. Eva shares her experience with authority issues combined with the use of sexist language.

Eva: Sometimes I have a feeling it can be a little bit hard to put the word through and actually be accepted as a leading person when there are a lot of male participants.

Eva: I had that once in Austria actually when I was skiing with a group of swimmers [swim team]. And it was actually a trainer from another team who made a comment to the other trainer like, "Oh, you let a girl go skiing with your group". And there I was really like, are you serious? Can't I lead a group because I'm a girl or like I'm a woman? [...] There were definitely some incidences where I felt that or even when I maybe would guide together with a man, as co-leaders, that I would have the feeling that people listen more to him than to me.

Iris, Mila and Tamara share how not being perceived as the one in charge, the leader, affects how much respect and authority they receive.

Iris: The main challenge I think is to make sure people understand I am the leader. Like, I mean, not only the guides under my lead but also the customers because they see a woman and they see four men and they are like, "Okay, we are going gonna ask this man because he should be the boss". And you're like, "Hey, hey, it's here". But often it was quite easy to make it understandable at the beginning.

Mila: I've definitely felt there is, you know, there are certain limits or unspoken limits of when you are a female in this industry. They'll only take your authority up to a certain level. They'll say it goes further, but when push comes to shove, it's really not the case.

Tamara: There's a lot, I guess, and it's hard. I think also the nature of the challenges has changed quite a bit, even since when I started working, which was nearly ten years ago, but is really not that long in the grand scheme of things. I think there's more awareness about the inequities between women and basically just non-cis men in the industry. But I think to me a lot of it boils down to like how people view you and what respect they give you, whether that's like your guests, like your clients, your students, whatever you want to call them, or your coworkers or your supervisors, your employers. The amount of respect and how people view

you is, I think, very different when you're a woman in the outdoor industry versus a man. And then I think the other aspect of it is, well, I guess it builds into that, like how much space you're able to take up and how people view your opinions or whether or not they even listen to you.

Mila describes an example from another women leader she works with who got treated differently from her male co-leader. Both Mila and Tamara mention that women, when being assertive, are perceived as arrogant and rude.

Mila: He [co-leader] was even saying to the girls, like "How can you be angry at her for laying down rules, while I was the one that kept on shouting at you?" and even for him it was like, how can you now hate a female just because she set ground rules, but you don't hate the person that was physically screaming at you. [...] Especially so much in Zambia that if you are female you don't have a place of authority, and you fight so much harder and because you fight for it people look at you like you're either crazy or arrogant until whatever you've been trying to tell them gets proven right. But they won't come back and apologise.

Tamara: Even when you have a super experienced woman as the leader, you're still going to get men who are going to question them or say "Oh, you're not being assertive enough". Et cetera. Et cetera. And it's like, okay, well, you say that someone's not being assertive enough, and then when they are, you go around and you say that they're, you know, rude or bitchy or whatever. And so you can empower women all you want, but if everyone else in the room isn't ready to interact with women in leadership positions, then they're just going to create problems that don't exist.

4.2.3 Proving

Five women mentioned feeling the need to prove that they can be as good and/or strong as a man doing certain activities. Mila speaks about how this feeling of having to be as strong as a man is ingrained from a young age.

Mila: I was a tomboy. I just played sports, and I just ended up playing with guys outdoors wherever I could go. So I always wanted to be as strong as a guy because, you know, they'll look at you and be like, "Oh, but you can't do all these things because you're a woman". So I kind of set out in my life to prove men wrong.

Iris brings up a similar unconscious need to outperform men.

> *Iris: Even if I don't think about it, I will want to do more, to show I'm able to. And I'm not sure it's because I'm a woman. Maybe just it's my personality. I always want to prove something, but I think there is a part of me, "Okay, I'm a woman, there are mainly men here, so I have to show I can carry the same amount of weight, I can do the same sport, I can hike faster, etc.". And I think did it.*

Tamara and Mila point out that they don't want people to think you can't do it.

> *Mila: [In Hong Kong] Naomi and I, were the only two women that ended up being at a higher level than all the facilitators. [...] But that did not come easy. We had to prove ourselves a lot. In the sense of whenever we did training or whenever we had to get signed off for certain activities, we had to be almost at a better level than the guys because we have so much more to prove than we actually needed to prove. And for people to look at you and be like, "Oh, okay, you actually know something".*

> *Tamara: For example, when I was guiding in Alaska, it was pretty standard because we had just so much equipment to carry that our packs were going to weigh around 70 pounds [31,75 kg], which if you weigh 200 pounds [90,72 kg], like, yeah, that's reasonable. But especially at the time, I was much smaller, right? And so to me, it was like, wow, okay, I know I'm strong enough to do it, but it wears away at your body. So much more to be carrying that amount of weight, right? Especially when you are a smaller person. Um, but then I guess conversely, you don't want people to think you can't do something just because you're a woman.*

Mila experiences a constant need to prove herself due to traditional gender stereotypes.

> *Mila: Just because they are male, [in Zambia] it always seems to be like, "Okay, we'll give the males these jobs and then all the girls will get these jobs". Which is never fun. So it takes a lot more for you to prove yourself. And it's almost like a constant thing that you have to do, which is really frustrating and very tiring. You really just want to get on with your job and do it the best that you can without having to try and prove to people why you can be in a certain position.*

4.2.4 Micro-aggressions

Different micro-aggressions were mentioned, including second-guessing, sexist comments, underlying gender stereotype beliefs, use of language, and unsuitable equipment. They are underlying actions and comments that make women "second-class citizens". Tamara and Eva experienced second-guessing and sexist gender stereotypes hidden in people's actions and comments.

Tamara: You could tell that whenever they [the students] asked a question, if they asked me, I would give them the answer and then they would like second guess it or they would be like, "No, that can't be true". Like, they'd be like, "What's this pan made out of?" And I'm like, "Anodised aluminium". They're like, "Oh, no way. It's made of steel". And I'm like, "Well, if you weren't going to listen to me, then why did you ask?" And I mentioned it to my co-instructor at the time, and he's like, "I didn't notice that". And then he started paying attention and he's like, "Yeah, they do this. And it's just to you, it's not to him, right?"

Tamara: There are always comments and you're always going to get people who make sexist comments. [...] But I think it's more like actions that are made that are micro-aggressions and less so the sexist comments because people pick up on that. Like, for example, a few years ago I was working up in the Arctic and we had this rifle master who just insisted that basically ..., he never went out there and said it, but you could tell he insisted that only the men would be able to carry rifles and you would go to the shooting range. And you could tell that there are clearly guys who don't have that much rifle experience and there are women on the team who have a lot of experience. But he would consistently just give the men the rifles. And you're like, "Huh, this is very interesting". And he didn't get up and say, "Only the men on our team can be rifle handlers". But it's sort of this like implied micro-aggression if that makes sense.

Eva: But there was this one time where we did a longer [ski] tour and I had a group with a lot of girls that were not super, super fit or like they were really fit, but not so fit on skis. And then the trainer selected another swimmer who was an older male swimmer to join our group because he thought it would be good to have a little bit of a stronger male person in our group on that trip. [...] It's just very underlying like it's a lot of small things that in the end add up and make you feel like no one would ever do that with a male trainer or a male outdoor guide. Like no one would ever say, "Okay, hey, maybe we should choose a strong woman to join your team so you're safe out there". No one would ever do that.

Another micro-aggression women were dealing with was the use of sexist language and sexist jokes.

Eva: The use of language is very different [in the Alp regions] because I feel like here in Scandinavia people are very aware of how to use words and how to not say politically incorrect things. In Germany and Austria, I would say people don't care so much about that. What they're saying and how they're saying things, especially when it comes to political correctness. I don't think they really care. So just the use of words and what you hear as a woman in the mountain context can be very, very inappropriate sometimes, actually.

Eva: It was like jokes here and there. It was like, "Oh, you can lift so much as a girl" or "Oh, you're going to lead this group now as a girl" or like you would go on a long trip with a group and be like, "Oh, we should have a male person with you". It was more like it was said in a jokey way, but still, in a way that makes you very aware that you're a woman, and it's not normal/not accepted that women can guide other people safely in nature.

Tamara: One of the ones that are really common is when we're in the Arctic, the Antarctic and we're doing beach landings with the boats and there's a big swell. You need people in the water to catch the boats. Yeah, and there are plenty of expedition leaders who are going to be like "Okay, we need four big strong men to catch the boats". And it's like, you know, sure, I'm not that big, but I'm just as good at catching a boat as other people. It's more about the technique, right?

Beau points out how unsuitable equipment impacts not only how women are seen but also the user's safety. When it comes to snowmobile suits, companies are unwilling to invest in a suit for women. She also mentioned the unbalance in the diversity of equipment.

Beau: For example the small size of men's [snowmobile] suit, it's not female medium size, this just doesn't work. And they were saying that often women in the research on the Antarctic stations are considered clumsy because they trip over the suits because the boots are too big or something. But obviously, the equipment is not made for women.

Beau: And this [men having awareness of physical differences in women] is definitely not the case when they were having this discussion about too-big suits, snowmobile suits and, you know, the rescue suits in the sea. And then I was just thinking and I asked someone like, "Do you think they can change the suits for females?" And then I could see like, "Oh, my God, how much would it cost?" And I'm like, "Yeah, it wouldn't cost that much if you would think about it before you equip the whole company, university or whatsoever with the right equipment or not assuming it's unisex.". The unisex is okay, it's just unisex. But the male suit, it's just not working for a female like the hands in the suits, it's like another arm. I need to even reach this glove. And is that safe? You know, then it becomes like it's a piece of safety equipment that you rely on. How can you rely on something that it's not suitable because, yeah, it's way too big or it's way too clumsy or whatever, you are in it? So safety is actually ignored in this aspect if we look at that.

Beau: If you would look maybe ten years ago, at least I was looking at this with my colleagues that at brands that how many clothes you could get for female and male. And this is now actually almost balanced out in many companies. But I remember, we were looking at this many years ago when I lived in China and it was like, "Yeah, female three backpacks, and for guys, it was ten different backpacks.".

4.3 Different treatment

Often the challenges women outdoor leaders encounter result in receiving a different treatment compared to their male colleagues. All seven participants received different treatments in one way or the other. Overarching themes emerged: questioning competence, physical abilities and the value given to words spoken by a woman or a man.

4.3.1 Questioning competence

This theme is connected to the difference in the perceived competence of women and men. Traditional gender stereotypes sustain perceived competence.

Beau: If there's a guy and a female [leading a trip], then I think often people would come to the guy to discuss certain stuff and to the female the other stuff. And usually, it is like the hard, technical skills would be discussed with the guy, which automatically means that people actually perceive that those people [men] have much more competence.

Celine: I know a lot of female guides and a lot of male guides and I know that my male friends, never get asked if they know how to use the rifle or get did they get any training or whatever. People take for granted that they know what they're doing. And I don't I cannot even tell you how often I've gotten that question. [...] I would say I think it's fair to ask if you have your leader with you and you are fully dependent on safety with them. [...] But I can see that with most people it's not about their safety. It's just about me being a woman and they don't understand how I know how to use a rifle.

Beau points out what she observed about women in management positions and how she initially didn't experience a difference in treatment, but after reflection, she realises the subtleness of differences in treatment.

Beau: I haven't experienced that [different treatment]. But actually, at this management level, I see that the girls need to prove their confidence and competence much more.

Beau: It's very interesting because it's never said, of course, upfront. It's always just like undermining someone's competence or questioning them. [...] So I think it's more on that level that nothing has been ever said straight. But you can read between the lines that or you start to question whether it is because I'm female. So I think that's what I have encountered.

4.3.2 Physical abilities

This theme shows the actions of people who perceive women needing help carrying equipment.

Naomi: Certainly not here at this particular company [current workplace]. [...] In the past perhaps. You know people might be quicker to explain things or to help to move things.

Tamara: The more obvious ones are, if there's some task that's more physical, it's not always the case, but oftentimes, depending on the demographics of your coworkers, they'll be like, "Oh, we need big strong men to do this". And if it's something I don't want to do, I'm like, "Oh yeah, you do it". But if it's like something else, I'm like, "Yeah, you need some muscle, but you don't have to be a man to do that".

Iris: Like for little things like, "Oh, no, Iris, don't carry that, I can do it." "Why?" "Well, I'm maybe more strong." I got this kind of sentence. I was like, "Okay, I will break my back just to show you I can do it". And it took me time to understand sometimes it is just to be nice and sometimes it's really "Okay, I'm the man. I have to do that instead of her." And it's really like little and small actions. And if you don't pay attention, you won't notice it.

Eva also mentioned how the focus is always on these physical differences where the men get to shine, while there is not enough attention to women's qualities.

Eva: It is quite crazy that we're just highlighting what men are better at than women. And never highlight what women are actually better at than men. [...] For example, men and women have very different physical properties. And the thing that's always highlighted is that women are weaker than men, men are stronger than women.

4.3.3 Value of words

Tamara and Mila explain how their words and opinions are not as respected and valued as the words of the men in the room, even though they might say the same thing.

> *Tamara: I think the amount of respect you get in conversations or just how much space people take up. Like in team meetings, you find that there are going to be people who are just going to talk and talk and you can say something and it will go in one ear and out the other. And they typically like only pay attention when it's another man talking and not when it's another woman talking. And so I think the amount of respect and interest that people give to your comments as a woman is much less than what you'd find for a man.*

> *Mila: The way that I kind of do it is whenever I do encounter a situation where I feel like my authority is getting challenged, I go and run my thoughts and my ideas and strategies past either the senior instructor or the head of the centre. Because they are higher than me in positions, and once they agree with it I can then go back to whoever and say "This idea, or plan, or this decision, has been approved by" higher people, which in this case are both men. But there are many times when you as a female will go and confront someone whatever the case may be and they will just not listen to you, but then you have to go and get a male involved and they will even look only at the male, and only listen to what he has to say. Even if it's word for word, exactly the same thing as you've been saying. [...] So if they still don't believe me, unfortunately, I will have to get the male, the senior management to come actually to the situation and say it from their own mouths, only then will they believe me.*

4.4 Perceived competence

Participants reflected on how gender socialisation affected their perception of their competence. The themes that emerged within this subchapter are "unconscious biases and doubts" and "reflections and actions".

4.4.1 Unconscious biases and doubts

Tamara, Beau, Iris and Naomi experienced how their unconscious biases and doubts sometimes creep in. Tamara refers to it as "imposter syndrome" and relates it to gender socialisation.

> *Tamara: Oh, yeah, all the time [experiencing imposter syndrome]. It's funny. Like, even when I'm working, it's like I will have so much more experience than someone else and I know how to do something, but I'll be like, "Oh, I don't know. Maybe I shouldn't be doing this. Or it's just too much or whatever. I'm not ready for this". And then you'll have some guy*

who has never even worked in the industry before and he's like, "Yeah, okay, I'm ready". And it's like, okay, to a degree, you know, you don't know what you don't know. And everyone, when you first start out, you're perhaps overconfident. But I think there's a lack of confidence among women that's just ingrained, and I experience that for sure. [...] And you get it even worse when people, men, start questioning you even more, which they're more likely to do I think with women in leadership roles, they question women much more. And so it just feeds into this cycle of imposter syndrome, I think.

Beau shares her experience and adds to this ingrained lack of confidence, mentioning how women and men are perceived differently as outdoor leaders. In contrast, men are automatically perceived as the more competent gender.

Beau: I'm working between those guiding schools in Iceland, Svalbard and Greenland. And I met a girl and I said like "I haven't been guiding in Svalbard for two years and I don't feel that competent". And this girl from Iceland was like, "Yes, this is exactly what it is, that the guys often take the role of the leader, even though they know that they don't have the competence, but they have the courage to do it versus females. They [women] often don't have the courage. Even when they have the competence.". So I think this was exactly pointing out what I was thinking about myself, that I sometimes don't feel competent because I compare myself to people that maybe don't have more competence, but they have more courage to do those things and have more courage because they have been always perceived as those people that have that competence. So it's kind of like a circle that it's really difficult to step out of because where do you start?

Both Iris and Naomi point out that they feel the need to prove themselves again since their male colleagues might be perceived as the more competent ones.

Iris: Unconsciously, I always try to do better than a man, because [...] I don't want to have to think "Maybe it's because it's a woman". I want to avoid that. And I'm quite competitive also. It's not helping. [...] And I think it's because since the beginning, I was doing as much as possible, and often I was doing more than them. So, yeah, it's more like the reaction of other people who are watching you, who make you feel like there is a difference.

Naomi: [My mother] was very determined that I wouldn't be like, "Oh, I'm a girl and therefore I can't". She was very good at instilling, like, "Whatever the boys can do you can probably do better, so just go for it". And so on a conscious level, I'm very pigheaded. And so whatever you can do, I can do the same or better. But on a subconscious level, there probably is some bias there towards myself and some second-guessing of my abilities because my male counterparts might be deemed to be or

viewed, rightly or wrongly, to be more competent or better. But it's definitely something that I guess does exist because I'm conscious of it. And so what? Whether it affects me, I don't know. But there is definitely a level of thought there that, yeah, I need to be able to prove to myself that I can do these things and think of myself as able to do these things if that makes sense.

Mila dreams about pursuing her own outdoor company in South Africa. Still, the traditional gender stereotypes in society and the lack of role models and representation make it scary to put herself out there.

Mila: I have my own business in South Africa, an outdoor business, and there are a lot of times when I have a lot of doubts about whether I should actually pursue all the dreams that I have for my company. Because it's very scary knowing that you are a woman. I don't know if there are a lot of women-run outdoor companies in South Africa that are only owned by a woman. [...] And that's a very scary thought because if look at all the outdoor companies in South Africa, whether it be Christian based or non-Christian based, all of them have a male CEO or a male director or a male, at least high up in the companies whereas it's very rare that you'll find just a woman doing everything. Um, and a lot of the times it's very scary for me to think that I need to go and actually put myself out there as saying "This is my company, this is what I believe in and this is the change that I want to bring. And this is why I do what I do". Um, because I think a lot of times they just don't take you seriously.

Beau also observes the effect of traditional gender roles on (young) women in guiding schools.

Beau: I don't know that many [female guides] in Greenland after guiding school. There are almost none, I might be wrong, but I think there's not a single woman that opened their own guiding company after guiding school, because it's such a men-dominated world in that sense in Greenland. Our students would say like: "Yes, finally I can prove to my father that I can do this and that". And of course, this is a very traditional society [Greenlandic society], so maybe a lot of that is rooted in that society. But at the same time, when you reach this level of your career, then maybe you are going to have a kid, maybe it's not the time when you go for more education or maybe the trips are too demanding and so on. So maybe this is why they don't go back to guiding. A lot of people that teach in the guiding schools are the International Mountain Guides and I don't know how many females are out there, but I actually haven't met a single female, and I only know a handful of guides doing that. So maybe it has much more to do with like the construction of a society that the female leads, you know, maybe raising kids and the guys doing all this fun stuff [guiding].

4.4.2 Reflections and actions

Five women describe their reflections on experiences and behaviours they internalised due to gender socialisation. They tell how reflecting made them pause and let go of patterns created by gender socialisation.

Iris: They didn't say anything, not in front of me, I guess. But they were used to going to [male co-guide] straight, really straight, because he has a kind of charisma, I think. And I think he could be a leader. It was like this since the beginning, like speaking a bit more and being a bit more present. [...] And I think maybe it's my bad also too to have accepted it at the beginning. But it's how we learn.

Beau: From my perspective as a student in a guiding school, I felt that I was equal to my colleagues, whether they were female or male, didn't matter. But as soon as I stepped out of it [the guiding school] and went into the teaching level, then all of a sudden I felt like I'm not competent enough because those people have much more experience and I mean hardcore or like the technical experience, which it's actually quite interesting because anyone can do the technical skills. You don't need to go to a guiding school for that and you can take the courses and so on. Actually, guiding it's more about decision-making and what we call soft skills, although maybe this is not the right term, maybe operational skills and interpersonal skills.

Naomi: Definitely. I'm very stubborn. And as I say, quite tenacious. So in the past, I probably have worked harder and, as I said, I was quite defensive at previous companies only since working for this one [current company] with such a positive culture that I've realised that actually I don't need to be defensive and be seen to be strong because otherwise people might think less of me and then I will think less of myself. And so in the past, I've probably let not show weakness, I suppose, whatever that might be. So whether that be I'm ill, I might just work through it because I don't want to be seen to be unable or incompetent. I've worked doubly hard or lifted extra heavy things or something stupid like that as I've got more common sense slowly but surely I'm less likely to feel that I need to prove myself. I have less to prove to other people and myself. But I think that's partly age-related and not just my surroundings. [...] If somebody thinks I can't do it, then that's their problem, not mine anymore. Whereas it definitely wasn't like that before. And it's still sometimes I catch myself and I'm like, "Well, hang on, you're cool".

Tamara: I think finding ways to recognise that [imposter syndrome] in the moment will help women be more effective leaders and just feel more confident in themselves. Because if you're not confident, you're never going to be able to get anything done.

Quitting her current job, a specific action of her employee made Mila realise how much work she was doing.

> *Mila: Actually all my workload, they [company in Zambia] are handing it to three guys. Um, which for me was kind of a, you know. It's kind of a moment where I felt very proud of the fact that I did all of this and my actual work in terms of instructing and what they call here: A course leader. So you design a program and everything. And they ended up having to hand out my work to three guys. Which I found very funny.*

In a male-dominated field, realising that you are the first (woman) in a certain position can make you very proud. Naomi experienced that in Hong Kong.

> *Naomi: Where I worked in Hong Kong, it was predominantly at the higher level of I guess decision-making and things predominantly male. There were a few female characters and I myself stepped into the ranks of being one of the more senior instructors and program managers and program coordinators. And I was the first in a particular role of being able to wear all three hats at the same time, of which I was very proud because I was like, "Oh, I'm female". So yeah, and then before mostly whilst instructors around me have been pretty 50/50 in terms of gender, the higher up, it has still been predominantly male, it's quite a male-dominated industry though I feel that that is changing. Which is great.*

4.5 Next step

Thinking about the next step to overcome the challenges they face and move towards a more inclusive outdoor leadership field, three overarching themes emerged: role models and representation, awareness and education, and support systems.

4.5.1 Role models and representation

Five women spoke about role models and representation as the next step. They also discuss why it's so important to see someone in an outdoor leadership position representing "your profile".

> *Iris: I think just to see more and more girls as head guides, as tour leaders, like leading and being competent, being able to do it more, maybe more than a man.*

> *Eva: I think role models are a very important step. [...] I think there just needs to be a very drastic shift in showing that women can be leaders and very good leaders.*

> *Beau: In Scandinavia, I have seen maybe more male teachers in the guiding school or actually in the guiding school where I teach, we have*

only one female and we have many men. [...] Then in Svalbard, we have none. And from that, I can say that this is an issue because females want female role models. We need them, we look up to them and they are important to know that I'm as capable as this lady doing this job, and I want to be like her when I grow up.

Wanting to see someone you can relate to is not just limited to seeing a woman; Naomi also highlights the importance of diversity within the women/people who are represented.

Naomi: I would like to see a greater representation of women from all walks of life. I think here in the UK, I can't speak for everywhere else, but in many places, I've worked it's very male-dominated, very perceived not to be accessible for people other than white heterosexual males. And now more so white heterosexual females. And so it would be great to see more people being able to access the outdoors, women, people of colour, people from the LGBTQ+ communities who identify as whatever they identify as being able to access the outdoors and feel welcome.

Naomi: I'm all for championing women. But I feel that that alone is slightly outdated in a way. Apologies. I feel that there are many people that should be championed and encouraged into the outdoors from wherever they're from and whatever physicality they have. So yeah, for me, success would look like this in a few years' time if I could work somewhere and see people from all walks of life, that would be really cool. I would like that a lot.

Naomi: "You can't be what you can't see". [...] enabling people from [minority] communities and particular sort of African and Asian communities who are not seen in the outdoors and are perceived often to not enjoy the outdoors, giving them a voice and giving them the opportunity to see people who represent them.

Celine reflects on the difficulty of changing the behaviour of the guests you work with as an outdoor leader due to cultural differences. Celine and Eva speak about which step they (and other women outdoor leaders) could take.

Celine: I think towards the guests it's much more difficult because I think they come from all kinds of different cultures. And where the traditional roles have not always changed. And I think it would be a bit, I mean I'm happy if it would change, but it would be a bit unfair. [...] I don't think an outdoor leader, except by actually being an outdoor leader and giving a good example, doing that I think will not change that on the global scale.

Celine: I mean it can only change when people in reality, I would say, meet the same amount of people in the field. And then it starts to be more normalised. So I think that's the only way to do it because yeah. As I

said, I think you cannot judge people for having been raised with certain kinds of ideas. That's not going to happen in ten days, this change. The only thing is that you can show them that it's okay.

Eva: How we could make a change would be that we as women stop being shy in our positions and try to get out there and try to reach out for bigger positions because we still living in a society where it's not that normal to have female leaders or especially young female leaders. [...] And the only thing we can do to normalise things, it's to make them happen more often.

Celine shares another way she uses storytelling to shift the perspective towards the women in the field.

Celine: On Svalbard and the Regions, there are a lot of stories about the polar explorers and all of those are obviously men, but there are also a lot of beautiful and good stories of either the women that supported them, but also a lot of female trappers and hunters that have been on Svalbard. And of course, there are fewer of those stories, but I know that a lot of people, decide to tell [the stories about the women], maybe not equal amount because that's not possible, but definitely not skip the stories where the women are the main characters in the stories. Because that can also make it feel like the landscape is not only for men or accessible only for men in that way.

Eva describes how important it was for her to have a role model and how she chooses to surround herself with role models.

Eva: A teacher that I had in my education, she's this super hardcore lady and she is adored by all Friluftsliv students. She's called a hero like she's considered an actual goddess because she's so badass and really nice and has like a very nice style of leadership. [...] And I think I was very lucky that she was my teacher and that I'm still having quite a lot of contact with her and seeing what she's doing and it's very inspiring.

Eva: It's very empowering, but I think it's what and who you surround yourself with. I listen to podcasts with female outdoor leaders and the people I follow on Instagram are female mountaineers or female outdoor leaders. And I really focus on looking at women doing these things [being mountaineers, outdoor leaders] instead of looking at men doing these things because I can just identify myself a lot better with that.

As an outdoor leader, you might also be seen as a role model. Celine shares her experiences and observations and speaks about how she can make women feel more comfortable in outdoor environments by being open, being an example, and being relaxed about physical challenges.

Celine: I would say a positive thing is that often after, let's say, a longer trip like that, people are very happy, it's like a small example, but they really want to be in the picture with me, with my rifle and then they can show their friends and tell about the experience and things like that. So I think that shows that they still think it's strange. So it hasn't totally changed, but they kind of are like proud of something or they think it's really cool and then they can kind of bring that back home.

Celine: Also with other kinds of issues, like if people suddenly get their period or stuff like that. It's all very blunt examples. But I do think things make a big difference in being a woman or a man in a leadership situation because you just want people to, especially about their physical health, be very open towards whoever is the leader because it's important to know those things.

Celine: One of the issues in Snow Scooter Guiding is that you go on a ten-hour trip and you are fully suited up and of course, people need to pee and it's -20 degrees. And it's just so much easier for men, of course, to do that. And then there's this issue that you cannot walk away from the guide or the group because it's a safety issue. So let's say that at a certain amount of distance, women will have to take the whole suit and their clothes down and have to go and pee in the middle of nowhere in really cold temperatures. And obviously, this is, I would say, a lot of steps for people to do. They would, of course, try to avoid it. But it's very important, of course, because it can actually make people really cold or stressed if they don't go to the toilet when they have to. So it's again, a safety thing that they have to go to the toilet if they have to. And I think it helps a lot to be a woman and to just like that, I would just say "Okay, I have to go and pee. So like whoever wants to join me, I can show you how to do it and hold your suits here.". [...] I think this actually could be something that I can easily do, like, show it or like, be an example with my body. But the men cannot do that. So I think this is something that I'm actually often quite happy about, that I'm just like, okay, good, people will actually think it's fine and join me. And then it's not an issue.

4.5.2 Awareness and education

Four women pointed out the importance of awareness and education. The courses of action range from awareness about physical differences and education on how to be a good follower to the use of language. Beau suggests that raising awareness of the experiences women outdoor leaders have, provides a backup in the conversations about the challenges women encounter.

Beau: For me, it's actually raising the voice in the matter where you have some tools to do it. [...] I think that science it's a way to actually document some stuff and say to people like, "Hey, this is how we do it, this is how people feel.". And of course, a lot of people don't take

qualitative data or, you know, social research, as any kind of science. But this is the way how I feel that more science, including women and more science by women. I think on that topic especially, it should be done because then we have something that stands behind us in that dialogue.

Beau: I think it's definitely awareness and more confronting people with who we are and that we have equal knowledge when we go out there.

Celine: I think it's important to understand that the bodies work differently. It's part of the leadership role to understand that.

Tamara: There needs to be more education for everyone else who's like what it means to be a good follower and a good participant and part of a team.

Eva: I think language use is a very, very big topic, how people use language. [...] People need to understand that just because they've said something for 30 years doesn't mean that it's still nice to say that or that they should still say that. People should figure out that it's time to make some changes. And it's just small changes like often women are called "Mädel" or "Mädchen", which means girl [in German]. Or like the girl is doing this now, and this is already such a downgrade, actually, and degradation for a woman. [...] It's a very big difference if you would say a young woman or a young girl.

Earlier in the interviews, Beau mentioned unsuitable and ill-fitting clothing for women since the clothing was either unisex or made for men; she now highlights that there should also be a change in the outdoor clothing industry.

Beau: The awareness has to go in the industry, but also in the people that make the clothes.

4.5.3 Support systems

Support can come from different directions on different topics; Celine and Tamara suggest it will help increase women's opportunities. Having outdoor companies hire an equal amount of women and men could provide these opportunities, and the companies could support women.

Tamara: Giving more women the opportunity to be put in leadership roles.

Celine: I think it's much easier to make sure that the companies that we work for that those companies have a more equal amount of women and men working for them and also that they understand the kind of issues that we do face. [...] They hire us. So that makes it much easier to have a conversation [with them] about it.

Naomi points out how companies could support women and families.

Naomi: But actually, if we want to modernise and we want to become better as a company, as an organisation, then we need to recognise that people who they're employing who are women and men who are in their late 20, early 30 will be wanting to look to start families, many of them. And how can they make the space more suitable for that?

Mila suggests having a platform, an online support system, for women in the outdoor industry in Africa.

Mila: If there was more like a platform for women in this industry. Like "How do I deal with a situation like this?". Which is quite different cause you get American, British or European countries who are on a kinda similar wavelength compared to Africa, no one understands Africa. [...] But then if you can have a platform where you can be like "You know this a situation that I'm dealing with." Cause maybe people have dealt with similar situations.

4.6 Reflexivity

While all women reflected on their experiences, four reflected how biases affect their answers and decisions and how awareness of gender socialisation impacts the people we work with.

4.6.1 Biases

Tamara describes how people might be unaware of micro-aggressions and the underlying meaning of actions and comments towards women outdoor leaders.

Tamara: These little micro-aggressions and these covert comments that you wouldn't notice unless you're looking for them or it's like part of your own lived experience right? Like if you're a man who's lived your whole life that way, why would you notice these things? You probably wouldn't.

She notes that people will have to open their eyes to someone's experienced challenges and be aware and reflective of their biases.

> *Tamara: It's hard, right? Because like, dealing with something like that is a cultural shift. [...] You need to change your whole mindset. And it's the stuff they have to do for themselves, right? They have to be able to even understand that this is happening. You have to recognise your own biases. We all have biases no matter how hard we try.*

4.6.2 Awareness of gender socialisation

As Tamara notes, "We all have biases no matter how hard we try" Celine describes how her biases affected her reflections throughout the interview and give an example of how her biases show up in her decision-making.

> *Celine: But by saying all of this, I was actually thinking in this whole interview now I have actually said a lot of my kind of very stereotyped ideas of how men or women guide. So I don't think that's as black and white as I'm telling it. [...] If I would have to choose to be guided by a man or a woman or in like something where safety is critical, I might actually want to be guided by a woman. So it's like my own assumptions about how we make decisions are also very much based on how you perceive them and think, "Oh yeah, they are just like less cowboy-ish, because we [women] are in general.". And of course, I know a lot of amazing male guides who are totally open and totally in touch with themselves and making amazing good decisions. But if I don't know the person, I would think I might be safer or better off [with a woman].*

At the end of the interview with Beau, we had a short conversation about the experience of "being the interviewee" instead of "being the interviewer", which she usually is. She reflects on the challenge of having an equal divide between women and men. Besides pointing out the imbalance of the number of women in the field, she also mentions what she observes regarding the perception of one's competence.

> *Beau: In my research, I'm looking into the safety competence of the guides working in Svalbard, Iceland and Greenland. And I've been trying to have this research equally divided between females and males. And it's not possible. It's mainly not possible, for instance, in Greenland, because they are very few females in that field. So I could not get the same number. They are maybe two female guides. And then in Svalbard, I came across men and females who said that they didn't feel competent to take part in my research. [...] I have much more males because the females told me they didn't really [feel competent enough]. They said that "No, I don't feel like I'm the right person to talk to. I don't have the right competence". So I guess it's circling back to what we think about ourselves.*

5. Discussion

In this research project, I explored the different challenges women outdoor leaders encounter in the outdoor leadership field. The literature shows men still dominate the outdoor field, making it harder for women to take up space. Besides exploring the challenges women outdoor leaders encounter due to the male-dominated nature of the outdoor leadership field, I explored how women were treated differently than their male colleagues. And how gender socialisation influenced how the participants perceived their competence. Finally, I asked them what they believed could be the next step towards a more equal and inclusive outdoor leadership field. During the interviews, some women reflected on their experiences and examined their own biases, which provided me with unexpected but eye-opening reflections.

In the results, I aimed to give the women outdoor leaders the stage and to create a great amount of space for their stories and experiences to be shared. Exploring the challenges was the purpose of this research project, led by the primary question: Which challenges do women outdoor leaders encounter in the outdoor leadership field? The main challenges women outdoor leaders face are, in one way or another, a result of gender socialisation and traditional gender roles. Even the other three themes that emerged in the participants' answers, authority, proving and micro-aggressions, can be traced back to the expectations society associates with the female sex. The knowledge constructs people build throughout their lives while interacting with their social and cultural environment affect how they interact with their environment. That's why I would argue authority issues, women outdoor leaders feeling the need to prove themselves and micro-aggressions towards women are a part of gender socialisation.

Celine gave a clear example of the expectations people had regarding the person who is supposed to be the skipper on a ship; her example shows people did not expect a woman to be the skipper; they assumed the skipper was a man. Here the sociocultural construct is "a skipper is a man". Having this construct in mind, people might be less likely to see the female skipper as competent enough to take the lead, and therefore she would have to prove herself to be seen as competent. Connecting authority issues and women having to prove themselves to gender socialisation. An example that relates the micro-aggressions to gender socialisation is the example from Eva, who shared a situation where male colleagues made sexist jokes; she mentioned how those

sexist jokes affected her: "In a way that makes you very aware that you're a woman, and it's not normal/not accepted that women can guide other people safely in nature".

I was happy to hear that one woman, Beau, initially did not encounter any challenges while working as an outdoor leader. She did, however, experience gender-related challenges when she stepped into the academic field. While working as a researcher on guiding and safety, she observed the challenges other women outdoor leaders encountered in the field. She was also the only woman who mentioned equipment challenges, specifically snowmobile/rescue suits people often need to wear in the Arctic. The ill-fitting suits cause women not to be able to move properly in the suit, making them look clumsy. Beau pointed out how this causes potential safety risks. Additionally, I would argue it builds upon the notion that women are perceived as less competent (Jordan, 2018; Warren et al., 2018). The second point Beau mentioned is the willingness of companies to invest in equipment suitable for women; women are expected to adjust and wear ill-fitting male suits instead. This shows that the outdoor industry is not a welcoming place for women. They can participate, but they have to change to the standard which is set by men.

The secondary questions accompanied the primary question, starting with: In which way do women outdoor leaders get treated differently from their male colleagues? This question brought out a few more challenges women encounter, specifically related to questioning their competence, physical abilities and how much people value their words and opinions. All of these themes build upon the themes from the subchapter on Challenges. In the experiences the women share, I noticed a certain "subtleness" to people's behaviour towards the women. These four excerptions larger quotes demonstrate this subtle behaviour:

- "And it's really like little and small actions. And if you don't pay attention, you won't notice it."
- "People might be quicker to explain things or to help to move things."
- "It's very interesting because it's never said, of course, upfront."
- "And they typically like only pay attention when it's another man talking and not when it's another woman talking."

In the case of Mila's experiences, it is, however, very clear people do not value her words unless a man is saying those same words. Her example about the steps she takes whenever she feels like her authority is getting challenged shows how much effort it can take to make people believe your words, in her case, having to get a man involved to say the same thing she just said. I noticed Mila encountered clear and upfront sexism, especially when she shared experiences in South Africa and Zambia. Since I grew up in The Netherlands, I have to be aware of the "Western country view" I have. Through my Western country lens, the experiences Mila shares seem like a textbook example of sexism; it is a form that does not occur that often anymore in the environment I grew up in. I am used to subtle sexist jokes and underlying biases in the behaviour of people, the type you barely notice, and often people are not even aware of the sexist nature of their words and actions. So listening to Mila's experiences, it felt like jumping back in time, whilst for her, this is her daily reality.

The participants gave examples of how participants and/or colleagues perceive and treat them differently. The perceived competence by others as a result of gender socialisation triggered my curiosity regarding the other side of the story, how the perceptions of one's competence are affected by gender socialisation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the literature shows (Appling, 1989; Loeffler, 1995; Warren et al., 2018) women tend to perceive themselves as less competent than they are due to gender socialisation which results in a change in dynamics and avoiding taking the lead. With this in the back of my mind, I formulated the following secondary research question: How does gender role socialisation influence how women outdoor leaders perceive their own competence? The answers to these questions could be divided into two themes: unconscious biases and doubts and reflections and actions. The answers fitting under the second theme were usually a follow-up on the answers categorised under the first theme. Participants describe how unconscious biases and doubt often came from a certain comparison to male colleagues. However, they also knew that men are usually perceived as more competent than women. Two excerpts of larger quotes show the reflection process:

> Beau: I sometimes don't feel competent because I compare myself to people that maybe don't have more competence, but they have more courage to do those things and have more courage because they have been always perceived as those people that have that competence.

> *Naomi: But on a subconscious level, there probably is some bias there towards myself and some second-guessing of my abilities because my male counterparts might be deemed to be or viewed, rightly or wrongly, to be more competent or better.*

After examining their unconscious biases and doubts, the participants described their inner dialogue when they caught themselves experiencing doubts or biases regarding the perception of their competence. Pausing to reflect on their thoughts, they could adjust their actions, feel proud, learn a lesson, or give themselves a break:

- "And I think maybe it's my bad also too to have accepted it at the beginning. But it's how we learn."
- "And it's still sometimes I catch myself and I'm like, "Well, hang on, you're cool"."

I believe this gentleness towards yourself, putting the doubts and biases you experience in perspective, could increase your confidence. Reflexivity is a good tool to possess as an outdoor leader, having the skill to examine your actions, thoughts and feelings. In my opinion, having this skill will help you become a better leader.

The final secondary question revealed the hopes and dreams of the women for a more inclusive outdoor leadership field; the question was: Which steps do women outdoor leaders believe need to be taken to overcome the challenges they face and move towards a more inclusive outdoor leadership field? The participants' answers could be divided into three approaches: role models and representation, awareness and education, and support systems. Realising that the question, and this whole research project for that matter, is set up with a feminist goal in mind, I aimed to dig deeper and recognise the different feminist perspectives that make an appearance within the different themes.

The biggest theme was "role models and representation" participants mentioned not only the need for role models and representation but also the importance of how they could be role models and how they surround themselves with role models. The liberal feminist perspective suggests increasing representation and equal opportunities is a way of achieving gender equality (Allin & West, 2013; Henderson, 1996). Thus, several participants' answers can be seen as solutions from a liberal feminist perspective, an excerpt: "I think there just needs to be a very drastic shift in showing that women can

be leaders and very good leaders.". What could be considered a downside to this perspective is that it does not break down the existing structure, which could be seen as a structure made by men. Combining increased opportunities and representation with a radical feminist perspective, I think, has the potential to represent women outdoor leaders and a more feminine leadership style, not conforming to what outdoor leadership is supposed to be according to male standards.

Naomi added a post-structural feminist perspective and suggested not being limited to the representation of just women.

> Naomi: I'm all for championing women. But I feel that that alone is slightly outdated in a way. Apologies. I feel that there are many people that should be championed and encouraged into the outdoors from wherever they're from and whatever physicality they have. "You can't be what you can't see."

I definitely agree and was happy she mentioned this shortcoming in my research. If this research project had been bigger, I would have liked to have the participant population be more inclusive and intersectional, considering class, race, sexuality and ability. Celine gave another example that could be seen as a post-structural feminist approach which was shifting perspective and focusing on the discourse of women in the outdoors.

Within the Awareness and education theme, the radical feminist perspective played a big role. The women addressed raising awareness, educating people and sexist language.

- "I think it's definitely awareness and more confronting people with who we are and that we have equal knowledge when we go out there."
- "I think it's important to understand that the bodies work differently."
- "It's a very big difference if you would say a young woman or a young girl."

In a way, it encourages breaking down the structures made by men, making space for women and their experiences, not just making space but also creating a safer space to be understood, for example, understanding that there are physical differences and women are not just "smaller men".

The different suggestions within the "Support systems" theme could be seen as liberal, radical and socialist feminist perspectives. Most suggestions are focused on the organisations around women; the companies they work for can provide a space where women are given opportunities, a space suitable for people who have children or are thinking about starting a family, and where the company understands the issues women face.

During the data analysis, another theme emerged, the women were not only reflecting on their experiences but also on their own biases and how that affected them. Celine, for instance, deconstructed her own bias:

Celine: But by saying all of this, I was actually thinking in this whole interview now I have actually said a lot of my kind of very stereotyped ideas of how men or women guide. So I don't think that's as black and white as I'm telling it.

She mentioned how she might feel safer being guided by a woman since she considers women to be on the safer side, a bias she marks as stereotypical. Tamara recognised people might not be receptive towards the challenges of others if they do not have to deal with the challenges in their life. This more or less unexpected theme made me reflect on my biases, structures, perspective, and stereotypical thoughts. How did I approach this research project? As I mentioned, the research could have been more inclusive and intersectional; I now look at this from my white, abled-bodied, cis-woman perspective. Even though I try to educate myself on the challenge people with a different class, race, ability, or sexuality encounter, I might not always be aware of their challenges. As Tamara said: "If you're a man who's lived your whole life that way, why would you notice these things? You probably wouldn't.". This research is more of a radical feminist approach, aims to create awareness, but is missing the post-structural feminist perspective.

My research project aimed to collect stories and contribute to the existing body of literature to give insight and further the conversation (Avery, 2015; Gray et al., 2020) so the results do not challenge existing theories. This research project is similar to previous research; an example is the article "Blazing a Trail … Together: The Need for Mentoring and Collaboration Amongst Women in Outdoor Leadership" by Avery, Norton and Tucker (2018). The biggest difference in their research was the focus, not on the challenges, but on what women need and the methodology; they interviewed

each participant three times to "gain confidence and trust in the interviewer" (p. 804). An important result was the need for role models and strong female relationships; this matches my results of the "next step" question. I wonder what else the women would have shared if there had been three interviews. Would we have had the chance to dive deeper?

Two articles highlighted the challenges women outdoor leaders face (Jordan, 2018; Warren et al., 2018), and their research provided an important basis for the literature review in Chapter 2. My results on challenges and different treatments had similarities with the challenges Jordan and Warren et al. mentioned. I was glad to hear non of my participants encountered sexual harassment. But I have to be aware that sexual harassment is a sensitive topic, and sharing that with an interviewer you just met, might be uncomfortable.

There were various limitations I encountered during the research process. While I consider myself fortunate to have had the chance to interview seven women, all from different countries, I also realise this creates a very wide, but not very saturated, view. I cannot draw any conclusions that apply to a specific country or location. The available time for this research project did not allow me to have a bigger participant population and potentially have a more inclusive and intersectional participant population. Currently, the women I interviewed are mostly from Western Countries; if the number of participants had been higher, I could have had a more diverse group of participants. Then again, this research project aimed to explore, to share stories, not necessarily compare the challenges of women outdoor leaders of different countries. Additionally, I could have interviewed participants multiple times to gain trust and confidence.

When it comes to the interview questions, there was one question the participants had a hard time answering due to the formulation of the sentence. The interview question was: How does gender-role socialisation influence your perception of your competence? In most cases, I received a comment about it being a hard question and had to clarify or repeat the question. In some cases, participants did not fully grasp the question and ended up not answering it. During the data analysis, I discovered that some of them unconsciously answered the question at another point in the interview.

I want to shortly mention that the transcription software Sonix did not always transcribe what had been said correctly, which caused random words in the transcriptions. While going through the transcriptions, I noticed that whenever participants mentioned "guides", Sonix transcribed it as "guys". Which I thought was a quite funny but accurate portrayal of the overall problem.

In conclusion, women in outdoor leadership positions still encounter various challenges, most connected to the sociocultural constructs regarding gender socialisation. Since collecting stories of gendered experiences of people in outdoor leadership functions could contribute to expanding the available literature and offer insight (Avery, 2015; Gray et al., 2020), there is still potential to continue collecting stories. Not just from women but also from a diverse group of people: be more inclusive and intersectional, considering class, race, sexuality and ability. I believe voicing the challenges people encounter and discussing and implementing changes that could be made to overcome these challenges can be a step towards a gender-neutral outdoor leadership field. Besides collecting stories from a more diverse participant population, there is potential to research the possibilities of practical solutions companies, guiding schools, and outdoor leaders can implement.

6. Conclusion

After interacting with a guiding school with very few women in outdoor leadership positions, I felt frustrated and disappointed. As a woman who recently started working as an outdoor leader, I quickly noticed how male-dominated the outdoor leadership field is. This particular guiding school was not an exception. It made me wonder which challenges women in outdoor leadership positions encounter in the field. Women do have the desire to work as outdoor leaders and do not "sell their soul away" by working office jobs. There is already existing literature on the challenges women face, but expanding the body of literature with stories and insights on challenges encountered by women outdoor leaders is a way to increase awareness, further the conversation and create transformational change. Wanting to explore the different challenges, I used interviews to collect stories and experiences from women outdoor leaders. I collected their stories and experiences by asking them about the challenges they face, how they are treated differently compared to their male colleagues, how gender socialisation influenced the perception of their competence and what they think could be a step towards a more inclusive and equal outdoor leadership field. The main findings concluded that the challenges encountered by women outdoor leaders are connected to gender socialisation and traditional gender stereotyping. The women experienced authority issues and micro-aggressions, and they often felt a need to prove themselves. These encountered challenges are strongly linked to the different treatments they receive and how they perceive their competence. As a next step, the participants would like to see more role models and representation in the field, create awareness regarding challenges and educate people, and have more support systems. This research clearly illustrates that women outdoor leaders encounter challenges but also raises the question of what practical steps forward could entail and how those steps can be implemented. Another suggestion for future research that came up during this research project is to make the research population more inclusive and intersectional in terms of race, class, sexuality and ability and explore the challenges they are facing. For now, remember the Sport Reform Dress that made it possible to move more freely and comfortably in the outdoors? A practical solution I can suggest is starting to invest in snowmobile suits suited for women because we found our place in the outdoors and are not going anywhere.

References

Allin, L. (2003). Challenging careers for women? Negotiating identities in outdoor education. Unpublished PhD thesis, Buckingham University Chilterns College, Brunel University.

Allin, L. & West, A. (2013). Feminist Theory and Outdoor Leadership. In: Pike, E. C. J., & Beames, S. (Eds.) *Outdoor adventure and social theory*. (1st ed.). (pp. 113-124) Routledge.

Appling, L. (1989). Women and leadership. National Outdoor Leadership School Staff Conference Proceedings (pp. 9–12). Lander, Wyoming.

Avery, M. E. (2015). The Gendering of Outdoor Recreation: Women's Experiences on Their Path to Leadership.

Avery, M. E., Norton, C. L., Tucker, A. (2018). Blazing a Trail ... Together: The Need for Mentoring and Collaboration Amongst Women in Outdoor Leadership. In Gray, T., Mitten, D. (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* (pp. 801-813). Springer Publishing.

Beauvoir, S. D. (1953). *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. SAGE.

Cherney, I. D., & London, K. (2006). Gender-linked Differences in the Toys, Television Shows, Computer Games, and Outdoor Activities of 5- to 13-year-old Children. *Sex Roles*, *54*(9–10), 717–726. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9037-8

Culp, R. (1998). Adolescent girls and outdoor recreation: A case study examining constraints and effective programming. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *30*(3), (pp. 356–379).

Diamond, M. (2000). IV. Sex and Gender: Same or Different? *Feminism &Amp; Psychology, 10*(1), 46–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353500010001007

Fasting, K. (1987). Sports and women's culture. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *10*, 361-368.

Ghimire, R., Green, G., Poudyal, N., & Cordell, H. (2014). An analysis of perceived constraints to outdoor recreation. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, *32*(4).

Gidlow, B., Cushman, G., & Espiner, S. R. (2009). Recreational hunters, fishers and divers in North Canterbury: Outdoor enthusiasms in social contexts. Lincoln, New Zealand: Lincoln University.

Gray, T., & Mitten, D. (2018). The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning. In *Springer eBooks*. https://doi.org/ 10.1007/978-3-319-53550-0

Gray, T., Mitten, D., Potter, T. G., & Kennedy, J. P. (2020). Reflective Insights Toward Gender-Inclusive Outdoor Leadership. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership*, 12(1), 102–120. https://doi.org/10.18666/ jorel-2020-v12-i1-9958

Gurholt, K. P. (2008). Norwegian *friluftsliv* and ideals of becoming an 'educated man.' Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning, 8(1), 55–70.

Gurholt, K.P. (2018). Tourist and Sport Reform Dress, Friluftsliv, and Women's Right to Vote in Norway, 1880–1913. In: Gray, T &, Mitten, D. (Eds.) The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning. Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education. (pp. 129-146) Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Haas, A. (2022). Women as Outdoor Leaders and the challenges they face. Unpublished essay. University of South Eastern Norway, course Landscape, Outdoor Practices & Identities.

Henderson, K. A. (1996). Feminist perspectives on outdoor leadership. In K. Warren (Ed.), *Women's voices in experiential education* (pp. 107-117). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Hill, A., Morse, P., & Dyment, J. (2020). A critical examination of the place of interviews in outdoor studies research. In: Humberstone, B., & Prince, H. (Eds.) *Research Methods in Outdoor Studies*. (pp. 57-67) Routledge.

Hoominfar, E. (2019). Gender Socialization. In: *Encyclopedia of the UN sustainable development goals* (pp. 1–10). Springer International Publishing. https:// doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70060-1_13-1

Humberstone, B., & Prince, H. (2019). *Research Methods in Outdoor Studies*. Routledge.

Jordan, D. (1988). An examination of gender differences in perceptions of outdoor leaders by pre-experience Colorado outward bound participants (Dissertation). Indiana University.

Jordan, D. J. (2018). Ongoing Challenges for Women as Outdoor Leaders. In T. Gray & D. Mitten (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* (pp. 217–233). Springer Publishing.

Kaskan, E. R., & Ho, I. K. (2016). Microaggressions and Female Athletes. *Sex Roles*, 74(7–8), 275–287. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0425-1

Kumar, R. (2018). Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners. SAGE.

Loden, M. (1985). Feminine leadership, or, How to succeed in business without being one of the boys. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA12214231

Loeffler, T. A. (1996). Sexual harassment and experiential education programs: A closer look. In K. Warren (Ed.), *Women's voices in experiential education* (pp. 213–225). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Martin, B., Cashel, C. M., Wagstaff, M., & Breunig, M. (2006). Outdoor Leadership: Theory and Practice. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA78663917

McNiel, J. N., Harris, D. A., & Fondren, K. M. (2012). Women and the Wild: Gender Socialization in Wilderness Recreation Advertising. *Gender Issues*, *29*(1–4), 39–55. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-012-9111-1

Mitten, D. (1985). A philosophical basis for a women's outdoor adventure program. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 8(2), 20–24. https://doi. org/10.1177/10538 2598500800205.

Mitten, D. (2017). Connections, compassion, and co-healing: The ecology of relationship. In K. Malone, S. Truong, & T. Gray (Eds.), Reimagining sustainability in precarious times. London: Springer.

Newbery, L. (2003). Will any/body carry that canoe? A geography of the body, ability, and gender. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 8, 204–216.

Packer, M. J., & Goicoechea, J. (2000). Sociocultural and Constructivist Theories of Learning: Ontology, Not Just Epistemology. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(4), 227–241. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep3504_02

Paludi, M., & Barickman, R. (1991). Academic and workplace sexual harassment: a resource manual. *SUNY Press*.

Pryor, A. (2018). Following the Currents of Mighty Women Past and Present. In: Gray, T. & Mitten, D. (Eds.) *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning. Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education.* (pp. 169-187) Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Salmons, J. E. (2015). Doing Qualitative Research Online. SAGE.

Sharp, B. (2001). Take Me to Your (Male) Leader. *Gender and Education*, *13*(1), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250123494

Sikt. (n.d.). Notification Form for personal data. https://sikt.no/en/notification-form-personal-data

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2016). Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise. Taylor & Francis.

Straker, J. (2018). Women's Voices in the Outdoors. In: Gray, T. & Mitten, D. (Eds.) *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning. Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education.* (pp. 95-108) Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Tyson, L., & Asmus, K. (2008). Deepening the paradigm of choice: Exploring choice and power in experiential education. In K. Warren, D. Mitten, & T. A. Loeffler (Eds.), *Theory and practice of experiential education* (pp. 262–281). Boulder, CO: Association for Experiential Education.

Tzuriel, D. (2021). The Socio-Cultural Theory of Vygotsky. In: *Social Interaction in Learning and Development.* Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75692-5_3

Van Staveren, I. (2021). Chapter 1: Karl Marx on Capitalism. In: *Alternative Ideas from 10 (Almost) Forgotten Economists.* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57609-7_2

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Warren, K., Risinger, S., & Loeffler, T. A. (2018). Challenges Faced by Women Outdoor Leaders. In T. Gray & D. Mitten (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* (pp. 247–258). Springer Publishing.

Wattchow, B. (2006). Outdoor leadership: Theory and practice. Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education, 11(1), 50–52. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03400848

Wright, M., & Gray, T. (2013). The hidden turmoil: Females achieving longevity in the outdoor learning profession. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, 16(2), 12–23.

Wynn. T. (2018). Contested Spaces: Gender Disparity in Outdoor Learning Environments. In T. Gray & D. Mitten (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* (pp. 195–197). Springer Publishing.

Yieke, F. A. (2001). Gender as a Sociocultural Construct: A Sociolinguistic Perspective. *The Journal of Cultural Studies*, 3(2), 333–347. https://doi.org/10.4314/jcs.v3i2.6196

List of tables and charts

Annexes

Annex 1: Interview guide

Interviewer: Annabelle Haas
Interviewee:
Date:
Conference app: Zoom

Duration	Action/question	"Script"
	Part 1: Introduction	
1 min	Introducing myself	Welcome to this interview. As mentioned in the information letter you received, this interview will be recorded in order to transcribe and analyse it later on. The data will only be used for this master's thesis. Do you have any questions about this? *time for answering questions* *start recording*
		I'm Annabelle Haas and this interview is part of my master thesis for the study "Nordic Masters in Friluftsliv Studies (Outdoor Studies)", which is a Nordic collaboration of four universities:

		- The University of South Eastern Norway, - The Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, - Hólar University in Iceland and - The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences.
1 min	Introducing research project	The topic of this research project is "Challenges women outdoor leaders encounter in the Outdoor leadership field". The outdoor work field has been male-dominated for a long time, which makes it harder for women to take up space in this field. The aim of this thesis is to explore the challenges encountered by women outdoor leaders and make their voices heard which could create awareness and hopefully change.

1 min	Reason the participants are part of this interview	You are chosen to participate in this interview, because you are working as an outdoor leader. Other synonyms I will use are a head guide, lead guide, guide in charge, main responsible, and guide with the ultimate responsibility.
0,5 min	Part 2: Getting to know each other	I would like to start with a few questions to get to know you.

+- 5 min	1.Could you please introduce yourself
	  1. Name, nationality
	  2. For how long have you been working in the outdoor field?
	  3. For how long of that time have you been an outdoor leader?
	  4. How did you become an outdoor leader?
	  5. What adventure activities do you guide as an outdoor leader now?
	  6. How often do you guide as an outdoor leader in these activities?
		This part is very open, providing background information.

	Part 3: Main questions	

7 min	1. What kind of challenges do you encounter as a women outdoor leader?	Follow-up in dept-questions depending on the answers to the "encountered challenges" question: 1. How often is your competence questioned by colleagues/ participants? • Why do you think that this happens? What do you think it is based on? 2. How often do you experience sexually inappropriate behaviour (by colleagues/participants)? • Sexist and inappropriate comments/touching/"jokes"/ objectifying/etc. 3. What do you do when you encounter <type of challenge>?
7 min	2. What do you think is the next step that has to be taken to overcome these challenges (in the outdoor leadership field)?	- Challenges mentioned in the previous question
7 min	3. Do you ever get treated differently compared to your male colleagues (because you're a woman)? If yes, could you give an example?	- By participants, other people you interact with while working

7 min	4. How does gender-role socialisation influence your perception of your own competence?	If necessary - little explanation of the gender-role socialisation, definition from Andersen and Taylor (2007): "Gender socialisation is defined as the socialisation process by which people learn and are influenced by the societal expectations associated with their sex". Follow up: • How does your "gender role" shape how you deal with things?
	Part 4: Finishing up	
3 min		Is there anything you would like to say or add?
2 min	Thanking	Thank you so much for participating in this interview. Would it be okay to reach out if I have another question later on? If you are interested in the final thesis, I can share it with you by email.
	References	Andersen, M. L., & Taylor, H. F. (2007). Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society, Updated. Cengage Learning.

Annex 2: Participant background

ID pseudonyms	Originally from	Currently in	"Title"	Years in outdoor field	Years as outdoor leader	Activities	Frequency	Countries worked in
Beau	Poland	Svalbard, Norway	Outdoor instructor, outdoor educator, program coordinator, Arctic Nature guide Researcher	12	5,5	Boat guiding - nature interpretation, teaching in guiding school, kayaking, hiking, dog sledding Research on safety in guiding	Summer season, research on guiding	US, China (Hong Kong), Korea, Iceland, Mexico, Greenland, Antartica, Svalbard
Celine	The Netherlands	Svalbard, Norway	Expedition Leader (on ships), Arctic Nature guide, Outdoor Leader	?	5	Outdoor art projects, hiking, sailing, nature interpretation	Full-time	Svalbard, Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland
Eva	Germany	Norway	Outdoor guide, winter guiding specialisation	3	2,5	Hiking, climbing, back-country skiing, cross-country skiing, day/ multi-day trips	Frequency depending on season	Austria, Norway, Germany

Tamara	Eastern US	Eastern US	Outdoor leader, outdoor instructor	10	9	Glacial mountaineering, field instructor, climbing, hiking, wilderness medicine instructor, ship based guiding (power boats), backpacking	Full time	Alaska, US, Antartica, general Arctic
Iris	France	France	Head guide	2	1	Hiking, trekking (backpacking), pack rafting	Summer season	Iceland, Belgium
Mila	South Africa	Zambia	Corporate teambuilding facilitator, outdoor leader, program manager, program design manager, outdoor instructor, development instructor	?	?	River rafting, white water kayaking, scuba diving, high ropes, rock climbing, abseiling, corporate teambuilding	Full-time	South Africa, China (Hong Kong), Zambia

| Naomi | Namibia | North Wales | Outdoor leader, outdoor instructor, program manager, program leader | 14 | ? | Diving, canoeing, rock climbing, camping, navigation, route finding, mountaineering, abseiling, scrambling, team building, raft building hill walking | Full-time | UK, Wales, Thailand, New Zealand, China (Hong Kong) |