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1 Introduction

This part will introduce the reader to the challenges employers have when attracting the most suitable employees for their organizations. Entering the labor market and finding a post-graduate job is a time consuming activity for many graduate students. If the organizations are familiar with which job-attributes students are valuing when they look for employment, both employers and employees will benefit.

1.1 Background

Every year nearly 60 000 people graduate from universities in Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2007a). All companies want to attract the best employees for their organization, and are therefore being extremely selective. To get the opportunity to pick out the most suitable candidates, the organizations need to attract a large number of applicants in the initial stages of recruitment (Freeman, Terjesen & Vinnicombe, 2007). This starts with the organizations trying to communicate a positive image in the mind of the graduate students by using various marketing means, commonly known as employer branding (Barrow & Mosely, 2006).

At the Swedish job market, there are nearly one million actively working firms in the enterprise directory in year 2008 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2008b). Of those firms, 850 are according to Nationalencyklopedin's (2008) definition large firms, which means that they have more than 500 employees (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2008b). There are a large number of smaller firms that also need employees. Finding the right person for the right position is hard for many firms in all sizes. Research reports rating the most popular employers among graduates and young professionals are every year showing that large Multinational companies (MNC) are the most attractive employers among graduates (Universum, 2008b). This fact is backed up by Moy and Lee's study among graduate students in Hong Kong (2002), which showed that graduates prefer working in MNC's over small- and medium sized companies (SMC). What is it that these companies communicate that attracts students? Expectations about the future at the labor market are of course different depending on who one asks. Everyone cannot, and do not want to, become an employee at Universum's (2008b) top-rated organizations; IKEA, H&M or Sony Ericsson. For this reason, all companies need to show themselves and position themselves in a way that communicates the image of what their target group wants in an employer.

In the past, a person's status in the society was highly linked to their occupation. After the industrial revolution in the 19th century today's organizations were developed, and have continued to grow. Even with the globalization and restructure of the community, a person's job is still the base of how they are perceived in the society, and hence the base of the societal status. Before, the most usual way of choosing occupation and career path was to do what one's father was doing (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2000). This was partly due to convenience reasons, but most importantly due to the way of learning; oral traditions and learning by doing. Today in a developed society, individuals have a greater opportunity to highly influence one's own career path (Brown, Brooks and associates, 2002). This is what is called *Career development*.

When talking about choosing an employer and a future job, the Yale school of management professor Victor Vroom (1995) makes a distinction between *occupational choices* and *organizational choices*. The occupational choice is what profession the person chooses, e.g. nurse or mechanic. The organizational choice, hence, is what organization the person then chooses to work within. Most commonly one chooses the occupation first and then

the organization (Vroom, 1995). Since this paper is based on the idea that companies trying brand themselves as good employers towards future employees, the focus is on the organizational choice among graduate students. Hence, organizational attributes are key factors to attract applicants, and by conducting employer branding activities, the companies are emphasizing the strengths of *the organization* as an employer (Barrow & Mosely, 2006; Freeman et al., 2007). The occupations are assumed to be the same in similar companies, e.g. an auditor has the same work tasks if working at accounting firms KPMG or Deloitte. What the company can do in order to attract the students is to highlight other benefits, like career development opportunities or a higher salary. The job applicant will thereafter select the organization where his or hers preferred job-attributes are to be identified.

Greenhaus et al. (2000) refer to the Expectancy Theory developed by Vroom when talking about organizational choice. The theory addresses questions such as *why do people choose the careers they do, what factors cause people to be satisfied with their work, and what influences human performance*. Further, Greenhaus et al., (2000) claims that job candidates are attracted to organizations which are most likely to provide desirable outcomes and avoid undesirable ones. Therefore, companies must be aware of *what* these desirable outcomes for graduate students are.

Greenhaus et al. (2000) continue to state that the person is not only dependent on the choices that one makes, but also on events beyond his or her control. This makes most decision-making situations to involve some elements of risk which also should be taken into account. From the sociological perspective, Brown et al., (2002) consider such elements of risk to be e.g. discrimination in the labor market, which means unequal opportunities for men and women, or whites and minorities. Finally, Vroom (1995) claims that the extent to which the outcomes are expected to be probable influence the applicants choice between alternatives. A successful employer must therefore include both elements of desirable outcomes as well as limitation of the potential risks. Promoting an organizations job security towards the target market is one example of communicating an elimination of risks.

Even though negative reports about companies laying-off its employees are published in the news every day, business students still hold a positive view of the future, and are hence also being selective when it comes to the employer (Carlén, 2008). To support this view, statistics from Statistiska Centralbyrån (2008a) indicates an increasing demand for business graduates until year 2020. The future for engineering graduates looks bright as well. According to Statistiska Centralbyrån (2007), the shortfall of technical schooled graduates will increase during the coming years. This indicates that there will be a deficit of qualified labor, and the firms must compete even harder in order to attract the right employees.

1.2 Problem discussion

When multinational corporations get most of the media's attention (European commission, 2007), small enterprises which are operating under a highly restricted resource constraint have a hard time to position themselves and attracting the right graduates for their organizations.

The research institute Universum (2008a) points out that successful employer branding activities has become an increasingly important factor for companies when they are about

to attract the best job seekers. Therefore it is not a surprise that large multinational companies, using extensive branding efforts to promote themselves, are the top-ranked companies on Universum's employer attractiveness ranking in 2008. They have a lot of resources and through various marketing programs they are able to create messages to stick themselves in the mind of students. The campus in Jönköping is not an exception. Notice boards are covered with job offerings and trainee positions in various companies. Students are also on a regularly basis invited to participate in company presentations held by those companies at the university (Knutpunkten, 2008).

As a graduate student, one has to choose the employer that is communicating the personally desired job-attributes fitting ones expectations. Career management is a commonly used term when talking about an individuals organizational selection strategies (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Gutteridge (1986) defines it as; *“a process by which individuals develop, implement, and monitor career goals and strategies”*. The first employment is highly connected with further career development (Caretta, 1992), and consequently the first choice of employer is of extra importance. From the companies' point of view, human resources are considered as one of the most important inputs to an organization (Universum, 2008a). A study from 2007 show that attracting talent is in the second place ranking of concerns that US organizations have (Deloitte, 2007). Selecting the right person to the right position is essential in order to optimize the organizational output (Branine, 2008).

When there is a gap in communication between organizations that are trying to attract students and the students that are searching for an organization where their desired job-attributes are to be find, a problem occurs. The gap will be present when companies do not know what attributes students are looking for when they make choices among employers, and students do not know what the organizations can offer. Hence, organizations that fail to highlight what they are offering or communicate wrong job attributes towards students might lose a talented employee. In order to diminish the communication gap between the organizations and students, this study aims to investigate what job-attributes students are looking for when selecting their first post-graduate employer.

The authors consider that the findings of this study will be of interest for employers, since it will increase the understanding of their prospective co-workers. A deeper understanding of graduates' job search criteria will enable organizations to better create a message that can be communicated towards potential employees. Small-, and medium-sized organizations in the Jönköping region that are in need for qualified managers will especially benefit from this study due to the locally selected sample. Understanding the local graduate students' expectations will enable them to better communicate towards students and include desired job-attributes that attract students. As the situation is today, many organizations all over the world are employing less qualified people because of lack of applications from the best fitting employees (Freeman et al., 2007).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine what job attributes graduating students find most important when choosing their first employer after graduating.

2 Frame of reference

To better explain the empirical findings, theories and previous research in the field will be addressed in this section. This enables the reader to better understand the authors' connection between graduating students job attributes and their selection of first employer. Finally, the frame of reference will be used when analyzing the collected data.

2.1 Career development in the general context

Career management: “a process by which individuals develop, implement, and monitor career goals and strategies” (Gutteridge, 1986).

When talking about career development one talks about an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterized by a relative unique set of issues, themes or tasks (Gutteridge, 1986). The fact that careers are constructed by individuals is supported by Brown et al. (2002).

Greenhaus et al. (2000) divided the career development process into five steps including *occupational choice*, *organizational choice*, *early career: establishment and achievement*, *midcareer*, and *later career*. Since this paper examines the organizational choice, the second step in the career development process, *organizational choice*, will be focused upon. Greenhaus et al., (2000) consider the organizational choice to start somewhere in the age between 18-25 years old, with an organizational entry. Thus, focusing on the group graduating students is relevant.



Figure 1: Career development process (Greenhaus et al., 2000)

2.1.1 Organizational choice

The organizational choice phase starts with several months of job search, and depending on the applicants' educational background the age of organizational entry varies (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Greenhaus et al. (2000) define a positive outcome of the process as one that satisfies one's career values and uses one's talent. A business graduate may therefore experience a positive outcome if one gets a position focusing on accounting or finance within an organization with the desirable attributes. Similarly engineering students will have a positive experience within an organization focusing on e.g. aerodynamics or nuclear fuel. The fact that students search for jobs in organizations where they further can develop their theoretical skills was confirmed by John Burgoyne and Tony Eccles as early as in 1975. Greenhaus et al. (2000) continues to say that it is likely that the applicant will experience dissatisfaction with the organization when the selection is based on incomplete

or unrealistic information. For example, if an organization presents themselves as flexible and when the employee start to work he or she strictly has to follow the routines, it is very likely that he or she will become dissatisfied due to the incomplete information.

When graduate students are leaving one organization and entering another one, Greenhaus et al. (2000) views it as a simultaneous process. The identified actors in this process are the individuals and the organizations. Organizations are presenting their values and benefits and the individual looks deeper into the available offerings organizations at the market and search for one that is most likely to meet the career expectations (Greenhaus et al., 2000). For instance a student interesting in accounting has searched among various organizations job offerings and tried to find one that is perceived to match his or her expectations. According to the sociological perspective, the organizational choice is also strongly influenced by what the community finds to be an attractive organization (Brown et al., 2002). Thus, if the organization has a negative image in the society it is according to Brown et al. (2002) likely that the graduate student will disregard the offering even though one likes the actual job. Engineering students holds for the same logic of reasoning when searching for a satisfactory organization.

2.1.2 Organizational entry process

The organizational entry process can be divided into four stages: recruitment, selection, orientation and socialization (Greenhaus et al., 2000).

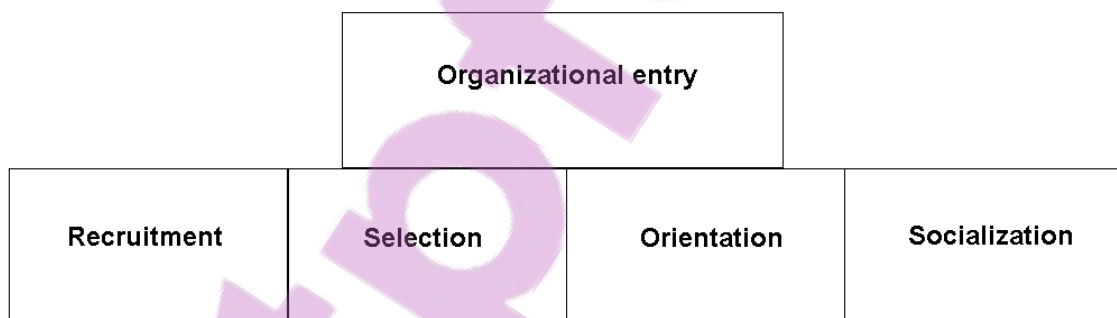


Figure 2: Organizational entry process (Greenhaus et al., 2000)

Recruitment is an activity from the organizational side when they are about to attract candidates who are qualified and capable for carrying out the job (Dale, 2003). In the recruitment stage, the individuals locate information on job sources and firms (Greenhaus et al., 2000). The next step, **selection**, is according to Greenhaus et al. (2000) when the individuals assess the organizations, make choices among the job offerings and deal with interviews. Dale (2003) looks into the selection process from the organizational perspective. He characterizes the selection process as the first time the employer meets the applicant face-to-face. This means that a selection activity viewed from the recruiting organizations side can be identified as a company presentation at the university, while the recruitment activity from an organization can be a note about an available position, where there is no physical contact between the employer and employee. The purpose of both the

recruitment and selection stages is to gain more information about the candidate and find out whether he or she is suitable for the position (Dale, 2003).

Looking at the job selection from the graduate's point of view, the consequences of making a wrong organizational choice can severely affect one's self-esteem and result in dissatisfaction and disappointment when the expectations are not met (Greenhaus et al., 2000). From the sociological perspective it is of importance to select the right employer because the choice strongly affects the person's wealth, earnings, lifestyle and status within the community (Brown et al., 2002). Thus, it is essential for employers to be familiar with graduates' expectations in order to attract the most suitable candidate for the position and not provide them with unrealistic expectations which make them dissatisfied.

2.1.3 Drawbacks to career development related to gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes formed in the rustic society are also still present in the society today (Brown et al., 2002; Amanatullah, 2008). The traditional social norms tell us that men are expected to strongly contribute to the household income, while women are seen as care takers and as the person staying home with the children. Before the society developed into the technical and automatized place it is today, the social roles were naturally ultimate in order to maximize outcome of labor where body strength was necessary (Brown et al., 2002; Amanatullah, 2008).

Both Vroom (1995) and Amanatullah (2008) try to explain why people still fall into these old roles. Gender role stereotypes work as expectations of how members of a group should behave, and therefore set the standard of appropriate behaviour. When a person deviates from the societal norm and what is expected of them, social pressure and prejudices will arise, and this can lead to the perception of the individual to lack qualities they *ought* to have. This in turn leads to intolerance from society and throwbacks of development for the deviating person, and hence societal roles are kept. The implications will be that women do not develop their careers in the same way as men do, even though they would have the ability and qualifications (Amanatullah, 2008).

These stereotypical roles will be kept in mind of the researchers when investigating graduating students at JIBS and JTH, to see to what extent they are present among this group.

2.2 Defining the target group, the graduating students: Generation Y

A model created by B. Schneider (1987, cited in Freeman et al., 2007) argues that “individuals seek organizations which they perceive to have characteristics similar to their own” (Freeman et al., 2007, pp. 507). Therefore, it is important for the employer to have a good understanding of their future employees as people. Generation Y is what the demographic group of people born between 1980 and 2000 are commonly called (Spiro, 2006). Since the majority of graduating students are in their 20s to 30s, they are included in the generation Y. This group has grown up in a high-tech environment and is used to a flexible and constantly changing world. They are defined to be individualistic, impatient, flexible, and more open towards a changing work place than their foregoer demographic group, called generation X. Generation X are people born from 1960s to 1980s. What defines generation X is that they are family oriented and prioritize having children before loyalty to a firm and work security (Sutton-Bell & Narz, 2007). Because of the importance of family among generation X, they raised a generation used to getting what they want and being able to make claims. This results in a great confidence and self picture, but also very high self-expectations. Studies have shown that people in generation Y are appreciating other factors the previous generations when choosing employer, such as personal development and self-actualization (Spiro, 2006).

When the competition is increasing in the recruitment area (Freeman et al., 2007) it becomes highly important for employers to get to know generation Y in order to know how to best attract talents. Today, the focus is not on the working process and regular working hours but on the result, which makes working flexibility and work tasks given as projects important job attributes (Foreman, 2006). Because the generation Y is impatient and aware of their own value, they tend to change employer more easily than former generations. This is also something recruiters and employers need to be aware of in order to keep the good employees (Sutton-Bell & Narz, 2007). When looking at the career mobility from the sociological view, Brown et al. (2002) explains that change of employer occurs in order to increase one’s own social status that is perceived by the employer brand. Another aspect of the generation Y is their attitudes towards hierarchy and the following relationship with an executive. Generation Y have little respect towards traditional organizations hierarchies, and need communication and personal feedback from their superiors. This leads to a demand of an open and flatter organized company (Foreman, 2006).

When looking at the attributes of generation Y from the employers’ perspective, it is according to Miller (2006) important to have in mind the enormous amount of information this generation has been growing up with. This has given them a natural sense of criticism towards media, and traditional advertising and media space are more likely to pass them by. However, they have a strongly built up network through Internet communities and accessibility to each other through cell phones, and therefore the most successful marketing channel is the “mouth-to-mouth” strategy, or to create a “buzz”. (Miller, 2006)



2.3 Attracting employees by the use of job attributes

Investigations in job related attributes have been done ever since Behling, Labovitz and Gainer in 1968 started to explore strategies for how organizations should recruit college graduates. Different sets of job related attributes have been developed and tested through the years. As cited in Moy and Lee (2002, pp.) Behling et al. states; “job attributes are the most important factor that affects job choice decisions of job seekers”. The importance for employers to be familiar with job seekers preferences regarding attitudes in various job related areas should not be underestimated. It has been argued by Moy and Lee (2002) that an individual perception of the job attributes determines whether or not they are perceived as attractive employers or not. In practice this implies the need to make separate investigations in the population that one is interested in. Further, differences in preferences of attributes between environmental groups can be derived to the sociological school of thought accounted for by Brown et al., (2002). Thus, different perceptions of attributes are likely to occur when the same set of job-attributes are tested in different populations.

When employers communicate towards graduate students in generation Y, they make use of a concept referred to as Employer Branding. According to Backhouse and Tikoo (2004, pp: 502) employer branding is defined as:

“A firm’s effort to promote, both within and outside the firm, a clear view of what makes it different and desirable as an employer”

Dr. J. Sullivan (2004) has identified the employer branding as a process from the organizational side where the organization consistently putting forth an image surrounding management and business practices that helps the organization to be perceived as an attractive, good place to work at. Further, Sullivan (2004) hopes that this will lead to the reputation and perception of the organization as one of the top employer.

The job search behaviour among graduate students in generation X has been examined by Eddy S.W. Ng, Ronald J. Burke and Lisa Fiksenbaum (2008). They rely on the concept called “*employer knowledge*” which assumes that job seekers have pre-stated beliefs about potential employers (Ng et al., 2008). Further they are of the opinion that different people are attracted to different attributes of a firm. For instance, they exemplify attributes that attract students as good pay and benefits, and good co-workers. Thus, examining what attributes communicated through employer branding activities that graduating students of generation Y prefer when they are in the organizational entry process for their first full time job after graduation is relevant.

2.3.1 Classification of job attributes

To be the preferred organization in what Burke and Ng (2006) call the “war for talent” it is essential for employers to be familiar with what job-attributes the next generation at work, the graduating students prefer. Research shows that students select organizations based on factors such as working conditions, flexibility and human resource policies (Ng et al., 2008). The organizations offerings communicated through the concept of employer branding therefore needs to be sticky in order to attract the students that are the most suitable candidates for the organization. To classify and divide various attributes that graduating students have towards future employers is one way of employers to see what organizational

attributes that attract students. Based on a study made by Moy and Lee (2002, pp. 342) the division into the following job attributes will be used for this study. These nine attributes are by Moy and Lee selected out of an original set of 15 attributes that was developed by G.N. Powel in 1991:

“

1. **Pay.** Cash rewards, also called compensation. This includes items such as the base salary, bonuses and incentive payments that employees receive for working in an organization.
2. **Fringe benefits.** Rewards in addition to regular compensation that are indirectly provided to the employee. Health and life insurance, pensions and education plans are some of the common fringe benefits.
3. **Working conditions.** Safety and comfort in the work environment.
4. **Managerial relationships.** Interpersonal relationships with managers and supervisors.
5. **Long-term career prospects.** Opportunities for promotion and advancement offered by the firm.
6. **Responsibilities given.** Duties for which employees have to bear responsibility.
7. **Involvement in decision-making.** Opportunities that are given to employees to participate in the decision-making process.
8. **Marketability.** Opportunities given to employees to develop skills that are highly connected to market demand.
9. **Job security.** Protection against the loss of employment; the lack of worry about being laid-off or dismissed.”

2.4 Previous research

Research within similar fields has previously been done. The primary data collected in Jönköping will be related to findings made in Universum's "Företagsbarometern" (2008), a study from Civilekonomerna "Civilekonomer tre år efter examen" (2008b) and Awapatents study of engineering students (2008).

2.4.1 Företagsbarometern

Every year the global research institute Universum performs a survey among students concerning their future career views and prospects. In 2008's survey, Företagsbarometern 2008, 15 120 students in the fields of business, engineering and law responded (Universum, 2008). The result showed that the top rated organizations among both engineering and business students were large multinational companies with their roots in Sweden. IKEA kept their first place among the business students, whereas Sony Ericsson topped the ranks among the engineers. According to Företagsbarometern (Universum, 2008b) the five top rated organizations were:

Table 1: Top 5 organizations Företagsbarometern 2008 (Universum, 2008b)

Engineering		Business	
1.	Sony Ericsson	1.	IKEA
2.	Ericsson	2.	H&M
3.	ABB	3.	Ernest & Young
4.	SAAB	4.	Swedbank
5.	Volvo group	5.	Öhrlings PricewaterhouseCoopers

2.4.2 Civilekonomerna tre år efter examen

Civilekonomerna is a Swedish union and interest organization for business people (Civilekonomerna, 2008a). 10 000 of the 33 500 organizational members are Bachelor of Business Administration students. According to their website (Civilekonomerna, 2008a), the organization work with questions such as education and working conditions. In April 2008, a nationwide report "Civilekonomerna tre år efter examen" (Civilekonomerna, 2008b) was published where 2 382 business graduates answered questions concerning their careers. 111 of the respondents to this questionnaire were former JIBS students.

According to the report (Civilekonomerna, 2008b), 38 percent of the respondents had a job before they graduated in 2004. Alexander Beck, who analyzed the report, mentions that this number is very dependent on the business cycle, when he compares with previous years' results. Working part-time during the period of studies increased the chance of getting a temporary job at an early stage. 89 percent of the graduates from JIBS had a job within six months from graduation, which is a higher number than many other institutions included in the report. Regarding the question about what students thought employers find important when hiring graduates, they stated personal characteristics, academic results (not dependent on the institution) and working experience as the most important factors. The majority of the former JIBS students (32.1 %) are working in the Stockholm region, 28 percent in the South, while 17 percent works in the Western part of Sweden. Salary is always a hot topic and it is also hard to make comparisons on. The fact tells that wages are higher for those who have studied abroad or had worked during the time of studies. Among former JIBS students the most part (65%) has a monthly salary in the range between 25 000 – 40 000 SEK, while 18 percent are earning more than 40 000 SEK and 35 percent earns less than 25 000 SEK per month. Management, consulting, audit and PR & advertising are the most common fields to work within. Finally, the survey shows that over

fifty percent of the graduates in 2004 work in companies employing over 1000 people.

2.4.3 Awapatent's survey among engineering students

Awapatent is an over 100 year's old consultancy company (Awapatent, 2008). In May 2008 they conducted an e-mail survey among 2 517 Swedish engineering students where questions about expectations of their future employers were asked. The results indicated that the engineering students prefer to work within management positions after graduation. Further, 58 percent of the students in the field of management and industrial economics consider the career development as an important factor when deciding about their first employer. The salary was an important factor for all fields of engineering students when looking into factors that determining the prospective employer. According to the focus group, the most important factor for the students is the working tasks.

3 Method

Using scientific research methods and applying them on a real-world problem to find an answer to what job-attributes that attract graduating students needs to be done in a methodical way. In this section the research process for fulfilling the purpose is presented.

3.1 Research Approach

The subject of study is approached from the sociological perspective. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Professor Duane Brown explains in his book *Career Choice and development* that the sociological view is taken when one make organizational choices based on influences from societal sources such as culture and status attainment connected with one specific employer (Brown et al., 2002). Since this paper investigates the graduating students' preferences in job attributes, and since the employer branding activities daily surrounds the students at the university, approaching the research from this perspective is accurate. Moreover, the theories used in this paper focus on status attainment in the society when making an organizational choice, and according to Brown et al. (2002) the sociologist thinking has dominated the field of study for decades. The authors of this paper therefore take this perspective in order to come closer to the reality of today.

3.1.1 Inductive or deductive research approach

When defining research approaches, the researchers need to address whether the study will be of inductive or deductive nature. A *deductive* approach explains and predicts out of existing theories. Through logical reasoning conclusions are drawn. An *inductive* approach on the other hand is based on empirical findings, and conclusions are drawn from samples of populations (Ghauri, Grønhaug, & Kristianslund, 1995). The research process is usually a combination of both, since empirical exploring generates new theories. The process goes in cycles, one leading to the next level of the other (Ghauri et al., 1995). In this study, the theories in the framework is the grounding of the analysis of the empirical findings. Therefore the analysis is mainly of deductive character. However, since the field of this study is relatively unexplored, the empirical findings are used as a base for inductive conclusions.

3.1.2 Descriptive, Explanatory or Exploratory purpose

In terms of research approaches, the aim of a study can according to Robson (2002) be divided into three main categories: *Exploratory*, *descriptive*, and *explanatory* studies (Cited in Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). An *exploratory* purpose is useful to clarify the understanding of a specific problem, and shed new light over a phenomenon, while an *explanatory* study aims to explain relationships between variables (Robson, 2002). This study aims to find out what attributes students prefer when they are selecting their first post-graduate job. Since research has not been done on the specific population of this study, the results explore the phenomenon of career choice of business-, and engineering-students,

and are therefore of the exploratory kind. A *descriptive* purpose aims to give a clear picture of a person, event, or situation. Even though this aspect is very important to have in order to conduct well-done exploratory studies, only making a descriptive study can be too narrow and shallow, and therefore lack value in terms of academic research (Robson, 2002). Yet, to be able to draw exploratory conclusions for this study, a well done descriptive study must be made. Therefore, this study is an exploratory study with a descriptive base.

3.1.3 Quantitative or qualitative data collection

By doing a quantitative data collection among graduating students, and analyze the results, the values of graduating students when it comes to applying to, and later accept, their first job, will be examined. *Quantitative data*, collected with for example a survey, gives a good view of a general opinion and is very useful when the purpose is to find out *what*, *where* and *when*. If the question to be answered instead is “*why*” or “*how*”, it is more appropriate to collect *qualitative* data, by conducting for example a case study (Saunders et al., 2007).

Since the purpose of this thesis is to answer the question *what* specific attributes that students prefer when choosing first employer, the natural method to use is a quantitative data collection. In further studies, the questions “*why*” or “*how*” graduates find specific attributes to be more important to other might answered by conducting case studies in order to gain more knowledge about why these specific factors are those of importance. Quantitative data are generally coded into numbers, and analyzed from that view (Saunders et al., 2007).

3.2 Method of collecting data

This study is made with focus on what job attributes that graduating students prefer. It is not done through a ranking of popular employers like the ones e.g. Företagsbarometern (Universum, 2008a) are performing, but as a more general study where were all specific organizations and names are excluded.

To fulfill the purpose of this paper, this study uses a set of the nine job attributes that previously have been used by Moy and Lee in 2002. Using the same attributes as in the Hong Kong study as framework for this study makes sense because the original set have been developed by the professional researcher, Powell and the nine selected attributes have been tested in Hong Kong and therefore the authors find this be applicable and understandable also today. The reason to not include all 15 original attributes is that they are either outdated or too similar to other attributes among the nine selected. Moreover, this makes it possible to compare the findings from the study in Jönköping to the one conducted in Hong Kong, because they are based on the same set of attributes.

To collect the quantitative data needed to fulfill the purpose of this thesis, the authors have decided to conduct a questionnaire survey. There are different possible methods of doing this. The methods can be divided into two main groups, *interviewer-administrated questionnaires* and *self-completion questionnaires*. In the group of interviewer-administrated questionnaires, the interviewer is present during the responding, either by asking the questions in person, or

just by monitoring the respondent (Saunders et al., 2007). That the researchers and sampling group are located in the same geographic area is perceived by the researchers as an advantage for using the interviewer-administrated method. The most usual way of conducting interviewer-administrated questionnaires is a face-to-face interview. Respectively, the main methods for self-completion questionnaire would be e-mail-survey, or a hand out survey which is collected after answering, called *delivery and collection questionnaire* (Saunders et al., 2007). The latter method would according to Saunders et al. (2007) be classified as a combination of an interviewer-administrated and a self-completion method. In order to collect as large sample as possible to a low cost, this study is made through a delivery and collection questionnaire. The researchers could in this way hand out the questionnaire during lectures and clarify possible questions from the respondents if they have any doubts. This method reduces interviewer bias, as well as generates a higher response level than the second best alternative method would do, which would be an e-mail survey. Also, the response level of a delivery and collection questionnaire are usually very high, according to Saunders et al. levels as high as 98% can be achieved (2007). The questionnaires will be handed out in class to all attending students.

The main argument for doing self-completion questionnaires is the elimination of interviewer bias, where the interviewer's own emotions or thoughts influence the respondent (Brace, 2004). However, there are shortcomings of this method. If the respondent read through the whole survey before answering, he or she starts to think about the further questions immediately. This can result in that important initial thought is gone missed, thoughts that are captured in a face-to-face interview.

3.2.1 Delimitation of population

This study examines the preferences of graduating students when it comes to applying for their first job. The graduating students are defined as: *Students who are enrolled in bachelor-, or masters-programme at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) or Jönköping School of Engineering (JTH)*. These students further have to be about to apply for a full time job related to their education within six months or already started the application process, in order to make the results as accurate as possible.

This group is chosen in order to limit the population and specify the group of interest. It is likely to think that the people in their final year of studies have started to apply for jobs, and hence, the focus when it comes to handing out questionnaires will be on 3rd and 4th year students. The study is made at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) and Jönköping School of Engineering (JTH), departments of Jönköping University. The other two departments, School of Health Science (HHJ) and School of Education and Communication (HLK), are excluded from this study. The limitation of the population to the business, law and engineering students relates to the fact that in recent history and up until now, the schools, hospitals and nurseries, which are where a majority of the graduate students from HLK and HHJ apply for jobs, are publicly administrated. Even though more departments are being privatized, the majority still belongs to the public sector, a fact that is statistically proved and analyzed in the report "Statistiska bilder av privatiseringen av välfärdstjänster" (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2001).

Respectively, business and engineering students are in majority drawn to the private sector and corporations (Universum, 2008b; Civilekonomerna, 2008b). When applying for jobs in the public sector, salaries are often set according to collective labor agreements and the

roles are clearer. In the private sector, individual salary agreements can be made to a larger extent, and the career development opportunities might also be of greater importance. It is therefore accurate to assume that people applying for jobs in the public sector value other attributes than those attracted to the private sector. To include all these attributes and dimension would make the study too extensive. This study examines a different set of attributes, which are related to privately owned corporations.

3.2.2 Sampling

Since the researchers' aims to generalize the findings from this survey to a larger population than the survey covers, the choice to select a proportion of elements from the entire population was made. Investigating all elements in the entire population is impossible due to resource constraints. To start with, the *population* is selected. Scheaffer, Mendenhall III and Lyman Ott (2006) define a population as "a collection of elements about which we wish to make an inference" (pg. 8). The population of this paper is students currently enrolled in a programme at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) and Jönköping School of Engineering (JTH). This population is represented by 3 515 students according to the administrator Eva Karlsson (Personal communication, 2008-11-21). To further narrow down the population, *sampling units* defined as "non-overlapping collections of elements from the population that cover the entire population" (Scheaffer et al, 2006, pg. 8) are selected. The researchers have identified the sampling unit as one individual student at either JIBS or JTH. This study covers a total of 124 sampling units at JIBS and JTH. Of those, 55 respondents are to find at JTH and 69 are registered at JIBS. The *frame* of this paper is though all registered program students at JIBS and JTH during the fall semester 2008. Students that the researchers have chosen to include in the frame of interest are registered to for studies in their last or second last semester at JIBS and JTH. Based on data from Eva Karlsson (Personal communication, 2008-11-21), the number of elements in the frame is 1 034 students, where the majority 787 students are registered at JTH and 247 at JIBS. Scheaffer et al, (2006) say that even though one sampling unit is included in the frame, the frame is rarely adequate, because registration lists are not updated every day. The information from Eva Karlsson was compiled at the 24th of September 2008. For this study, it means that students that for some reason have chosen to quit the program still will be accounted in the frame. Finally, this implies that Scheaffer et al., (2006) definition of a *sample* as "a collection of sampling units drawn from a frame of reference" (pg. 9) is fulfilled.

3.2.3 Convenience sampling

The sample for this study cannot be classified to what Amir Aczel and Jayavel Sounderpandian (2006) defines as a *random sample*. All graduating students at JIBS and JTH do not have an equally chance of being selected. For various reasons, all registered students that counts to the sampling frame are not present at the university at the same time, and therefore absent students are not able to influence the outcome of the research. Thus, the selected method of interviewer-administrated questionnaires in combination with self-completing questions limits the researchers to choose between various *non-probability sampling* methods. Since only students that are attending the lectures are able to respond to the questionnaire, the researchers are not able to conduct a random sample from the whole population with the method of choice.

Saunders et al. (2007) presents various numbers of non-random sampling techniques that are useful for different purposes. Due to the researchers' limited time, Saunders et al. (2007) suggest the researchers to use either convenience, also called haphazard sampling, or self-selection sampling. Further, Patton (2002) states that there are no rules when using either one of these techniques. So, the researchers' most important criteria's when selecting the sample elements was to get an approximately equal distribution of respondents between the different departments. The respondents should also be able to read and understand the English questions in order to avoid what according to Saunders et al. (2007) is referred to as a translation bias. The researchers are aware of the importance of sample selection and agree with Saunders et al. (2007) whom states that failure in selecting a representative sample will impact the credibility of the study.

It is not only the sample size that is of importance when a good result is achieved. Patton (2002) claims that the researchers' analytical skills are even more important for the study. Therefore, the researchers find no need to investigate every element in the population. Following Saunders et al.'s (2007) suggestion to continue the in-class sampling process until the required sample size has been reached. Using what is commonly known as "The rule of thumb", where the sampling process continues until at least five respondents for each question are reached will generate credible results. Thus, investigating in a larger population means more data to analyze, and due to the researchers limited knowledge, time and resources a larger sample size will not enable the researchers to make deeper investigations. However, the main argument for choosing to use convenience sampling over self-selected sampling is the authors of this papers assumption that there is a very little difference in the population, which also Patton (2002) indicates as a suitable case for using convenience sampling.

3.2.4 Questionnaire design

The purpose of this study is to investigate which attributes graduating students find most important when applying to their first study related full time job. The questionnaire is handed out by means of time in class, and all participating students will be asked to answer the questionnaire after orally given instructions from the researchers. There will be respondents included which are not representative for the population of graduating students about to apply for their first job, and therefore screening questions will be used. The population will only include graduating students enrolled in a programme at the schools JIBS or JTH at Jönköping University, which are about to apply to an education related full-time job within six months or have already started. Respondents not representative to the study might be students only taking one course, and therefore not considered to belong to the group of graduating students. It also includes students who already have a full time employment.

There are a distinct difference between measuring attitudes and behavior. The behavioral answers are only limited by the respondent's memory as he or she only is required to describe certain decisions, such as which brand of pasta one usually buys. The measurement of attitudes is slightly more problematic as the researcher must find a way to motivate the respondents to express their true attitude towards the problem of interest (Brace, 2004). Since this research will measure attitudes towards different employment conditions, these problems must be addressed in the questionnaire design. Saunders et al. (2007) suggests that a good method to overcome this is to use a rating scale, where the respondent chooses a point on a scale where he or she define his or her attitude. This study

will measure students' attitudes towards employer attributes, and weight them towards each other. For this purpose, a semantic differential scale will be suitable to use. In a semantic differential scale two options are compared against each other, and the respondent indicates which they agree most with (Brace, 2004). The scale has been slightly modified by the researchers to fit this specific study. The advantage with this modified scale is that the respondent cannot agree fully with all statements but have to choose one over the other. This divides the respondents into clear segments of attitudes. The original Semantic Differential Scale was created by Charles E. Osgood in 1957 and includes seven points on the scale (Brace, 2004). However, Brace (2004) say that most commonly the scale ranges from 1-5. Saunders et al. (2007) disagree with Brace (2004) and holds for the view that it is a better alternative is to use even scales in order to make people pick a side. They state that people often choose the middle alternative due to the central tendency effect (see below). The researchers have agreed upon using the even number scale for this study, including a six point scale, even though it has some problems. However, Brace (2004) states that a problem with an even number scale can be that people are reluctant to leave answers blank, even though they do not fully agree with any of the options, or just do not understand the question. Therefore, the researchers have decided to use a seventh option, which Brace (2004) refers to as *don't know*. The researchers have chosen to name this box in the questionnaire as *no opinion*.

An alternative measurement scale to use would be the Likert scale, which is a scale very similar to the Semantic Differential Scale. They do both measure attitudes and the respondents are in both cases asked to state to what extent they agree to a statement. Brace (2004) states some problems with the Likert scale. Some of these problems can also be applied to the Semantic Differential Scale: the order effect, the central tendency, and pattern answering. The order effect relates to the tendency to pick the answer to the left on the scale, stated by Artingstall in 1978 (Cited in Brace, 2004). To overcome this problem, the questions can be repeated with changing places. Another problem is called the central tendency, and relates to the reluctance of respondents to choose extreme positions. Brace (2004) has a solution to this with two-step questions, where the respondent first chooses the alternative they agree with most, and thereafter states to what extent they agree with it. As Brace (2004) also argues, this is often time consuming to hand out surveys. If the questionnaire process takes long time, it will impact the respondents' willingness to contribute with data. A third problem according to Brace (2004) is the pattern answering, where the respondent falls into a pattern of ticking the boxes, vertically or diagonally. This is often due to boredom, and therefore the questionnaire has to be created in an as interesting as possible way. Conflicting answers indicate where pattern answering is present. Options with similar meaning should in the same way as to avoid order effect be given with reversed polarity (Brace, 2004). In this study, similar options are given six times, and with reversed polarity. The questionnaire was after various experienced researchers such as Brace and Saunders et al.'s advices decided to contain a total of twelve questions regarding the preferences among graduating students. These twelve questions are according to Brace (2004) called the main questionnaire. The researchers find this number of questions to be relevant in order to be able to address all adequate attitudes included in this study. The number is also below the "rule of thumb" maximum number of questions in a set, which are 30 questions. If there are more than 30 questions in a set, the respondent becomes bored, and the risk of pattern answering increases (Brace, 2004).

After the main questionnaire, a question regarding the student's perception of what degree students are aware of the employer branding activities they are exposed to during their time at the university. At last, questions regarding the respondent's gender and age is addressed

for analytical purpose. If the respondent wants to be informed about the results from the study, one should indicate that by stating their e-mail address at the bottom of the questionnaire.

3.2.5 Respondent archetypes

To facilitate the analysis of the questionnaire, the respondents will according to their answers be divided into four archetypes. The archetypes are by the researchers derived from Moy and Lee's (2002) nine job attributes, and will be called *The Pay Motivated*, *The Relationship Motivated*, *The Career Motivated*, and *The Responsibility Motivated*.

The Pay Motivated (PM)

Relates to the two attributes *Pay* and *Fringe Benefits* (Moy & Lee, 2002). The Pay Motivated student is looking for a first employment where they instantly receive a high salary or commission. They value fringe benefits such as a company car. To trade-off interesting working task in order to earn more is something the Pay Motivated student would do.

The Security Motivated (SM)

Relates to the three attributes *Working Conditions*, *Job Security*, and *Managerial Relationship*. The Relationship Motivates student wants to feel happy and comfortable in the working place. They want to have a good time among colleagues and appreciate team building activities and other social activities. They think job security is important.

The Career Motivated (CM)

Relates to the two attributes *Long Term Career Prospects*, and *Marketability*. The Career Motivated student has made a long term plan for their career development before they start their first employment. Accepting a low paid first job with not so good working conditions is something they happily do if they see development opportunities. The future goal of the career motivated student is a high position with status and of course the accompanying salary.

The Responsibility Motivated (RM)

Relates to the two attributes *Responsibilities Given*, and *Involvement in Decision-making*. The Responsibility Motivated student wants to be responsible for their own work as well as the other. They want to be involved from the beginning and take responsibilities, and value interesting work tasks highly. Flexible working hours and the possibility to plan one's own work is also important. In a middle manager position in a local company is where you will find the Responsibility Motivated student.

3.2.6 Questionnaire layout

The questionnaire is built up as figure X shows, where PM = The Pay Motivated, SM = The Security Motivated, CM = The Career motivated, and RM = The Responsibility Motivated. All archetypes are put against each other two times, resulting in twelve questions. The figure 3 is a template for showing the structure of the main questions, but in the actual questionnaire the questions are mixed to prevent the central effect or pattern answering.

Please mark on the scale to what extent you agree with the two given alternatives:

	Agree fully with a	Agree mostly with a	Agree more with a	Agree more with b	Agree mostly with b	Agree fully with b		no opinion
Q1. a: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q2. a: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q3. a: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q4. a: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q5. a: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q6. a: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q7. a: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q8. a: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q9. a: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q10. a: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: PM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q11. a: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: SM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q12. a: RM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	b: CM	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3: Questionnaire Structure (Own creation)

3.2.7 The questions

The questions related to the archetypes presented as follows:

Table 2: The questions (Own creation)

The Questions in the Survey	
The Pay Motivated	The Career Development Motivated
Pay	Long-term Career Prospects
High salary is important to me.	I could work for low salary if it meant future advancement in the organization.
Trainee placements are not an option for me.	If my employment can be beneficial for my long-term career plan, I see no reason to change.
If my employment generates enough money, I see no reason to change employment.	Trainee placements seem to be a good entry for future employment.
Fringe Benefits	Marketability
Personal benefits such as health insurance and company car are important to me.	Opportunities for personal promotion and advancement are important to me.
Being part of sharing the company profit is important to me.	I chose my education because of the reputation it has in the business world.
Paid vacation is important to me.	Working in a multinational organization is important to me.
The Security and Comfort Motivated	The Responsibility Motivated
Working Conditions	Responsibilities Given
If I have a good relationship towards my co-workers I see no reason to change employment.	Planning my own workdays and having flexible working hours is important to me.
Certificates that prove a safe and environmentally friendly workplace is important to me.	Being able to delegate is important to me.
	If my working tasks are interesting and rewarding, I see no reason to change employment.
Job Security	Involvement in Decision-making
Not worrying about being laid-off is important to me.	Becoming a member of the management team is important to me.
A good retirement plan and protection in case of unemployment is important to me.	Being able to influence the decision making process is important to me.
	To see my ideas become reality is a motivation for me.
Managerial Relationships	
An open relationship towards the management is important to me.	
Shared responsibilities for success as well as failures are important to me.	

3.3 Pilot study

The objective to perform a pilot study is to test the developed questionnaire on a small population before performing the major study (Saunders et al., 2007). The researchers decided to carry out the pilot study as a two-stage process. First the questionnaire was handed out to ten randomly selected students at the university and they were asked to read through the questions and instructions. They were then asked to give oral feedback about the questions, measurement scale and layout. As Brace (2004) state, the questionnaires are rarely the best the first time, and due to the researchers limited experience in questionnaire design following up by conducting a two-stage pilot study felt necessary. The second stage of the pilot study was performed in a larger scale, when the questionnaire had been re-designed according to suggestions from the first test-pilots. The randomly selected respondents were observed by the researchers when filling out the form and afterwards a discussion about how they experienced the survey was held. The results from the pilot study were briefly analyzed in an Excel sheet to find out if the answers tended to be biased. According to Brace (2004) the informal first-stage test is the minimum that every researcher should do before conducting a large scale survey. The researchers motive for undergoing a two-stage pilot study is that the likely benefits for increased testing outweigh the cost of time.

3.3.1 First stage pilot study

The participants in the first testing round saw no reason to change the overall design of the questionnaire. They found the questions easy to understand. Adjustments in the questionnaire instructions were though made due to feedback from the test pilots. Highlighting that the respondent had to fill in only one alternative and illustrating how to fill out with an example question were done. Moreover, the issue of letting the respondent chose an indifferent argument between the statements occurred. The researchers expected this question, but saw no reason to change the measurement scale even though some of the test-pilots indicated that they would like to pick an indifferent statement.

3.3.2 Second stage pilot study

After adjusting the questionnaire based on the feedback from the first pilot round, the researchers went on to test the new edition of the questionnaire at ten randomly selected students at JIBS and JTH. Brace (2004) gives the suggestion that the researchers should check how long time it takes for the respondents to complete the survey and observe their behavior when filling out the form. They had no problems understand the instructions about how to fill in the form after the design improvements that were made in the first pilot study. The advantage of having an interviewer-administrated questionnaire is that the researchers are able to explain the instructions orally before the respondents will fill out the survey, or answer questions if the respondents still not know how to reply to the questions (Brace, 2004). The survey took on average five minutes to complete, which is sufficient time in relation to the amount of data collected. After making an Excel-analysis of the test-pilots results, the results showed no tendency for that the answers would be biased. Even though the questionnaire has been tested, Brace (2004) state that even experienced

researchers will often find out that mistakes in the questionnaire design will lead to unexpected results.

3.4 Data collection

As discussed in the method section (3.3) the primary data for this bachelor thesis was collected through a combination of interviewer-administrated and self-completion questionnaire. Schedules over classes held at JIBS and JTH was retrieved from Jönköping University's homepage (2008) and then the researchers made a schedule (see appendix 2) for where and when the in-class interviewer-administrated questionnaires should be conducted. Since the researchers was interested in a diverse population of graduating students, the questionnaire was handed out at various times and days during week 47 in year 2008. Classes that had registered program students that started in year 2004 and 2005 were of major interest. At JIBS, the frame of interest included undergraduate students registered in the Affärsrättsliga programmet, Bachelor of Business Administration, International Economic and Policy program and post-graduate students enrolled in the one-, or two-years Masters Programs. At JTH, the frame consists of registered program students enrolled in various undergraduate programs in the field of Civil Engineering and Master Programs in the field of Information Technology and Engineering and Product Development. Even though the researchers are aware of the limitations with performing data collection in this form where only students attending the lectures has an ability to influence the results, the multiple times that the questionnaires was handed out, to some extent solved this problem. What became obvious during the time the surveys were collected was that the classes at JTH are much smaller than the ones at JIBS. This is one reason for that more sampling units of the population belongs to the JIBS faculty, even though a larger number of classes was visited at JTH.

3.5 Analyzing the data

As Patton (2002) argues the researcher's ability to analyze the collected data will to a great extent influence the outcome of the report. The survey was constructed in a way where the different alternatives were given pre-assigned values according to the codebook in the following chapter. Saunders et al. (2007) do advice the researchers to develop this kind of codebook if the researchers aim to collect primary data. After the questionnaire was conducted, the researchers use computer software in order to organize and process the data before presenting it in a visual way. Saunders et al. (2007) recommends that quantitative data should be analyzed by using diagrams and statistics, which the authors also intend to do.

3.5.1 How to analyze the questionnaire

When analyzing the responds to the questionnaire, the questions have been divided into two parts, according to the separate statements, A and B. The different parts will be analyzed as different questions, e.g. 1A will be analyzed separately from 1B. The reason to this is to facilitate the analysis, and as mentioned earlier, the reason for using the semantic

differential scale was that the respondents would not be able to agree fully to all statements but have to choose one over the other. This aim has been accomplished and hence the questions can now be separately analyzed.

In the analysis each answering option are given a coefficient. This means that the different alternatives at the questionnaire are given a corresponding pre-assigned numbers in the range of 0 to 5. The researchers have decided to let 5 represent “Agree fully with statement X”, which is the statement according to the divided question, and 0 means “Agree fully with statement Y”, which is the opposite statement. Consequently, 0 points can also be expressed as “Do not agree at all with the statement X”, which the respondent indirect has indicated by stating that he or she agrees fully with the other statement. This makes it possible for the researchers to transfer the collected data into computer software that can assist in organizing the data before the analysis is conducted. For example; if the respondent is answering “Agree fully with A”, and A is a statement relating to the pay motivated, the answer will generate 5 points in Pay Motivation. If the answer is “Agree mostly with A”, the respondent will receive 4 point, and respectively 3 point if answering “Agree more with A”. This means also that the respondent get the inverted points for the B alternative. If he or she get 4 Pay Motivated points in a question weighing Pay motivated towards security motivated, he or she also get 1 security motivated point. The same on the opposite side with B. To understand this method better, below is a table of the analyzing template where the questions are mixed as in the actual questionnaire:

Table 3: Questionnaire analysis template (Own creation)

			Agree fully with A	Agree mostly with A	Agree more with A	Agree more with B	Agree mostly with B	Agree fully with B			No opinion
1	A	PM (<i>Fringe benefits</i>)	5 PM 0 SM	4 PM 1 SM	3 PM 2 SM	2 PM 3 SM	1 PM 4 SM	0 PM 5 SM	B.	SM (<i>Working Conditions</i>)	0
2.	A	SM (<i>Working Conditions</i>)	5 SM 0 PM	4 SM 1 PM	3 SM 2 PM	2 SM 3 PM	1 SM 4 PM	0 SM 5 PM	B.	PM (<i>Fringe benefits</i>)	0
3.	A	RM (<i>Responsibilities given</i>)	5 RM 0 PM	4 RM 1 PM	3 RM 2 PM	2 RM 3 PM	1 RM 4 PM	0 RM P SM	B.	PM (<i>Pay</i>)	0
4.	A	PM (<i>Pay</i>)	5 PM 0 CM	4 PM 1 CM	3 PM 2 CM	2 PM 3 CM	1 PM 4 CM	0 PM 5 CM	B.	CM (<i>Long Term Career Prospects</i>)	0
5.	A	CM (<i>Long Term Career Prospects</i>)	5 CM 0 PM	4 CM 1 PM	3 CM 2 PM	2 CM 3 PM	1 CM 4 PM	0 CM 5 PM	B.	PM (<i>Pay</i>)	0
6.	A	SM (<i>Job Security</i>)	5 SM 0 CM	4 SM 1 CM	3 SM 2 CM	2 SM 3 CM	1 SM 4 CM	0 SM 5 CM	B.	CM (<i>Marketability</i>)	0
7.	A	PM (<i>Fringe benefits</i>)	5 PM 0 RM	4 PM 1 RM	3 PM 2 RM	2 PM 3 RM	1 PM 4 RM	0 PM 5 RM	B.	RM (<i>Responsibilities given</i>)	0
8.	A	CM (<i>Long Term Career Prospects</i>)	5 CM 0 SM	4 CM 1 SM	3 CM 2 SM	2 CM 3 SM	1 CM 4 SM	0 CM 5 SM	B.	SM (<i>Job security</i>)	0
9.	A	RM (<i>Involvement in decision</i>)	5 RM	4 RM	3 RM	2 RM	1 RM	0 RM	B.	SM (<i>Managerial</i>)	0

		<i>making</i>)	0 SM	1 SM	2 SM	3 SM	4 SM	P SM		<i>Relationship</i>)	
10.	A	CM (<i>Marketability</i>)	5 CM 0 RM	4 CM 1 RM	3 CM 2 RM	2 CM 3 RM	1 CM 4 RM	0 CM 5 RM	B.	RM (<i>Involvement in decision making</i>)	0
11.	A	SM (<i>Managerial Relationship</i>)	5 SM 0 RM	4 SM 1 RM	3 SM 2 RM	2 SM 3 RM	1 SM 4 RM	0 SM 5 RM	B.	RM (<i>Involvement in decision making</i>)	0
12.	A	RM (<i>Responsibilities given</i>)	5 RM 0 CM	4 RM 1 CM	3 RM 2 CM	2 RM 3 CM	1 RM 4 CM	0 RM P CM	B.	CM (<i>Marketability</i>)	0

3.5.2 Handling missing data

Even though the researchers have followed Brace's (2004) advice when constructing the questionnaire and added a box where the respondent could indicate "No opinion", one has to address those answers in the analytical process. This data will be classified to what William G. Zikmund (2000) classifies as non-response errors. Non-response errors are participating sampling units that statistically counts when the collected data is analyzed (Zikmund, 2000). According to Saunders et al. (2007) there are various reasons for missing data such as: the respondent refused to answer the question, the respondent did not know the answer, the respondent missed the question by mistake or that the respondent felt that the question was unclear. Thus, if the respondents did leave a question in the questionnaire without filling in one alternative or indicated "No opinion", data from these cases will be classified as missing data. The data that is indicated to be in any of the above mentioned forms will thus be handed separately in the analysis. This in order to find out why, where, and to what extent the result is affected by the missing data.

3.5.3 Computer software

Today, there are many different computer software programs that can assist when handling the data. The researchers have decided to use the program SPSS version 16.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Science) to analyze the data. According to Lars Wahlgren (2005) SPSS is one of the most frequently used statistical software at universities in Sweden and are considered to be useful for making statistical analyzes. To make the visuals in terms of tables and diagrams, Microsoft Excel has been used due to personal preferences of the authors.

3.6 Credibility of the study

To be sure that the data collected is useful for making analysis and drawing conclusions from, the credibility if the study in terms of generalizability, reliability, and validity must be tested.

3.6.1 Generalizability

The generalizability, or external validity, means to what extent the results found in the study can be transferred to other settings. In a field experiment, where the sampling unit is observed in its natural environment (as opposed to a lab experiment) the internal validity generally is rather low, while the external validity, or generalizability, is often relatively high (Sekaran, 2003). This study is a type of field experiment, without hypotheses tested, and hence the focus should be on having a high level of external validity.

The generalizability will here be measured in terms of ratio male/female in the population compared to the sample, and the ratio JIBS students/JTH students in the population compared to the sample.

The whole population examined, including all graduating students at JIBS and JTH, counts to a number of 3 515 individuals in 2008 (Personal communication with Eva Karlsson, 2008-11-21). At JTH, there are a total of 1 612 students, which means 45 percent of the population. In this study, a number of 55 out of 124 respondents were collected from JTH, and this represents 44 percent of the sampling unit. Hence, the generalizability of the schools will be almost perfectly accurate.

Of the total students at JTH, 32 percent are female and 68 percent male. In the study, a number of only 16 percent female respondents at JTH were represented. Also at JIBS, where a total of 959 graduating students are registered in 2008, the females were being underrepresented in the study. While 50 percent of the whole population is female, only 39 percent was represented in the study. This will lead to some bias in the generalizability of the study, since the results cannot fully be transferred accordingly to the whole population.

3.6.2 Reliability

The reliability of the study is to what extent it is bias-free. When measuring something static and unchanging, a test-retest method is a good way to check the reliability. With this method, the test is repeated after some time, and the correlation between the test results are measured. This method can be used when conducting questionnaire studies, by handing out the same questionnaire to the same population a few weeks or month later (Sekaran, 2003). However, in this study it will not be applicable since during the time of the retest, the sample will have graduated and hopefully got their first full time job already. A better assurance of reliability in this study will be to use Parallel-Form Reliability. With this method, the same question is asked multiple times, at least two times, but with other words and formulation. If the correlation of the similar questions is high, one can conclude reliability of the study. The Parallel-Form reliability method diminishes the bias of wording and ordering of questions (Sekaran, 2003). In this study, there are four different archetypes measured, and as many as six questions are used for all archetypes, with different formulations.

As Brace (2004) argues, another issue of reliability arises when the respondents purposely are giving inaccurate answers. This most usually occurs when the questions are relating to attributes of the respondents that they are less proud about, e.g. bad habits or attitudes towards unconventional beliefs. Even though the researchers have thought about this issue when constructed the questionnaire, it is not a guarantee that the respondents are honest in the way they reply to the questions. However, the researchers see no reasons to

believe that inaccurate answering is present, since the questions in the survey not are of any private or defending kind.

3.6.3 Validity

The most important aspect when doing a study is whether it actually measures what it is intended to do. This is what is called content validity (Johns & Lee-Ross, 1998). Another type of validity is the construct validity, which refers to how the study made fits to the theories behind it (Sekaran, 2003). Johns and Lee-Ross (1998) exemplifies this by stating that if asking people how they like the food at a restaurant, one cannot validly draw conclusions from the results of how the same people are happy with the service at the restaurant.

The least a researcher should do in order to try the validity is to test the *Face validity* (Johns & Lee-Ross, 1998). In this study this is done in terms of a mini-pilot study. 10 people were asked to match the statements included in the questionnaire with the four archetypes, Responsibility Motivated, Security Motivated, Career Motivated, and Pay Motivated. The result was that to an 85 % degree, respondents understood what they were asked, and this proves face validity of the study.

4 Results and Analysis

In this chapter the empirical findings from the conducted questionnaire will be presented and discussed based on the theoretical framework previously presented in this paper.

Graduating students' preferences regarding job attributes when applying for their first full time job shows that employers that manage to communicate an offer where the *Responsible Motivated* student fit will attract most students from JIBS and JTH in general. There are though significant differences in preferences between the various faculties and genders. What became obvious for this study is that students are to the least extent attracted by pay related attributes when choosing their first employment.

4.1 Positioning of Respondents

The survey was conducted in randomly selected classes at JIBS and JTH and in total completed by 254 respondents. After the surveys were collected, a total of 124 respondents indicated in the screening questions that they fulfilled the researchers' pre-stated criteria for the sampling unit. These screening criteria removed all respondents who were not enrolled in a programme at JIBS or JTH and hence not graduating students, and students who did not intend to start looking for a job within 6 months. A slightly more number of students at JIBS, 69 students, compared to JTH, 55 students, belonged to the sample of interest. The large amount of rejected surveys is due to the researchers' narrow delimitation of the population of interest. For instance did the sampled class *Intermediate macroeconomics* (appendix 2) included over 50 students, but only a few of them indicated that they belonged to the population of interest. The retrieved class schedules does only provide information about from which classes students are sampled from, but information about how many of the interesting elements that were included in the class is not published. Following the method stated in section 3.3 and performing in-class sampling resulted in that the researchers had to distribute surveys even to students not included in the population of interest, which accounted for a large amount in the e.g. *Intermediate macroeconomic* class.

Among the respondent program students, the majority of the students indicated that they belong to the age group between 21-24 years old. Within this age range, a total of 83 students (67 %) belong. The whole sample range from 19 years old to 30 years old. Regarding the gender distribution of the graduating students, one can see that there are a significantly higher number of male respondents, 88 males compared to 36 females. A reason for this is that only 9 out of the 55 JTH students were females. When the archetypes in section 4.2 are analyzed, the results will therefore to a larger extent represent the males' attitudes towards different job attributes than the female respondents. Therefore, Brown et al.'s, (2002) previously discussed problem, when female and male make choices in regards to societal gender expectations, will to a greater extent influence the respondents answer to the various job attributes than if the sampling group was equally distributed among the genders and faculties. To sidestep this issue, the results separated by gender will be presented in percentage numbers.



The selection criteria for being considered as one element that belongs to the group that the researchers are interested in was that one either have started to look and/or apply for a job related to ones studies *or* that one have not started yet, but expect to start within six months. Among the respondents 62 percent have not yet started to look for a full time job, but expect to start what Greenhaus et al. (2000) defines as the organizational choice process within the next six months. This implies that the remaining 38 percent of the population of graduating students have started to look for jobs and thus are in what Greenhaus et al. (2000) refers to as the organizational entry process. In this process, the first stage is called the recruitment stage and it is in this phase that the employers have to take the opportunity to attract qualified and capable candidates that later on will enter their organizations. So, being familiar with what the students find to be important attributes when assessing the various employers is in this phase crucial for the employers if they aim to attract the most suitable graduates.

When the respondents were asked the question to what extent they thought that they have been affected by employer branding activities at their university, there were small indications that the employers branding efforts were affecting the graduating students choices of employers. More than 50 percent of the respondents thought that they were not at all or close to not at all affected by employer branding. Branding activities are considered as a highly important for companies, and according to Sullivan (2004) a successfully communicated brand leads to an organizational reputation and perception as one of the top employers. When listening to the students' perceptions, creating effective branding programs that persuade and influence the graduating students' choice of employers seems to be a challenge for companies that advertise at Jönköping University. Even though the study reveals that JIBS students are more affected by employer branding efforts than JTH students, the majority of the students do not feel that branding activities have changed their thoughts of job attributes. However, an important aspect of this is that the results of this question in no way reflect the actual effectiveness of companies' employer branding activities. The question does not examine if the effectiveness on the students is of positive or negative kind. It might even be so that a successful employer branding is one that is affecting the student without him or her even recognizing the effect it has, since many people react aversely towards advertisement forced upon them.

4.2 Career characteristics of graduating students - Empirical findings

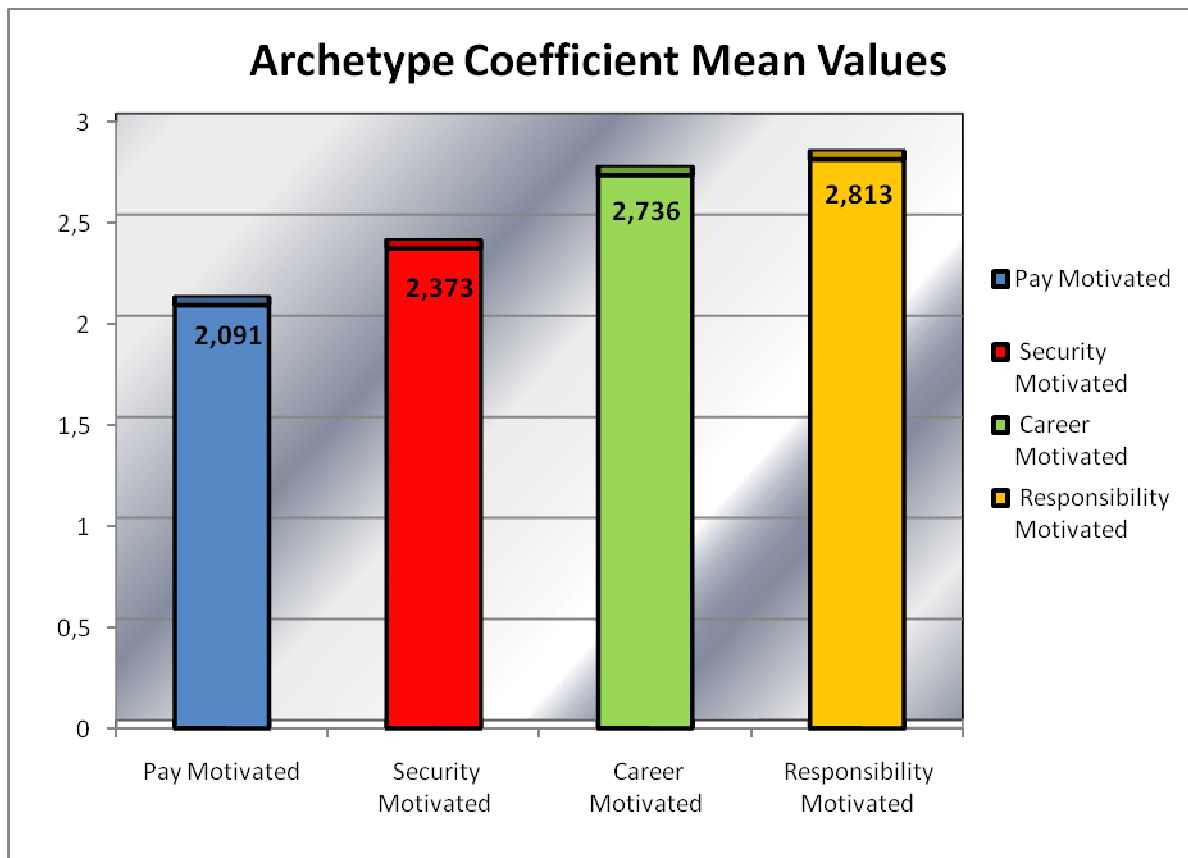


Figure 4: Archetype Coefficient Mean Values (SPSS output)

The respondents' answers of the questionnaire about students' preferences in attributes of their first full time job related to their studies, which was handed out to 124 graduating students currently enrolled in a program at JIBS or JTH at Jönköping University are showed in figure 4. In the diagram, the questions were divided into four different answering archetypes labeled *the Pay Motivated*, *the Security Motivated*, *the Career Motivated*, and *the Responsibility Motivated*. The points received by each respondent to each archetype were added according to the point analyzing system showed in section 3.6.1, and then the mean values were calculated. The result is that students at JIBS and JTH in total are scoring highest mean values at the questions related to the archetype Responsibility Motivated. Hence, comparing the attributes included in the studies they value responsibility, flexibility and involvement in decision making as the most important attribute. On second place, the Career Motivated archetype is found. From this, the finding that students value opportunities for future advancement and long-term career prospects is derived. As seen when comparing the means, the differences between all archetypes are rather small, however between the highest mean value, 2.81 and the lowest 2.09 the difference is significant. Consequently, all attributes included in the study are of great importance to the students.

The purpose of the study was to find which job attributes that the students preferred, and this has also been accomplished. A table with all mean values to each question follows, ranked by mean values. Here the results show that the career motivation related question 5A and 6B, are ranked highest. These questions are: “*Trainee placements seem to be a good entry for future employment*”, and “*Opportunities for continuous education and advancement are important to me*”. These statements were put against the alternatives: “*Trainee placements are not an option for me*”, and “*Not worrying about being laid-off is important to me*”, which are statements relating to Pay motivation and respectively Security motivation. Naturally according to the questionnaire layout, these statements are also the statements ranked with the lowest mean values. What can be concluded from this is that trainee placements as a good start of the career is something the majority of the respondents agree to. When comparing to the companies highest ranked on Företagsbarometern, a majority of these companies do offer trainee placements (Traineeguiden, 2008).

An explanation to the fact that the Responsibility motivation was found to be the archetype with highest mean value even though Career Motivation statements are ranked both at first and second place in this table can be found if looking one step further down. Even though two of the Career Motivation is ranked highest, as much as four out of six statements from the Responsibility Motivation follow. This makes the overall score to become higher, and therefore a higher general mean value is showed in figure 4.

In this table, the range of the mean values is also showed, in terms of standard deviation. These values show that all questions are rather commonly ranged, with standard deviation values from 1,176 to 1,537. Hence, no one deviates significantly.

Table 4: Mean values ranked (SPSS output)

Mean Values per Question	The Question	The opposite option (ranked inverted)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
5A Career Motivated	Trainee placements seem to be a good entry for future employment.	<i>Trainee placements are not an option for me.</i>	121	3,83	1,193
6B Career Motivated	Opportunities for continuous education and advancement are important to me.	<i>Not worrying about being laid-off is important to me.</i>	119	3,55	1,313
3A Responsibility Motivated	If my working tasks are interesting and rewarding, I see no reason to change employment.	<i>If my employment generates good money, I see no reason to change employment.</i>	121	3,08	1,275
10B Responsibility Motivated	Being able to influence the decision making process is important to me.	<i>I could work for low salary if it meant future advancement in the organization.</i>	124	2,89	1,302
9A Responsibility Motivated	To see my ideas become reality is a motivation for me.	<i>Shared responsibilities for success as well as failures are important to me.</i>	122	2,88	1,446
12A Responsibility Motivated	Being able to delegate is important to me.	<i>I chose my education because of the reputation it has in the business world.</i>	113	2,87	1,176
8B Security Motivated	A good retirement plan and protection in case of unemployment is important to me.	<i>Working in a multinational organization is important to me.</i>	121	2,83	1,480
1B Security Motivation	If I have good relationships towards my co-workers I see no reason to change employment.	<i>Personal benefits such as health insurance and company car are important to me.</i>	121	2,78	1,228
7B Responsibility Motivated	Planning my own workdays and having flexible working hours is important to me.	<i>Paid vacation is important to me.</i>	123	2,73	1,537
4B Career Motivated	If my low paid employment can be beneficial for my long-term career plan, I see no reason to change.	<i>High salary is important to me.</i>	122	2,68	1,350
2B Pay Motivated	Being part of sharing the company profit is important to me.	<i>Certificates that prove a safe and environmentally friendly workplace is important to me.</i>	121	2,61	1,293
11A Security Motivated	An open relationship towards the management is important to me.	<i>Becoming a member of the management team is important to me.</i>	124	2,59	1,414
11B Responsibility Motivated	Becoming a member of the management team is important to	<i>An open relationship towards the management is important to me.</i>	124	2,41	1,414

me.

2A Security Motivated	Certificates that prove a safe and environmentally friendly workplace is important to me.	<i>Being part of sharing the company profit is important to me.</i>	121	2,39	1,293
4A Pay Motivated	High salary is important to me.	<i>If my low paid employment can be beneficial for my long-term career plan, I see no reason to change.</i>	122	2,32	1,350
7A Pay Motivated	Paid vacation is important to me.	<i>Planning my own workdays and having flexible working hours is important to me.</i>	123	2,27	1,537
1A Pay Motivation	Personal benefits such as health insurance and company car are important to me.	<i>If I have good relationships towards my co-workers I see no reason to change employment.</i>	121	2,22	1,228
8A Career Motivated	Working in a multinational organization is important to me.	<i>A good retirement plan and protection in case of unemployment is important to me.</i>	121	2,17	1,480
12B Career Motivated	I chose my education because of the reputation it has in the business world.	<i>Being able to delegate is important to me.</i>	113	2,13	1,176
9B Security Motivated	Shared responsibilities for success as well as failures are important to me.	<i>To see my ideas become reality is a motivation for me.</i>	122	2,12	1,446
10A Career Motivated	I could work for low salary if it meant future advancement in the organization.	<i>Being able to influence the decision making process is important to me.</i>	124	2,11	1,302
3B Pay Motivated	If my employment generates good money, I see no reason to change employment.	<i>If my working tasks are interesting and rewarding, I see no reason to change employment.</i>	121	1,92	1,275
6A Security Motivated	Not worrying about being laid-off is important to me.	<i>Opportunities for continuous education and advancement are important to me.</i>	119	1,45	1,313
5B Pay Motivated	Trainee placements are not an option for me.	<i>Trainee placements seem to be a good entry for future employment.</i>	121	1,17	1,193
Valid N (list wise)			106		

4.3 Analysis of the results

4.3.1 Analysis of the results when separated by gender

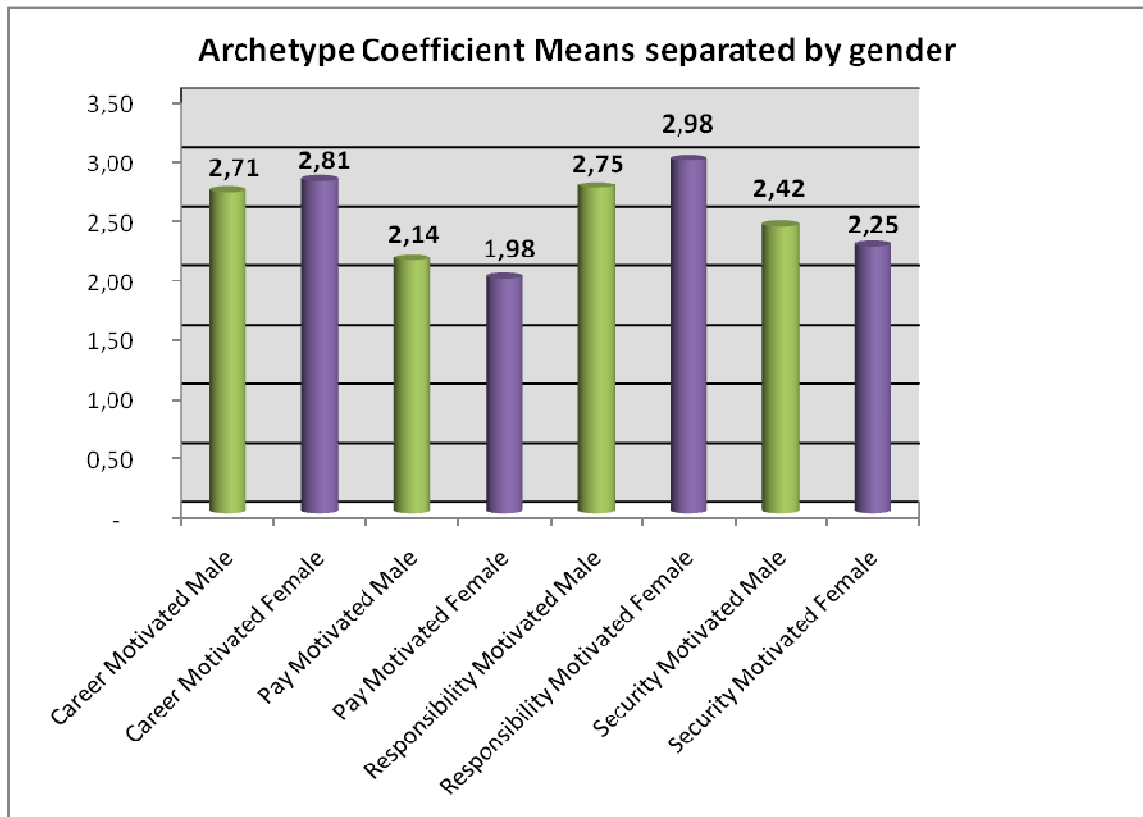


Figure 5: Archetype Coefficient Means separated by gender (SPSS output)

In order to see if there are any differences in the answering between genders the means separated by male and female respondents were done. Figure 5 show that both male and female respondents are scoring highest on the Responsibility Motivated questions, followed by Career Motivated. This accords with the overall mean values, where the same results were shown. To go further into the archetypes and in which ranges most of the respondents have answered, figures of all means divided into archetypes will follow (figure 6). To facilitate the overlook, the mean values are group together into ranges.

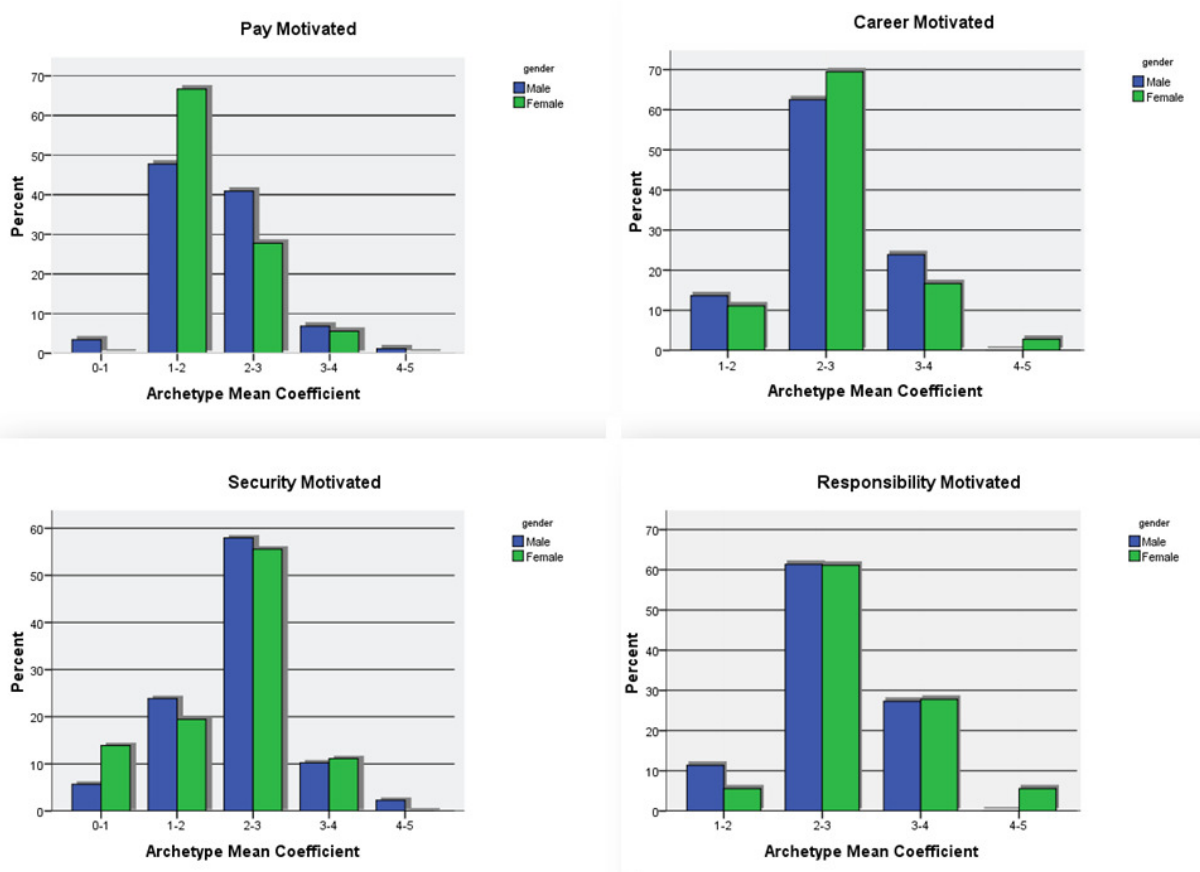


Figure 6: All Archetype Mean Values separated by gender (SPSS output)

When looking at the results on the Pay Motivated related questions together from the genus perspective (first diagram in figure 6), results show that male respondents have answered higher on the scale than females. This finding goes in line with what Brown et al. (2004) claimed when accounting for the sociological school of thought. Speculating in that men even in today's society feel that they have to follow the traditional social expectation, where they strongly contribute to the household income, is likely to be one implication of these finding. Also in the next diagram where the gender distribution of the archetype Career Motivated is showed, male respondents have scored higher. However, there is a significant negative correlation between Career Motivated and Pay Motivated male respondents (see appendix 3) and thus, the career motivated males do not find high payments as a motive for focusing on a career. The opposite goes with the last two archetypes, the Security Motivated and the Responsibility Motivated, where in both cases female respondents have scored higher than male respondents. This is also in line with the sociological view (Brown et al., 2004) where the traditional societal role of females as the care taker is accounted for. Further connections of this finding to existing theories can be drawn to Vroom's (1995) Expectancy Theory, where the females are to a larger extent than men expected by the society to be responsible for keeping the daily life working smoothly. When looking at Amanatullah's (2008) theory about possible drawbacks due to societal expectations, this would mean that female students at JIBS and JTH are being held back from having as ambitious career plans as the male students do. However, the diagrams show that on the Responsibility Motivated and the Career Motivated related questions, none of the respondents, either male or female, have agreed fully to the opposite

alternative, and hence scored 0 points on a Responsibility or Career Motivated question. This means all students value career development and responsibility highly. This further makes all the scores generally higher for these two archetypes, and explains how they received the highest mean values in total, even though female respondents which are the minority of the sample population have contributed to the highest mean values. In conclusion, the traditional societal expectations about genders even today is confirmed and affecting graduating students when they are stating their preferences regarding attractive job attributes.

4.3.2 Analysis of the results when separated by School

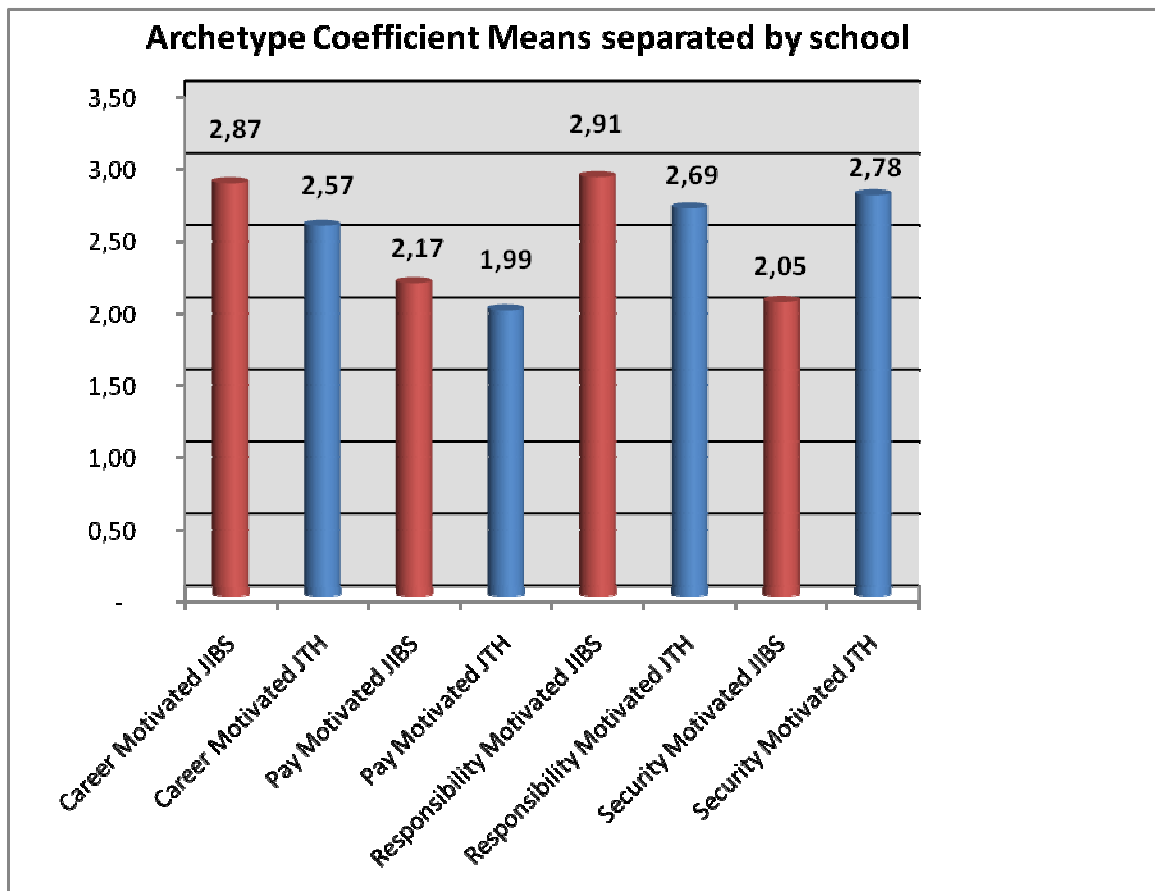


Figure 7: Archetype Coefficient Means separated by school (SPSS output)

Continued, the results will be separated according to school, in order to examine any differences in preferences. First of all, figure 7 shows that JIBS students overall score higher in all question types except the Security Motivated related questions. This set of questions is also surprisingly the set where JTH students' scores are highest overall. Implications of these findings can be drawn to the report published by Civilekonomerna (2008b) which reveals that the majority of graduates works in the private sector that traditional scholars (Brown, 2002) perceive as less secure than public owned organizations.

Also, the engineering students preferred working places according to Företagsbarometern (Universum, 2008) indicates that the Security Motivated engineers would prefer organizations that historically have been stable and important for the Swedish economy. In the ongoing financial crisis as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, it might be so that engineering students are being more affected by layoffs, and therefore value job security higher than business students. No such evidence are however found by the researchers in excess of the findings of this study.

A further look into this set of archetypes is showed in the following diagrams, where the ranges of respondent means are shown as in the gender separation area. A significant difference between answering of JIBS students and JTH students can be seen when looking at the Security Motivated archetype diagram. Overall, JIBS student seem to be more career- and pay motivated, while JTH students tend to be more alit with the security-, and responsibility motivated archetypes. This is a fundamental finding of this study.

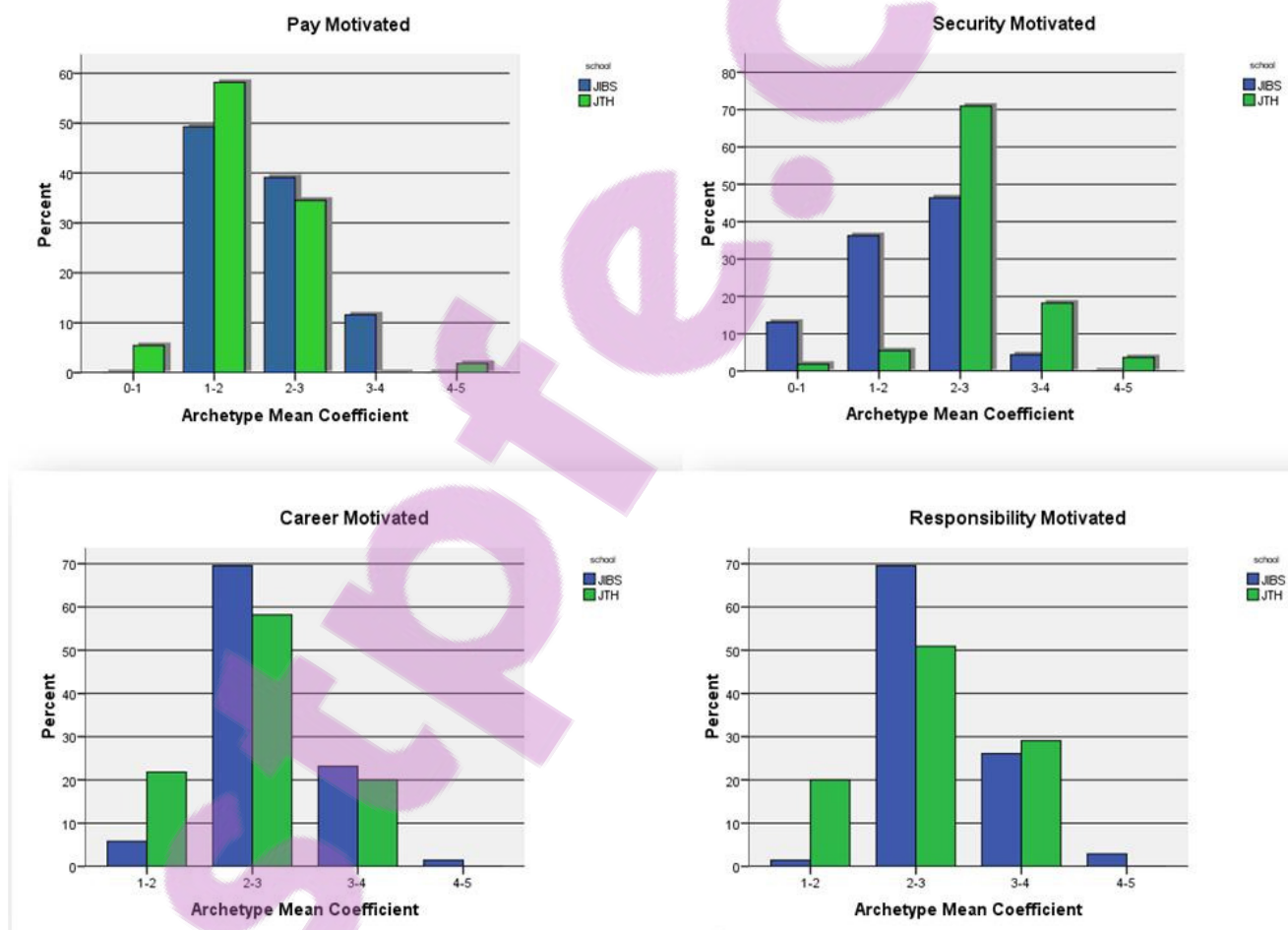


Figure 8: All archetype mean values separated by school (SPSS output)

To see the integrated results where the separated genders at JIBS' preferences are compared to the separated genders at JTH's preferences, please see appendix 4.

4.3.3 Relating the results to the group of focus: Generation Y

As stated in previous sections (2.2), generation Y is a generation defined by characteristics including individualism, impatience, flexibility, and openness towards a changing work place. When drawing parallels to the results of this study and comparing with the strongest archetype, the Responsibility Motivated, these characteristics fit the archetype very well. Also the Career Motivated student which is found on second ranking fit to the characteristics of generation Y. The Responsibility Motivated student wants great responsibility and flexibility. The Career Motivated student wants self actualization and personal advancement and development. An assumption that can be drawn from this is that students' perceptions of their own capabilities of accomplishing a work with great responsibility attached, is very positive. Theory backs this assumption; as Spiro (2006) states, generation Y are used to getting what they want and being able to making claims. This results in a great confidence and self picture, but also very high self-expectations.

The Responsibility Motivated student also values interesting work task highly, and this relates to the states made by Spiro (2006), that generation Y are appreciating other factors the previous generations when choosing employer. Spiro (2006) also mentions Career Motivation related attributes such as personal development and self-actualization.

When looking at the second aspect of the Responsibility Motivated student, involvement in decision making as well as a place in the managerial team is important. Relating this to the typical generation Y individual, their attitudes towards hierarchy and the following relationship with an executive leads to a demand of an open and flatter organized company. Generation Y has little respect towards traditional organizations hierarchies and need to communicate with and to get personal feedback from their superiors.

The opposite character to the generation Y student would be the Security Motivated. He or she values job security and wants to feel happy and comfort in the working place. They want to have a good time among colleagues and appreciate team building-, and other social-activities. They consider job security is a very important aspect of the employment, and hence can be generalized as risk averse. It is not surprising to see a total result of low levels of Security Motivated people in this study, as it includes a typical set of generation Y students. However what is surprising is that so many JTH students value the security motivation attributes. This finding is though already being discussed in previous section 4.3.2.

4.3.4 Relating the results to previous research: the Hong Kong study

When business graduates at Hong Kong Baptist University responded to a survey based on the same nine attributes as this survey, the results revealed that they in first hand looked at their careers from a long-term perspective (Moy and Lee, 2002). The most important attribute to them was the *long-term career prospective*, followed by *pay*, *job security* and *managerial relationships*. Thus, the results showed in the Hong Kong study were almost the inverted from what this study has revealed. Cultural and industrial-economical differences can explain this difference in preferences compared to how JIBS and JTH look at the same set of attributes. What though is interesting is that business students in Hong Kong share more preferences in attributes with JTH students than with the business students in Jönköping. Further, the perceptions of the surrounding environment as the sociological school accounts for are a possible explanation for the differences among business students

in the various countries. Therefore, one cannot exclude the powerful environmental impact that shapes the attitudes of students.

4.4 Analysis of missing data

Since the respondents had the choice to answer the questions with “No opinion”, a separate analysis is done for those answers. If the respondents indicated “No opinion” or left the box blank (non-response) the data is considered to belong to the category of missing data. In total, the number of missing data accounts for 2.4 percent of the total number of questions, and thus, the researchers considers the impact of the missing data to be small for the final result of the study. Recalling what Saunders et al. (2007) mentioned as a reason for non-response, was that the respondent thought the question was unclear. During the process of data collection, the researchers became aware of this issue when one respondent did not know the meaning of one question and decided to leave it blank. This is an advantage of the interviewer-administrated questionnaire, and because the same question that caused trouble for the respondent was the one that in total had the largest amount of non-response rate it is a reason to assume that more respondents had the same problem and therefore did not answer that particular question. Another reason due to that the highest non-response rate occurs at the last question can simply be that the respondents did not pay enough attention to the question because it was the last one in the set, which Saunders et al. (2007) also indicates as a reason for missing data.



5 Conclusion

This chapter of this bachelor thesis aims to answer what attributes that graduating students finds most important when choosing their first post-graduate employer will be presented.

The purpose of this study was to examine what attributes graduating students find most important when choosing their first post-graduate employer. The purpose has been fulfilled by using a set of nine attributes, divided into four own formed archetypes based on those attributes. These archetypes were analyzed and the results showed both differences in overall preferences regarding the attributes, but also significant differences between genders and the schools. In total, the Responsibility Motivation attributes were preferred among the sample.

The results further shows that societal norms are reflecting upon the choices of graduating students, as well as the characteristics of the generation which the students are brought up in.

As a single factor, pay is not as important as the other attributes when it comes to the first post-graduate employment. However, the findings that career development and responsibilities are important attributes indicates that the graduating students see a high salary as a long term goal. They are willing to make a good job and be rewarded in the future.

An important finding relating to the fact that preferences differs between the schools is that organizations targeting both business and engineering students might have to use different marketing strategy on different schools. According to the results that engineering students tend to be more job security motivated, the organizations will have to approach them earlier, as they probably prefer to have a job when they graduate. The career- and responsibility motivated business students are probably more likely to wait for a job they really want.

Even though it is a small proportion of the results that are missing, one should not forget that all conclusions drawn are in regards to the missing data. A perfect set of data would have generated more reliable answers.

To summarize, the authors see great possibilities for employers to find their future employees at JIBS and JTH. Students in both schools are showing great ambition and a willingness to perform.

6 Discussion

The conclusion of the findings will be discussed within this section and the researchers will provide the employers with suggestions of what they can do in order to strengthen their employer brand communication at Jönköping University towards the graduating students.

6.1 Limitations

This study is limited to a certain population and their personal perceptions about important attributes when they apply for their first full-time job after graduating. If wanting to apply this study on a broader contest, it is likely that the result is biased since the students are enrolled at the same university. They have been exposed to the same kind of organizational branding activities and got their ideas about their future at the labor market from the same information sources. If the same study would have been performed at Stockholm School of Economics and Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm it is likely that the answers would substantially have differed because those students got their preferences from another environment.

The method used was a slightly modified semantic differential scale. The original scale is a proven measurement tool, however this modified scale where different statements are put against each other is not as widely acknowledged, and this leads to some academic ambiguity of the findings in this paper. The researchers have therefore put a lot of effort in analyzing the results in different ways, and are satisfied and assured that the outcome is correct and accurate.

As argued for in the method section it is always an issue of measuring attitudes and perceptions of people. To get a picture that captures every single element in the population have not been possible for this research, but conducting a larger sample would have been possible. However, the empirical findings from this study are limited to the population of JIBS and JTH graduating students, enrolled at those schools during the fall semester 2008. The sampled population is identified as the most critical element in this research paper, and changes in this variable are considered to have a substantial effect on the outcome of the study. Drawing some general conclusions about graduates preferences regarding attributes that they find important when applying for their first full-time post job related to their studies based on this questionnaire conducted among students at JIBS and JTH will therefore not be possible.

6.2 Implications

This research paper can be useful for employers in the Jönköping region when they are visiting the University and holding company presentations, or creating marketing plans. Organizations that today are present at the university will after this study have an increased knowledge of the students in their final year of studies are looking at in companies before exiting the world of academia and hence, they are able to promote themselves through their organizational attributes local that students finds to be important.

From this paper, employers who know what candidates they are looking for are able to get information of what in their employer branding they should put focus on. For most job vacancies there is a requirement of a certain education. This indicates that companies trying to attract engineering students should focus on the job security aspects of the organization. Also, in specific cases the companies are asking for a male or a female in order to even out gender differences inside the company. By having the information about what preferences different genders in different educations have, the company will be able to focus on these attributes in order to attract the right person.

Companies strive to attract as many applicants as possible in the first recruitment step, in order to be able to select the best ones in further recruitment steps (Freeman et al., 2007). The recommendations from this paper to the companies who just want to establish themselves as “good employers” for the students would be to focus on the attribute most important to the largest group: the responsibilities and involvement in decision making.

Small organizations that today are not using the concept of employer branding at Jönköping University can also get ideas on how to create a brand and attract students from the University since they now are aware of what attributes the graduates are looking for.

6.3 Further research questions

Upon writing this thesis and collecting data many new insights have come to the mind of the authors as well as ideas of how to make further studies within the field. Since the subject of employer branding is relatively unexplored and considered as a new concept, the use of traditional marketing channels in order to successfully communicate an employer brand can be questioned. To make further investigations of students’ attitudes at the remaining departments of Jönköping University, School of Health Science and School of Education and Communication would be interesting. Extending the sample to other schools would enable the researchers to find out if the attitudes differs from JIBS-, and JTH students or not.

To create a deeper understanding about why these specific factors revealed in this paper are the most important, a qualitative data research would be possible.

What also is possible to do as further research within the subject is to examine what specific branding activities the successfully perceived organizations do at JIBS and JTH, and further address their campus activities. Conducting the research using a different method such as a case study where the effectiveness of employer branding activities is measured could be done. This study could include the perception of different companies which are branding themselves in different ways, one focusing on being active on campus, another not targeting students. The differences in perceptions of the companies as employers would tell more about the effectiveness of employer branding activities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Questionnaire

Below the questionnaire which made the base of the survey will follow.

A study on employer branding

This study will be used as empirical data for a bachelor thesis about employer branding. All respondents will remain anonymous.

Please compare the two alternatives A and B and mark on the scale which one you agree most to.

Pick only one alternative per question and scale. Note that the questions regard your first job after graduating.

Example: I agree with both statement A and B, but more with statement B than with statement A.

	A						B				
		Agree fully with A				Agree fully with B		No opinion			
	A	Personal benefits such as health insurance and company car are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	If I have good relationships towards my co-workers I see no reason to change employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.	A	Personal benefits such as health insurance and company car are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	If I have good relationships towards my co-workers I see no reason to change employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	A	Certificates that prove a safe and environmentally friendly workplace is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Being part of sharing the company profit is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	A	If my working tasks are interesting and rewarding, I see no reason to change employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	If my employment generates good money, I see no reason to change employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	A	High salary is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	If my low paid employment can be beneficial for my long-term career plan, I see no reason to change.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	A	Trainee placements seem to be a good entry for future employment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Trainee placements are not an option for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	A	Not worrying about being laid-off is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Opportunities for continuous education and advancement are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	A	Paid vacation is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Planning my own workdays and having flexible working hours is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	A	Working in a multinational organization is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	A good retirement plan and protection in case of unemployment is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	A	To see my ideas become reality is a motivation for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Shared responsibilities for success as well as failures are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn!

		Agree fully with A				Agree fully with B		No opinion
10.	A	I could work for low salary if it meant future advancement in the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B	Being able to influence the decision making process is important to me.						<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	A	An open relationship towards the management is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B	Becoming a member of the management team is important to me.						<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	A	Being able to delegate is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	B	I chose my education because of the reputation it has in the business world.						<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent do you think your answers have been affected by employer branding activities at the university, such as company presentations and events?

Not at all To a very large extent

Are you currently enrolled in a programme at JTH or JIBS?

Yes, JIBS Yes, JTH No

After graduating, where are you planning to look for a job?

Sweden Other country

Have you started to look for a full time job related to your studies?

Yes, I have started to look and/or apply for a job No, but I expect to start within 6 months

I already have a full time job No

Male Age: _____

Female

Thank you very much for your participation!

Please state your e-mail address if you want to be informed of the results of this study: _____

Appendix 2 – Research schedule

School and day	Date	Lecture	Time
JTH			
Monday	17	Architecture & Technology	13:00-14:45
		Produktutveckling och design	10:00-11:45
		Operativsystem	15:00-16:45
		Distributed databases	10:00-11:45
Tuesday	18	Elektroteknik/Elektronikdesign	13:00-14:45
IHH			
Monday	17	Intermediate Macroeconomics	9:00-12:00
		Handelsrättslig översikt kurs	
		Master thesis political science	13:00-17:00
Tuesday	18	Intermediate Macroeconomics	9:00-11:45
		Strategic change	10:00
Wednesday	19	Enterprisesystem	10:00
Thursday	20	AR Thesis seminar	10:00

Appendix 3 – SPSS output

Correlation: Career motivation and pay motivation male

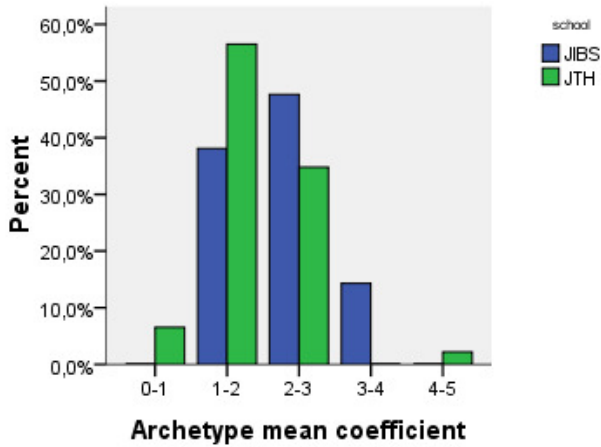
Correlations

		Career Motivate	
		Male	Pay Motivated Male
Career Motivated Male	Pearson Correlation	1,000	-,264*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,013
	N	88	88
Pay Motivated Male	Pearson Correlation	-,264*	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,013	
	N	88	88

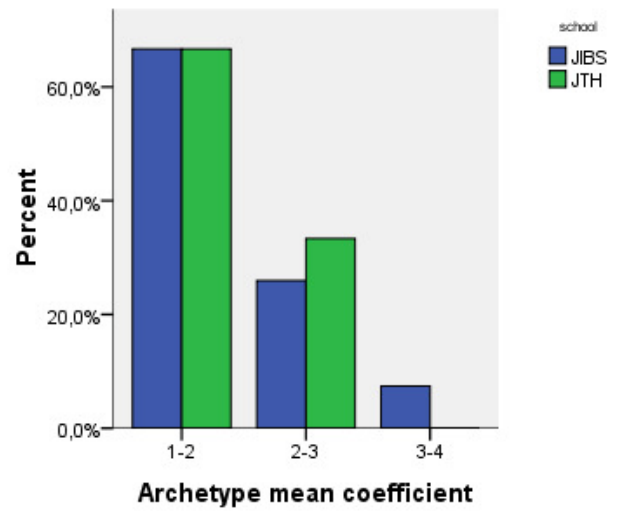
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 4 – Archetypes separated by gender and compared between schools (SPSS output)

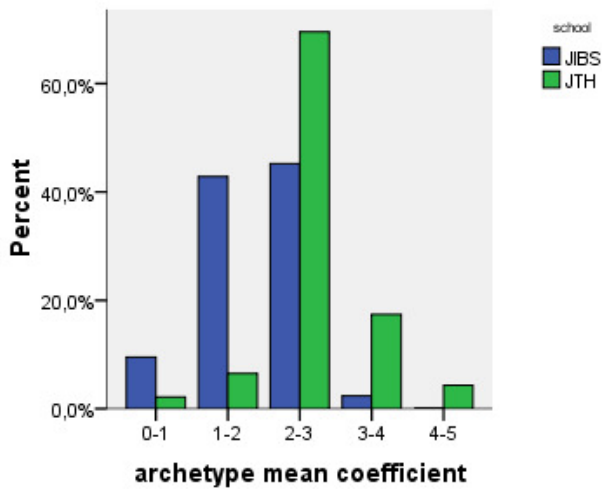
Pay Motivation Males



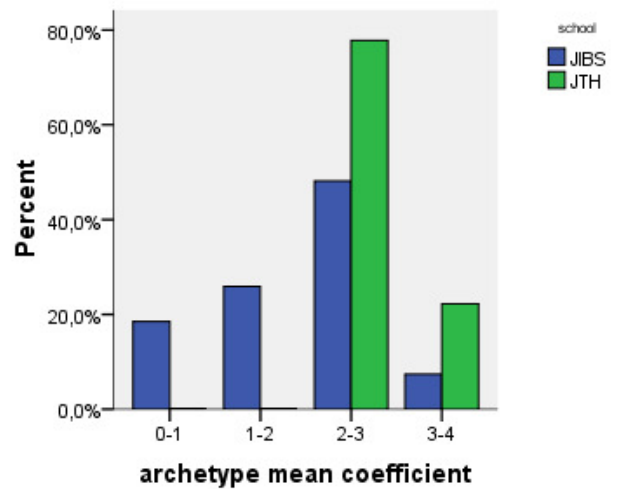
Pay motivation Females



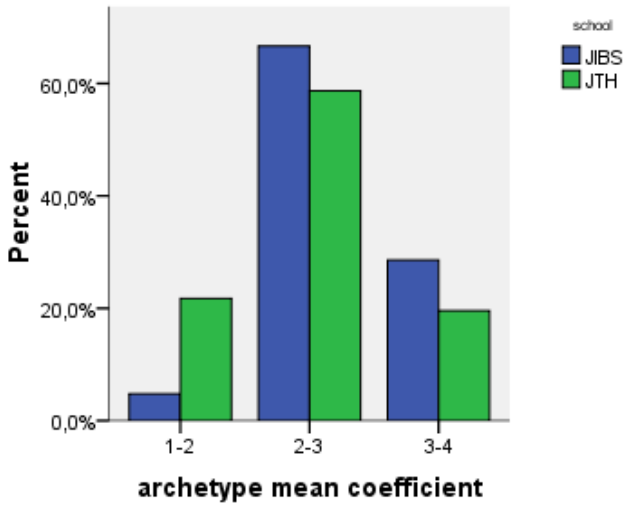
Security Motivation Males



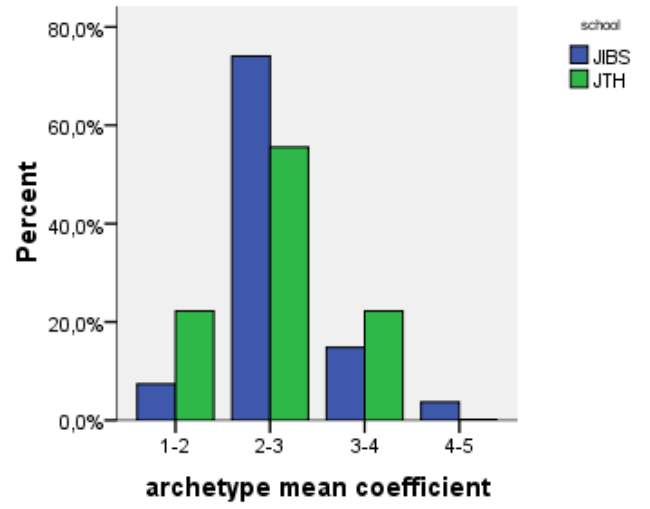
Security Motivation Females



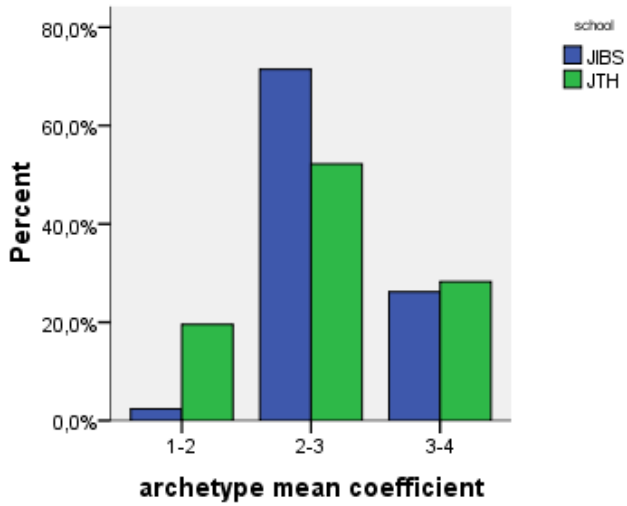
Career Motivation Males



Career Motivation Females



Responsibility Motivation Males



Responsibility motivation Females

