

Labor Attraction in non-urban areas

How can small sized companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus attract IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus?

Master's Thesis in
Culture, Communication and Globalization

Author: Mathilde Sørensen
Supervisor: Helene Pristed Nielsen

Aalborg University
31 May 2018



Abstract

Small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus often have trouble attracting student workers. It appears that students do not want to commute for a student job, if the company is small and rather unknown. Yet, if the company is big, international or well-known, it can easily attract student workers and receive many applications. However, this only seems to be an issue in relation to student workers, as many students express that they are willing to commute for a fulltime job when they graduate; but not a job during their time of study. Today, there are countless ways to get around in Aarhus; there is a solid bus system and several opportunities for carpooling, as to why there are only few excuses for refusing to travel a bit for a student job. Based on this, the purpose of this thesis is to understand how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract students within the area of IT by investigating how they change their mindset when they graduate. The focus on IT students was chosen, since this is a desired group of employees with a low unemployment rate, as to why there ought to be extra focus on how to attract them. This initial interest resulted in the following problem statement:

How can small sized companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus attract IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus?

With this problem statement, the aim was to investigate how individuals within the area of IT feel about working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus respectively as students and as graduates. Furthermore, the thesis also discusses how cultural aspects potentially influence the change in their mindset along with their graduation.

The research was carried out qualitatively by conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals who are just about to graduate and thereby currently seeking fulltime jobs, or individuals who have graduated within the last year. The interviewees come from various IT streams at institutions of higher education in Aarhus. The research was conducted using qualitative data, since the aim was to gain descriptive data from graduates in order to understand how their mindsets potentially change.

By the use of theories on motivation, employer branding, consumer culture, and mobility, the statements from the interviewees was analyzed and discussed in order to find out whether or not they

change their mindset when they graduate. The dataset shows that they do not change their mindset remarkably in relation to their decision-making process. However, the dataset strongly indicates that since their time of study, the graduates' motivations for applying for jobs and their opinions towards employer branding and mobility have changed significantly. Thereby, the results indicate that there is a shift in their values when they become graduates; they start focusing on different things. As students, their primary focus is on their studies. However, they need a job in order to get money, but they have certain preferences. They want a job where they can enjoy themselves and be with other students in a young environment, while they get relevant work experience. Furthermore, the job has to be in the urban area of Aarhus, as they do not want to move or spend time on travelling. Yet, as graduates, the majority is willing to move or travel between half an hour and one and a half hours for a job. Therefore, the results strongly indicate that students want to live and work in an urban area, and therefore, there exists an urban culture among them, which seems to become less important when they graduate.

To overcome these obstacles, companies must listen to what students prefer and try to implement new initiatives. They can benefit from employing more than one student and allow the students to work from home. Doing this, it helps to ensure a young environment and it lowers the travelling time.

Table of content

Abstract.....	1
List of Figures	6
1.0 Introduction.....	7
2.0 Literature Review	10
2.1 Attracting employees in remote areas	10
2.2 Mobility.....	12
2.3 Attracting students and graduates.....	13
2.4 Danish initiatives	15
3.0 Research Problem	18
3.1 Delimitation	18
3.2 Problem statement	20
3.3 Structure	20
4.0 Theory	22
4.1 Employer branding	22
4.1.1 Basic assumptions within employer branding.....	22
4.1.2 Employer branding in practice	23
4.1.3 Internal- and external employer branding	24
4.2 Consumer Behavior and Decision-Making Process	25
4.2.1 The five steps in the Consumer Decision Process Model	25
4.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	27
4.4 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory	29
4.5 Mobility.....	30
4.6 Recapitulation	32
5.0 Methodology	33
5.1 Aim of Research	33

5.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations	34
5.3 Research design	35
5.4 Research method	35
5.5 Sampling	36
5.6 Data analysis	38
5.7 Validity and reliability	40
5.8 Ethical considerations	41
6.0 Empirical data	42
7.0 Analysis	44
7.1 Analysis of interviewees' time as students	46
7.1.1 Decision-making process during time of study	46
7.1.2 Motivation during time of study	50
7.1.3 Employer branding preferences during time of study	53
7.1.4 Mobility preferences during time of study	54
7.1.5 Recapitulation of first part of analysis	55
7.2 Analysis of interviewees' time as graduates	56
7.2.1 Graduates' decision-making process	56
7.2.2 Graduates' motivation	59
7.2.3 Graduates' opinions on employer branding	61
7.2.4 Graduates' mobility preferences	63
7.2.5 Recapitulation of second part of analysis	65
7.3 Sub-conclusion of entire analysis	66
8.0 Discussion	68
9.0 Conclusion	72
10.0 Works Cited	75
11.0 Appendices	80

Appendix 1: Interview Guide.....	80
Appendix 2: Written consent form (Example)	81
Appendix 3: Transcripts	82
Appendix 4: Coding framework for interviewees' time as students	83
Appendix 5: Coding framework for interviewees' time as graduates	86

List of Figures

Figure 1: Central urban area of Aarhus

Figure 2: Consumer Decision Process Model

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Figure 4: Herzberg's satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors

Figure 5: Example of coding framework

Figure 6: Analytical overview

1.0 Introduction

Through the last couple of years, there has been a lot of political focus on places outside central urban areas in Denmark, and the Danish government has implemented a long line of initiatives to strengthen these areas. The initiatives include higher transport allowance, economic contribution to ferry rides, and moving workplaces away from the capital area (Juel). The latter initiative has received a lot of attention in media recently, as government has announced that more than 1800 workplaces will move away from the capital area in the near future (Holst).

However, this initiative only revolves around state workplaces and does not include private companies, as government has no control over where these choose to locate themselves geographically. This means that many of the companies, which are not located in central urban areas, are on their own and must administer attracting employees to come work in these areas themselves. To some companies, this can be a big challenge; this includes especially small companies, as these do not have the same opportunity to brand themselves as big companies have (Kronborg; Pedersen). Often, they do not have the same amount of money, as to why many small companies choose not to spend money on branding, since advertisements can be too expensive for them (Kronborg).

Basically, there is no political focus on how private, small companies located outside central urban areas can attract employees, although many of these companies have trouble attracting new employees. Studies show that people increasingly seek to central urban areas to live and work, in fact, more than 54% of the world's population lives in central urban areas (UN). However, not all people can live and work in the cities – there is simply not room for this. Moreover, some companies require a lot of space, and it is therefore more adequate to locate them outside central urban areas.

Throughout the country, it has become harder for companies to find employees for vacancies, which is quite a paradox, because there are thousands of unemployed citizens who are provided through the municipal funds (Danmarks Statistik, *Registreret Ledighed*).

Compared to other countries, Denmark is quite small; it only takes one day to travel across the entire land and back, and one can easily get around by both car and public transportation. Overall, this country has a solid road system, and the government continues to build new roads, expand the motorways, and make the trains faster each year. Furthermore, the Danish population has taken sharing

economy to heart and the number of citizens who use it, continues to increase (Danmarks Statistik, *Deleøkonomi – Hvordan Kan Den Defineres og Måles* 21-22). Today, people can share and rent almost anything. You can rent an apartment or a car for a couple of hours, and it only takes you a few minutes. Additionally, the number of websites, apps, and Facebook groups concerning lifts around Denmark is increasing. It has become popular to pick up “strangers” and ride together to save money, take care of the environment, or to simply have company while driving. On the whole, citizens of Denmark have multiple opportunities to commute by car, train, bus etc., as to why there are only few excuses not to be willing to travel a bit for a desired job.

Through my own experiences as an intern working with bridge building between companies and students at institutions of higher education in Aarhus, I have found that the majority of students are not willing to travel outside Aarhus to get a relevant student job. This is despite of the increasing focus on the importance of a relevant student job besides one's education. If the job is not located in the heart of Aarhus, many students deselect it before reading the job advertisement. Yet, when they graduate, they seem to be more than willing to commute or move for a job. In addition, it seems there is a tendency among students to prefer big companies over small ones. The positions at these companies are never vacant for long, as opposed to positions at small companies, which are often vacant for long, and sometimes the companies need to give up on finding student workers (Pedersen).

Based on the considerations above and together with my own experience from working with bridge building between companies and students, this thesis will investigate how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract student workers. It will focus on recent graduates or soon to be graduates from institutions of higher education in Aarhus, and the aim is to understand how their motivations related to job seeking and their opinions towards working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus change as they look for a fulltime job instead of a student job. A recent study shows that Danes commute more than ever before (Ritzau). However, this line of thinking does not seem to apply for students in Aarhus. Based on this, I expect to find differences in people's mindsets and, therefore, I want to investigate how cultural aspects might influence and change their opinions and beliefs towards job seeking and preferences regarding company size.

By investigating how students change their views when they become graduates, it is possible to find differences and/or similarities and discuss how cultural aspects potentially influence their choices and

motivations. This knowledge can be valuable for small companies when they approach students, as it can give them a better understanding of their preferences, and thereby allow them to target students more sufficiently.

2.0 Literature Review

A literature review is characterized by documenting an understanding of prior research (Hart 1). In this chapter, I will look at previous studies and discuss the theories and results from these in order to document my knowledge. Since the overall focus of this thesis is how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract students, it is interesting and essential to look at prior research on this topic in order to investigate how my research can contribute with new knowledge on this area. That is, the objective is to look for gaps in already existing research and see how this thesis can contribute with new and valuable knowledge.

2.1 Attracting employees in remote areas

In Australia, a study on “Labor attraction and retention in rural and remote Queensland communities” was conducted in 2013 (Becker et al.). Although Australia is much bigger than Denmark and the definition of rural might be different there, this study is still interesting, as it can shed light on some of the reasons that underlie why people do not want to work outside central urban areas – knowledge that I can use when I talk to people in Denmark about the same issue.

The definition of remote varies from person to person, and what people in Denmark might find remote or long from a central urban area will likely differ from how it is defined in Australia. Nevertheless, emphasis is on the fact that people see a place as rural, remote, non-urban etc., and therefore deselect it. Therefore, this study can still be useful and in the following I will discuss the results of the research and consider how these can be valuable for this thesis.

The study was conducted by Becker et al., since attracting and retaining skilled labor force is a critical and complex issue for remote communities. They investigate the current approaches to attract and retain employees in two separate regions in Australia, and their findings identify some critical challenges for remote communities and organizations seeking employees within the private sector (Becker et al. 342; 360; 362). At the same time, however, they emphasize that the reasons for labor shortages can be very different depending on region, which means that potential actions to address these problems also can vary significantly (Becker et al. 360). This notion is worth considering, and it enhances the initial focus of the thesis; the aim is not to generalize citizens in Denmark and make an exact plan for companies that can ensure how they can get employees. Rather, emphasis is on

understanding potential employees and receiving a lot of point of views on the given topic in order to create an understanding that will help companies when they brand themselves and recruit students.

The study is of qualitative character and Becker et al. have conducted both focus group interviews and individual interviews either face to face or by telephone. They chose to conduct their research using qualitative methods, since they sought to understand their participants and collect in-depth knowledge on the given topic, which a qualitative design allowed them to do (Becker et al. 348). However, having chosen this design, they are not able to generalize their findings, which they emphasize in their study. They state, that further research could be done quantitatively with a larger sample size, as this would enhance the opportunity of generalization (Becker et al. 364).

Linking the latter mentioned knowledge to this thesis, it indicates that neither this study can be generalized. However, since my objective is to understand the mindset among individuals during their time as respectively students and graduates, it does not appear to be an issue, since the aim is to gather multiple opinions and not to generalize.

Their target group consists of people from regions experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees, and the researchers sought to identify reasons that could help them understand the motivations behind people's choice of workplace. Basically, their findings showed that the underlying reasons varied between the two regions; both wages, isolation, long distance, and personal factors influenced people's decisions (Becker et al. 351).

Looking at the personal factors, these played a significant role both when people had to decide if they wanted to take a job in another region but also in terms of remaining there afterwards. In this case, personal factors mainly include family/partner and lifestyle expectations. The researchers state, "In both regions studied, one of the most common personal factors creating difficulty in employee attraction was dual-career couples, or integration of a partner into the community" (Becker et al. 356). This knowledge correlates with the current culture in Denmark, as companies must pay attention to people's families, as well, if they want to attract and retain employees (Styrelsen for Arbejdsmarked og Rekruttering). This mainly applies for international employees who come to Denmark, however, in some cases, it can also apply for employees being recruiting at companies located outside central urban areas, since they might feel that it is a long way from home, as well.

Based on these latter reflections, this thesis will do wisely to consider these aspects when attempting to understand and identify the underlying motivations concerning working outside central urban areas of Aarhus. Moreover, this prepares the ground for distinguishing between students and graduates, as the majority of women have children after their education, hence, do not settle down during education (Jepsen). In fact, the average woman in Denmark is 29 years old, when she has her first child (Danmarks Statistik, *Gennemsnitsalder for førstegangsfødende kvinder*). Based on this, one can expect that there are differences between students and graduates, if looking at personal factors such as family in correlation with Becker et al.'s study.

2.2 Mobility

In correlation with the above, it seems adequate to include *mobility*, as well. Since this thesis will investigate how small companies in a non-urban area can attract employees, it is essential to include aspects on *mobility*, as it allows me to understand how people within my target group feel about commuting for work and potentially moving for a job. This knowledge is useful when trying to understand how cultural aspects potentially influence a change in mindset, and whether or not an urban culture exists among students. In the following sections, I will discuss what previous research has found on this area and reflect on how these results can be used in this thesis.

Previously this year, Cook and Cuervo published an article which investigates the distinction between people who leave a remote area and people who stay there. They state, “Studies of rural areas have necessarily been occupied by discussions of migration, the experience of which is often concentrated among young adults in the years immediately following the end of secondary education. This dynamic has been attributed to a mobility imperative that equates leaving rural areas for the opportunities offered by urban centers with success and staying in rural areas with failure” (Cook and Cuervo 1). This means that they seek to challenge the assumption that mobility is associated with the development of personal competences that people who are not mobile are incapable of developing.

Their article is based on data drawn from an ongoing longitudinal panel study from Australia called *Life Patterns study*, which is based on Australians who left secondary school in 1991 in the state of Victoria. The study includes both surveys and interviews with people from this group and Cook and Cuervo's article draws on a subset of these interviews (Cook and Cuervo 5). The objective in these

interviews was to address the topics of belonging and place, and the interviewees were split between those who left their remote place of origin, those who stayed, and those who left for education or employment but returned again later in life.

The findings of the study show that the mobility decision of both those who stayed in a remote area and those who left but returned later is closely related to family considerations, since many of the participants were steered by the desire of being close to friends and family (Cook and Cuervo 7; 14). This correlates with the results from the Australian study accounted for in section 2.1 saying that personal factors are important when people choose to take a job in another region. This knowledge can prove useful when seeking to understand how people feel about commuting for work, and the study has served potential motivations that could make people want to move for a job, which can be used in this research, as well.

The above-mentioned study and related article focus on Australia, and therefore the results cannot be directly compared to a Danish context. Australia is much bigger than Denmark, and the definition of remote is likely different there than in Denmark. However, as previously argued for, the definition of remote is individual and therefore an Australian study can be used in a Danish context.

2.3 Attracting students and graduates

Another study which is quite interesting for this thesis was conducted in Finland in 2012. The study is a bachelor's thesis, and it seeks to answer the following, "How should companies use employer branding in order to attract student and graduate applications?" (Eronen). This is very similar to this thesis, as to why it likely will contain valuable information that I can draw on.

The study was conducted by Laura Eronen and focuses on employer branding. It uses mixed methods; that is, both quantitative and qualitative methods. Eronen has prepared a questionnaire of quantitative character to collect facile information from the participants, who consist of students and graduates. In addition to this, she has conducted two single interviews of qualitative character to gain in-depth information on the topic (Eronen 19). Combining these two methods might be useful for this thesis, as it allows the researcher to get many responses through the quantitative questionnaire, which helps to ensure validity, and at the same, lets the researcher know which aspects might be of importance to the interviews. By conducting qualitative interviews in addition to the questionnaires, the researcher

can explore the data in-depth and try to understand the interviewees and their opinions towards the topic. Based on these considerations, these mixed methods might be of value for this thesis.

Eronen's study uses theories within consumer behavior and argues that these relate to employer branding, as well. That is, consumers and employees look for the same things, when they are to choose respectively a product and a workplace (Eronen 5-6). She argues that a consumer and a job seeker go through the same decision-making process; she states, "What relates employer branding to the decision-making process is that a person goes through a decision-making process also when deciding on job" (Eronen 6). This is an interesting viewpoint, and one that ought to be tested in this thesis, as well. In addition to this viewpoint, she also includes a paragraph saying that a brand must be strong, stand out, and connect with its consumers. She states, "A brand needs to stay relevant and bring something new to the market continuously" (Eronen 7). Once again, she claims that the same principles apply for employer branding – in order for job seekers to choose a given company, it must stand out. If a company wants to attract employees, it has to be desirable and not only satisfy basic needs.

Furthermore, looking at the latter mentioned needs, her research includes yet another interesting aspect. As above, the assumption is that job seekers act as consumers. However, consumers seek to fulfill their needs through products or services, whereas job seekers want to fulfill their individual needs through, for example, monthly salary or social belonging. In relation to this, *The Hierarchy of Needs* is important. The pyramid is developed by Maslow and illustrates which needs humans have and in which order they want to fulfill these. Humans have both physiological needs, safety needs, esteem needs etc. Eronen argues that The Hierarchy of Needs is important in employer branding; she states, "A person needs a job in order to have financial security. This is a part of safety needs. However, this need is satisfied by having any job available. A person's need to be held in esteem is especially important from employer branding point of view" (Eronen 5). Based on this, one can say that The Hierarchy of Needs relates highly to job seekers and employer branding.

Looking at the results from her research, there are, in particular, two things that apply for both students and graduates. She has listed the reasons for choosing jobs among her respondents, and it is mainly the job description and career possibilities that attract people. However, students with part time jobs have also listed flexible working hours as an important factor; in fact, one out of five of her respondents has mentioned it (Eronen 24). This result correlates with my initial assumption regarding

differences between individuals during their time of study and as graduates, and this is something I ought to consider in my research. Overall, her data and results can help this research determine which direction to go when investigating how students change their mindset when they graduate.

2.4 Danish initiatives

Since this thesis takes its point of departure in companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus, it is essential to look at prior initiatives in this region, which will be the focal point in this section. Furthermore, it will discuss the current initiatives that government has implemented all over Denmark in an attempt to strengthen non-urban areas. By including and considering these things, it gets easier to understand the current situation both generally in Denmark, but also locally in Aarhus. Looking at prior initiatives and business plans, it is possible to detect which initiatives are in focus, and potentially what works and what does not work.

Looking at the initiatives that government has rolled out since 2015, these have been at the center of attention and widely discussed in the media. The government calls the initiative “Better Balance”, since the aim is to create a better balance between workplaces in Denmark and ensure a better allocation nationally (Finansministeriet 3).

Basically, the government has decided to move many state jobs from Copenhagen to other places in Denmark in an attempt to spread the jobs so that they are not only located in the capital. By spreading jobs and moving them to areas away from central urban areas, it will likely contribute to create activity and stimulate development in the nearby area, so that economic development and growth can benefit everyone in Denmark and not only citizens in the capital area (Finansministeriet 3-4).

However, although it has been done in good faith, the implementations have been met with a lot of critique, especially from employees who have been forced to either move across the country or quit their jobs (Johansen). In the “Better Balance II” initiative, it says that the government will take families into account, since they are aware that a process like this can be a radical change for the entire family. For example, they emphasize that there must be room for flexibility during the moving process and furthermore, that the new municipality must present options for housing, schools, institutions etc., so that people will feel welcome (Finansministeriet 36).

Officially, there is no evaluation of the initiative yet, so one cannot draw any final conclusions, hence, say anything about the outcome and potential better balance in the country. However, it seems that the affected people are dissatisfied with the process and the way things have been handled; in fact, the majority of the inflicted employees has expressed that they have no intention of moving (Secher). Based on this, this thesis will consider that moving people a long way against their will might not be an adequate solution for companies located outside central urban areas. Rather, ways to attract and retain employees to the companies and communities need to be scrutinized.

Yet, the above discussed initiative only addresses state jobs moved from Copenhagen, hence, not private companies in the region of Aarhus. Therefore, the following section will lay out what Aarhus municipality in cooperation with nearby municipalities does for businesses outside the central area and which focus they have.

In the business plan for Aarhus 2018-2019, one of the goals is to optimize the commuting options in the area. The increase in globalization and the growing role of cities means that international competition between city regions is intensified. This necessitates an increase in population and jobs. Therefore, Aarhus must grow and develop into an area with closely related labor and settlement (Aarhus Kommune 4).

The same business plan shows that an increasing number of companies in Aarhus have trouble recruiting qualified labor force (Aarhus Kommune 11). When companies have too many vacant jobs and cannot recruit the needed labor force, it obstructs growth and development. Therefore, the city of Aarhus has focus on recruiting qualified labor force and has started a pilot project with proactive branding to attract employees. Focus in this project is especially on IT specialists, as many companies need employees with competences within this area in particular (Aarhus Kommune 11). This information is crucial for this thesis, as it discloses which profiles that are needed, hence, which profiles that are essential to know how to attract.

Since this thesis focuses on companies located outside central urban areas, it needs to consider not only Aarhus municipality, but also the nearby municipalities. Therefore, it will account for *Business Region Aarhus* (BRAA) and the work they do. It is a cooperation between twelve municipalities

around Aarhus; the participating municipalities are Aarhus, Favrskov, Hedensted, Horsens, Norddjurs, Odder, Randers, Samsø, Silkeborg, Skanderborg, Syddjurs, and Viborg.

In BRAA, the main goal is to connect the municipalities and make it easier for people to work and commute across the municipalities' borders which correlates with the goal from Aarhus' business plan 2018-2019. They work to strengthen the area. For example, currently, they strive for a better infrastructure, as they see this as crucial for continuing growth. Furthermore, they want to ensure that people can get anywhere in the region within an hour (Aarhus Kommune 23). BRAA and the goals they strive for can help companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus attract employees, as infrastructure and transportation options might have a say when people choose jobs; no one want to work somewhere they cannot travel to.

The above tells me that Aarhus focuses on recruiting qualified labor force, and that the companies within the municipality are in need of especially IT profiles. However, there are no specific plan for how private companies outside the urban area of Aarhus can attract employees. Although BRAA focuses on how conditions for commuting citizens can be better, this is all the focus there is. Therefore, this thesis will attempt to fill out this gap and present valuable knowledge on the topic.

3.0 Research Problem

In this chapter, a definition and delimitation of the problem area will be laid out. Together, these considerations will lay the foundation for the following problem statement that will emerge at the end of the chapter.

3.1 Delimitation

Based on my interest in this given topic, I have chosen certain aspects and delimitations for this thesis. These are chosen, as I believe they will contribute to a better understanding of how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract students.

Firstly, this thesis will focus on small companies, which are defined as companies with less than 50 employees and an annual revenue smaller than 10 million Euros (SMV Portalen). Originally, the thesis was laid out to focus on small and medium sized companies, however, according to the EU definition, a medium sized company has less than 250 employees and an annual revenue smaller than 43 million Euros (SMV Portalen). However, in Denmark, this would be a rather big company, as to why this thesis will only focus on small companies according to the EU definitions.

Moreover, this thesis will have its point of departure in Aarhus and the nearby municipalities who are members of BRAA. This is based on my experience from working with bridge building between students and businesses, as I have found that there in fact is a problem with getting students to work outside the central urban area of Aarhus. Therefore, it seems relevant to investigate this matter further. This means that the results will say something about this area only.

Based on the business plan for Aarhus 2018-2019, this thesis will focus on people within the IT industry. It is a desired group of people, since many companies need employees with competences within this field concurrently with the increasing digitalization. This means that focus will not be on IT companies in particular, rather, employees within the area of IT, since the majority of companies needs IT specialists whether they operate within communication, marketing, food industry etc. Since it is a desired group of people, it forms the basis for investigating how companies can attract them.

Furthermore, since the aim of this research is to investigate how students change their mindset towards job seeking and distance to work, when they become graduates, it is essential that I talk to

people who have experience with both job seeking while they have been studying, as well as when they have graduated. Therefore, people in this study will consist of recent or soon to be graduates who can talk about their experiences with job seeking while they studied and applied for student jobs, as well as job seeking and applications for fulltime jobs. The participants are people who have studied at higher educations in Aarhus – this includes both the University, VIA, Business Academy etc. I do not differentiate between these educations, as all of them contain streams with IT profiles. By choosing to focus on recent or soon to be graduates, it helps to ensure that the memory of their time as students is still present. I define a recent graduate as someone who has graduated within the last year.

Finally, a non-urban area can be difficult to define, as people often have different opinions towards this depending on personal matters; for example, if you do not have a car, you might see somewhere as far away compared to someone who can easily drive there. However, I must define the concept, and I have done so based on previous experiences with students refusing to “travel long” for a job together with knowledge on high-density housing areas in Aarhus. Therefore, in this thesis, non-urban areas are defined as places outside Aarhus town center and the suburbs Tilst, Brabrand, Viby, Aabyhøj, Holme, Højbjerg, Skåde Bakker, Skejby, and Vejlbj Risskov, since there is high-density in all of these places. In figure 1 below, my definition of the central urban area of Aarhus is illustrated.

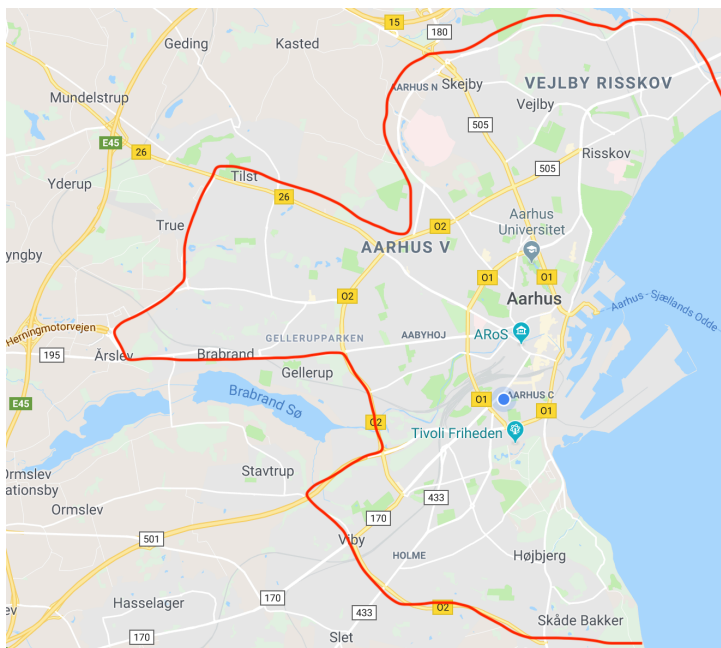


Figure 1 – Central urban area of Aarhus

3.2 Problem statement

Based on the elaborations above and the delimitations of the problem field, this thesis will seek to answer the following problem statement,

How can small sized companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus attract IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus?

With this problem statement, the objective is to investigate how IT students change their mindset in relation to job seeking and jobs at small companies when they graduate. By taking a closer look at their mindsets, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of them and explore how cultural aspects might influence their beliefs towards the given topic. This construction lets me gather valuable knowledge that can help small sized companies outside the central urban of Aarhus attract student workers within the area of IT.

3.3 Structure

In order to answer the above-mentioned problem statement, it is essential to gain knowledge on the job seeking process among graduates and see how they have changed their perceptions since they were students. To gain these insights, it is crucial that I have the adequate theoretical and methodological foundation. Therefore, this thesis will begin by covering the theoretical aspects and account for the chosen theories which include *employer branding*, *consumer behavior/decision-making process*, *motivation*, and *mobility*. The theories will help me understand the process of job seeking and the issues related to it, and they will lay the foundation for the later analysis.

Subsequently, I will account for the methodological considerations and justify how the chosen design can help me answer the problem statement. In this chapter, sections on research design and research method, sampling of participants, validity and reliability, data analysis, and ethical considerations will appear.

The methodological chapter will be followed by a short chapter where the empirical data will be accounted for. In here, I will briefly explain the empirical data and how it has been coded, and furthermore, I will account for the ways in which the coded data will be used in the following analysis.

The analysis will be based on the collected empirical data and the theoretical framework explained earlier. It will seek to understand how IT students change their perceptions, motivations, and opinions towards job seeking and working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus, when they graduate. I will scrutinize the data and distinguish between statements relating to students and graduates in order to see how these have changed and investigate how cultural aspects might influence this change. The analysis will consist of two parts; one for arguments relating to the interviewees' time as students, and one for arguments relating to their time as graduates. By dividing the analysis and distinguish between the arguments relating to the interviewees' time as respectively students and graduates, it will likely be easier to understand them and find differences and similarities in their mindsets. In each analysis, I will examine and analyze the arguments and link them to the theoretical framework. Eventually, a comparison between the arguments will appear in order to see how the mindset differs depending on whether the interviewees talk about their time as students or as graduates.

The next chapter will include a discussion, where I consider the results and reflect on how these can be used. I seek to come up with actual solutions for small companies in non-urban areas outside Aarhus.

Finally, the thesis will end with a conclusion in which I will recapitalize the assignment and answer the problem statement.

4.0 Theory

This chapter will account for the literature and theories that will be used in this thesis and elaborate on how these are relevant for the research. Much of the literature is chosen based on the previous literature review, as the frameworks and theories in there have inspired me.

4.1 Employer branding

Since this research focuses on how small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract student workers, it is essential to look at *employer branding* and define this term. It is an area of growing importance, and it has been used with increasing enthusiasm since it was first employed in America in the early 1990s (Lane 24; Mandhanya and Maitri 44).

Overall, the aim of employer branding is to make the workplace attractive to current and potential employees in order to recruit and retain people, as the fight for good employees can be tough. Although the tendency was developed in America, it has become a popular and crucial term in the Danish corporate world through the last two decades. In the mid 2000s, the concept became widespread in Denmark, and researchers began to explore the term (Engelund and Buckhave 9). Further, companies began to establish employer branding initiatives; for example, the Danish windmill manufacturer, *Vestas*, established their employer branding department in 2005 (Jørgensen), and Novo Nordisk, the multinational pharmaceutical company, launched a new employer branding concept in 2008 (Engelund and Buckhave 13). These are both big, international companies, but today, employer branding has spread and is also used by small companies in Denmark.

4.1.1 Basic assumptions within employer branding

The concept of employer branding emerged from the idea to apply brand and consumer thinking to the areas within human resources. It was a common thing to use marketing ideas in order to attract and retain consumers, and the early intention was to test if the techniques within this culture could be applied within the area of human resources in order to attract and retain employees, as well. It emerged, as employers discovered, that it was not enough to simply pay employees more; additional procedures had to be made, and they began to come up with other things to offer talented employees to attract and retain the right candidates (Lane 25). Based on this, employer branding can be seen as a fusion between HR and marketing.

The terms *employer brand* and *employer branding* are often used in the same contexts; however, they differ in meaning. Employer brand refers to an organization's reputation as an employer. The founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, describes the term in the following way, "Your brand is your reputation. It is the things people say about you when you're not in the room" (Lane 24). This is a good way to describe it, as it encapsulates the meaning very well and defines the relation to the company's reputation. On the contrary, employer branding refers to all things related to policies, recruitment advertising, training, management, and other things that deal with how to attract, retain, and employ people (Mandhanya and Maitri 44; Lane 24). According to Ambler and Barrow, employer branding is defined as, "... the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (187).

4.1.2 Employer branding in practice

Both employer branding and employer brand are relevant terms in this research. The aim is to investigate how small companies can attract students, and the statements from the interviewees will likely give an idea of which elements small companies can benefit from focusing on when targeting potential employees; hence employer branding. Additionally, employer brand is relevant, as it is difficult for a company to attract employees if their reputation is bad. In other words, a good employer brand is, to some extent, a condition for successful employer branding (Markelz 11). Furthermore, since this thesis focuses on small companies, employer brand is even more crucial, as it is important for small companies to have a good reputation, since they do not have the same opportunity as big corporations to give employees economic compensation, as to why they need to focus on other things (Markelz 10).

The above prepares the ground for the fact that employer branding can be used in order to understand which things people within my target group emphasize when choosing a job; knowledge that can prove valuable for small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus when attracting student workers.

In practice, employer branding initiatives can be seen as, for example, private health care insurance, flexible work hours, superannuation, dentist schemes, fitness etc. There are many options and they do not necessarily have to cost much. Yet, these aspects are important for this thesis, as small companies often have unknown employer brands and therefore, they cannot rely entirely on a good

reputation, rather, they must to a greater extent focus on employer branding to attract new employees (Markelz 10).

4.1.3 Internal- and external employer branding

Within employer branding, there are both an internal and external perspective which I will account for in the following, as they differ and deal with very different things.

External employer branding is designed primarily to attract the target population and at the same time, it is intended to support and enhance a company's values. It establishes the company as an employer of choice and thereby enables it to attract the best possible workers. Once recruits have been attracted, they develop a set of assumptions about the company and employment there, which they will carry into the company and thereby support its values and enhance their commitment to the company (Backhaus and Tikoo 502-504). Therefore, external employer branding aims to reach and recruit qualified workforce outside the company.

On the other hand, *internal employer branding* aims to satisfy and motivate the current employees in order to retain them and increase productivity. The goal is to develop a workforce that is committed to the set of values and organizational goals that are established by the company. This means that internal employer branding intends to influence a company's culture positively and thereby create a good work environment for the current employees (Backhaus and Tikoo 502-504).

Overall, a successful employer branding strategy results in two things. Firstly, it leads to positive associations and thereby employee attraction, and secondly, it leads to employee satisfaction and thereby increased productivity.

This research will likely focus most on external employer branding, since it deals with attracting new employees which is the focal point in this thesis. However, aspects within internal employer branding can also turn out to be relevant when analyzing the data, depending on what the interviewees emphasize in the interviews.

4.2 Consumer Behavior and Decision-Making Process

As briefly described in the literature review, Eronen argued that employer branding could be linked to consumer behavior, since people go through the same process when choosing a job and purchasing a product. This process is called *Consumer Decision Process* and, in the following, I will account for it in detail. Knowledge on this process will make it easier to understand how people choose where they want to work.

The Consumer Decision Process was developed to help companies and marketers understand their consumers better and thereby be more effective in their marketing. This knowledge allows marketers to design their marketing plans more efficiently and increase their sales (Teo 350).

There are many different models that illustrate this process, however, the essence is the same in all of them. This thesis will have the EBM model as its point of departure, since it is very general and thereby applicable for a wide range of situations which is useful here, as I want to apply the model for employees instead of consumers. Furthermore, the EBM model considers several steps and details in the process which I will account for further down (Teo 351). The core decision process of the EBM model is illustrated in figure 2 below and will be the point of origin.

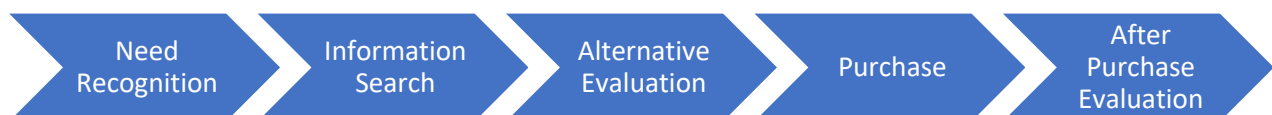


Figure 2 – Consumer Decision Process Model

4.2.1 The five steps in the Consumer Decision Process Model

The process begins with *Need Recognition*, when a consumer recognizes a need that is large enough to stimulate a search that can help satisfy the given need (Teo 351). Relating this knowledge to the topic in this thesis, the process starts, for example, when people realize that they are missing something in their current job, that they are unsatisfied with something, or that they want a new job.

When the need has been identified in the first step, the consumer moves on to *Information Search* and begins to search for different ways to fulfill the given need. The search will likely provide a set of alternatives and the consumer will eventually generate a set of preferred options (Teo 351). This step can be compared to when people search for a new job and find the relevant job advertisements available on the market or look up companies that they want to work for.

Next, the process moves on to *Alternative Evaluation* where the consumer will evaluate the set of preferred alternatives. The consumer will use information from outside sources together with information that is stored in memory in order to create a set of criteria to help evaluate and compare the preferred alternatives (Teo 351). Linking the alternative evaluation process to this thesis, it can be compared to people that consider alternative job advertisements and companies available on the market. At this time in their process, they use prior experiences, stored information, reputation, media etc. to decide which job to apply for or which company to contact.

When the alternatives have been carefully evaluated, a purchase will likely take place, and the consumer will buy the product best suited for the given situation (Teo 351). This step is called *Purchase*, and it can be compared to the moment when people either apply for a specific job or accepts a job.

The last step is called *After Purchase Evaluation* and it takes place when the consumer has received the product. A good experience with the product will lead the consumer to the given brand again when a similar product is needed. On the contrary, dissatisfaction with the product can lead to disappointment and will likely keep the consumer from buying products from the given brand again (Teo 351). Relating this process to this research, it refers to the moment when a person is hired, starts working and becomes an employee of the company. The employee automatically evaluates the job and compares the assignments, atmosphere etc. to his or her expectations. If the job satisfies the employee and lives up to or exceeds his or her expectations, the employee is likely to recommend the company to friends and family and create a good reputation, hence *employer brand*, for the company.

Based on the above, this thesis will use the core decision process of the EBM model within consumer behavior to analyze how people decide to take a job. Although the situations are different, they contain multiple similarities as accounted for in the process above. Therefore, it is possible to compare

these and use this model in order to understand how people decide which job they want or which company they want to work for. However, this thesis will only focus on the first three steps, since the aim is to understand the job seeking process and motivational factors that follow. That is, this thesis only focuses on the process up until people choose a job in order to understand the motivations behind their choices. This process is closely related to motivation, which will be accounted for in the following sections.

4.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In order to understand and analyze the motives behind people's choices regarding jobs, it is essential to investigate what motivates them. Therefore, this thesis will include motivational theories and models, as these can help me understand the motivations behind people's choices of workplace and company. In the following, I will lay out the basic assumptions within a motivational theory developed by Abraham Maslow and justify how it relates to this research.

Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist and one of the first to define and explore the human needs. In 1943, he developed the well-known pyramid called *The Hierarchy of Needs* in which he listed the human needs in five groups starting with the basic needs at the bottom (Larsen 169). Accordingly, people will move up the pyramid and strive to fulfill the needs in each group. Based on this, the pyramid functions as a hierarchy and the needs at the bottom must be fulfilled to a certain extent before needs on the next level can be prioritized. Therefore, humans start at the bottom and are motivated to fulfil the physical needs, and they will move on to the next level when they feel the needs are fulfilled. This is illustrated in figure 3 below.

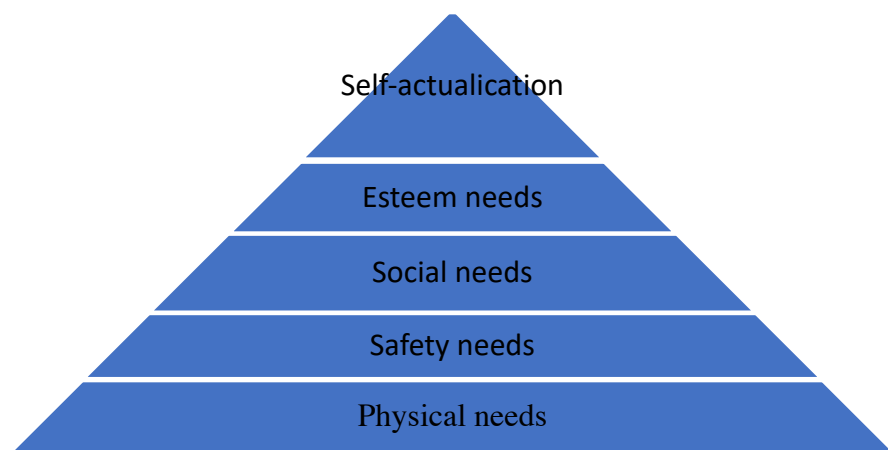


Figure 3 – The Hierarchy of Needs

As illustrated, the physical needs are located at the bottom of the pyramid, and these cover the basic needs such as food, water, and sleep. The second level is the need for safety, which refers to a safe environment with physical and psychological stability and safety such as a place to live. Together, these represent the most basic needs for humans and are essential for survival, as to why they are placed at the bottom. The third level is the need for social relations which refers to humans' need to be social with others such as friends and family. This level is followed by the need for esteem which is, for example, the need for acknowledgement and respect from others. Finally, the top level is the need for self-actualization which refers to the need for fulfilling one's creative and true potential.

In practice, this model has received different criticism. The first point of criticism refers to the fact that the theory is not empirically proven, as Maslow has not conducted experiments or tests. The theory is developed based on his own clinical experiences and there is no empirical data to back up his claims, and the foundation of the theory is therefore vaguely described (Madsen 55). Furthermore, the theory might be outdated since it was developed more than 60 years ago. Today, most people in the West have a home and get food and water every day, as to why the lowest need might not be seen as a motivational need today; rather, it can be seen as a matter of course. Additionally, the theory does not say anything about when a need is considered fulfilled. Lastly, people might have different needs, and the theory does not consider that. This means the presented needs might not be current for all humans, and the order can be different for some.

Despite of the criticism, The Hierarchy of Needs is relevant and applicable for this thesis. Although it does not directly relate to work situations, it deals with motivation which can occur in all kinds of situations. The different levels in the pyramid can help an employer understand which factors that motivate employees. In practice, the two lowest levels can refer to an employee's salary and financial situation together with the safe feeling a job can provide. The next level can refer to the need of social relations to colleagues either through social events or daily contact. Furthermore, esteem needs can be linked to the need for recognition and acknowledgment from management or colleagues. Lastly, the top need can relate to an employee's need to develop and upskill themselves. Therefore, the different levels can be used as a guide to help motivate employees and understand how to fulfil their needs (Larsen 170).

Although The Hierarchy of Needs is quite applicable for this research and prepares the ground for interesting aspects related to motivational factors, this thesis will draw on yet another motivational theory as it allows me to approach the issue from multiple angles. Therefore, in the next section, I will account for another motivational theory.

4.4 Herzberg's Two Factor Theory

Another way to look at motivation is by the use of *Herzberg's Two Factor Theory*, which looks differently at needs and motivation than The Hierarchy of Needs does.

The theory was formed in 1959 by Frederick Herzberg, and it is based on a study conducted on a large number of employees in different types of companies, which increases its validity opposed to the previous mentioned theory by Maslow. Herzberg interviewed the employees and asked about previous experiences in their careers; both positive and negative experiences. In his research, he found that happiness on the job usually was caused by internal factors and that an external reward could not compensate for this satisfaction (Bakka and Fivelsdal 197). Additionally, he found that lack of satisfaction not necessarily was the same as dissatisfaction and the other way around (Larsen 170).

Based on these findings, the theory was developed and takes *motivational factors* and *hygiene factors* as its starting point (Alshmemri et. al 13). Within these, there are several factors that can cause either satisfaction or dissatisfaction among employees, which is illustrated in figure 4 below.

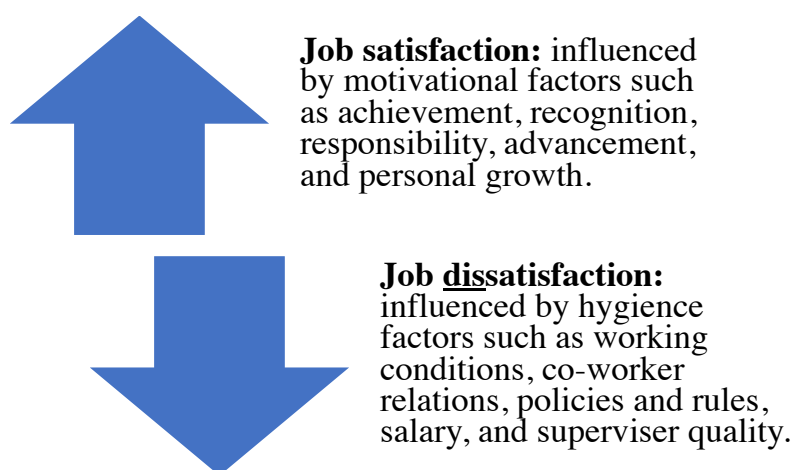


Figure 4 – Herzberg's satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors

As illustrated, an employer can improve the motivational factors and thereby increase job satisfaction. At the same time, by improving the hygiene factors, it is possible to decrease job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction can only be increased by improving the motivational factors; that is, it is not enough to improve the hygiene factors. At the same time, lack of motivational factors will not necessarily create dissatisfaction (Larsen 171).

In practice, the lines are likely more blurred, and Herzberg has been criticized for the clear division between the hygiene- and motivational factors. Other studies have shown that there might be a more gradual transition between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and that multiple hygiene factors can have a motivational effect (Bakka and Fivelsdal 197). Despite of this, the theory presents an interesting viewpoint and can be used to understand the motivational factors in play when people choose a job, and at the same time, it can help me understand if there are any hygiene factors that contribute to people's choices. Based on this, it is quite relevant for this thesis.

4.5 Mobility

As accounted for in the literature review, *mobility* is relevant for this research, as it deals with people's willingness to move and travel. Relating this to the issue of students refusing to commute for a job, aspects within mobility can help me understand which aspects that influence people's choices when it comes to willingness to move and commute. Therefore, next, I will discuss the results from a Danish research that focuses on the motivations for moving to the region of North Denmark, which is the region furthest away from the capitol of Denmark. Although my research focuses on non-urban areas outside Aarhus, this given research can still prove useful, as it provides aspects that influence people's willingness to seek away from urban areas, as to why it can be related to my research. Therefore, in the following, I will account for the research and its results.

Emerek and Kirkeby have conducted a study which focuses on the motivations behind people's choices of moving to the region of North Denmark. Their research seeks to investigate whether non-economic factors are as important as economic factors when both males and females migrate to the region of North Denmark (Emerek and Kirkeby 53; 55). In their study, they distinguish both between males, females, singles, and couples.

The research covers 25 years (1986-2010) and is based on a large set of longitudinal data from Statistics Denmark including information such as place of birth, education, residence, children living at home etc. By analyzing this dataset, they can track people's movement and analyze the characteristics of people who move to the region of North Denmark and people who do not (Emerek and Kirkeby 55).

Looking at their results, they have found five factors that influence people's motivation for moving to the region of North Denmark and these include *place of birth, ownership of residence, children living at home, family and social ties, and labor market status*. In the following, I will briefly account for their results in order to be able to include them in this research.

Place of birth shows that people who are born in the region of North Denmark have a higher chance of moving there, than people who were born outside the region. There are no differences between males and females, but couples who were both born in the region of North Denmark have an even higher chance of moving there (Emerek and Kirkeby 62).

Ownership of residence refers to the chance of moving if you own a house. The results show that especially couples who own a house are less likely to move to the region of North Denmark. However, the authors emphasize that it might be the North region that is in focus, but rather the fact that house owners are more likely to have a more permanent and settled living situation. For singles, the results are of less significance (Emerek and Kirkeby 62).

Children living at home seems to enhance the chances of moving to the region of North Denmark for some of the target groups. Looking at couples and single women, the chances of moving are higher if they have children living at home. On the contrary, single men are less likely to move unless they are cohabiting (Emerek and Kirkeby 62).

Family and social ties are very important if looking at their results. Parents' residency seems to influence both men, women, singles, and couples and it plays an important role. If their parents have residence in the region of North Denmark, all the groups are more likely to move there (Emerek and Kirkeby 63).

Labor market status is the most important factor for both singles and couples, and the results show that it is even more important for women than for men (Emerek and Kirkeby 63).

The above results and motivations can help me guide the forthcoming research and can serve as inspiration when trying to understand people's motivations for choosing to work at small companies outside non-urban areas of Aarhus. It offers a set of aspects that can help me understand why students refuse to commute to non-urban areas outside Aarhus, which will give small companies located there a greater chance of attracting them. That is, the results from the above research can be used as a guideline. Furthermore, it can provide interesting aspects and enhance validity, if I compare my findings to the above results.

4.6 Recapitulation

The above theories and frameworks will lay the foundation for this research and have been chosen as they provide aspects that can help me understand why IT students refuse to commute for a job outside Aarhus. This information is crucial, when studies show that people increasingly commute more, and universities, media etc. emphasize the importance of a student job. This means that the chosen theories and frameworks are chosen to help me answer the problem statement. Furthermore, the chosen literature correlates with the methodological framework that will be accounted for in the next chapter. Besides from the theories and frameworks discussed in the latter sections on *employer branding*, *consumer behavior/decision making process*, *motivational theories*, and *mobility*, this thesis might also draw on the results from the studies accounted for in the literature review, since comparing my results to similar research can help ensure validity.

5.0 Methodology

This chapter will clarify the methodological point of departure in this research. It will account for its aim and perspective and how these correlate with the problem statement. Furthermore, this chapter will justify the chosen research design and account for sampling and data analysis. Finally, a section on validity and reliability will emerge together with a number of ethical considerations.

5.1 Aim of Research

Overall, the topic investigated in this thesis can be approached from either a quantitative or qualitative angle, and there are many contrasts between these two methods (Bryman 408). In the following, I will elaborate on the advantages and disadvantages that follow with each of these methods and look at some of the contrasts in order to determine which type is most adequate for this thesis.

Looking at quantitative research, it is often associated with measurement and generalization, and this method is adequate when seeking to know “how many” or “how much” (Bryman 35-36; 408). Furthermore, this method prepares the ground for big sample sizes and can therefore be very representative, as to why generalization is possible (Gelo and Gallucci 3-4). However, when conducting quantitative research, the researcher does not gain in-depth or descriptive data, rather, focus will be on gathering a lot of information from a big sample size (Bryman 176). Because of the big sample size, the researcher is often distant and not involved with the research participants; often, they do not meet or interact with one another (Bryman 408).

On the other hand, qualitative researchers are often very involved with their research participants, since they look for an understanding of, for example, behavior and values, and they seek to gain in-depth information on a given topic (Bryman 408). For qualitative researchers, the aim is not to generalize their findings. Rather, they want to understand the participants and their beliefs in terms of the context in which the research is conducted (Willig 1; Bryman 408). The objective in qualitative research is to obtain knowledge on a given topic and interpret this in order to understand the research participants. A qualitative research is often conducted as interviews; either single or in focus groups, but it can also take form as, for example, a netnography (Kozinets 61).

Based on the elaborations above, this thesis will be carried out qualitatively, as I attach importance to interactions with the research participants in order to gain in-depth and descriptive data that I can

interpret in accordance with the problem statement. If I were to conduct this research quantitatively, I would miss out on important data, although it would allow me to have a large sample size and generalize the findings. The aim of this research is to understand the behaviors and motivations among students and graduates in relation to jobs outside the central urban area of Aarhus. This means I only seek information about this given context and do not look for generalizations for the entire population or to other contexts. Based on this, emphasis must be on in-depth and descriptive data, as to why qualitative research is most adequate for this thesis.

I could choose to combine qualitative and quantitative research, however, the latter mentioned study conducted by Eronen used mixed methods, and it did not appear to be an advantage in the analysis nor conclusion, since her primary focus was on the qualitative part of the empirical data. In fact, she sees the quantitative data as facile. She states, "The objective of the qualitative research is to gain deeper insight into the decision-making processes of students and graduates, whereas the quantitative approach will gather more facile information" (19).

The following sections will account for the execution of the qualitative research.

5.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations

Since the aim of this thesis is to investigate how small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract students through an investigating of the transition in students' mindsets when they become graduates, it is essential to understand how people within my target group feel and gain in-depth information from them. Therefore, this thesis will have its ontological point of departure in constructivism, as I am interested in understanding the different perceptions that these individuals might have related to working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus. As such, I allow for differences in motivations and perceptions related to the topic, as I acknowledge that these might be outcomes of social settings and interactions between people (Bryman 380). With my subjective interest, I am not interested in generalizing across my results, rather, I seek to find multiple motivations in relation to the problem statement. This means that my point of departure is not to be associated with objectivism, as this stance seeks to generate one universal reality that exists independently from humans (Bryman 32), which in this case would mean one, universal motivation among my target group.

The ontological point of departure correlates with my epistemological stance, as I seek to understand and interpret how students' mindsets change when they graduate, and the research can therefore be associated with interpretivism. I seek to interpret their perceptions in order to understand how they experience things related to work and how they feel about the given topic. That is, I am not interested in explaining why they feel in a certain way and identify the sources of the phenomena, which would be associated with positivism (Schwandt 296-297; Guba and Lincoln 112).

Both the ontological and epistemological stance correlate with the qualitative research design, that will be described in the following (Bryman 36).

5.3 Research design

In line with the problem statement, I have set up a qualitative and comparative study, as this type of research is adequate when seeking to find differences and similarities. A comparative design allows me to gain in-depth information relating to people's time as respectively students and graduates. Furthermore, it allows me to understand how they might change in relation to their motivations for taking a job and how potential cultural aspects might influence this change. This knowledge can prove beneficial when small companies target new employees, as it can give them a better foundation for knowing how to target IT students.

5.4 Research method

When conducting qualitative research, my data could come from various sources including, for example, interviews and qualitative questionnaires (Bryman 501). Each of these have advantages and disadvantages, and I must consider how these affect this research before I start collecting empirical data.

A qualitative interview can provide me with detailed answers from the interviewees, and I can ask follow-up questions which can help me avoid misunderstandings during the interview and later when interpreting the data (Thomsen). However, an interview is time consuming, and I will not be able to have as many respondents, as if I were to send out questionnaires of qualitative character. By sending out questionnaires, I will likely get more responses and thereby motivations and perceptions towards the topic, and based on that, the research will be more representative and valuable to small companies. Yet, there are disadvantages to questionnaires that I cannot ignore, and these include the lack of ability

to do follow-up questions in the moment (Guthrie, *Interviews* 2). Furthermore, there is a high risk of non-response, which might bias the outcome (Guthrie, *Questionnaires* 8). Based on this, and since I attach great importance to in-depth information, interviews are better for this research, because qualitative interviews are adequate when seeking to gain insights into individuals' lives (Kvale 40).

Therefore, in this research, I will conduct interviews with individuals within my target group; sampling of interviewees and criteria for participation will be explained further in section 5.5. The interviews will be held individually and will be semi-structured. A semi-structured interview is appropriate for this research, as it allows the interviewees to elaborate on the topics and talk about things that are important to them. At the same time, it prepares the ground for cross-case comparability due to the degree of structure (Bryman 472), and this is important as I want to compare the interviewees' answers.

The interviews will be held in Danish, as I expect that the majority of the interviewees to be native Danes. By conducting them in Danish, I reduce the risk of misunderstandings as a result of not knowing the correct words, and furthermore, the chances are likely higher that people will participate, if the interviews are held in Danish instead of English.

The interviews will be based on an interview guide (appendix 1), that is developed on the basis of the literature and theories accounted for in the previous sections. These include *employer branding*, *consumer behavior/decision making process*, *motivational theories*, and *mobility*. These are topics that are meant to guide the interviews. The interview guide consists of many open-ended questions since these are crucial, as I want in-depth and descriptive answers that can help me understand the motivations and perceptions that the interviewees have towards working at small companies in non-urban areas outside Aarhus (Guthrie, *Interviews* 3-4). The posed questions seek to gain information about previous experiences with job seeking among other topics. By focusing on previous experiences, I avoid hypothetical questions that the interviewees might not know the answer to.

5.5 Sampling

Since this thesis seeks to investigate how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus can attract students by investigating how they change their mindset when they become graduates, it is essential that I talk to someone who has experiences with job seeking both as a student and

as a graduate. By doing so, I will try to understand how they feel about jobs outside the central urban area of Aarhus and which factors that play a role in relation to this.

As accounted for in the delimitation in section 3.1, this thesis will investigate people within the area of IT, since this is a desired group of employees, as to why it is relevant to know how to attract them (Aarhus Kommune 11). Based on this, I will talk to people within the area of IT who have graduated within the last year or students who are just about to graduate and have begun seeking a fulltime job. By talking to recent or soon to be graduates, I can ask about their work experiences both as students seeking a part time job besides the studies, but also their work experiences as (almost) current graduates. Thereby, I can see if their perceptions towards the issues have changed and elaborate on how cultural aspects might influence these perceptions. By focusing on people who are just about to graduate or have graduated within the last year, there is a greater chance that their memories of their time as students are still present in their mindset. If I were to interview people who graduated many years ago, chances are that they have likely forgotten how they felt about student jobs and working outside the central urban areas of Aarhus.

In order to gain knowledge on this topic, I have listed some criteria to make sure that I talk to people that are relevant for the research and can provide me with descriptive knowledge on motivations for working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus. The first and obvious criterion is that the interviewees must be recent or soon to be graduates within the area of IT. That is, they must have begun their job seeking process and started looking for a fulltime job; otherwise it is not possible for me to see if and how they might have changed their perceptions.

Their initial opinion towards working at companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus is not of importance while sampling them; this means that I do not differentiate between people when it comes to their current mindset towards the topic. I am interested in gathering as many aspects and opinions as possible, as to why I want to speak with different people with a wide range of views. If I only talk to people who do not want to work at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus, I will not get information about potential advantages that people working there might see. By allowing both types of people in the interviews, I get more than one point of view.

Furthermore, it is a criterion that they have been seeking a job both while they were students and graduates, otherwise I cannot ask about their previous work experiences, which is what I plan to do in accordance with the previously mentioned interview guide.

In order to sample the interviewees, I will use the methods within *purpose sampling* and *snowball sampling* (Kirkeby), as I will use my network at the Student House in Aarhus where I work. It is an organization that is driven by business- and student members, and my daily job consists of bridge building between these parties. Therefore, I have built a large network of students from all kinds of educations in Aarhus including IT. Furthermore, I am in contact with businesspeople from both small and big companies in East Jutland. Therefore, this network is a great opportunity to find interviewees with the use of the latter mentioned sampling methods. In particular, *snowball sampling* is crucial here, as this method is useful when seeking a specific group of people; a person with an education with IT will likely know others with same background and will thereby be able to tell them about this research (Kirkeby).

5.6 Data analysis

Each of the interviews will be recorded with the consent of the interviewees, so that I do not miss out on anything. Moreover, by recording the entire interview, I can pay attention to the conversation and do not have to take notes that might disturb the interviewees or interrupt our conversation (Layder 18-19). These recordings will then be transcribed, and the transcriptions will lay the foundation for the analysis. In this respect, it is important to state that the analysis will be divided in two, as I distinguish between the statements relating to the interviewees' time as respectively students and graduates. By dividing the analysis, it creates an overview that makes it easier to compare and interpret the results.

I seek to understand how students change their mindset when they graduate and thereby potentially differ. I do not seek to generalize the outcome and find one, universal motivation among the interviewees, rather, I want to find multiple motivations. In order to find these, I will use an analytical tool within grounded theory called *open coding* (Bryman 568-569). By using open coding, I can break down my data into smaller parts and divide them into topics related to the chosen theories and my problem statement. The smaller parts can then be divided into concepts relating to the problem statement.

Doing this, it is possible to find differences, similarities, patterns, and exceptions in the dataset, which makes it easier to compare, analyze, and interpret (Bryman 570). Furthermore, I will apply *constant comparison*, as this allows me to constantly check the codes and concepts and thereby reduce the risk of potential inconsistencies which contributes to validity (Gibbs 98-99; Bryman 568).

After coding the transcripts, I will gather the concepts and create a coding framework in order to make the analysis easier. The coding framework will contain an overview of the different concepts and include references to the transcripts. By doing so, it allows me, as well as the reader, to quickly find the relevant passages in the transcripts. An example of a coding framework is provided in figure 5 below.

Argument	Explanation	Code
Decision making process	How the interviewees seek jobs and decide which jobs they want to seek	1.0
Finding 1		1.1
Finding 2		1.2
Mobility	The interviewees' attitudes towards mobility	2.0
Finding 1		2.1
Finding 2		2.2
Motivation	Important factors related to job seeking and preferences	3.0
Finding 1		3.1
Finding 2		3.2
Employer Branding	The impact of employer branding initiatives	4.0
Finding 1		4.1
Finding 2		4.2
Solutions	Potential suggestions for solutions	5.0
Finding 1		5.1
Finding 2		5.2

Figure 5 – Example of coding framework

5.7 Validity and reliability

A good way to ensure validity is by applying multiple methods, as this will provide a triangulation (Shenton 65). However, as discussed in section 5.1 and 5.4, I have chosen not to use mixed methods, as the previous and similar study conducted by Eronen showed that the quantitative part was redundant. Furthermore, this research seeks to gain in-depth and descriptive answers from the interviewees, which is not the focal point in quantitative research (Bryman 160). This research will only use data collected through interviews, as this correlates with the desire of in-depth and descriptive data. Other qualitative methods, such as observations, do not seem adequate for this research, as it is difficult to observe how people apply for jobs.

Yet, there are other ways to obtain a triangulation and thereby ensure validity. For example, I can compare my results to the results of a similar study. In this case, the study conducted by Eronen will be adequate, as it is a similar piece of research both regarding topic and research method. Furthermore, Eronen's research was conducted in Finland which resembles Denmark both in terms of welfare system, political system, and school system, as to why I think a comparison is possible. By comparing the results of this research to Eronen's research, I can crosscheck my results and discuss the potential differences and similarities. Additionally, the research on mobility conducted by Emerek and Kirkeby can also be used to compare my results to, as they list several factors dealing with people's willingness to move away from the cities, which relate to the topic in this thesis.

Finally, I will conduct pilot interviews as these contribute to ensure validity by eliminating potential biases in the interviews (Bryman 263). The first two interviews will act as pilot interviews, which means that I will evaluate the interviews and potentially alter the interview guide if there are aspects that need adjustment.

Looking at reliability, this term is often associated with quantitative research, generalization, and measurement (Bryman 389-390). However, this research does not seek to generalize its findings, rather, it seeks to identify multiple motivations among the target group and understand how they feel about working in SEs located outside the central urban area of Aarhus. Although, since the objective of this research is that the latter mentioned companies can use this knowledge, as to why some sort of reliability is needed. Therefore, in an attempt to ensure reliability across time and samples, I have

tried to sample both males and females, so that the sample is as representative as possible and represents more than one group of society (Bryman 406).

In relation to reliability, it is important to state that as a constructivist, I believe that individuals have multiple realities and that these are constantly changing, as to why there can be no guarantees that the results in this research are reliable over time or across samples (Golafshani 601-602; Payne and Payne 2).

5.8 Ethical considerations

Since this research will be based on interviews and thereby deals with people, I must consider if there are any ethical aspects that need attention before I begin the research (Flick 2-3).

To overcome any ethical issues, all interviewees must sign a written consent form, where I have clarified the scope of the research and explained what they can expect from participating in an interview. An example of the consent form can be found in appendix 2. As stated in the written consent form, the interviewees will be anonymous, which means that their names will not appear anywhere in the thesis or the appertaining appendix (Flick 3). Anonymity is important in this research, so that the interviewees' names and opinions towards the topic do not appear in any searches made by previous, present, or future employers, as this potentially could harm their chances of a job.

If the interviewees agree to the written consent form, I will record the conversations and transcribe everything afterwards. I will then send the transcript to the interviewee who will have the opportunity to read it through before accepting it. They are allowed to make changes if there are aspects that they want to adjust if these somehow, for example, do not correlate with their actual opinion or if there are parts they want to conceal.

In addition to the written consent form, I will let all interviewees know that they can end the interview at any time if they for some reason feel overwhelmed or feel the need to stop. Furthermore, they can always choose not to answer a question if they feel that it, for example, invades their privacy.

6.0 Empirical data

This chapter will explain the empirical data and account for the ways in which the data will be used in the following analysis.

Prior to the analysis, I have conducted seven interviews and transcribed each of them. The mode of transcription was pragmatic, as there is no linguistic focus in this thesis. Names and other personal information that can identify the interviewees have been removed or rewritten in the transcripts. For example, when the interviewees mention their current, prior, or future workplace by name, I have changed the name of the company and simply written whether it is a big or a small company, instead. This is done to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees, so their statements do not cause them any trouble with a potential employer. Moreover, since the interviews have been conducted in Danish, the transcripts are also in Danish and have not been translated due to time and resources. However, all parts used in the following analysis will be translated and included in English.

I have read the transcripts multiple times in order to scrutinize the data and eventually code it, as this helps me identify differences, similarities, and other interesting aspects relating to the problem statement. Concretely, I have coded and categorized the transcripts as accounted for in section 5.6. This process has been useful, as it has allowed me to work in-depth with the data and thereby discover aspects and arguments that did not appear at first glance.

Since I seek to understand how students potentially change their mindset and motivations towards job seeking and jobs at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus, when they become graduates, I have created two coding frameworks; one for students and one for graduates. By constructing two separate coding frameworks, it is easier to compare the arguments from the interviewees, opposed to if I had made one framework for all arguments. If I only made one coding framework, it would be difficult to distinguish between the arguments relating to respectively their time as students and as graduates.

The primary headings in the coding frameworks correlate with the chosen theories for this research which include *consumer behavior/decision-making process*, *motivation*, *employer branding*, and *mobility*. However, the sub headings within each concept can differ, as I found that the interviewees expressed different arguments depending on whether they were referring to their time as students or

graduates. Within each concept, I have referred to the statements from the interviewees by the use of line numbers from the transcripts. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that all the transcripts have been gathered in one document (appendix 3).

The coding frameworks can be found in appendices 4-5, and the analysis will be based on these. I will reference to these by the use of line numbers during the analysis when arguing or discussing the findings. I will refer to the interviewees as *respondent 1 (R1)* and *respondent 2 (R2)* etc. For example, if referring to respondent 4's statement in line 456, I will write, *R4 loves big companies (l. 456)*.

Initially, one of the criteria for participating in this research had to do with job history; I intended to only interview people who had been job seeking both during their time of study and as graduates in order to investigate how they had changed their mindset. However, due to misunderstandings, one of the interviewees did not have a job while studying; in fact, the interviewee did not begin to search for a job until a fulltime position became relevant. However, during the interview, surprising aspects came to light, and while coding the interview, I found interesting aspects relevant for the thesis, as to why it is included after all.

In the following chapter, I will use the coding frameworks explained above in order to analyze the empirical data and eventually answer the problem statement which is,

*How can small sized companies located outside the central urban area
of Aarhus attract IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus?*

7.0 Analysis

This chapter will scrutinize the empirical data and it will take the latter mentioned coding frameworks as its starting point. Through the analysis, the aim is to understand how students change their mindset in relation to jobs when they become graduates. By comparing the statements relating to respectively the interviewees' time as students and graduates, it is possible to see how they potentially change over time. The potential differences and similarities between their mindsets can be used to understand how cultural aspects might influence this change, and thereby obtain a better understanding of how small companies can attract IT students.

The chapter will consist of two separate analyses. It will begin with an analysis of the arguments relating to the interviewees' time as students. These arguments will be analyzed in accordance with the topics from the theories accounted for in chapter 4, which include *motivation*, *employer branding*, *consumer behavior/decision-making process*, and *mobility*. By relating the arguments to these topics, I can uncover the motivations in play and determine whether employer branding initiatives influenced the interviewees' choices in relation to jobs during their time of study. Furthermore, I am able to account for their decision-making process and explain which platforms and application methods that are most adequate for companies to use. Lastly, the arguments relating to mobility, allows me to account for the interviewees' opinions towards jobs outside the central urban area of Aarhus during their time of study. Their statements towards this, lets me understand how they felt about commuting for a student job and how long they were willing to use on transportation during their time of study.

After the first analysis, I will scrutinize the statements relating to the interviewees' current mindset as graduates and a similar analysis will emerge. By differentiating the statements relating to respectively student mindsets and graduate mindsets, it is easier to get an overview of how they resemble one another or differ in their motivations and perceptions towards the topics. The arguments relating to the interviewees' time as graduates will be analyzed in the same way as described above, which mean the statements will be examined in relation to the topics within the theories in order to obtain an understanding.

These two analyses allow me to find differences and similarities between the interviewees' time as respectively students and graduates and will lead me to understand how cultural aspects might influence the change in students' mindsets when they become graduates. Eventually, these changes and

potential cultural aspects will be reflected on in the following discussion. Furthermore, the discussion will consider statements from the interviewees relating to potential suggestions and solutions that can get students to work at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus; knowledge that these companies can benefit from and use in the future.

An overview of the analytical construction of this chapter can be found in figure 6 below.

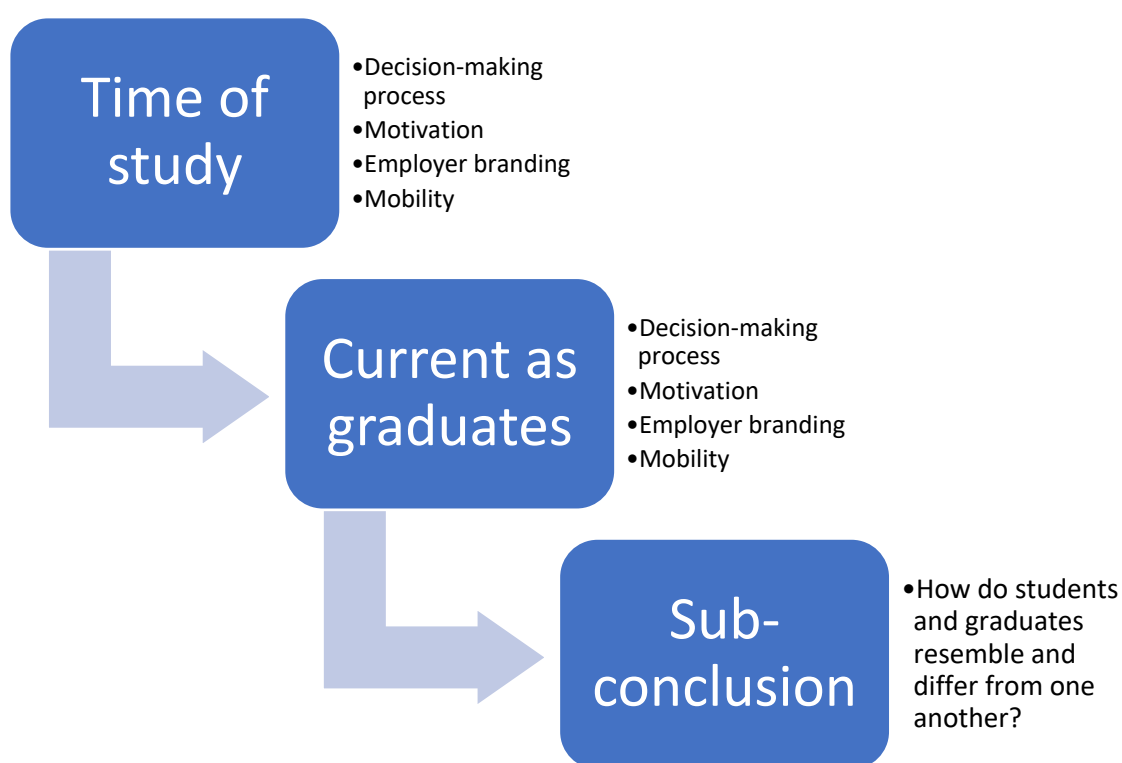


Figure 6 – Analytical overview

Before I begin the analyses and thereby differentiate between the interviewees' time as students and graduates, it is important to explain how the interviewees define big and small companies. As accounted for in the delimitation, this thesis defines small companies in correlation with the EU rules, which means less than 50 employees and an annual revenue smaller than 10 million Euros. In the interviews, I asked the respondents how they would define big and small companies. It is essential to compare my definition to the statements from the interviewees in order to be sure that I analyze and

conclude on the correct type of companies. Looking at the statements from the interviewees, several of them state that the number of employees and departments are important here. For example, R4 states, "It has probably something to do with both how many employees there are, but also how many departments or cities the company is placed in" (l. 975-976). Furthermore, R7 says, "Number of employees is a big part of it and then the number of departments" (l. 1758). R3 also states that the number of employees defines whether a company is big or small (l. 675-677). Additionally, R2 states that he would define a small company as somewhere with 20-30 employees (l. 433-435). R5 also defines it based on number of employees; he states that 50-100 is a medium sized company, so anything under that is a small company (l. 1217-1218, 1222). Except from R1, none of the interviewees mentions annual revenue in relation to the definition of small and big companies. R1 says that the annual revenue has nothing to do with the definition; it has more to do with the number of colleagues and the feeling you get when you are there (l. 155, 156, 160-161). R1 states, "If the entire company consists of 20 people, I think it is starting to be a small company" (l. 161-163).

Based on the statements from above, the EU definition is fairly correct to use in this research. The annual revenue of maximum 10 million Euros is unimportant to the interviewees, as almost none of them mention this. However, if looking at their statements all together, they define a small company as a company with between 20-50 employees, and this correlates with the EU definition. Based on this, the further analyses and thesis in whole will define a small company based on number of employees in correlation with the EU definition.

7.1 Analysis of interviewees' time as students

In the following sections, an analysis of the interviewees' decision-making process, motivations, and opinions towards employer branding and mobility during their time of study will emerge. All the sections will take the coding framework for students as its starting point and relate the statements in there to the topics within the theories. The given coding framework can be found in appendix 4.

7.1.1 Decision-making process during time of study

Looking at their decision-making process, this deals with the process they go through when they search for jobs. The aim is to understand how they approach job seeking, which information they search for and where their searches take places. Furthermore, this section will focus on opinions towards small and big companies and try to understand how their preferences related to these

influenced their searches, choices, and applications during their time of study. Moreover, it will seek to understand whether a company's reputation influenced their job choices during their time of study. This knowledge is useful, as it allows me to understand their process and preferences regarding platforms and job advertisements; this information is useful, as it lets small companies know how they target students most effectively and which factors they must emphasize.

The interviewees have very resembling ways to search for student jobs. In fact, all of them state that they used online platforms as their primary source when they searched for student jobs (l. 80, 388, 613, 879, 919-920, 1396-1398). Among the different platforms online, the interviewees especially highlight Jobindex. For example, R4 states that she mostly used Jobindex, as she thinks that this platform has the majority of all job advertisements available on the market (l. 919-920). Additionally, R2 says that he got his student job through Jobindex (l. 388). Besides from Jobindex, several of the interviewees also mention AU Jobbank, which is a database for student jobs relevant for students at Aarhus University; this means it only has study relevant jobs. For example, R7 states, that during her time of study, the only online platform she used was AU Jobbank, as she found it easy and accessible (l. 1698, 1706). Moreover, R3 says that he got his student job through a job advertisement on AU Jobbank (l. 587).

Besides from online platforms, one of the interviewees also mentions his network. R3 explains how he was transferred to another department when he moved to Aarhus, so that he could keep his student job (l. 588-589), and that he also heard about a recruiting company through a friend and thereby got another student job, as well (l. 603-604).

However, the majority of the interviewees did not use their network for student jobs; rather, they used online platforms and sent their applications solicited. One interviewee explains how she determinedly went to a specific company's webpage in order to find contact info and apply unsolicited for a job (881-883). However, besides from this example, none of the interviewees applied unsolicited for a job during their time of study. Rather, they used platforms as Jobindex and AU Jobbank. This is crucial knowledge, as it shows how important it is that small companies use online platforms to communicate their job advertisements.

In relation to the above, I asked the interviewees whether or not a company's reputation mattered to them and how they potentially found information about this given reputation. R1 states that a company's reputation meant a great deal during her time of study, and that she sought information on a company's webpage in order to determine if she could identify herself with them and their products (l. 90-91, 95-97). Additionally, R2 says that he would not apply for a job at a company with a bad reputation (l. 398-399). In relation to this, he defines a bad reputation as something dealing with work environment and planning, or if he hears from media or someone he knows that it is a bad place (l. 403-405). R3 shares the same opinion and states, "It is a high priority in a student job because I need to be able to use it afterwards. So, if you work somewhere with a bad reputation, then you do not want to be there, and you cannot use it to move on if it is supposed to be a stepping stone (l. 627-630). These statements strongly indicate that it is crucial that a company has a good reputation and treats its employees well, so that these employees can spread the word to others. However, looking at the statements from R6, she does not exactly share the same opinion. She agrees that during her time of study, she wanted to work at a company where she could identify herself with their values, however, if she really needed the money, it did not matter. She says the following about a company's reputation, "In relation to the student job, it is a bit the same. It plays a role in the beginning or if you have time to wait for the job, but if I really need the money or the work experience, I just need to have a job and it does not matter anymore (l. 1412-1414).

The above indicates that a company's reputation matters, but some students might be willing to compromise if they are in need of money. In relation to a company's reputation, the interviewees had different ways of finding information about companies during their time of study. However, the majority of the interviewees researched online and read through the company's webpage. For example, R2 would read about the company on their webpage if he did not know it and he would also ask his network for advice (l. 411-413, 417). Furthermore, he lists media as a big influencer. He exemplifies how he has heard a story in the media about a woman who was fired because she took home a ballpoint pen that belonged to the company, which he disassociates himself from (l. 404-405). Additionally, R3, R6, and R7 also list webpage and network as information sources (l. 642-644, 651-652, 1422-1423, 1722-1723).

To students, information search seems to be a rather normal thing to do before applying for a student job – especially if they consider applying at an unknown company, as to why it seems even more

important to small companies who might not have a well-known employer brand. Their process correlates with the Consumer Decision Process Model accounted for in section 4; more precisely, step two and three dealing with information search and alternative evaluation. The information search takes place before they apply for a job and several of them read about the company online. They evaluate the company in relation to their stored memories from media, friends, family etc., which correlates with the third step in the model.

Based on the considerations above, it is essential for small companies to have a solid webpage where their values are explained in order for students to identify themselves with the company. Moreover, by thoroughly explaining their values and goals on online and thereby allowing for people to read it in advance, it helps to ensure that companies only receive applications from people who are really dedicated and able to see themselves working there. In the end, this can save time for the company.

The last aspect within the interviewees' decision-making process deals with their preferences towards small and large companies during their time of study. They were asked to list advantages as well as disadvantages in order to say whether they preferred one over the other. Previously, I have experienced that it is difficult for small and unknown companies to recruit students, whereas big and well-known companies easily get many applications. Therefore, the following section will seek to investigate whether or not this is a fact in order to come up with possible solutions.

Looking at the statements from the interviewees, several of them express that they preferred to work at a big company during their time of study. For example, R1 states that she preferred big companies, since it looks better on her CV and thereby lets her use it as a stepping stone in her future work life (l. 150-151). Moreover, R1 liked that big companies have more structure. She states, "Somehow, there is more control of everything, and people are more aware of what they need to do. You have more defined areas of responsibility" (l. 175-176). Though, at the same time she is aware that a small company has advantages as, for example, more responsibility from day one (l. 119-120). R3 agrees with this and also lists responsibility as the main advantage (l. 659). However, R3 still preferred working at big companies during the time of study. He says, "It is because I want to use it as a stepping stone, so it is easier for them to look and see that I have been somewhere acknowledged, then it is easier to get a position" (l. 664-665). R6 has a lot of arguments and lists many pros and cons of both sides. For example, at a small company it is easier to be noticed since you do not compete with a lot

of others, and you have more responsibility (l. 1432-1441). At the same time, she emphasizes that a big company has more resources and can therefore offer different things and there will be more colleagues to discuss with (l. 1442-1443, 1445-1448).

Opposed to the above arguments, R8 has a very strong and different opinion. She explains how a friend of hers is thinking of applying for an internship at IBM, and in relation to this, she states, "... it is a huge company. And they [interns] are not allowed to do anything; they are put at a table and only allowed to do the assignments that fall in their lap. And then of course they have to get a lot of coffee and play gofer for all the important people and managers" (l. 1742-1744). She goes on and says that she did not want to work at a big company during her time of study, because she wanted responsibility (l. 1753-1754).

Overall, the above strongly indicates that the interviewees have considered this aspect thoroughly, and that they are aware of the different pros and cons of working at respectively a small and a big company during their time of study. Having said that, the interviewees emphasize that the downside of working at a small company during their time of study deals with the lack of acknowledgement from other companies in the future and thereby the lack of possibility to get something good on one's CV. At the same time, the interviewees are aware that they can get more responsibility at a small company. This information is crucial for small companies, as it shows that students are in fact aware of the advantages from working at a small company. Therefore, small companies ought to take advantage of this and write it in their job advertisements; they have to let students know that there are a lot of opportunities at their company and play on their good sides.

7.1.2 Motivation during time of study

This section will analyze the statements relating to the interviewees' motivation for applying for jobs as students. It will find the aspects that influence their choices and define which factors were important to them when they applied for jobs during their time of study. Overall, the interviewees listed many important factors including *flexible work hours, content, challenges, money, colleagues, accessibility, work experience/CV, environment, and job title*. In the following, I will scrutinize these in order to explain what the interviewees emphasized when they chose a student job.

Firstly, the majority highlights money as a big influencer when they chose a student job. Many of them were motivated by the fact that they needed a monthly income besides state education grant (l. 194, 355-356, 461, 726-727, 1021, 1706-1707). This correlates with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as money can cover one's physical needs and provide safety in form of e.g. housing. This means that money is an important factor, however, it is not directly what motivates them to apply for a certain job; they can get money from any kind of job. For example, R6 states, "The salary has never been decisive for me; it is a bonus, but not decisive" (l. 1507-1508). Furthermore, R4 says that her motivation was shared between money and content in a student job (l. 1021). R3 supports this claim, as he took a student job based on the content; the salary was lower than he was used to. He explains that he took the job because he eventually could benefit from it, as it had the right content and would give him work experience within the field (l. 730-732). Furthermore, the challenge played a big part, as he felt he needed new challenges and therefore sought a new job (l. 695-697, 727-728). These statements correlate with Herzberg theory, as they strongly indicate that money cannot create satisfaction. Furthermore, the need for challenges can be linked to the top need in Maslow's pyramid, as it, to some extent, correlates with a need to fulfil one's potential and constantly develop.

Content is another important factor for the interviewees during their time of study. Several of them emphasize the importance of interesting content and preferably something that looks good on their CV. For example, R1 states, "If I had enough money and was ensured a job after my education, I would not have a student job. I think there is enough to do while studying, so I wish that the job was not necessary" (l. 194-196). With this, she says that she only had a student job because of the importance of having work experience after education and having something valuable on the CV. R6 also emphasizes the importance of the content, as she says, "But the most important thing is really the content; that it is interesting to do. Definitely; that must be the most important thing for me" (l. 1492-1493). These statements strongly indicate that, as students, the interviewees wanted a job where they enjoyed working while making money. However, it is difficult for companies to ensure that the content is interesting, as people have different preferences.

Another factor influencing the motivation among the interviewees during their time of study has to do with the environment and their colleagues. Several of them say that they preferred working somewhere with other students in a young environment (l. 701-702, 1024, 1707-1708, 1894-1896). For example, R2 says, "But I also wanted a job where there were other students, so that we could have a

strong feeling of solidarity and teamwork. I mean, the content in the job as a phoner is deadly boring, but we had a blast together” (l. 461-463). R4 supports this opinion, as she says a job in telemarketing would be boring but at the same time she knows that there are many social initiatives which she was fond of as student (l. 1024). Additionally, R7 says that she liked to be part of the study environment while studying, and therefore she took jobs at the university; thereby, she could be social while working (l. 1707-1708). R6 agrees with this, as she says that she looked for a student job where there was a solid unity between the employees (l. 1542-1544). The above statements strongly indicate that many students underline environment and good colleagues when they describe their motivation and list important factors in a student job. These correlate with the social needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and shows that a social relation is a big motivational factor among students. This means the statements indicate that a young environment can attract student workers, as to why companies can benefit from hiring more than one student worker, and they can emphasize the potential student environment already in the job advertisement in order to get students to apply. R7 says that she might consider applying for a student job outside Aarhus if she could have a taste of the company through a video (l. 1931-1934), which is knowledge that small companies can benefit from. According to Herzberg, colleagues and environment are hygiene factors and can therefore not improve employees' satisfaction. However, the statements above strongly indicate just the opposite; students need good relations in order to be satisfied at work.

Moreover, several interviewees state that they were fond of flexible work hours during their time of study (l. 1296-1300, 1347-1348, 1350-1351). For example, R6 says, “And it is also important that the job itself is flexible. I love that I can work from home, because it allows me to decide when I work” (l. 1350-1351). This aspect correlates with the results from Eronen's research, as she found that 20% of her respondents emphasized the importance of flexible work hours in a student job. Additionally, R5 says that he would appreciate the ability to work from home; he thinks it would make a lot of sense for companies outside Aarhus as it would lower the travel time (l. 1296-1300). Companies outside Aarhus can benefit from listening to these statements, as it can attract students. Furthermore, since this thesis deals with students within the area of IT, in many situations, it is possible to work from home as long as you have a computer. However, R5 did not have a job during his study of study as mentioned in chapter 6. Yet, his opinions and statements towards the topic are quite interesting, as to why they are included after all. He explains that he did not have a job, as he did not feel the need for one. He says, “Well, I am not the kind of person who just goes out and uses many thousands at

clubs, on clothing and shoes or anything like that. So, I simply did not have the need” (l. 1184-1186). Furthermore, he says that he wanted to focus a lot of his studies (l. 1183-1184). When asked whether or not he felt that he was less inclined to get a job after his studies because of his lack of work experience on the job market, he says, “I do not think about that at all; I am sure I will get a job as a computer scientist, haha. Of course, I might be less attractive than the one next to me with work experience, but there is so much need for people like me that it will not be a problem. It is not like I am a humanist” (l. 1197-1199). This statement is quite interesting, as it strongly indicates that he is sure that he will get a job simply because he studies computer science and therefore is attractive to employers, since there is a current need for this type of employees. This aspect will be further elaborated in the discussion in chapter 8.

Overall, expect for R5, students need a job because they have to have another income besides state education grant and want work experience to put on their CV. In relation to the consumer decision process model, this means that their need recognition is related to this and happens in correlation with these needs. However, they can get work experience and income from any job, so the interesting question is what they emphasize when they choose a job. The above indicates that content, environment, and colleagues mean a great deal to students as to why small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus ought to focus on these areas. Furthermore, flexible work hours and challenging assignments also influence their choice of job. These motivational factors correlate with the three lowest steps and the top step in The Hierarchy of Needs; physical needs, safety needs, social needs, and self-actualization. The interviewees do not indicate to be motivated by esteem needs during their time of study which is interesting and indicates that there are other things more important to them.

7.1.3 Employer branding preferences during time of study

The interviewees are familiar with quite many employer branding initiatives and fringe benefits; however, they did not seem to care about them during their time of study. Overall, the interviewees share resembling opinions towards employer branding initiatives in relation to a student job. In fact, all of them say that employer branding initiatives such as pension scheme, lunch, Christmas gifts etc. are great bonuses and very appreciated, however, it is nowhere near decisive for their choice of student job and they do not base their choice on it (l. 206-208, 225-226, 493-495, 755, 757, 778-779, 1062-1064, 1542-1544, 1811, 1823). For example, R7 says, “It is nice, but it is not something I have thought about when I applied for student jobs” (l. 1811). Additionally, R4 says, “It would be a nice perk, that

might attract me if the position had already caught my attention. So, it would be something that might decide for me in the end” (l. 1062-1064). This means that the initiatives do not attract students, however, some initiatives might determine whether or not students choose one job over the other if there are several jobs on the table. Based on this, employer branding initiatives are not decisive, and it might not be necessary for small companies to use resources on these in order to attract IT students.

7.1.4 Mobility preferences during time of study

The last aspect to discuss relates to the interviewees' opinions regarding travel time and distance to job during their time of study. This information is crucial for small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus, as they need to know how students feel about their placement and how they potentially can attract them and which factors that influence their willingness to commute to work.

Looking at the statements from the interviewees, these show that the vast majority was not willing to commute for a job during their time of study. In fact, several of them wanted their job to be within bike distance in order to quickly get there and back (l. 1583-1584, 1847). For example, R1 says that she wanted her student job to be within a radius of 10 kilometers so that she did not use up much of her time, as she thinks there was enough to do while studying (l. 297-299). R2 supports her claim, as he states that a student job has to be within a bike distance of 15 minutes (l. 513-514). He substantiates this by saying that a student job is not worth travelling for because there is so much else you have to do, and besides, he says, “And the traffic in Aarhus is insane, so even though there might only be 15 kilometers to the job, it can easily take 40 minutes by car, and even longer by bus because it is always late” (l. 521-522). In relation to a student job, R7 defines a long distance as anything she cannot bike to. She says, “Anything that I cannot bike to, and I probably do not bike more than 6 kilometers” (l. 1847). These statements strongly indicate that students want their job nearby and that they are not willing to commute outside Aarhus in order to get a student job.

However, R3 does not share quite the same opinion as the others. In relation to the student job, he also defines a long distance as somewhere he cannot bike to and if it takes half an hour by car, he thinks it is long (l. 792-793). However, he has a car and actually works outside Aarhus which takes him approximately 20 minutes (l. 792), and he would be willing to drive even further for the perfect student job. He states, “If I could really incorporate my study and feel that I would finally understand what I was taught in class, then I would not feel that it was bad to drive an hour. Then it would be

okay” (l. 816-818). However, his opinion about this depends on his car, as he would not do it if he did not have a car, since he does not like public transportation (l. 825-826). This indicates that the fact that he owns a car influences his willingness to travel for a student job, since it probably makes his travelling faster and easier. This knowledge is essential to small companies outside the central area of Aarhus, as it shows that travelling options mean a great deal to students.

Other reasons for rejecting to travel long for a student job relates to lack of time, lack of flexibility due to studies, not willing to drive long for a short amount of time, waste of time, primary focus on studies, inconvenience, and less free time (l. 295-296, 512-513, 806, 825-826, 1101, 1595-1596, 1858-1859, 1866-1867, 1871-1873, 1878-1880). These reasons indicate that students value their time and prioritize their studies and thereby choose not to use so much time on work and transportation. Additionally, R7 states that if she had a job outside Aarhus she would need to use money on transportation (l. 1855), which implies that money on transportation might be an issue to some students. These reasons can prove useful for small companies, as it allows them to understand students better and come up with potential solutions in order to attract them.

Lastly, the interviewees were not willing to move during their time of study, as they find their studies more important than a potential student job. However, several of them are willing to move after their education which I will discuss in the next analysis. This means that their refusal towards moving is linked to their studies and time of study, and it strongly indicates that they are not specifically attached to Aarhus as a city. This discussion will continue in section 7.2.4.

7.1.5 Recapitulation of first part of analysis

The above analysis indicates that the interviewees mostly use online platforms when they applied for student jobs, and they often sought information about a company and its reputation/values before they applied; especially if they did not yet know the company. If it was a known company, they tended to ask their network for advice. The interviewees are a bit split regarding their preferences for small and big companies during their time of study, but they are well aware of the different advantages and disadvantages that follow when working at respectively a big and a small company.

Looking at their motivation for applying for student jobs, they list *colleagues*, *environment*, *content*, *flexible workhours*, *money*, and *work experience* as motivational factors or important aspects when they chose a student job.

In relation to employer branding initiatives, the interviewees agree that these did not directly influence their choice of student job. The interviewees saw these as bonuses, but they were not driven to apply for a job based on any fringe benefits. However, if the content in a job appealed to them, certain initiatives might influence their choice in the end.

Finally, the interviewees without a car during their time of study were not willing to travel outside Aarhus for a student job. In fact, the majority wanted to be able to bike to work and be within a small radius. Yet, the interviewee who had a car during his time of study worked 20 minutes outside Aarhus and would also be willing to travel even longer, as long as he still had a car. The interviewees' viewpoints on distance and travelling have to do with their time, as they think that their studies took up a lot of time. Furthermore, transportation cost might also be an issue to some students.

7.2 Analysis of interviewees' time as graduates

The next sections will analyze the statement from the interviewees relating to their opinions as graduates. The overall frame will be the same as above, however, some of the aspects within the topics might vary, since the interviewees emphasized different things depending on whether they talked about their time as students or as graduates. However, the overall topics are the same, which means that this analysis will contain aspects within consumer behavior/decision-making process, motivation, employer branding, and mobility. The aim of this analysis is to understand how graduates feel about working at small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus and identify which factors that influence their choices and preferences towards this. This information allows me to see if they have changed their mindset since their time as students and understand how cultural factors might have influenced this change.

7.2.1 Graduates' decision-making process

This section will take graduates as its starting point, and it will cover the interviewees' statements relating to their decision-making process as graduates. Furthermore, the section will include aspects relating to their preferences towards big and small companies, their potential need for information search, and it will explore how a company's reputation might influence their choices.

Looking at the interviewees' statements regarding the ways in which they search for fulltime jobs, the majority of them state that their primary platform is online (l. 57-59, 80, 361-362, 367, 368, 380, 609, 904-905, 919-920, 1166, 1377-1381, 1381-1385, 1392, 1688-1689). For example, R3 states, "I

am currently seeking fulltime jobs, and that is only online" (l. 609). Additionally, R5 says that so far, he has only sought through Jobindex online (l. 1166). He substantiates this by saying that Jobindex has a job agent that will send you e-mails every morning with relevant job offers so that you do not have to use time to search yourself, which he thinks is easier (l. 1167-1169). Moreover, R1 also lists the platform as useful (l. 57-59). Jobindex highly seems to be the primary platform for the interviewees, as the majority of them says that they use it when seeking fulltime jobs (l. 57-59, 368, 888, 904-905, 1166, 1378).

Another popular platform seems to be LinkedIn; several of the interviewees emphasize it while talking about their job seeking process as graduates (l. 57-58, 1677-1682, 1382-1384). However, it does not seem that they are particularly active, as they mostly use the platform to look for jobs, which means that they do not actively post content or ask their network for help.

Regarding their network, many of the interviewees express that they do not use their network as much as they could. For example, R2 states, "I use my network a little, but not as much as I could. I just think it is easier to go online and see which options I have in proportion to the job positions available online and then choose what fits to my profile. Instead of going through multiple parts and asking everyone you know. It is so troublesome" (l. 381-384). R3 backs this up, as he states, "Well, I don't know. I have asked a few. In fact, I wrote to someone I know and asked if they had an opening where she worked, but they did not. No, that is a lie, I have asked two. The other one was abroad, but I have not heard back from it yet. So, I somehow feel that it pays more off to search online and apply through there" (l. 617-620). Furthermore, R4 explains that she does not really use her network either, which she thinks is a shame. She could easily see herself working fulltime at her student job company, but she thinks it would be embarrassing if her boss did not want to recommend her, although she thinks that is highly unlikely (l. 924-931).

In relation to their job seeking process, the interviewees express different opinions towards working at a big or a small company. For example, R1 would rather be at a big company, since she prefers to be able to choose when she wants to be social; she says, "At a big company, you often have the opportunity to be a bit more on your own and sit with your own assignments, and somehow choose whether or not you want to be social" (l. 125-127). Additionally, R3 also prefers to be at a big company, as he thinks there is more control and structure (l. 681-684). Also, he would like to have a top

position one day, and he thinks his chances are better at a big company (l. 688-689). R5 agrees with them, as he also prefers big companies, especially in the beginning of his career, as he thinks it is important to be trained properly with the help of schemes and processes, and he thinks a big company has more structure and thereby more likely to offer this (l. 1203-1206). However, R4 has another opinion. She has always thought that it would be cool to work at a big company, but recently she has changed her mind and come to the point where she does not care whether she ends up at a big or a small company. She substantiates this by saying that advantages and disadvantages follow both types of companies (l. 955-961). Additionally, R6 is in doubt, as well, as she can see both ups and downs (l. 1455-1460).

The above statements and opinions show that the interviewees have different preferences towards working at small and big companies, however, they have considered choices and show insight into the different advantages and disadvantages that follow working fulltime at both types of companies.

Looking at the interviewees' statements towards the importance of companies' reputation and their potential need for information before applying for a fulltime job, the majority of them thinks that reputation matters and often searches for information beforehand. For example, R1 thinks that a reputation means a lot and she uses her network to find out information about the given company before she applies. If no one in her network knows the company, she will read about it online. Therefore, in any case, she investigates the company in advance (l. 90-91, 95-97, 102-105). In addition, R2 would not apply for a job at a company with a bad reputation (l. 398-399), and R3 states, that it is very important to him that he fits in with the company and that he can see himself working there many years, and that requires a good reputation (l. 625-627). Both R2 and R3 search for information online and use their network to find out information about a given company before they apply (l. 411-413, 651-652). R4 shares the same opinion as above and says, "For example, I looked at an interesting graduate program in England, but it was at a tobacco company. And then I thought that I did not to support that, and that is not directly a bad reputation, because I know nothing about their terms and conditions. But I just thought that what they work for; I do not want to work with that" (l. 938-941). With this, she says that their reputation also has to do with their product which in this case is tobacco, and she associates that with something negative. R6 also thinks that a company's reputation plays a part, although, only to a certain extent (l. 1403-1406). She explains that the reputation plays a part in the beginning, but after four months of unemployment compensation, she will probably change her

mind and take any given job (l. 1403-1406). In relation to information search, R6 agrees with the others, as she also searches online to find out information about a company (l. 1422-1423).

The interviewees have resembling opinions towards reputation and information search as graduates. They all consider this aspect before applying for a fulltime job and they try to find out information about the company beforehand, either through their network or online.

7.2.2 Graduates' motivation

This section will analyze the important factors relating to the interviewees' motivations for applying for fulltime jobs after their education. The interviewees listed multiple factors including *content*, *challenges*, *colleagues*, *environment*, *job title*, and *job advertisement*.

Looking at the interviewees' opinions towards salary, many of them express that this does not directly influence their choices regarding jobs, nor does a high income motivate them to apply for a job (l. 189-190, 468-469, 1006, 1010, 1253-1257, 1499-1501, 1763-1765). For example, R4 states, "I had a friend who was in the position that he was offered two jobs. One of the jobs gave him 3000 DKK more a month, and then he chose that, although the other job was abroad, and he dreamt of that for so long. And I just think that is a shame; when it gets like that" (l. 1009-1010). However, the majority sees salary as a nice bonus and would prefer a high income, but it does not motivate or influence their job choices (l. 189-190). Yet, one of the interviewees emphasizes the importance of his salary a bit more than the others. R2 says, "But I would say that money plays a bigger role now than before I became a father. You have to prioritize your money differently, and you spend crazy amounts on something you did not even know cost money, so it is important that there is more on the bank account" (l. 470-472). These statements strongly indicate that salary does not directly influence their choices, although there might be factors such as children that can make one's income more important. Linking these statements to the motivational theories accounted for in section 4, they indicate that, as graduates, the interviewees are not motivated by the two lowest needs in The Hierarchy of Needs. However, it is important to emphasize that as graduate, you will get unemployment compensation, and although it is not as much as a fulltime income, it is higher than state education grant which they are used to, as to why they do not necessarily have to worry about the two lowest needs; they are ensured no matter what. Looking at the motivational theory by Herzberg, the statements above

correlate with his argument about hygiene and motivational factors, as the interviewees indicate that money cannot buy them satisfaction, although it can decrease dissatisfaction.

Looking at the first motivational factor among the graduates, it deals with content. Many of them emphasize the importance of having a job with interesting and challenging content (l. 183, 187-188, 440, 478-479, 706-707, 711, 713, 986, 1226-1227, 1404-1405, 1464-1465, 1492-1495, 1762-1763, 1768-1770, 1789-1791). For example, R6 says the following about her motivation for applying for a fulltime job, "Definitely the content, and that is because I think a lot about that it has to be something interesting" (l. 1464-1465). Later in the interview, she also says that the most important thing always has been the content and that is not just about to change; she would not take a job where she constantly would have to look at her watch because of boredom (l. 1492-1495). Additionally, R3 and R2 also state that content and challenges are important; in a fulltime job where they put many hours, it is essential that they enjoy their work and are challenged through the content (l. 440, 706-707, 713). All of these statements strongly indicate that the interviewees emphasize challenging content when they choose a job after their education. To a certain extent, this can be related to the top need in Maslow's pyramid. The interviewees seek to challenge themselves and fulfill their entire potential through the content in their fulltime job.

Another very important factor is colleagues. Several of the interviewees list colleagues as important when they look for jobs as graduates. For example, R2 states, "I do not think that I would be okay in a job, if I did not have good colleagues around me to talk with. It is not because we necessarily have to do a lot of social things, but we need to be fine when we are there, because then you want to come every day" (l. 446-449). R3 shares this opinion, as he says that he needs to feel a desire to come to work because of his colleagues; they have to be enjoyable (l. 714). Additionally, R5 and R6 also list good colleagues as important (l. 1226-1227, 1489-1490). Linking these statements to the motivational theories by respectively Maslow and Herzberg, they only correlate with Maslow. The statements strongly indicate that, as graduates, the interviewees are motivated by social needs as they list social relations as an important factor. However, looking at the theory created by Herzberg, social relations are found under hygiene factors and are thereby not supposed to be able to increase satisfaction among employees. Yet, it seems to be the case here, as the interviewees list good colleagues as a condition when they choose a job as graduates. This means that Herzberg's theory is not useful here.

Closely related to colleagues, two of the interviewees also list the environment at work when asked about important factors (470, 491-492, 988-991). Once again, this does not correlate with Herzberg's theory, as working environment is a hygiene factor and thereby not supposed to motivate employees or create satisfaction. R2 says that one of the most important things is the environment; it has to be a good working environment (l. 470). Additionally, R4 emphasizes that it is important that it is an informal environment, as she thinks a formal one is boring (l. 988-991). In relation to the environment, R4 also mentions job advertisements. To her, it is crucial that the job advertisement is catchy, otherwise she does not click on it when she looks for jobs as graduate. She only looks at it a few seconds, as to why it is essential that it catches her attention instantly. Furthermore, she often thinks that you can tell from the advertisement whether or not the environment is formal or informal (l. 995-998). R7 backs this up by saying that she sometimes can tell whether or not it is a good workplace by reading the job advertisement (l. 1472-1474).

Lastly, one of the interviewees states that her job title matters; she says, "It is a bit annoying to admit, but I actually think that the title means quite a bit" (l. 983). However, at the same, R7 states, "It is always nice with a cool title, but I have been working as an HR-assistant at a big company during my sabbatical, and I would say that they changed their titles like they changed their underwear. Well, titles are fine, but seriously, it does not mean that much" (l. 1774-1776). Both these statements indicate that the given interviewees think that a good job title is positive, however, they do not quite agree on the importance of it.

Overall, the interviewees list different motivational factors in relation to their job seeking as graduates. To some extent, they agree that it is important to have a job with interesting and challenging content and good colleagues. A few of them also list environment, job title, and job advertisement as important factors in relation to a fulltime job. Lastly, the interviewees are not directly motivated or influenced by salary when they choose a job; although it is a fine bonus, it is not decisive for them. Yet, R2 has a child and he lists it as more important than the others, although still not as decisive.

7.2.3 Graduates' opinions on employer branding

This section will look at the interviewees' opinions towards employer branding initiatives as graduates. It will try to understand how they feel about this, and whether or not they see it as important or influential.

The interviewees indicate that employer branding is positive and many of the initiatives are nice to have as graduates, although, as R4 says, they need to create some sort of value in your life (l. 1035). She goes on to say that if companies try to sell the job only based on the perks within, it quickly looks like the content in the job is bad. She exemplifies how she heard about a graduate program where the company kept emphasizing that you could borrow an Audi, and this made the job itself sound bad and make her not want to apply (l. 1037-1040). Yet, if a company offered a good pension scheme, she would be more inclined to apply as this creates value (l. 1041). R2 and R7 backs this up, as they say that some perks are nice to have but it is not decisive for them (l. 490-491, 493-494, 1812-1814). However, at the same time, several interviewees state that some employer branding initiatives are important to them; they emphasize pension scheme and private health care insurance (l. 232, 239, 758-760, 1041, 1524-1526). For example, R1 states, "Of course, pension is one of the things that I emphasize a lot" (l. 232). R2 backs up this opinion as he says, "But I would say that this is something I emphasize now; that I am covered in relation to private health care insurance, pension etc. Because it means a lot to have that included, I think" (l. 758-760). He substantiates this by saying that he knows people who have received bad treatment in the public health care sector and therefore wants something else (l. 766-768). Furthermore, R6 says that a good pension scheme would attract her, and it would be prudent to have in the future (l. 1524-1526).

Although some employer branding initiatives might not attract graduates, multiple interviewees emphasize that these can retain them in a job (l. 246, 1050-1052, 1056, 1526-1529, 1534-1536). For example, R6 says that some initiatives are superficial and can only satisfy you in the moment, yet, they are part of keeping you satisfied in your current job (l. 1526-1529). Additionally, R4 states, "It is probably more likely things that will satisfy me when I am employed and will make me stay there or create a positive view on the workplace and the management" (1050-1052).

With these statements, the interviewees indicate that they have focus on employer branding initiatives as graduates. Yet, some initiatives are more important than others, but it seems that the important factor revolves around value; the initiatives must create some sort of value in order to be attractive and influential.

7.2.4 Graduates' mobility preferences

The last aspect to discuss is the interviewees' opinions towards mobility. This section seeks to discover how the interviewees feel about distance to work and whether or not they are willing to commute for a fulltime job.

Looking at the interviewees' statements regarding distance to work, these show that they are willing to commute between half an hour and one and a half hours (l. 255-256, 260, 500-501, 783-784, 785-786, 802, 1068, 1071-1072, 1549-1550, 1827). For example, R1 is willing to drive long for the right fulltime job, but she thinks that one and a half hours is a long time (l. 255-256). She substantiates this by explaining that she is used to drive, and, in her family, they have often driven a lot because of work and hobbies (l. 260-262). R2 somewhat agrees with this, as he drives an hour to work every day, and that is close to his maximum (l. 500-501). He has a child that he wants to be able to pick up from daycare and be with in his everyday life, and he wants to be able to be there quickly when the child is ill, and he thinks a job far away prevents him from this (l. 501-505, 507). Additionally, R4 is also willing to use an hour on transportation each way. Looking at the statements from R3 and R5, they are willing to drive a bit less, as they do not want to spend so much time of their day on transportation (l. 786-787, 1263-1266). They express that they think anything above half an hour is a long time (l. 785-786, 1264-1265).

The above statements strongly indicate that the interviewees, to some extent, are willing to commute as graduates, and that their views on distance have changed since their time of study.

Besides from opinions in relation to their travel time, the interviewees were also asked whether or not they would move for a job. Information on their willingness to move is important, as it allows me to understand whether or not the interviewees have a special attachment to Aarhus. That is, by investigating whether or not the interviewees are willing to move away from Aarhus after their education, it allows me to understand if their refusal to travel outside Aarhus during their time of studies is due to Aarhus as city, or if there are other cultural aspects that influence this. Therefore, in the following section, I will analyze the statements from the interviewees relating to their willingness to move for a job as graduates and scrutinize the aspects that influence their choices.

The majority of the interviewees are willing to move for a job; however, they would not move anywhere. For example, R1 says, "It depends on where the job is located. I mean, which city it is in; whether or not it would be nice to move there ... I would not live in a little small town in the middle of nowhere because that was where the company was" (l.267-270). Additionally, she says that her boyfriend has a lot of influence on her choice, as he would need to be okay with moving (l. 277). R2 agrees with this, as he states that his choice would depend on his girlfriend (l. 526-528). He goes on to say that their daughter and parents also influence his choice. He explains that if they were to move, it would need to be closer to their families, and it would have to be soon, as he would not move his daughter when she got older (l. 526-531).

Furthermore, R4 says that she is willing to move for a fulltime job as graduate, but not to any city; it would have to be somewhere nice where she enjoys being and wants to be associated with (l. 1121-1123). She exemplifies that she would never move to Randers or Horsens because of their bad reputations, although she would not mind commuting to a job there (l. 1113-1115). At the end, she adds that she would not move outside a city, as she sees herself as a city person (l. 1127-1129).

Looking at the statements from R6, she states that she would move almost anywhere in Jutland, but not further away than that (l. 1572-1573). She explains that she wants to be relatively close to her or her boyfriend's family, as she likes the idea of having them nearby (l. 1370-1372, 1577). R7 backs up this opinion, as she also wants to be close to something familiar. She could easily move away from Aarhus, but it would need to be to somewhere she knew or had a connection to e.g. her family (l. 1834-1838).

R5 does not quite share the same opinion as the others, yet, at the same time, he emphasizes some of the same aspects. He says, that as graduate, he would move for the perfect job, but it would need to be his dream job (l. 1274-1276). This means he would not move for just any job, as he is very fond of Aarhus and has his whole network there. He explains that he uses a lot of his free time with family and friends as to why it would be emotionally difficult for him to move (l. 1280-1283).

The above statements strongly indicate that the interviewees are willing to move for a job as graduates, but only on certain conditions. Firstly, it seems that they include their family and network in their decision, as it means a lot to them to be close to something familiar. This means that those who have their entire network in Aarhus are less inclined to move. These indications correlate with the

Australian study conducted by Becker et al., as the researchers found that personal factors and family/partner were very influential in relation to people's willingness to move.

Secondly, some interviewees express that the company's placement has something to say, as well, as they do not want to move somewhere with a bad reputation or in the middle of nowhere. This means that the interviewees' refusal to commute outside Aarhus cannot be linked to the fact that they do not want to leave Aarhus in general, since they are more than willing to leave when they graduate. If linking these findings to the previously conducted research by Emerek and Kirkeby accounted for in section 4, it correlates with their results on *place of birth*, *children living at home*, and *family and social ties*. The other aspects relating to *ownership of residence* and *labor market status* have not been included in my interviews, as to why there can be no comments to whether or not these correlate, as well.

7.2.5 Recapitulation of second part of analysis

The above analysis strongly indicates that graduates mostly use online platforms to apply for fulltime jobs, and they also use LinkedIn to find relevant job offers. Yet, the interviewees tend to not use their network for job seeking. A company's reputation is important to the interviewees and they tend to search for information online or through media and friends before they apply for jobs as graduates. Looking at their preferences regarding small and big companies, they have different opinions towards what they want, but their minds are considered, and they are aware of the different advantages and disadvantages that follow with both types of companies.

In relation to their motivation for applying for fulltime jobs, they list *content*, *challenges*, *colleagues*, *environment*, *job title*, and *job advertisement* as motivational factors or factors that influence their job choice.

Furthermore, to some of the interviewees, certain employer branding initiatives are important when they search for jobs as graduates, and these include pension scheme and private health care insurance. Yet, other initiatives are not important or decisive when they choose a job, in fact, these might make a job look bad, since they can take focus away from the job itself. However, other initiatives as, for example Christmas gifts, are still viewed positively, and several interviewees define them as satisfying; that is, these initiatives can likely retain them when they have been employed.

Finally, the interviewees are willing to use between half an hour and one and a half hours on transportation as graduates, which strongly indicates that they are willing to commute. Additionally, the majority of them would move for a job if it was close to something familiar or if the city was attractive. The majority includes their partner or family in the decision and would only move if it was a joint decision. Yet, the interviewees with close ties to Aarhus are less willing to move away, as they want to stay close to family and friends.

7.3 Sub-conclusion of entire analysis

The above analyses on the interviewees' statements relating to their time as respectively students and graduates show both differences and similarities.

Looking at their decision-making process, it has not changed significantly since their time as study; they mostly use online platform, primarily Jobindex, to search for jobs, although graduates seem to also use LinkedIn to a greater extent.

Their opinions towards small and big companies also indicate to be the same, and their need for information about companies is essential both during their time of study and as graduates.

Yet, their opinions towards motivation, employer branding, and mobility differ. The analyses show that the interviewees emphasized the following during their time of study: *colleagues, environment, content, flexible workhours, money, and work experience*. Yet, as graduates they emphasize *content, challenges, colleagues, environment, job title, and job advertisement*. This means that they differ in relation to *money, flexible work hours, work experience, job title, and job advertisement*. In the following, I will shortly outline how they differ.

Looking at *money*, the interviewees emphasized that money was important during their time of study, as they needed it in order to pay their rent. However, as graduates, they do not ascribe as much importance to money likely because they are ensured through unemployment compensation.

In relation to *flexible work hours*, multiple interviewees emphasized that they wanted a job with flexible work hours and that they were fond of working from home. Yet, none of the interviewees mentioned this in relation to their job seeking as graduates.

Relevant work experience seems to be important to the interviewees during their time of study, as they need it in order to get a job later in life. However, this does not seem to be important to them when they search for jobs as graduates, as none of them emphasized it.

The next difference has to do with one's job title. This aspect was emphasized among the interviewees in relation to their job seeking as graduates. One of them said that she looked for a nice job title when searching for fulltime jobs. This aspect was not mentioned in relation to job seeking during their time of study.

Lastly, one of the interviewees also mention *job advertisement* in relation to her time as job seeking graduate. The job advertisement is crucial to her when she searches for fulltime jobs online. However, none of the others indicate that this plays a part.

Looking at their opinions towards employer branding, the interviewees did not really care about any of the initiatives during their time of study, however, as graduates, multiple of them see pension scheme and private health insurance as important and to some extent decisive.

Lastly, their opinions towards mobility and distance to work have changed significantly. During their time of study, they were not willing to move or work outside Aarhus if they did not have a car; in fact, they preferred to be able to bike to work and be within a short distance. However, as graduates, they are willing to commute between half an hour and one and a half hours. Furthermore, unless their entire network is placed in Aarhus, they are more than willing to move away from Aarhus to get a job, which strongly indicates that they do not have a special attachment to Aarhus.

The findings from the above analyses will be discussed in the next chapter in order to come up with potential solutions.

8.0 Discussion

This chapter will look at the findings from the analyses and discuss their meaning in order to find possible solutions to the problem statement. Furthermore, it will discuss how cultural aspects potentially influence the differences between the interviewees' mindsets as respectively students and graduates in order to create an understanding of students in relation to job seeking. This is essential, since this thesis seeks to understand how students change their mindset regarding jobs when they graduate, and how cultural aspects potentially influence and change their opinions towards this.

The above analyses show that students without a car do not want to travel outside Aarhus for a student job, however, as soon as they graduate, they are more than willing to travel between half an hour and one and a half hours. So why is this? It does not seem to be due to money, as the majority of the interviewees express that they do not focus on salary when looking for jobs as graduates. Rather, it appears that the interviewees want to focus on their studies during their time of study and have a great time with other students – also while working. Furthermore, the analysis of their responses about their time as students shows also that although several of them say that they would prefer working at big companies, although they are well aware of the advantages that follow when working at small companies. This means that it is not impossible for small companies to attract students; they just have to play on their good sides and try to meet what students prefer. In the following, I will try to look at the interviewees' preferences in order to determine what small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus can do to attract students within the area of IT.

Firstly, multiple interviewees express that they do not want to use a lot of time on traveling and that they are not very fond of public transportation. Therefore, small companies located in non-urban areas outside Aarhus need to minimize students' traveling time. For example, companies could try to arrange car-pooling or at least encourage people to arrange it, so that students have the possibility to get a ride to work. Additionally, some interviewees emphasize the need for flexible work hours. This means that a student job with the possibility to work from home can be attractive to students. Furthermore, since this thesis deals with students within the IT sector, it will likely be easy to work from home as long as you have a computer. Therefore, companies ought to write in their job advertisements that this is a possibility. They can write that it is possible for students to only travel to the company once a week with colleagues and work from home the rest of the time. Doing this, it reduces the overall traveling time and it provides students with flexibility. If car-pooling is not an option,

companies can consider offering to pay students' traveling expenses or some of it, so that students do not have any expenses by taking the job.

Another interesting aspect has to do with students' need to be with other students and have a good time. Many of the interviewees express that they would be willing to take a boring job, for example as phoners, because there are other students there and they know there is a young and social environment. This indicates that students seek out companies which employ other students. However, it can be difficult for small companies to hire many students due to money and capacity. Yet, to overcome the part about money, they could consider hiring interns, as these do not necessarily need money, although the companies would have to invest time and resources in them.

Closely related to the above, companies ought to consider how they approach and target students. As one of the interviewees suggest, companies could make a video in addition to their job advertisement. This video could, for example, introduce some colleagues and illustrate the environment at the office in order to attract students and convince them that it is a nice place to work. If the company already has students employed, they can benefit by making them do the video, so that it is clear to potential appliers that there are other young people at the workplace.

Looking at the interviewees' opinions towards content and challenges in their student jobs, it seems to be quite important to many of them. However, it is difficult for companies to ensure that the content is interesting, as this can vary from person to person. Yet, companies can try to ensure that students are challenged and satisfied with their assignments by continuously evaluating together. Once again, companies ought to write this in their job advertisement in order to inform and attract the students early in the process.

Looking at the interviewees' willingness to move away from Aarhus because of a job, they all express that they would not move during their time of study. However, those who do not have all their family in Aarhus, are willing to move away from the city because of a job elsewhere when they graduate. This strongly indicates that the interviewees do not have a special connection to Aarhus and therefore, their refusal to commute for student jobs cannot be linked to the city of Aarhus itself. However, several interviewees emphasize that they want to live in cities and not outside cities, which could indicate that there is an urban culture among students and that they prefer to be in the cities. Yet, this

urban culture seems to be less important, when they graduate, as the dataset indicates a change in their priorities.

Another interesting aspect relates to the motivational theories accounted for in section 4. Firstly, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, people are motivated by esteem needs which is the fourth need in the pyramid. However, there are no aspects of the data indicating that the interviewees are motivated by this need. Instead, they are primarily motivated by the third need relating to social relations. This means that although the majority of the needs presented in the pyramid are valid among the interviewees, not all the needs are existing here. Additionally, this indicates that the order of the needs might be blurrier than Maslow states. For example, to some people, the need for self-actualization might be more important than esteem needs. Furthermore, looking at the other motivational theory created by Herzberg, this is not quite applicable, either. The interviewees express that colleagues and social relations are very important to them both during their time of study and when they graduate, as good colleagues can make their workday better. However, according to Herzberg, these are hygiene factors which means that they cannot increase employees' satisfaction. Yet, this analysis strongly indicates this to be the case here. It is likely that the lines are blurrier than Herzberg states; to some, hygiene factors cannot increase satisfaction, but to others, they might be the most important factors when it comes to their job satisfaction. Therefore, these motivational theories are good guidelines for companies, but they cannot rely entirely on them, as situations and individuals can differ.

The last aspect to discuss relates to respondent 5 who was the one that did not have a job during his time of study. As a computer scientist, he has a very hardcore IT education, and he is currently a desired type of employee because of the increasing use of digital devices and low unemployment rates among people with his qualifications. Therefore, it is interesting that he chose not to have a job during his time of study. Many of the other interviewees express that they needed a job besides their studies because they had to have something to put on their CV in order to get a fulltime job after their education. However, R5 is certain that he will get a job even though he has no work experience. As already discussed, it is crucial for companies to emphasize other things than work experience and money in their job advertisements, and with the statements from R5, it seems even more crucial for companies who seek computer scientists. Yet, he is the only one who said it, and I did not sample others who chose not to have a job during their time of study. Therefore, there are no others to back up his claims as to why one needs to consider that there can be other aspects influencing his decision.

The above discussion strongly indicates that IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus prefer to live and work in the city during their time of study. Their statements indicate that there is an urban culture among them as students. Furthermore, it seems that the interviewees want to be with other students and live in the city while they study, and this desire appears to influence their job choice quite a bit. However, small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus can still try to attract them, as students seem to be well aware that there are many advantages by working at small companies. Therefore, these companies must play on their good sides and focus on the things that are important to students in order to attract them.

9.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate how small companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus could attract IT students from institutions of higher education. The initial assumption was that students changed their mindset, opinions and preferences towards working at small companies outside Aarhus when they graduated. Therefore, this thesis has looked at recent graduates and soon to be graduates, who have started their job seeking processs, and analyzed how they have changed in relation to the topic, since their time of study. This aim led to the following problem statement:

How can small sized companies located outside the central urban area of Aarhus attract IT students from institutions of higher education in Aarhus?

The research was conducted with the use of qualitative interviews, and with this, both advantages and disadvantages have followed. The qualitative design has enabled me to gain in-depth and descriptive information from the interviewees and that has allowed me to understand how they felt about the given topics. Yet, qualitative interviews and the following transcription were time consuming, as to why the number of participants is lower than it would have been if I had chosen a quantitative design as, for example, a survey. However, a survey would not provide me with descriptive answers and would prevent me from asking follow-up questions, as to why it was deselected. Yet, choosing the qualitative design has resulted in certain limitations, and it has meant that the results of this research cannot be generalized to the entire population. However, it can indicate how individuals within the target group feel about the given topic.

Many of the interviewees preferred working at big companies during their time of study. However, the interviewees showed insight and were very considered in relation to big and small companies. They were aware of the different advantages and disadvantages that follow with both types of companies. Therefore, it is not impossible for small companies to attract IT students, if they emphasize their positive sides to a greater extent.

The analysis indicate that the interviewees change their mindsets in relation to some of the issues in question, whereas other aspects stayed the same when they became graduates.

In relation to their job seeking process and thereby their decision-making process, they did not change significantly, although graduates seem to also use LinkedIn to a greater extent. Yet, the analyses strongly indicate that the interviewees primarily use Jobindex and other online platform to search for both student- and fulltime jobs. However, the interviewees were not motivated by the same things as students and graduates. During their time of study, the interviewees emphasized *colleagues, environment, content, flexible workhours, money, and work experience* as important factors in relation to their motivation for applying for student jobs. However, as graduates, they emphasized *content, challenges, colleagues, environment, job title, and job advertisement*. This means that as graduates, they no longer focus on *money, flexible work hours and work experience*, but instead, they have stated to focus on *job title and job advertisement*.

Looking at employer branding, the interviewees expressed that during their time of study, employer branding initiatives were somewhat unnecessary and had no influence on their job choice. However, as graduates, they focus a bit more on this area and multiple interviewees strongly indicate that they list a good pension scheme and private health insurance as important and to some extent decisive in a fulltime job.

Finally, the interviewees changed their mindset towards mobility significantly. During their time of study, they were not willing to commute for a student job and they preferred if their job was within bike distance. However, as graduates, they are willing to commute between half an hour and one and a half hours. Additionally, unless their family is placed in Aarhus, they are more than willing to move away from Aarhus to get a job as graduates.

Not all results from the analysis correlate with the chosen theories. The motivational theory by Herzberg defined *environment* and *colleagues* as hygiene factors and thereby unable to satisfy employees as work. However, the majority of the interviewees emphasize these factors both during their time of study and as graduates. This conflict might correlate with the fact that the theory is old, and that the lines might be blurrier than the theory depicts them to be. Furthermore, the esteem needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs did not appear to be motivational among the data from the interviewees. This indicates that Maslow's motivational theory is a good guideline, however, all people do not necessarily go through every step, as he suggests.

Yet, at the same time, some of the results correlate with previous research which enhances the validity in this study. The need for flexible hours among students correlate with Eronen's research, and the fact that the interviewees include their family and partner in their work decisions correlates with Becker et al.'s study. This enhances these results and makes them more valid.

The results from the analysis strongly indicate that the interviewees change their mindset when they graduate. More specifically, their values change, and they start focusing on different things. Their opinions towards distance to work also change, and the majority is willing to move and commute much longer for a fulltime job as graduates. This strongly indicates that there exists an urban culture among students, and that they prefer to live and work in the urban area of Aarhus. However, when they graduate, this aspect becomes less important to them. This means that their refusal to commute for a student job cannot be linked to an attachment to Aarhus, since they are willing to leave the city when they graduate. Therefore, small companies ought to be able to attract students, as their refusal to commute can change over time.

Overall, through qualitative research, this thesis has illustrated that it is difficult for small companies outside the central urban area of Aarhus to attract students with the area of IT. However, if the companies focus on the right things, it is not impossible. They might consider allowing students to work from home, as this will lower their travelling time and make the job more flexible. Profitably, they ought to write this already in the job advertisement, as this might get students to apply for the job. Furthermore, since the dataset strongly indicates that students focus a lot on the environment at work and their colleagues, companies ought to put in effort on these areas. They might benefit from making a video to illustrate how the workplace is, and furthermore, they can benefit from employing more than one student, as students want to work with other students.

10.0 Works Cited

- Aarhus Kommune. "Erhvervsplan 2018-2019" www.aarhus.dk. Web. 4 February 2018.
- Alshmemri, Mohammed et al. "Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory". *Life Science Journal* 14.5 (2017): 12-16. *Lifesciencesite*. Web. 23 March 2018.
- Ambler, Tim and Simon Barrow. "The Employer Brand". *The Journal of Brand Management* 4.3 (1996): 185-206. *ResearchGate*. Web. 2 March 2018.
- Backhaus, Kristin and Surinder Tikoo. "Conceptualizing and Researching Employer Branding". *Career Development International* 9.4/5 (2004): 501-517. *Researchgate*. Web. 10 March 2018.
- Bakka, Jørgen Frode and Egil Fivelsdal. *Organisationsteori*. Fourth Edition. København: Handelshøjskolens Forlag, 2004. Print.
- Becker, Karen et al. "Labour Attraction and Retention in Rural and Remote Queensland Communities". *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies* 19.3 (2013): 342-368. *Ebschohost*. Web. 23 January 2018.
- Bryman, Alan. *Social Research Methods*. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2012. PDF.
- Collier, David. "The Comparative Method". *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Ed. Ada W. Finifter. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association 1993. 105-119. PDF.
- Cook, Julia and Hernán Cuervo. "Staying, Leaving and Returning: Rurality and the Development of Reflexivity and Motility". *Current Sociology* 00.0 (2018): 1-17. *Sage Journals*. Web. 27 March 2018.
- Danmarks Statistik. *Deleøkonomi – Hvordan Kan Den Defineres og Måles?* København: Danmarks Statistik, 2018. Print.

Danmarks Statistik. "Gennemsnitsalder for Førstegangsfødende Kvinder i 2017". www.statistikbanken.dk. Web. 8 February 2018.

Danmarks Statistik. "Registreret Ledighed". 2017. www.dst.dk. Web. 6 February 2018.

Emerek, Ruth and Anja Kirkeby. "Moving to the Periphery: A Longitudinal Study of Movers and Non-Movers". *Remapping Gender, Place and Mobility – Global Confluences and Local Particularities in Nordic Peripheries*. Ed. Stine Thidemann Faber and Helene Pristed Nielsen. Ashgate, 2015. 53-67. Print.

Engelund, Henrik and Brit Buchhave. "Employer Branding som Disciplin". Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur, 2009. Print.

Eronen, Laura. "How Should Companies Use Employer Branding in order to Attract Student and Graduate Applications?". March 2012. www.theseus.fi. Web. 24 January 2018.

Finansministeriet. *Bedre Balance II*. Copenhagen: Rosendahls, 2018. Print.

Flick, Uwe. "Ethics in Qualitative Research". *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2007. 1-10. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 10 March 2018.

Gelo, Omar C. G. and Marcello Gallucci. "Quantitative Research". *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Theory in Psychology*. Ed. Harold L. Miller. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., (2016): 1-5. *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. 2 March 2018.

Gibbs, Graham R. "Analytic Quality and Ethics". *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2007. 90-104. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 7 March 2018.

Golafshani, Nahid. "Understand Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research". *The Qualitative Report* 8. 4 (2003): 597-606. Print.

Guba, E. G. and Y. S. Lincoln. "Competing Paradigms In Qualitative Research". *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. California: Sage, 1994. 105-117. Print.

Guthrie, Gerard. "Interviews". *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2010. 1-11. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 4 March 2018.

Guthrie, Gerard. "Questionnaires". *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2010. 1-10. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 4 March 2018.

Hart, Chris. *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*. London: SAGE Publications, 1998. Print.

Holst, Helene Kristensen. "Her er planen: 1800 statslige arbejdspladser flytter fra hovedstaden til provinsen". 2018. www.b.dk. Web. 4 February 2018.

Jepsen, Helene. "LISTE: 10 Fordele ved at få Barn som Studerende". 2015. www.livsstil.tv2.dk. Web. 10 February 2018.

Johansen, Mathias Skov. "Udflytning: Nu Siger de Ansatte op i Protest". 2015. www.karriere.jobfinder.dk. Web. 5 February 2018.

Juel, Frederik M. "Godt for yderområder at udflytte statslige virksomheder". 2015. www.business.dk. Web. 2 February 2018.

Jørgensen, Annemette Schultz. "Vestas Satser på Employer Branding". 2010. *Djæfbladet*. Web. 24 March 2018.

Kirkeby, Anja. "Data, Approaches and Assumptions: Sampling and (or?) Secondary Data Analysis. 2016. Lecture Handout. Print.

Kozinets, Robert V. "The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities". *Journal of Marketing Research* 39.1 (2002): 61-72. Print.

Kronborg, Mads. "Mindre Virksomheder Opgiver Branding" 2007. www.business.dk. Web. 4 February 2018.

Kvale, Steinar. *Interview: En introduktion til det kvalitative forskningsinterview*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 1997. Print.

Lane, Phill. "Human Resources Marketing and Recruiting: Essentials of Employer Branding". *Handbook of Human Resources Management*. Ed. Matthias Zeuch. Berlin: SpringerNature, 2016. PDF.

Larsen, Henrik Holt. *Human Resource Management – License to Work, Arbejdslivets Tryllestøv eller Håndjern?* Holte: Valmuen, 2006. Print.

Layder, Derek. "Qualitative Data & Mixed Strategies". *Doing Excellent Small-Scale Research*. London: SAGE Publications, 2013. 70-93. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 24 February 2018.

Madsen, Kresten Bent. *Abraham Maslow, Personlighedens Psykologi*. København: Dreyers Forlag, 1981. Print.

Mandhanya, Yogita and Shah Maitri. "Employer Branding: A Tool for Talent Management". *Global Management Review* 4.2 (2010): 43-48. *Ebscohost*. Web. 3 March 2018.

Markelz, Michelle. "Why Your 'Employer Brand' Matters". *Marketing News* 50.5 (2016): 10-11. *Business Source Premier*, EBSCOhost. Web. 10 March 2018.

Menard, Scott. "The Purposes of Longitudinal Research". *Longitudinal Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2002. 1-21. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 10 March 2018.

Payne, Geoff and Judy Payne. "Longitudinal and Cross-sectional Studies". *Key Concepts in Social Research*. SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2004. 144-148. *SAGE Research Methods*. Web. 8 March 2018.

Pedersen, Martin Poul. "Højtuddannede Flygter fra Små Virksomheder i Yderområder". 2007. www.business.dk. Web. 2 February 2018.

Ritzau. "Danskerne pendler mere end nogensinde". 2018. www.nyheder.tv2.dk. Web. 2 April 2018.

Schwandt, Thomas. "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry". *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Ed. Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y.S. London: Sage, 2003. 292-320. Print.

Secher, Mikkel. "Vil ikke Flytte med til Provinsen: De Tænker ikke på vores Familier". 2015. www.nyheder.tv2.dk. Web. 13 February 2018.

Shenton, Andrew K. "Strategies For Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects". *Education for Information* 22 (2004): 63-75. *Science and Education*. Print.

SMV Portalen. "Definition af SMV". www.smvportalen.dk. Web. 15 February 2018.

Styrelsen for Arbejdsmarked og Rekruttering. "Pulje til Modtagelse og Fastholdelse af Højtkvalificerede Udenlandske Medarbejdere og deres Familie". 2016. www.star.dk. Web. 9 February 2018.

Teo, Thompson and Yon Ding Yeong. "Assessing the Consumer Decision Process in the Digital Marketplace". *Omega – The International Journal of Management Science* 31 (2003): 249-363. *Science Direct*. Web. 5 March 2018.

Thomsen, Trine Lund. "Doing Qualitative Research". 2016. Lecture Handout. Print.

Willig, Carla. "Qualitative Research". *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Theory in Psychology*. Ed. Harold L. Miller. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2016. 1-5. *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. 4 March 2018.

11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

All questions will be followed by conversation, where I will ask about the interviewees' answers and try to have them elaborate on things. The questions are mostly guidelines to ensure that all desired topics are discussed.

Background

1. Tell me about yourself (residence, civil status, job history, current position, dream job etc.)

Decision-making process

2. Can you explain the process you go through when searching for a job?
3. What is your primary platform to find a job? Online, network, ads etc.
4. How does a company's reputation affect your decision-making process?
5. How do you obtain information about a company's reputation?

Motivation

6. Would you rather work in a small or a big company? Can you list pros and cons?
7. What motivates you to pursue a job?
8. Which things do you feel are most important in a job? And how do these things influence your choice of job? E.g. content, salary, reputation, company's product etc.

Employer branding

9. Which employer branding initiatives do you know?
10. Are any of these important to you when you choose a job? Why?

Mobility

11. How would you define "a long distance" in relation to commuting for work?
12. Would you consider moving for a job? Under which circumstances?
13. How does distance between home and workplace influence your choice of job?

Appendix 2: Written consent form (Example)

Interviewaftale

Mit navn er Mathilde Sørensen, og jeg er kandidatstuderende på uddannelsen Culture, Communication and Globalization ved Aalborg Universitet. I forbindelse med min afhandling, er jeg i gang med at undersøge, hvordan små virksomheder uden for det urbane område i Aarhus kan tiltrække studerende inden for IT-sektoren. Derfor er jeg interesseret i at snakke med folk i denne målgruppe. Jeg vil gerne tale om, hvad denne gruppe mennesker lægger vægt på, når de vælger job, og hvilke ting, der har betydning for deres valg både under studietiden samt efter de er færdiguddannede for at kunne sammenligne og se, om der er sket ændringer.

Du kan hjælpe mig med min afhandling ved at medvirke i et interview, hvor vi vil tale om dine erfaringer med jobsøgning samt motivationen bag dit valg af job og virksomhed. Interviewet varer højst en time, og jeg vil meget gerne optage det, så jeg får alt det med, som du har sagt. Efter interviewet renskriver jeg vores samtale og sender dig et udskrift, hvis du vil, så du har mulighed for at læse det igennem og komme med kommentarer eller tilføjelser, hvis du mener, der er noget, der skal uddybes eller rettes. Hvis ikke jeg hører fra dig, inden der er gået en uge, går jeg ud fra, at du godkender udskriftet. Denne deadline er sat af hensyn til min afleveringsfrist.

Dit bidrag er anonymt, og hverken dit navn eller tidligere/nuværende/fremtidige arbejdsgiver eller virksomhed vil blive nævnt i opgaven eller det tilhørende udskrift. Hvis du har spørgsmål, er du velkommen til at kontakte mig på enten msore16@student.aau.dk eller på telefon 30 24 12 26.

.....

Navn: _____

Jeg har læst interviewaftalen og vil gerne deltage i interviewet, under forudsætning af at jeg får mulighed til at gennemlæse udskriftet.

Deltager – dato

Mathilde Sørensen – dato

[Appendix 3: Transcripts](#)

Attached in a separate document.

Appendix 4: Coding framework for interviewees' time as students

Argument	Explanation	Code
Decision making process	How the interviewees seek jobs and decide which jobs they want to seek	1.0
Small/large company	Opinions towards working at a small or large company (l. 44-45, 46-47, 47-49, 49-50, 136-143, 143-146, 150-151, 174-176, 427-429, 659, 660, 664-665, 666-667, 667-669, 682-684, 1432-1441, 1442-1443, 1445-1448, 1456-1460, 1742-1744, 1746-1747, 1749, 1750-1752, 1753-1754).	1.1
Methods of seeking	The ways in which students seek a job (l. 71-72, 72-73, 80-81, 388, 393, 587, 588-589, 590-591, 603-604, 604, 879, 881-883, 919-920, 1396-1397, 1698-1699).	1.2
Company size	Statements towards the definitions of small- and large sized companies (l. 155, 156, 160-161, 162-163, 167-169, 433-435, 674-675, 675-677, 975-976, 978-979, 1217-12-18, 1222, 1758).	1.3
Reputation	Arguments relating to a company's reputation (l. 90-91, 398-399, 625-626, 627-630, 634, 1412-1414, 1418, 1713-1717).	1.4
Information	Arguments related to seeking information about companies (l. 102-103, 103-105, 403-405, 411-413, 417, 642, 642-644, 644-647, 651-652, 1422-1423, 1722-1723, 1723-1725, 1735).	1.5
Mobility	The interviewees' attitudes towards mobility	2.0

Travel time	The amount of time that students are willing to travel for a student job (l. 297-299, 513-514, 792-794, 1068-1071, 1583-1584, 1585-1588, 1588-1591, 1592-1593, 1847).	2.1
Move	Willingness to move for a student job (l. 269; 526, 1833-1834).	2.2
Influencers	Things that influence choice of travel time and willingness to work outside Aarhus (l. 295-297, 304-308, 308-310, 512-513, 515-516, 520-521, 521-522, 806, 814-821, 825-826, 833, 1079-1083, 1101-1103, 1591-1592, 1595-1596, 1606-1607, 1609-1610, 1854-1855, 1858-1859, 1864, 1866-1867, 1871-1873, 1874-1876, 1878-1880, 1901-1902, 1904-1905).	2.3
Distance	Willingness to work outside Aarhus (l. 316, 814-821, 1088-1089, 1089-1090, 1602, 1851-1852, 1852-1853, 1886, 1888, 1889-1892).	2.4
Motivation	Important factors related to job seeking and preferences	3.0
Flexible work hours	Opinions towards flexible work hours (l. 1296-1300, 1347-1348, 1350-1351).	3.1
Content	Opinions towards the content in a job (l. 1021, 1492-1495, 1795-1798, 1889-1892, 1894-1896).	3.2
Challenges	Opinions towards challenges in job (l. 695-697, 727-728).	3.3
Money	Opinions towards whether money influence a job (l. 194, 355-356, 461, 726, 727, 737, 1021, 1412-1414, 1499-1501, 1507-1508, 1706-1707).	3.4
Colleagues	Opinion towards of colleagues	3.5

	(l. 461-464 1024, 1486-1487, 1489-1490, 1542-1544).	
Work experience/ CV	Opinions towards a study related job/experience (l. 194-196, 730-732, 737, 757-758, 1708).	3.6
Environment	Opinions towards environment at work (l. 701-702, 1024, 1707-1708, 1894-1896).	3.7
Employer Branding	The impact of employer branding initiatives	4.0
Importance of employer branding initiatives	The extent to which employer branding initiatives influence students' choice of job (l. 206-208, 225-226, 493-495, 755, 757, 778-779, 1062-1064, 1542-1544, 1811, 1823).	4.1
Solutions	Ideas relating to solve the issue and get students to work in SEs outside central urban area of Aarhus	5.0
Future	Willingness to commute due to a study related job/secu- rity of job in the future (l. 833, 1606-1607).	5.1
Social environment	Willingness to commute due to colleagues and social things (l. 814-821, 833, 1889-1892, 1894-1896, 1903, 1910- 1911, 1938-1943, 1946-1948).	5.2
Content	Willingness to commute due to job content (l. 833, 1609-1610, 1887-1888).	5.3
Flexibility	Willingness to work outside Aarhus if "work from home" is a possibility (l. 1296-1300).	5.4
Money	Willingness to work outside Aarhus if transportation is paid (l. 1886).	5.5
Visibility and job ad	The importance of job ad and visibility (l. 1911-1915, 1931-1934).	5.6

Appendix 5: Coding framework for interviewees' time as graduates

Argument	Explanation	Code
Decision making process	How the interviewees seek jobs and decide which jobs they want to seek	1.0
Small/large company	Opinions towards working at a small or large company (l. 44-50, 136-143, 143-146, 219-220, 427-429, 667-669, 681, 682-684, 688, 689, 955-956, 956-960, 962-963, 968, 968-970, 1203, 1204-1207, 1207-1210, 1210-1211, 1432-1441, 1442-1443, 1445-1448, 1456-1460, 1742-1744, 1746-1747, 1749, 1750-1752, 1753-1754).	1.1
Methods of seeking	The ways in which students seek a job (l.57-59, 64-66, 80-81, 361-362, 367, 368, 380, 381-384, 609, 613, 617-620, 888-889, 889-892, 893-894, 895-897, 904-905, 906-907, 919, 920, 924-929, 929-930, 1166, 1167-1169, 1377-1381, 1381-1385, 1392, 1664-1665, 1669-1674, 1677-1682, 1688-1689).	1.2
Company size	Statements towards the definitions of small- and large sized companies (l. 155, 156, 160-161, 162-163, 167-169, 433-435, 674-675, 675-677, 975-976, 978-979, 1217-1218, 1222, 1758).	1.3
Reputation	The extent to which a company's reputation influence students' decision-making process (l. 46-47, 47-50, 90-91, 398-399, 625-627, 634, 636-638, 913-915, 935, 935-938, 938-941, 943-944, 1173-1174, 1175-1179, 1403-1405, 1408-1410, 1418, 1713-1717).	1.4

Information	Arguments related to seeking information about companies (l. 102-103, 103-105, 403-405, 411-413, 417, 642, 642-644, 644-647, 651-652, 949, 950-951, 1231-1232, 1422-1423, 1722-1723, 1723-1725, 1725-1731).	1.5
Mobility	The interviewees' attitudes towards mobility	2.0
Travel time	The amount of time that students are willing to travel for a fulltime job (l. 255-256, 260, 500-501, 783-784, 785-786, 802, 1068, 1071-1072, 1263-1265, 1549-1550, 1827).	2.1
Move	Willingness to move for a fulltime job (l. 267-269, 269-273, 526-529, 535-538, 540-541, 1107-1109, 1116, 1127-1129, 1274-1276, 1370-1372, 1565-1570, 1572-1573, 1831).	2.2
Influencers	Things that influence choice of travel time or willingness to move/work outside Aarhus: (l. 260-262, 277, 287-289, 501-505, 507, 786-788, 806, 1077-1079, 1113, 1113-1115, 1121-1123, 1280-1283, 1551, 1554-1557, 1577-1578, 1834-1838, 1842).	2.3
Motivation	Factors related to job seeking and preferences	3.0
Content	Opinions towards the content in a job (l. 183, 187-188, 189-190, 440, 478-479, 711, 986, 1226-1227, 1464-1465, 1492-1495, 1762-1763, 1768-1770, 1789-1791).	3.1
Money	Opinions towards whether money influence a job (l. 189-190, 468-469, 470-472, 1006, 1010, 1253-1255, 1255-1257, 1499-1501, 1763-1765, 1768-1770).	3.2
Colleagues	Opinions towards colleagues	3.3

	(l. 444, 446-449, 456, 470, 478-479, 711, 714, 1226-1227, 1486-1487, 1489-1490).	
Environment	Opinions towards environment at work (l. 470, 491-492, 988-991).	3.4
Challenges	Opinions towards challenges in a job (l. 181-182, 706-707, 713, 1405-1406).	3.5
Job title	Opinions towards the title in a job (l. 983, 1776-1779).	3.6
Job advertisement	Opinions towards job ads (l. 995-998, 1472-1476).	3.7
Employer Branding	The impact of employer branding initiatives	4.0
Importance of employer branding initiatives	The extent to which employer branding initiatives influence graduates' choice of job (l. 215-219, 231, 232, 239, 490-491, 493-494, 758-760, 764, 772-773, 1035, 1037-1040, 1041, 1045-1046, 1524-1526, 1536-1538, 1812-1813, 1817-1818, 1823).	4.1
Retainment	Employer branding initiatives relating to job retainment (l. 246, 1050-1052, 1056, 1057-1058, 1526-1529, 1534-1536).	4.2