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Recruiting the Right Junior Auditor – a
Human Resource Perspective

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Employee turnover has long been an issue within the audit profession and is generally considered to have a negative impact on auditing firms. As auditing firms rely on the skills and knowledge of their employees, the recruitment process is crucial in order to appoint candidates who will benefit the firm. Previous research has studied the turnover within audit firms, where the majority of the studies have focused on why employees choose to leave. While previous research mainly focuses on the individual's perspective, the purpose of this thesis will be to explore how audit firms' HR-departments work with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective.

A model that illustrates the recruitment process has been created through researching theories and literature regarding turnover. In order to collect information, semi-structured interviews were used. The questions were based on the created model and the literature presented throughout the thesis. Interviews were held with HR-respondents in order to explore their view on the recruitment process. Junior auditors were also interviewed in order to explore their perception of the recruitment process, and to identify if there were any differences from the HR-respondents' views.

Our findings indicate that the participating firms' recruitment process is both extensive and well developed in order to make sure that they hire a suitable candidate. It did not become apparent that the firms focused on tenure during the employment selection, although the well-established structure of the recruitment process might indirectly impact the turnover situation. Our results also indicate that firms invest much time and resource into their marketing activities and that they value the personal competence of their candidates greatly.

Keywords
Recruitment process, turnover, auditor, marketing, expectation, motivation, competence, up or out
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1. Introduction

*The introduction chapter includes the presentation of the background and problematization. The thesis’ research question and research purpose will also be presented.*

1.1 Background

The auditing industry complies with criteria mentioned by Freidson (2011), which indicates that auditing firms can be considered as professional organizations. According to Freidson (2011), the two most underlying criteria to what makes a profession are that the work is considered so specialized that it is inaccessible to those lacking the required training, and that it is generally believed that the work cannot be standardized. Brante (1988) defines professions as jobs that have a scientific foundation, and are therefore relatively hard to learn and master. Auditing is a profession where theoretical education is required, (to become an authorized auditor), not only by the employer, but also by law. Hence, it is safe to say that the job as an auditor requires both knowledge and countless hours of studying by the individual interested in the job.

Employees are a key element to any company, no matter the industry it operates in. In auditing and accounting, firms want to ensure that they get their employee selection right from the very start, as the appointment and replacement of one employee can cost as much as 150% of that employee’s annual salary (Hiltebeitel & Leauby, 2001). Because of the high costs associated with a “mis-appointment”, the recruitment process for a junior auditor can be both demanding and difficult. According to Butcher (2015), one can expect various tests regarding both personality and knowledge in different forms, as well as numerous interviews, when applying for a job in auditing.

In order to justify the difficulties and pressures associated with working in an auditing firm, there are large incentives that work as motivation for employees to stay committed to their firm. According to Briscoe and Von Nordenflycht (2014) the strongest incentive is the possibility of one day becoming a partner at a firm. Being a partner means being involved in a firm’s decision-making, and also receiving personal benefits in terms of salary and yearly bonuses (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990). While becoming a partner in a firm might be seen as an important incentive, it must be said that very few actually get the privilege of achieving it (Axelsson, 2011).
Something that has to be taken into consideration when discussing turnover is who is actually leaving. Of course, one can look at the individual level and try to determine the specific cause of each departure, or one can look at the bigger picture and try to explain trends and general reasons behind employees’ decision to leave. Logically, most of the people hired for entry-level jobs are usually younger graduates, which make them a part of generation Y, also known as millennials according to Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010). PWC (2013) states that two out of three employees are in their 20s or early 30s. The generational differences are something that organizations need to understand to be able to attract and recruit the right people for a job (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). According to the study made by Twenge et al. (2010), millennials put greater emphasis on leisure time in comparison to previous generations, whereas they do not value extrinsic rewards, such as status and money, as highly. The findings regarding the extrinsic rewards not being as important for millennials, contradicts the research by Kirschenbaum and Weisburg (1990). Kirschenbaum and Weisburg’s (1990) study showed that salary is the main reason for separation between a firm and its employees. The differences in results between the two studies, which were done on different generations, further prove that millennials value different factors than previous generations. In order to meet the changing demands of generation Y, the auditing firms’ HR-departments might need to update their strategic work when recruiting candidates.

Given the above-mentioned information, a newly appointed junior auditor has to be considered as someone with drive, knowledge and personal qualities that firms seek. Not only does the theoretical background and education suggest that the person has enough basic knowledge about auditing, but the firms’ own tests in the recruitment process also strive to ensure that the individual is a good fit for the specific firm. There are also extrinsic incentives, such as the potential of becoming a partner, as a way to encourage an employee to stay long-term. Nevertheless, an American study shows that more than 60% of those who had chosen the auditing profession changed jobs at least once within their first three years of appointment (Hiltebeitel & Leauby, 2001). Another study made by Bullen and Flamholtz (1985) showed that 32% of employees in auditing leave their employment within their first three years, 66% within five years and finally 78% within seven years. Auditing firms would benefit from understanding why so many leave, since researchers confirm that a high turnover rate can have a negative impact on firm sustainability. Chi, Hughen, Lin and Lisic (2013) also state that high turnovers are a problem for auditing firms, since it can lead to worsening of firms’ provided services. Turnover of staff affects many different stakeholders, such as the specific
individual, the individual’s co-workers, the firm and the firm’s clients. This study will focus on how audit firms’ HR-departments are working with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective.

1.2 Problematization

So why are so many junior auditors leaving their firm so early on? According to Carrington (2010), working in an auditing firm for a couple of years gives an individual several opportunities if she was to seek another job. This is also confirmed by Steenackers, Breesch and Haardies (2016), who conclude that working within auditing gives an individual valuable experience, while it may also work as a springboard on to other employment opportunities.

Another factor that can be a reason for high turnover is work-overload and work related stress. Bursell and Neurath in SvD (2010) state that junior auditors are frequently expected to work over-time during their first years. An Indonesian study shows that work overload significantly impacts junior auditors’ turnover intention through both job satisfaction and work related stress (Pradana & Salehudin, 2015). The same study also suggests that work overload is the main reason for the high turnover rate within the auditing field (Pradana & Salehudin, 2015). Elci, Sener, Aksoy and Alpkan (2012) study confirm that work related stress is a factor that increases the turnover rate, while Siong, Mellor and Moore (2006) state that both stress and job satisfaction impact the turnover intention of an employee. Referring to previous literature, it is safe to say that work-overload greatly impacts the “worklife-experience” in a negative fashion (Pradana & Salehudin, 2015; Elci, Sener, Aksoy, & Alpkan, 2012; Siong, Mellor, & Moore, 2006), giving the employee reasons to search for jobs elsewhere. As the auditing industry is infamous for its “long hours”, the heavy workload could potentially work as an instigator for job turnover.

A study made on audit staff in Taiwan concludes that other factors that affect the tenure of employees in auditing firms are gender, performance, salary and academic background in accounting (Chi, Hughen, Lin, & Lisic, 2013). Findings from the study suggest that employees with higher salary, higher performance ratings and a background in accounting education tend to stay with the firm for a longer period of time. Kirschenbaum and Weisburg (1990) confirm that salary is a major reason for actual separation between the firm and the individual employee, and also state that age, tenure and the perceived chances for improvements at the job also impact the actual turnover rate. Chi et al. (2013) mention that
previous research implies that there is a correlation between turnover intention and actual turnover, which suggests that if firms were able to discover the intentions early on, actual turnover could potentially be prevented.

Chi et al. (2013) show that females tend to stay with their auditing firm for a shorter period of time than their male counterparts. Previous research made by Greenhaus, Collins, Singh and Parauraman (1997), show that the reason for women leaving auditing firms earlier/more frequently than men is attributed to the empirical results which shows that women have less desire to gain partnership with their firm. The desire, (or the absence of it), to become partner is a career-related reason, while Law (2010) through his study finds that more personal-based reasons also affect the choice of leaving a firm. According to Law (2010), the imbalance between personal-life and work-life is labeled “role-conflict”, and has the highest impact on the turnover decision made by female auditors in Hong Kong. As trends show an increase in the number of women entering auditing firms (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2008), the reasons explained above must be taken into consideration if auditing firms wish to lower the turnover numbers.

As auditing firms are aware of the high turnover numbers, it is worth exploring if they are actively working to reduce them, or if they simply do not see an issue with the turnover rate. As many professional service firms, including auditing firms, adopt the so-called up or out system, the question on whether firms actually encourage some employees to leave is relevant to discuss. Lennox and Park (2007) claim that an alumnus, (former employee), who are working in another company can influence her current company into working with the alumnus previous firm in auditing matters. A study made by Iyer, Bamber and Barefield (1997) also state that an alumnus could be a valuable asset for auditing firms. Depending on what policies are operated and how well an auditing firm treats their alumni when they are still at the firm, alumni identification can be strengthened. Alumni identification consequently affects the former employee’s inclination to benefit her previous firm (Iyer, Bamber, & Barefield, 1997). Another argument that speaks to the benefit of turnover is as Basioudis (2007) states that audit firms can use the fact that many previously employed accountants have a significant presence in companies’ boards of directors. With this insight, firms can determine the level of fees charged for their supplied services (Basioudis, 2007). In summary, it can be concluded that there are benefits to having some turnover. However, there are for obvious reasons also many downsides.
Hiltebeitel and Leauby (2001) state that appointing and later replacing an employee, can cost as much as 150% of that employee’s annual salary. While an early departure from a junior auditor is associated with economical costs for a firm, Vaiman (2008) further describes that long-term retention is a way for companies to gain an advantage over their competitors. Chi et al. (2013) state that high turnover can lead to worsening of a firm’s provided services, while the Financial Supervisory Commission (2009, as cited in Chi et al., 2013) states that high turnover as well as a shortage of experienced audit staff has continuously been among the top challenges in auditing firms. As with everything else, there are both pros and cons with staff turnover. According to Iyer et al. (1997), previous studies focuses on the negative aspects of turnover, and while there are benefits of having alumnus, auditing firms presumably intend to keep their best employees. However, in order for the up or out system to successfully work, some employees must leave the firm on a continuous basis. Therefore, it has to be taken into consideration that firms might consciously work to push out those who are deemed not to be successful within the firm, in order for them to fulfill a more valuable role for the firm as alumnus.

This study will focus on how auditing firms are dealing with the recruitment of junior auditors. Since the recruitment process starts at the first moment a potential candidate comes in contact with a firm, the study will focus on two main areas; Firstly on how auditing firms attract suitable candidates for a job. Secondly, on how firms select candidates that they believe will be successful as auditors.

Auditing firms, in particular the Big 4\(^1\), recruit new junior auditors every year. Especially larger offices located in major cities recruit on a continuous basis, where they seek to find the best talents for the job. The goal is to attract talented people to the firm based on the firm’s own terms, rather than having to replace departing junior auditors. For obvious reasons, the quality of the recruitment process is vital to a firm, as the employees represent the firm towards its customers and other stakeholders. Ahmad and Schroeder’s (2002) study shows that in order for a firm’s quality management practice to be effective, the behavioral traits of a prospective employee should be thoroughly examined to establish whether he/she meets the firm’s requisitions. A successful quality management practice is vital to a business’ overall

\(^1\) Big 4 consists of four major auditing firms: Deloitte, E&Y, KPMG and PWC
success, as it influences all internal functions of an organization (Luburic, 2014), which also means that it impacts both results and performance. In other words, the employee selection affects a firm’s success, which implicates that it is crucial for firms to hire the right person for a job. While hiring the right people is fundamental, it is also important for firms to keep their employees’ knowledge and skills within the firm. As previously established by Hiltebeitel and Leauby (2001) and Bullen and Flamholtz (1985), audit firms struggle to retain their personnel long-term. We believe that there is an impact on the tenure from the very start of the employee attraction process. Therefore, we will try to see how/if sustainability, (in the context of retention), is included when recruiting new personnel. This study will explore how firms HR-departments attract suitable candidates and how they select an employee among the assembled candidates. We hope that this research can offer a better understanding on how auditing firms HR-personnel view the turnover-issue, and how they deal with the recruitment process in practice.

1.3 Research question
How are audit firms HR-departments working with recruitment and turnover issues among junior auditors?

1.4 Purpose
The purpose of this study is to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments are working with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective.
2. Scientific method

The study's design will be presented in this part. A short description of the content in our theoretical reference frame will be given along with explanations about the choice of theories.

2.1 Research design

The aim of this study is to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments are working with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective, which means that this study will try to explore the HR-departments’ view rather than to explain why they view it in a certain way. Because this study aims to let HR-respondents explain how they recruit junior auditors and how/if they incorporate a turnover perspective when recruiting, a qualitative research method is suitable. It allows us to explore each respondent’s views, rather than to compile and quantify all respondents’ answers into one conclusion. Conducting interviews allows the respondents to give elaborate answers and explanations to why their firm takes certain actions during the recruitment process, which is suitable for this thesis’ purpose. By reading literature and research regarding how organizations recruit employees, we understood that the recruitment process is often extensive and complex. In order to easier identify different factors within the recruitment process that might impact future turnover, we decided to divide the process into two separate areas; attracting the right employee and selecting the right employee.

Even though this study focuses on the HR-departments’ view instead of the individuals, we must first understand what it is that generally causes people to quit their jobs. We must also understand why turnover among junior auditors is abnormally high. In order to do so, we have studied literature and previous research that focuses on turnover in general, and on what impacts turnover intention among junior auditors. Based on the literature and research that we have studied, we have identified some factors that might impact the turnover within auditing firms. Within “attracting the right employee”, we have identified that firms’ marketing and the expectation gap that marketing might create can have a possible impact on junior auditors’ turnover intention. We also believe that junior auditors’ turnover intention is affected by motivation, competence and person-job/organizational fit issues. Therefore, we believe that firms’ recruiters during the employment selection process should assess whether candidates are motivated, have the right competence and will fit into the job and organization. These factors are placed under “selecting the right candidate”. By understanding how/if firms’ HR-departments deal with these factors during the recruitment process, we can make assumptions
Regarding if the HR-departments’ actions influence the junior auditors turnover intention. While this study does not focus on the junior auditors’ turnover intention, it is important to understand it as it ultimately impacts the turnover within auditing firms. Therefore, it is necessary to use both individuals’ perspectives and firms’ perspectives in this thesis.

There are two main kinds of approaches: deductive and inductive (Saunders, 2012). Because our study emanates from previous literature, researches and theories, it has a deductive approach. We decided to use a deductive approach mainly due to the topic that this study regards. Recruitment and turnover are something that have been debated and researched from different perspectives, in different geographical locations and in different industries. Because of the large amount of accessible literature and researches regarding our topic, it suited our own research to emanate from previously presented literature. Normally, a deductive approach is associated with creating and testing pre-established hypotheses. However, we decided not to formulate any hypothesis, as we did not want to test any pre-determined ideas regarding how firms’ HR-departments carried out their recruitment processes. Instead, we mainly focused on research regarding the individuals’ perspective and identified different factors that we visualized by creating a model. We also used research from firms’ and HR-departments’ regarding recruitment and turnover to help modify our model. From our model, and its components/factors, we formulated interview questions that let our respondents express their views. In other words, our respondents answered questions that we had formulated through previous research, which results in our study having a deductive approach.

2.2 Content of theoretical framework
Because this study explores audit firms’ entire recruitment process, we have identified some theories that can be used when looking at the recruitment process from different perspectives. Because auditing is a profession, we wanted to incorporate the profession theory in to our thesis. Brante (2009) explains that a profession requires many years of education and work experience to master. Furthermore, he explains that a profession plays an important role in our society and that it therefore should come with high social rewards such as prestige, salary and status for those who master it. Because professions impact the well-being of our society, an unstable turnover rate within an industry considered as a profession could potentially harm our society. The high turnover rate within auditing, which is considered to be a profession, is therefore an important topic.
Because employees’ turnover intention is vital to understand for this study, we also wanted to use theories that can be related to employees’ turnover intention. Theories such as the Expectancy theory, the Motivation theory, the Self-processing theory and the Social learning theory have therefore been used.

The recruitment process essentially is a process of matching people with jobs. The Expectancy theory can be used to help explain the existing expectation gap among junior auditors, since the expectation gap is affect the turnover intention of junior auditors, (Jeacle, 2007). Furthermore, earlier research also suggests that there might be a gap in firms’ expectations on the skills and knowledge that they believe that their candidates should possess, (Jackling & De Lange, 2009). This means that the Expectancy theory can also be used from an HR-perspective. We also use the Motivation theory when discussing the intrinsic and extrinsic values that motivate people. The Motivation theory can help to explain motivational aspects, why employees choose to work at a certain firm and how firms’ representatives determine whether a candidate is motivated or not. Furthermore, the Self-processing theory and the Social learning theory have been used when describing individuals’ attitudes and views on themselves. These two theories can help to explain individuals’ own perception about themselves and how it influences the jobs that they apply for. More in-depth discussions regarding the above mentioned theories are presented in chapter 3.
3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework will firstly present some basic concepts, followed by theory and literature regarding the two main areas of this thesis. In the end of the theoretical framework, a model based on applied literature will be presented.

3.1 Human Resource Management (HRM)

According to Armstrong (2009), human resource management regards all aspects of how people are both employed and then managed while working in an organization. It includes organizational activities such as human capital management, corporate social responsibility, employee well-being, recruitment and talent management. The main objective of human resource management is to ensure that an organization achieves success through its people. Furthermore, Armstrong (2009) states that there are no universal characteristics of HRM.

According to Bevort and Poulfelt (2015), HR-specialists encounter difficulties when they try to apply their knowledge, systems and techniques onto professional service firms (PSFs). Auditing firms are regarded as PSFs, as auditing firms deliver a variety of professional services to their clients. Paul, an HR-specialist who was interviewed by Bevort and Poulfelt (2015), explained that he was shocked by the complete absence of HRM-systems within an audit firm that hired him to help them with their HRM.

Storey (1989, as cited in Armstrong, 2009) distinguishes the differences between hard and soft versions of HRM. The hard version identifies people and employees as resources through which companies achieve competitive advantages, while the soft version instead focuses on the wants and needs of the employees. The soft approach emphasizes the need to gain commitment from their employees through the “hearts and minds”, while also drawing attention to the importance of organizational culture. Truss (1999, as cited in Armstrong, 2009) has observed that even though the theoretical description of HRM is of a more soft nature, the reality is often hard as the economic interests of an organization often outweigh the individuals’ wants and needs. According to Briscoe and Von Nordenflycht (2014), the competition among auditors can be very intense and could potentially make it difficult to obtain a soft approach within the organization. The high turnover of junior auditors could theoretically be linked to a potential absence of soft HRM, where auditing firms might fail to meet the personal demands of their employees.
As previously mentioned, human resource management is a wide concept with many different ingredients. Recruiting, (or employment selection), is vital for a firm since it affects an organization’s overall performance (Armstrong, 2009; Luburic, 2014). In order to determine how auditing firms’ HR-departments are working with recruitment, employment attraction and selection will be the main branches of HRM used, while also incorporating a turnover perspective throughout this thesis. Since turnover is often associated with high costs, it is often considered as something negative and undesirable for auditing firms. However, since auditing firms presumably are familiar with the turnover issue, it is important to consider whether firms might actually accept and encourage turnover to some extent.

3.1.1 Retention
According to Armstrong (2009), the employees that organizations wish to retain are unfortunately often the ones who are most likely to leave. Retention management concerns the actions that organizations take in order to retain the most talented personnel. Retention management within professional service firms (PSFs) is vital because of the costs associated with losing employees. It is also important since losing employees also means losing the knowledge that they possess, something which can hurt firms badly (Vaiman, 2008). Since PSFs rely on the professional skills and knowledge of their employees, turnover results in firms forfeiting their main source of competitive advantage towards its competition. Furthermore, Vaiman (2008) states that some turnover is inevitable, no matter how well firms implement retention techniques. This agrees with Cappelli (2000, as cited by Armstrong, 2009) who claims that it is the market and not the company that will ultimately determine the movement of employees. According to Steenackers et al. (2016), working in auditing for some years gives an employee valuable experience and can work as a springboard onto other job opportunities. Hence, the market for a junior auditor can be both large and attractive. In conclusion, it is impossible for an organization to keep all of their employees, no matter how good their retention management is. Therefore, it can be presumed that firms are not interested in retaining every employee, but rather to keep those who are believed to have the highest potential. Something that also agrees with this idea is the fact that auditing firms usually use the up or out system.

3.1.2 The up or out system
According to Carrington (2010), the up or out system is adopted by the majority of the major auditing firms. An employee that works in a firm where the up or out system is adopted has a limited period of time to prove herself. At the end of that timeframe, the employee either
advances within the hierarchy, or is encouraged to leave that particular firm (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990). The higher up in hierarchy, the fewer places there are to compete for (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990). According to Malhotra, Morris and Smets (2010) the up or out system creates a highly competitive environment, and consequently a relatively cheap incentive from a firm’s perspective; if an employee wishes to keep her job, she has to perform well. However, the competitiveness could also have a negative impact on an employee (Malhotra et al., 2010), as it could result in vicious competition that might cause work related stress, which consequently can result in increased turnover intentions among junior auditors (Pradana & Salehudin, 2015).

Malhotra et al. (2010) further argue that an employee realizes her chances of becoming a partner within a firm quite early on in her career, which consequently impacts the decision to stay with a firm, or to seek appointment elsewhere. The experience and knowledge that a junior auditor gathers from working within an auditing firm, and the social network that is created through interacting with different clients, often means that a junior auditor can easily get a job elsewhere. Firms often help the individuals who are not expected to gain partnership within the particular firm to establish contact with the firm’s clients. As having alumni that work for clients can strengthen the bond between two companies, it can be beneficial for both the auditing firm and the employee if the employee were to take a job with one of the firm’s clients Malhotra et al. (2010). Furthermore, Carrington (2010) states that the majority of auditing firms do not experience turnover as an issue. Because the up or out system is so widely adopted and that there are indeed benefits to “losing” employees, it has to be considered whether firms are content with the current turnover situation.

### 3.2 Attracting the right candidate

For a firm, the recruitment process starts before the interviews and tests, when the firm sets out to market themselves and assemble interesting recruits. According to Armstrong (2009), the aim of advertising is mainly to attract attention and to generate candidates for an advertised job. It also needs to stimulate action from the receiver, which means that the message needs to be conveyed in a way that will arouse interest in the desirable recipient. According to Armstrong (2009), attracting candidates when facing difficulties in regards to attraction and retention should be preceded by assessing the factors that are likely to either attract or repel candidates. In other words, an auditing firm should determine its strengths and weaknesses as an employer before advertising a job. With fewer people interested in seeking
a career within auditing (Nga & Mun, 2013; Ahmad, Ismail, & Anantharaman, 2015), it is important for a firm to figure out how to attract the right candidates for an advertised job.

### 3.2.1 Marketing

A study made by Marriott and Marriott (2003) on accounting students showed that the students’ attitude towards working in an auditing firm were relatively positive in the beginning of their studies. However, the attitude had shifted in a negative manner at the end of their studies, indicating that studying gave them a negative exposure towards the profession. In particular, students found the profession less interesting and enjoyable (Marriott & Marriott, 2003), which can be translated into “not as fun”. Furthermore, Jeacle (2007) proposes that the stereotypical image of auditors as dull and boring can result in fewer applicants for jobs in auditing firms. In order to disown the grey stereotype, also known as the bean counter, auditing firms use colorful brochures and portray their employees as fun and vivid. The brochures are public and are accessible to those who are interested, which allows for firms to reach individuals who have not decided on whether they want to work within auditing. Firms also advertise the social life you get from working within their firm, fun activities and the possibility to travel (Jeacle, 2007).

Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard (2016) mention that the competition among auditing firms to attract good candidates is fierce, and also emphasize the importance of creating advertisements that excites and intrigues those who firms seek to acquire. Chia’s (2003) study gives an insight to what generally drives junior auditors and suggests that by identifying these factors, firms can specialize their recruitment format and advertisement to improve their results. Identifying motivational factors creates an understanding on what potential employees value, which helps firms to clarify what to focus on when advertising. PWC (2013) mentions that the majority of their new recruits are considered as millennials, which makes it important for their company to understand what those millennials react and respond to. Millennials have expectations in terms of work/life balance, advancement prospects, work environments, pay and benefits (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010) that firms need to take into consideration when constructing their advertisements. Furthermore, Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard (2016) state that auditing firms use marketing experts to help them present their strategies to successfully attract good candidates. By assessing the wants and needs of millennials, firms can formulate their job advertisements in a more appealing way in order to attract the “right” candidates.
Collins and Stevens (2002) state that an effective marketing mix of advertisements and publicity help firms to improve their organizations’ brand image, something that can help them to attract the best and brightest job seekers. According to Cameron (1994), the definition of publicity is the information of organizations’ products or services that is spread to the public through editorial media. Press releases and public relations campaigns are effective ways to influence the publicity (Cameron G, 1994). Collins and Stevens’ (2002) study shows that media publicity has a positive correlation with job seekers’ attitudes towards the organization. Moreover, Turban and Greening (1997, as cited in Collins and Stevens, 2002) state that organizations that have a higher reputation among third party sources, such as the media, become more attractive to graduating students.

As Collins and Stevens (2002) also state that students are more inclined to believe information obtained from other sources than from an organization itself, they suggest that word of mouth is vital since it has a strong impact on the organizational image. Even though a firm is not able to control word of mouth directly, it can actively participate in promotional activities in order to influence it in a positive manner. Coombs and Rosse (1992, as cited in Collins & Stevens, 2002) state that the development of close relationships with universities is a good way to attract students. It also gives a firm the opportunity to get to know and build relationships with students, something which can be beneficial when they graduate and become job seekers.

3.2.2 Expectancy gap

While Jeacle (2007) states that mediating a positive image of a job can be beneficial, exaggerating the positives of a job can have negative consequences in terms of misperceived imaginations by those applying for the job. Elam and Mendez (2010) conclude that the demographic of people entering the auditing profession is changing and questions how this group’s expectations will mesh with the existing culture in auditing firms. The study’s results suggest that the group of students questioned will have a hard time getting their expectations fulfilled, due to the fact that there is a conflict with traditional auditing firm culture (Elam & Mendez, 2010). Carcello, Copeland, Hermanson and Turner (1991) have also studied the expectations of American students and compared them with junior auditors who had been working in the industry for a maximum of three and a half years. The results suggested that the students had significantly higher expectations on the profession than what the junior auditors felt was the reality (Carcello et al., 1991). Crain and Phillips (1996) also
conclude that students have unrealistic expectations in terms of job duties and responsibilities, something which further proves that there is a gap between the expectations from students, and the reality in which they will work. In order to find the “right” person for an advertised job, firms cannot exaggerate the advertising so that an applicant is misled. From the auditing firms’ perspective, students may not live up to the requirements that firms expect them to. According to Jackling and De Lange (2009), there is an expectation gap between what firms expect and what students actually possess in terms of skills and attributes. We believe that the Expectancy theory can help us to explain why junior auditors leave their job due to a wrongly perceived image of life as an auditor. We also believe that the Expectancy theory can be used to identify why firms’ expectations on their recruits might not be accurate.

3.3 Selecting the right candidate

After assembling the candidates generated by the advertisement for a certain job, firms need to make sure that they hire someone who is both competent and motivated for the job. A big part of the recruitment process is the interview/s, where the recruiters from the hiring firms can form a more personal opinion of a candidate. According to Armstrong (2009), an interview should give the employer some idea on three key matters; Will the candidate be motivated enough to do the job? Is the candidate competent enough to do the advertised job? Will the candidate fit in well to the organization?

3.3.1 Motivation

The theory on motivation describes the reasoning behind someone’s choice to do something, and Armstrong (2009) explains that motivating other people is about getting him or her to take certain actions that results in a desirable outcome. Furthermore, Armstrong (2009) divides motivation into two different types, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation arises from self-generated factors that influence someone’s behavior, and is not based on external incentives such as payment and reward. Self-generated factors include the individual’s feeling that her work is important and challenging, that there are opportunities to advance in hierarchy and that she feels that she can determine her own actions. Extrinsic motivation arises when things are done to motivate people. An organization that are offering incentives such as increased pay and promotion, are appealing to the extrinsic motivation of an individual. The threat of punishment if an employee fails to achieve an objective is also a form of extrinsic motivator (Armstrong, 2009). In auditing firms, general industry-integrated extrinsic motivators are easy to identify, where motivating personnel with the possibility of partnership might be the most obvious one. The up or out system also functions as a form of
extrinsic motivator since it clarifies the path for the firms’ employees, giving them a choice to either work towards partnership or accepting to leave the firm.

As Ahmad, Ismail and Anantharaman (2015) mention in their research, previous studies show that students who chose to work in auditing firms placed lesser interest in intrinsic factors. This is also stated by Ahmed, K. Alam and M. Alam (1997) whose results also indicated that students that were heading towards auditing firms did not place any significant value to intrinsic factors, but rather valued the extrinsic rewards and benefits. Even though previous research (Ahmed, Alam, & Alam, 1997; Jackling & Keneley, 2008) suggests that those who choose to work in auditing firms are motivated by extrinsic factors rather than by intrinsic, Ahmad et al. (2015) suggest that focusing solely on extrinsic motivation factors are not enough to warrant commitment towards the actual profession. Because accountants/auditors tend to strive for extrinsic factors, they can easily be persuaded into professions that are perceived to be even more extrinsically rewarding. The authors therefore suggest that firms should not exclusively emphasize extrinsic rewards, but instead focus on the intrinsic values of the profession as well (Ahmad et al., 2015). Intrinsic motivation is also believed to increase employer productivity (Becchetti, Castriota, & Tortia, 2012), which is why it is important to take into consideration when choosing whom to employ. In other words, intrinsic motivation is a factor that an employee must feel in order to stay with an auditing firm long-term (Ahmad et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important for firms to determine whether they believe that a candidate will enjoy the environment within the organization. By looking at how/if firms incorporate questions regarding intrinsic motivation, we can get a better understanding of how they value the motivational aspect when choosing a candidate. In turn, this understanding can help explain turnover issues that occur due to motivational factors.

3.3.2 Competence

The employees in a professional service firm, such as an auditing firm, are one of the most important assets because of the knowledge and skills they possess (Teo, Reed, & Ly, 2014). They are also responsible for a firm’s connection with its clients, which makes it important for employees to represent their employer in a desirable way. Even though social qualities are important in order to make a good impression, auditors are often judged by the quality of the service that they deliver. The service quality of an auditor is correlated to the skills and knowledge of that specific auditor. Siriwardane, Hu and Low (2014) have identified skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKAs) that are deemed necessary for auditors to possess in order for
them to fulfill their duties in a competent, diligent and objective way. According to their study, professional integrity knowledge on double-entry accounting and being able to understand a client’s business are seen as the most important SKAs. Furthermore, the study suggests that being able to assess audit evidence and having a questioning mind also are important when working as an auditor (Siriwardane et al., 2014). A study made by Palmer, Ziegenfuss and Pinsker (2004) where the results showed more general SKAs, concluded that communication skills, interpersonal skills, accounting knowledge and problem-solving skills are of great importance if one wishes to become a successful auditor.

As described previously, becoming a licensed auditor requires by both law and recruiting auditing firms, that you have years of theoretical education. Even though education should presumably guarantee some form of competence, Johnson, Baird, Caster, Dilla, Early and Louwers (2003, as cited in Siriwardane et al., 2014) state that “the evidence from current course syllabi suggest that change in auditing education is occurring more slowly and less comprehensively than the demands of both academic reformers and recent events affecting the profession would dictate”. Jackling and De Lange (2009) also state that deficiencies have been identified in the skill sets that graduates normally bring to their initial workplace. These findings suggest that auditing firms cannot solely rely on universities and their education to guarantee the competence of candidates. Because people who are under-qualified for a job eventually leaves it (Kulkarni, Lengnick-Hall, & Martinez, 2015), it is important for firms to assess the competence in order to make sure that candidates have the potential to stay long-term. By examining how firms evaluate their candidates’ competence and how they determine/measure whether their candidates are competent enough, we can better understand whether turnover issues can be associated with recruitment of under-qualified employees.

3.3.3 Person-Job/Organizational fit

When a firm’s recruiters decide that a candidate is motivated and competent enough to perform well, they also have to decide whether the person will fit in well with the firm’s current employees and the entire organization. According to Breaugh and Starke (2000), an employer that wishes to achieve a high level of first-year retention rate and job satisfaction among its employees, should determine whether a candidate has an accurate perception on what an offered job entails. An employer should also consider whether a candidate has good insight to her own skills and abilities as well as to her wishes and desires (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). An employee who has an accurate perception of what her job entails is more likely to
be satisfied with the job, something which minimizes the risk of her leaving in the beginning of her tenure (Wanous, 1992, as cited in Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

While fitting a candidate to a certain job should be primarily emphasized, recruiters must also consider how well a candidate will fit in to their organization (Cooper, Robertson, & Tinline, 2003). A study made on individuals’ perspective on person-organizational (P-O) fit, concluded that the perception of a P-O fit emanates from the congruence between the individuals’ values, and their perceived image of the organizations’ values (Cable & Judge, 1996). The Self-processing theory mentioned by Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) suggests that individuals’ attitude and view on themselves, (e.g. self-esteem and self-efficacy), influence the fit and/or attraction individuals feel towards a certain job or organization. Bandura (1977, as cited in Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005) proposed that people choose activities that they believe they are capable of accomplishing based on their own perceived self-efficacy. Furthermore, the Social learning theory suggests that individuals are attracted to jobs and organizations if they believe that they can succeed at them. In order for individuals to be able to evaluate whether they will succeed, they must have a justified perception of both the offered job and the organization.

Another aspect that has to be taken into consideration is the salary and its influence on the fit between a candidate and an organization. According to a study made by Cable and Judge (1996), organizations that were perceived to offer a higher pay level attracted more job seekers. Since auditing is a profession, one could assume that entry-level auditors should reap the high social rewards (Brante, 2009) associated with working within a profession. However, according to Revisionsvärlden (Johansson, 2017), the audit industry is one of the worst industries for newly graduates in terms of salary. Only the bank and staffing industry pay their recently hired employees a lower salary than the auditing industry (Johansson, 2017). FAR also confirms the low starting salaries and explains that the interest in auditing shown by students despite the low salaries are due to the potential of future opportunities and future pay (Lennarsson, 2017). Cable and Judge (1994) suggest that people with high self-efficacy believe that they are capable of performing well, and are therefore interested in organizations that offer rewards based on their individual performance. This could potentially cause a mismatch between the salary that a junior auditor feels that she deserves, and the salary that her firm offers. Since Kirschenbaum and Weisburg’s (1990) study showed that salary was the
main reason for separation between a firm and its employee, the mismatch could potentially result in employee turnover.

### 3.4 Model development

![Image of the model diagram]

Figure 1. Original model

As shown in Figure 1, the model is based on the different areas in the recruitment process that have been discussed in the text above. One of the main areas is attraction, which regards how organizations find the right candidate. The model focuses on how firms use their marketing activities in order to attract candidates, while it also considers the expectancy gap created by advertisements regarding jobs and organizations. The other main area regards the selection process, where organizations decide which candidate to hire. The model highlights competence, motivation and person-job/organizational fit as the main factors when selecting whom to employ.
4. Empirical method

The empirical method will display how literature has been collected and used. It will also show how empirical data was collected, as well as what the research’s sample consisted of. The operationalization and the way information was processed will also be presented, followed by a chapter were reliability and validity is discussed.

4.1 Literature search

In order to create a relevant and reliable theoretical framework, scientific articles have been the main source of information. The articles have been collected through databases that Högskolan i Kristianstad has access to. Since the theoretical framework is divided into different areas that concern different topics, the used search words have varied. The most commonly used words were: junior auditors, auditing firms, recruitment process and turnover, accompanied by relevant words in regard to the area in focus. Both relevance and date of publication were considered when choosing which articles to use. Even though we have tried to use as much current research and data as possible, relevance has occasionally outweighed the date of publication. Since our theoretical framework present some generational differences, it has sometimes been beneficial to use older researches that describe behavior of earlier generations. The older researches have then been compared with more current research that focuses on the current generation. In addition to scientific articles, textbooks have also been used in order to create a better understanding of both theories and phenomena discussed throughout the theoretical framework.

4.2 Collecting information/data

Because the aim of this thesis is to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments work with the recruitment process from a turnover perspective, we decided to collect data in a qualitative way. A qualitative method allows the respondents to express their own feelings and perceptions, which a quantitative method cannot capture as it is measured by numbers and is based on calculations (Alvehus, 2013). There are numerous methods to choose from when conducting a qualitative research, such as case studies, focus group observations and interviews. We decided to use interviews as our data collecting method, as it is the most suitable method to use when researching how people think, feel and act (Alvehus, 2013). By using semi-structured interviews, the respondents were given the freedom to answer our questions freely, and to mention what they felt were relevant and important regarding each question. Unlike surveys, where respondents are often given options to choose from,
interviews made it possible for us to receive information that we did not expect. While interviews suited our purpose, it must also be remembered that each method has its limitations. Some respondents might be long-winded in their answers and go off topic. Furthermore, sensitive matters might result in that the respondents hesitate to answer the questions in an honest way. To try to avoid dishonest answers, the respondents were clearly informed beforehand that their answers would be treated anonymously.

4.3 Sample
We decided to ask for interviews at auditing firms that we believed were big enough to have both junior auditors and a local HR-department. Requests were then sent to smaller auditing firms as well, in order to better the chances of possible interviews. A total of 49 emails were sent out to different email-addresses with a standardized Swedish template (See Appendix 2). No regard was taken to the geographical location, as it was believed that telephone interviews would not decrease the quality of the data collected. The sample of three individual firms was based on a “convenience selection”, which means that our sample consists of the participants that were available for interviews (Denscombe, 2009). A risk with convenience selection is that it could mirror a certain group, rather than a wider phenomenon. Due to the small sampling size, we have not tried to generalize our results to the context of the entire auditing industry. Since the aim of this study was to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments are working with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective, the firms’ HR-departments were our main source of information. In order to analyze the recruitment process, we believed that it would be beneficial to hold interviews with junior auditors as well. The empirical data collected from our interviews with the junior auditors was compared with the empirical data collected from our interviews with the HR-respondents, which resulted in a more comprehensive analysis. While our main focus was to interview the HR-departments and get their view on our questions, the interviews with the junior auditors gave us additional insight. On several instances, our interviews with the junior auditors also helped to solidify the statements that the HR-respondents had made, something which gave further reliability to the HR-respondents statements. Hence, our interviews with the junior auditors were of great importance for this thesis.

A total of six interviews were held. Three interviews were held with HR-personnel, while three interviews were conducted with junior auditors (See Fel! Hittar inte referenskälla.). In the HR interviews with firm B and C, two respondents were present at each interview. A total
of four interviews were conducted face to face, while two interviews were held by telephone due to the geographical distance (See *Fel! Hittar inte referenskälla.*).
Table 1. Interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Firm A</th>
<th>Firm B</th>
<th>Firm C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR respondent</td>
<td>HR A</td>
<td>HR B1 &amp; HR B2</td>
<td>HR C1 &amp; HR C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior auditor</td>
<td>JA A</td>
<td>JA B1 &amp; JA B2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Interview information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Work experience in the current firm</th>
<th>Interview time</th>
<th>Interview type</th>
<th>Type of firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firm A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR A</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>27'46''</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Non-Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA A</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>23'15''</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Non-Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR B1</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>55'55''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR B2</td>
<td>Contact person of one university, 2 years as a junior auditor</td>
<td>55'55''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA B1</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>18'59''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA B2</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>23'27''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR C1</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>44'08''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR C2</td>
<td>6 years in HR and 16 years as an auditor</td>
<td>44'08''</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
<td>Big 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 HR B2 assists in recruiting junior auditors and is responsible for the firm’s relationship with a local university.
4.4 Interview guide/Operationalization

There are two different interview guides, one with questions for the HR-department, and one with questions for newly recruited junior auditors. These two interview guides will be showcased individually in this part.

4.4.1 The interviews

The different areas in our theoretical framework have been summarized, and questions have been formulated from the theories and literature used in each area. The interviews conducted were semi-structured and allowed the respondents to give elaborate answers and to express their ideas regarding each topic. Furthermore, the respondents were given the opportunity to control the tempo/pace of the interviews. Because the questions were openly asked, without trying to influence the respondents to answer in a certain way, it sometimes resulted in answers that were not always related to the factors that our theoretical framework evolves around. The HR-interviews’ main focus was to let the auditing firms’ HR-personnel explain how their firms attract and select candidates. However, the interviews also aimed to create an understanding of how the HR-respondents viewed the different areas discussed in this thesis. In order to get an understanding of how the HR-respondents viewed the specific topics mentioned in each area of the theoretical framework, follow up questions were asked when the HR-respondents did not discuss the topics on their own. It is important to emphasize that the follow up questions were only asked if the respondents did not mention the topics on their own.

The interviews were held in Swedish, which means that the interview guide was in Swedish as well. The Swedish interview guides can be viewed in appendix 5 and appendix 6. However, since the results were translated and analyzed in English, the questions have also been translated in this chapter. The English interview guides can be viewed in appendix 3 and 4.

4.4.2 The interviews with the HR-respondents

The following questions have been asked in the interviews with the HR-respondents. First of all, general questions were asked:

- How long have you been working with recruitment?
- Have you worked with recruitment in any other industry?
- Do you see any noticeable differences between recruiting junior audit assistants and recruiting for other positions?
By asking these questions, we were able to provide the research with some information about the individual respondents. For example, someone who has been working in different industries might have a better understanding on what differentiates and complicates the process of hiring junior auditors. These questions also worked as a good starting point, as they allowed for the respondents to give general answers and did not force the respondents into details straight away.

Secondly, questions regarding attraction were asked. The questions were divided into separate areas according to our model. We wanted to know more about the firms’ marketing, and our main question for the firms’ HR-respondents was:

- *Would you like to tell us about how you attract the right candidates?*

This question gave the respondents the opportunity to explain their firms’ process when attracting candidates. The question was asked so that the respondents could present their views in a free and non-constricted way. In accordance with the structure of our interviews, follow up questions regarding topics that had not been covered by the respondents were asked. The questions were:

- Different types of marketing activities (”student-nights”, university co-operations)
- What are the purposes of the different activities?
- Which activity fulfills its purpose in the best way?
- Communication of firm strengths.
- Counteract weaknesses (the stereotypical image of the auditor) through job ads
- Can excessive communication of firm strengths lead to false expectations for the candidate?

The follow up questions guided the respondents to speak on topics that are discussed in our theoretical framework. Since Collins and Stevens (2002) mention that a good marketing mix increases firms’ chances to attract the very best, we wanted to understand the different activities that firms take on in order to market themselves. Because the competition of attracting candidates among auditing firms is fierce (Durocher, Bujaki, & Brouard, 2016), we believe that communicating firms’ strengths could improve the firms’ chances of attracting quality candidates. By discussing the matter, we got a better understanding on whether the respondents agreed, and how they communicate their individual firm’s strengths. As Jeacle (2007) mentions, the stereotypical image of auditors as grey and dull can result in fewer applicants for jobs in auditing firms. By discussing the stereotypical image, we got a better understanding on whether the respondents felt that it was their responsibility, as members of the auditing industry, to help change the perceived image of an auditor. Jeacle (2007) also mentions that exaggerating a positive image can lead to miss-perceptions, which is why we
wanted to know how the respondents work to mediate a positive image of life as an auditor, without giving candidates false expectations.

After having discussed marketing, we wanted to understand how the respondents viewed the expectancy gap within the auditing. We started out with our main question, which was: *What expectations do you feel that applicants have when applying to work for you? How do those expectations agree with your wishes regarding the jobseekers expectations?*

Crain and Phillips (1996) state that students have unrealistic expectations on auditing firms in terms of job duties and responsibilities. Since a gap in expectations can lead to turnover issues, we wanted to understand how the respondents perceive the expectations of those who apply for a job within the respondents’ firms. To get an expanded understanding of the expectancy gap, we also discussed the following topic:

- *Applicants expectations on work assignments and responsibilities*

As the used literature suggests that students often have unrealistic expectations on work assignments and responsibilities, we discussed whether the respondents agreed and if they take any actions to not create/inflate misleading perceptions.

We also asked another central question regarding the expectancy gap:

- *How do you, during the recruitment process, mediate the expectations that you have on those that you choose to hire?*

According to Jackling and De Lange (2009), there is also a gap in expectations in what the firms expect their candidates to possess in terms of skills and attributes. By understanding if/how the firms’ representatives mediate their firms’ expectations, we can determine whether the candidates have the opportunity to assess whether they will be able to live up to the expectations or not. We also asked some follow up questions, which were:

- *Do new recruits usually live up to your expectations? (Yes or no question)*
- *If no, why not?*

By assessing whether the recruits usually live up to the firms’ expectations, we better understand if the respondents share the view of Jackling and De Lange (2009), and if so, why they believe that the recruits does not perform as expected.

As part of our research and theoretical framework compares previous generations of job seekers with millennials, we wanted to know if the respondents experienced any difficulties when attracting and selecting candidates nowadays. We therefore asked:
Do you notice any differences/difficulties when recruiting junior auditors today, in relation to when you recruited a couple of years ago? What are they?

As concluded by used literature, auditing firms are currently mainly recruiting from generation Y (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2013; Durocher, Bujaki, & Brouard, 2016). According to research made by Durocher et al. (2016) and Twenge et al. (2010), generation Y value work differently from previous generations. By asking the above question, we got a better understanding of how the respondents viewed the differences experienced when recruiting people from generation Y, and whether recruiting was more difficult now than before. We also had some follow up questions and topics regarding the subject:

- **Generation Y (those born between the 80’s and 90’s)**
- **Different values (private life, development opportunities, work environment, salary)**
- **Different expectations on the employer**
- **Do you adjust your marketing plan according to these values and expectations when advertising a job that is directed towards millennials?**

These are some different factors that millennials value differently according to reviewed literature (Twenge et al., 2010; Ng et al., 2010). In accordance with our interview structure, we asked the respondents about these differences if the respondents did not mention them on their own. If the respondents agreed that millennials have different values and expectations from previous generations, we wanted to understand in what way the respondents’ firms account for that fact when attracting personnel.

After asking the respondents about the attraction process and how they viewed the various topics that we have identified to be a part of that process, we moved on to our questions about the selection process. Our questions regarding the selection process were divided into smaller areas in accordance with our created model, just like our questions regarding the attraction process. Firstly, we talked about motivation and asked:

- **What should motivate a junior auditor in order to thrive and develop at your firm?**

By identifying the different motivational factors that the respondents feel are important to succeed in their firm, we received a better understanding of what the respondents value in terms of motivation. As previous studies suggest that intrinsic motivation is vital in order for an employee to succeed in the long run (Ahmad et al., 2015), the answers given by the respondents were an indication on whether they agreed with that or not. We also discussed the following topics regarding motivation:

- **Intrinsic (self-esteem, self-determination etc.)**
- **Extrinsic (monetary rewards, partnership etc.)**
- **Measurement / assessment of motivation during the recruitment process.**
As Armstrong (2009) divides motivation into two different categories, intrinsic and extrinsic, following up on the different topics helped us to understand how the respondents viewed the different forms of motivation. While extrinsic factors can help to attract candidates to a certain firm, intrinsic factors can help to increase employee productivity (Becchetti et al., 2012) and to increase tenure (Ahmad et al., 2015). Additionally, as motivation could be hard to measure before hiring someone, we wanted to understand if the firms put any effort into understanding what motivates their candidates.

After discussing motivation, we went on to ask the respondents about the competence-aspect when hiring:

- *What type of competence do you find vital for the recruit to have when starting to work as a junior auditor for your firm?*

Auditing is a profession that requires professional knowledge and skill (Teo et al., 2014). Therefore, the skillset of an employee has a big impact on whether she will be successful and stay long-term. By asking the above question, we realized what competence the respondents valued the most. The question was also asked to the junior auditors, and the differences in response is worth analyzing as studies show that people who are under-qualified for a job eventually leaves it (Kulkarni et al., 2015). In order to better understand why the respondents valued certain skills and competences, we asked some follow up questions:

- *Why are these competences important?*
- *In what way do you test these competences during recruitment?*
- *What competences, that you value, are recruits often missing?*
- *Is the level of education of those junior auditors that you hire normally adequate to give them a good start with your firm?*

The follow up questions gave us a deeper understanding on why the respondents valued the described competences, while it also helped us understand how the respondents test these competences during the recruitment process. By learning what recruits normally lack, our study can offer a better understanding on what the gap between firms’ expectations and recruits’ skillset looks like.

We also had some questions regarding person-job/organizational fit. Our main question in this area was:

- *How do you make sure that the candidates you recruit will fit in well with your organization?
Since Person-organization fit is a key matter that HR-departments need to evaluate in the recruitment process, we believe that this question gave us a better understanding on how the respondents assess whether a candidate will fit in well with their organization. We also discussed some other topics that regard the person-job/organizational fit:

- **Evaluation/assessment of the candidates.**
- **Candidates’ desires and goals, as well as the expectations of the firm.**
- **How are you dealing with the issue of low-starting salaries? (Hard to be a good fit if the candidate believes they are worth a higher starting salary than offered)**

A candidate who as an accurate perception of a person-job/organization fit should more likely be satisfied with her job, and are consequently less likely to quit within her initial period (Wanous, 1992, as referenced by Breauagh & Starke, 2000). By discussing whether firms take their candidates’ desires and goals into account, we believe that we received a better understanding on the probability of a good job-person/organizational fit. Because salaries can be a reason for dissatisfaction and separation (Kirschenbaum & Weisburg, 1990), we feel that is important to understand how firms are dealing with entry-level salaries.

We also discussed turnover with the respondents. In order to understand the respondents’ perspective, we felt that we had to understand the turnover situation within the firms where the respondents worked. We therefore asked:

- **How large is the turnover of junior auditors in your firm?**

Furthermore, we discussed turnover in general and the turnover that the respondents experienced that their specific firm had. We did this by asking the following questions:

- **What are your general views on junior auditor turnover? (positive/negative)**
- **Pros and cons of turnover:**
  - **Pros:** Stronger connection with clients
  - **Cons:** Costs, loss of knowledge
- **When turnover among your junior auditors occur, who is generally leaving? (the most talented or those who are not as talented)**
- **Literature suggests that many students use a job in auditing as a “springboard” on to something else. Is this something that your firm is experiencing, and in that case, what are your views on it?**

As our research focuses on the human resource perspective, we believe that these questions helped us to develop a better understanding on the actual situation within the respondents specific firms. As studies suggest that firms can benefit from having alumni working in other companies (Iyer et al., 1997), it was important for us to understand how the respondents view alumni, and whether the respondents agreed that turnover could be positive for firms. The up or out system’s main objective is to retain the most talented individuals, while encouraging
those who are not as talented to seek employment elsewhere (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990). By understanding who is leaving the respondents firms, we can better explain the reasoning behind the respondents’ positive/negative attitude towards turnover. In conclusion, the follow up questions and topics help us to understand why the respondents view turnover as an issue or not.

We also wanted to talk to the respondents about the up or out system. Our main question regarding the up or out system was:

- In research and literature, there are often talks about the “up or out system”. Is that something that exists in your firm?

Even though the research that has been read and used in this thesis (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990; Pradana & Salehudin, 2015; Malhotra, Morris, & Smets, 2010) suggest that the up or out system is a given within professional service firms, we wanted to know whether the respondents’ firms applied the system as well. If the respondents explained that the system was indeed used within their firms, we further asked:

- How does your firm practice that system?
- What are the positives/negatives of the system?

In case of the up or out system’s existence, we wanted to understand how it was applied and practiced. Malhotra et al. (2010) state that the up or out system creates a highly competitive environment that can lead to work related stress. However, firms can benefit from having alumni in other companies. Therefore, it can be beneficial for firms to encourage people to leave as it can strengthen the relationships between firms and their clients (Malhotra et al., 2010). We wanted to know how the respondents viewed the up or out system, and if they felt that the positives outweigh the negatives.

We also wanted to know how if the respondents’ firms conducted any “exit-interviews” with the people that left the firms. Therefore, we asked the respondents:

- Do you usually follow up on the reasons to why junior auditors leave your firm? If yes, what are they?

By asking this question, we discovered what actions the respondents’ firms take to understand why someone had quit their job. The question also gave us an indication on whether the firms were interested in understanding why employees left, and whether the firms took any actions to prevent it from happening again.
Before we finished our interviewees, we asked some final questions to give the respondents a chance to express their thoughts on matters that had not been discussed during the interviews. The final questions were:

- Is there anything that has not been brought up that you feel are important when it comes to recruiting?
- Is there anything that has not been brought up that you feel are important when it comes to how your firm deal with turnover?
- Do you feel that there is anything that your firm could do differently when recruiting in order to get junior auditors to stay at the firm for a longer period of time?

4.4.2 The interviews with the junior auditors

In our interviews with the junior auditors, we did not ask any follow up questions like we did with the HR-respondents. We did not want to impact the junior auditors to answer in accordance with their firms’ HR-respondents, but rather give them the opportunity to share their experiences from their own point of view. We believed that this could lead to a difference in results between our interviews with the HR-respondents and our interviews with the junior auditors. The identified differences would then be central when conducting our analysis. We started of by asking the junior auditors:

- How long have you been working within your current firm?

By asking this question, we believed that we could possibly link certain opinions to the tenure of that respondent’s employment.

We wanted to know how the junior auditors had experienced the marketing from their current firm. Therefore, we asked:

- How did you first come in contact with your firm?
- In what ways were you in contact with your current firm, before you started working?
- What were your experiences from the different interactions with the firm?
- What made you apply for a job with your current firm?

These questions gave the respondents an opportunity to explain how their current firm approached them. The questions also helped us to identify the respondents’ interpretation of how their current firm communicated with them. Furthermore, the questions also let the respondents explain why they eventually chose to apply for a job with their current firm.

We also wanted to understand the junior auditors expectations, and whether they felt that the expectations were accurate:

- What were your expectations on the job/firm before you started working?
- What were these expectations based on?
- Did your expectations change during the recruitment process?
In what way did the firm during the recruitment process mediate the expectations they had on you?
Do you consider the expectations you had before you started working to fit well with the reality? Why/why not?
What, other than the work itself, did you value when you decided to start working within your current firm?

By asking these questions, the respondents helped us to understand their early expectations, and what they were based on. The junior auditors’ expectations were compared with the HR-respondents’ answers regarding the expectancy gap in our analysis. Therefore, the questions above helped us to identify any potential flaws in how firms mediate their expectations on their employees. The respondents’ answers also helped us to understand if they believe that an expectancy gap actually exists. Moreover, determining what the respondents value, other than the work itself, can be used when reviewing the image that recruiters and HR-departments try to communicate, and can work as a guideline for firms when determining what strengths to highlight.

Because motivation is a central component in the selection process according to our model, we wanted to know how the junior auditors viewed motivation. Therefore, we asked:

- What motivates you into performing well?
- Did you experience that the firm questioned your motivation motives during the recruitment process?
- In what way does your firm help in increasing your motivation?

By assessing what actually motivates the interviewed junior auditors, we could compare the answers with what the HR-respondents explained should motivate their junior auditors. Even though the question of how firms work to increase the motivation of the respondent is more relevant from a retention perspective, it can still help us to understand if firms appeal to the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation of their employees. In extension, the firms’ choice between appealing to the respondents’ intrinsic or extrinsic motivation helped us to assess whether turnover can be a result of how firms use the two different aspects of motivation.

We also asked the junior auditors about competence:

- What forms of competence do you feel is important in order to become a successful auditor?
- Did you feel that your firm tried to test if you had these competences during the recruitment process?

In order for someone to be able to do their job successfully, it is important that they possess the right skillset. Having determined what the HR-respondents viewed as vital competences,
we wanted to know what competences the junior auditors felt was important. The questions allowed us to identify differences between the HR-respondents and the junior auditors answers. We believed that these differences would help us to analyze how turnover can be caused due to competence-based reasons.

As the third and final component in our model regard the person-job/organizational fit, we wanted to ask the junior auditors about how they believe that they fit in with their current employer:

- Do you feel that your firm tried to understand your goals and desires?
- Would you say that you fit well into the organization? Why/why not?
- What values do you share with your firm?
- Research suggests that the entry-level salary in auditing is relatively low. Do you consider that to be a problem? Why/why not?

Because the person-job/organizational fit is crucial in order for employees to stay long term within an organization, we wanted to understand if the junior auditors felt that their employer cared about their goals and desires. We also wanted to know whether the junior auditors felt that they fit in well with their current organization, and how they felt about their entry-level salary.

We also discussed turnover with the junior auditors:

- In research, there are often talks about the up or out system and its existence within auditing firms. Do you feel that the system exists within your firm?
  - If yes:
    - How does that work in practice?
    - What do you believe are the benefits and disadvantages of having such a system?

Understanding the junior auditors view on the up or out system, and whether their firms practices it, can help us from two different perspectives. Firstly, it determines whether there is a difference in opinion between the HR-respondents and the junior auditors regarding the existence of the system. Secondly, if the system does exist, we can better understand whether the junior auditors view the system as something that motivates, or if they consider it to add unnecessary pressure.

Just like in our interviews with the HR-respondents, we finished our interviews with the junior auditors by asking some final questions:

- Is there anything that you consider to be of importance regarding the recruitment process that has not been brought up during this interview?
• Do you feel that your firm could do something differently, in order to get recruits to stay for a longer period of time?

The final questions let the respondents mention things that has not been brought up during the interview, and also invited their opinions on how their particular firm could better its recruitment process in order to retain staff for a longer period of time.

4.5 Information processing

With the consent from our respondents, all of our interviews were recorded on a mobile phone. After the interviews, we listened to the recorded audio and transcribed it. When processing transcribed data, regard must be given to the fact that full objectivity cannot be achieved. Processing the material will always be influenced by the author’s identity, values and previous experiences. In order to achieve a high degree of objectivity, it is important to be aware of these influential factors when processing the information in order for them to have as little impact as possible.

Since the interviews were held in Swedish, the transcribed text was also written in Swedish. However, the text has been translated into English when coded for our analysis and when presented throughout chapter five and six in this thesis. The collected data was coded according to its meaning and area of concern (i.e. marketing/motivation/turnover) rather than to the questions asked by us as interviewers. Because the respondents often drifted away from a question and instead started to discuss other topics, it was more relevant to connect the respondents’ answers to the area that they concerned, rather than to connect them with the questions asked. The coding was done separately for each interview, as it gave us a better overview of the data collected and helped us categorize all of the collected data in a more relevant way for analysis purposes. The table below, and the following explanation, shows an example of how the collected data has been coded.

Table 3. Example of coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Coded data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you do during the recruitment process to convey the expectations you have on your employees?</td>
<td>... Then we have tools to match employees with our expectations, but that’s not something that the candidate sees.</td>
<td>The recruitment process</td>
<td>The firm uses tests that will help the firm’s recruiters to assess whether a candidate will fit the firm’s needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in Table 3, the interview question aimed to let the HR-respondent explain how she mediates the expectations that her firm has on its candidates during the recruitment process. The question was asked in Swedish and the answer was given in Swedish. While the question was originally categorized under “expectancy gap”, the answer from the respondent made it more fitting to attribute the answer to “The recruitment process”. The coded data explains our interpretation of the answer in English.

4.6 Reliability and validity

When working with qualitative data, reliability and validity is something that has to be taken into account. In order for a paper to be high quality, it is important that it is both reliable and credible.

The reliability of a paper is based on how the author has interpreted the collected data. In order for a paper to have a high degree of reliability, it is important for the author to be as objective as possible when interpreting the answers collected from interviews. Ideally, the information presented should be the same no matter who interprets it, which further shows the importance of non-personal reflections from the author when presenting the information (Denscombe, 2009). In order for this thesis to have as high reliability as possible, the results were read and interpreted individually by the two authors, before the two authors jointly interpreted and analyzed the collected data.

The validity refers to the credibility of a research (Denscombe, 2009). In order to answer our own research question, it is important that the questions asked to the respondents are relevant. It is also important that the answers given to us by our respondents can be presented in a useful context. Therefore, it is important to carefully choose which questions to ask the respondents, in order to receive relevant data that can be analyzed. In order for this thesis to have as relevant and credible interview questions as possible, the questions were thoroughly discussed with our supervisor.

Furthermore, it is important to consider to what degree respondents are telling the truth when answering interview questions (Denscombe, 2009). By conducting personal interviews, the risk for untrustworthy answers decreases. Even though Denscombe (2009) suggests that body language can be a big part of an interview, no regard has been taken to that aspect when analyzing the results.
Because this thesis is written in English and the interviews were held in Swedish, it is important to make sure that the translation does not change any of the substance in the collected data. In order for the collected data to maintain its original meaning, the main objective when translating has been to keep the respondents underlying meaning and intention intact, rather than to focus on the wording.
5. Results

The results will be presented individually for each firm. The disposition is structured so that the results from the interview with each firms’ HR-respondents are presented first. In firm A and B the results from the interviews held with the junior auditors will then be presented.

5.1 Firm A

Firm A was not a member of the Big 4. The respondent from the HR-department, HR A, was female. The junior auditor interviewed, JR A, was male.

5.1.1 Interview with HR A

The lady interviewed had previous experience in recruiting personnel to a completely different industry, while also working with the recruitment of junior auditors for about seven years. The respondent felt that recruiting junior auditors was fairly easy, compared to recruiting personnel in other industries. The respondent felt that there was a great pool of talented students to choose from, which resulted in the firm having a lot of qualified options when recruiting. The respondent explained that her firm has a developed employer-branding program, and also has a close connection to several of the major universities in Sweden. When asked to discuss the different marketing activities that her firm participated in, the respondent mentioned sending out auditors to hold guest lectures. Furthermore, the respondent mentioned that her firm was present during different labor market days and that it invited students to individual meetings and case-nights. The respondent believed that case-nights, where students visit the firm’s office and partake in different tasks, was the best activity. She explained that it was the best way to connect with several students at the same time. The respondent also mentioned the individual conversations with students as a good way of getting to know potential recruits, while at the same time being able to teach students more about the respondent’s company.

The respondent also explained that her company emphasized its strengths by speaking directly with students, and by sharing information through various media-outlets such as the company’s webpage and brochures. The respondent also confirmed that her firm is actively working to diminish the stereotypical image of an auditor by working with a marketing bureau that helps the firm create slogans that devitalizes the stereotype.
The respondent experienced recruited junior auditors to be very eager to visit clients shortly after they were hired, something which could be a bit unrealistic. Even though she stated that her firm allows new recruits to come in contact with clients early on in their career, she also felt that recruits occasionally were a bit eager to meet clients. She explained that it is not realistic for newly recruited junior auditors to expect to meet with clients within the first few weeks of their appointment, and that it is important to not become impatient. Furthermore, the respondent believed that junior auditors sometimes believe that they know a bit more than they actually do, which can lead to disappointment. However, the respondent also said that “auditing-knowledge” is something that they learn when they are appointed by the firm. She explained that the recruits start their education almost immediately after being appointed. The respondent also acknowledged the fact that new recruits get a supervisor immediately after the appointment who helps them with any questions. The supervisor also helps the recruits to adjust to life within the auditing firm. Overall, the respondent felt that the expectation gap was not large enough to be considered as an issue.

The respondent described candidates nowadays to be more focused on having a balance between their work life and their private life. Furthermore, candidates often ask more questions nowadays compared to a couple of years ago, concerning matters that are not directly linked with the job itself. Since the respondent made clear that candidates nowadays have more requests and demands about their employer, she explained that it is of great importance for her firm to stay updated and meet the demands from its employees. When asked to describe the recruitment process, the respondent mentioned that her firm saved information about the different candidates that had been to interviews and meetings with the firm. Furthermore, she explained that the HR-team tries to find suitable candidates among those who had been interviewed, and also through the firm’s various marketing channels. According to the respondent, factors such as personal interests, previous work life experience, education and whether someone appears to be a team player are all factors that are considered when reading CVs and deciding on who to invite for a job interview.

The respondent mentioned that a candidate’s personality was something that was valued during the interviews, and that social competence was considered as the most important feature to if someone would succeed as a junior auditor. The respondent explained that there are no tests done by a candidate during the recruitment process. She also explained that as long as a candidate meets the educational requirements to become a licensed auditor, there are
no other demands on the candidate to possess any specific knowledge. Furthermore, she mentioned that an ideal candidate should be motivated by personal development and by having varying work tasks.

The respondent mentioned that she did not see the low entry-level salaries as an issue, since graduates who apply for jobs are normally well informed on how entry-level salaries are positioned within the auditing industry. However, the respondent explained that salaries could become an issue two or three years into an appointment, when an employee might be persuaded by other jobs that guarantee a much higher salary. Regardless, the respondent did not see turnover as an issue in her firm, as it allows for “new blood, new views and new thoughts”. Furthermore, the respondent agreed that some of the appointed junior auditors viewed the job as a stepping-stone onto something else, but the respondent herself did not see that as an issue. Instead, the respondent emphasized that employee turnover can be healthy for an organization. Moreover, the respondent explained that the up or out system does not exist within her firm, as many employees go “sideways” (becoming specialists within a specific field) rather than upwards to partnership. As exit-interviews are held with those who actually leave the respondent’s firm, she was certain that turnover normally occurs due to the departing individual’s need to try something else, rather than due to the firm “pushing” them out.

5.1.2 Interview with JA A

Because this particular respondent had worked at firm A for just one month, some questions were difficult for him to answer. The respondent explained that he had recently graduated, and that he took part in firm A’s recruitment process just three months before our interview was held. Furthermore, he explained that he first came in contact with the company through family and friends, who recommended that he applied for a job at firm A. Since the respondent had studied at a university where firm A was non-present (in terms of student and marketing activities) his initial contact with firm A was made when he sent his CV and personal letter applying for an advertised job. The respondent explained that he had applied for various jobs at different firms, but that he felt that firm A suited him best. He briefly described the recruitment process and mentioned that he only went to two interviews with firm A before finding out that he got the job. Since there were no tests carried out during the interviews, the respondent believed that the recruiters mainly focused on his personality and social skills during the recruitment process.
The respondent expected the job itself to be very demanding and intense, especially during peak season. He also had some expectations on the specific firm, as he had learned that the firm has a high percentage of customer satisfaction. Since the firm has mainly smaller or middle-sized clients, the respondent also expected to get a better understanding of business and have more varying tasks, than if he would have chosen to work in a firm that dealt with larger-sized clients. Because the respondent had only been appointed at firm A for one month, he could not verify whether his early expectations were correct.

The respondent expressed that personal development and to continuously learn new things motivated him as an individual. Furthermore, he felt that his superiors encouraged him to strive towards partnership, which also added to his motivation. When asked about the generally low entry-level salary in auditing, the respondent explained that he was not working at firm A because of short-term rewards. Instead, he viewed his appointment as long-term and because of that, he did not see the entry-level salary as an issue. Moreover, he felt that partnership was discussed more openly in firm A than in any of the other firms he had visited. Therefore, he believed that the up or out system existed to some extent. However, he emphasized that it was impossible for him to know if the system truly existed, considering the short duration of his appointment. The respondent also believed that an individual should be good with numbers and be able to understand different aspects of a business in order to become a good auditor. However, he still believed that social skills and the ability to network were more important than any theoretical skill.

5.2 Firm B

Firm B was a member of the Big 4. When interviewing the HR-department, there were two females, (HR B1 and HR B2), that sat in during the entire interview. There were also two separate interviews conducted with two junior auditors, (JA B1 and JA B2).

5.2.1 Interview with HR B1 and HR B2

The two respondents had vastly different work-experiences. HR B1, who was responsible for firm B’s recruitment process, had been working with recruitment in firm B for approximately sixteen years. HR B2 had been a junior auditor for two years, and had been responsible for the relationship with a certain school for the past six months. The respondents explained that their firm has a large employer-branding program on a national level, and that it partakes in different marketing activities on a local level. Case-nights, having auditors hold guest lectures at schools, participating in labor market days and having individual meetings with students
were some activities that the respondents mentioned. The respondents explained that case-nights were particularly appreciated among students, as it gave students the opportunity to meet employees of firm B and experience what auditing actually means. Case-nights were also beneficial from the firm’s point of view, as they gave the firm a chance to meet with students who were interested in auditing. The respondents also explained that the firm’s employees put a lot of time and effort into helping students throughout their studies, as they believed that it was an effective way to create relationships with potential employees.

The respondents explained that they got to know students by continuously interacting with them, which allowed their firm to understand what students seek in an employer. By understanding the students, the respondents explained that they are able to advertise the strengths of their firm so that they become appealing to students. The respondents also believed that their firm had become much better at marketing what it was like to work in firm B on social media, something which further helped them to attract promising students.

The respondents believed that candidates nowadays request opportunities for personal development and long-lived careers. Furthermore, the respondents explained that students seek for a stable employer in terms of job security. The respondents also experienced that candidates nowadays asks entirely different questions when they attend job interviews, in comparison to a couple of years ago. Moreover, the respondents stated that candidates value their own free time and other personal life engagements to a greater extent than what candidates did a couple of years ago. Even though the respondents believed that the change in candidates’ attitudes could be problematic short-term, they believed that the audit industry as a whole would benefit from adapting to these new attitudes and demands in the long run.

The respondents believed that candidates should have an internal driving force that motivates them in order to become successful junior auditors. They also explained that it is important for candidates to be driven by personal development and to always want to learn new things. Furthermore, the respondents explained that candidates’ motivation is tested during the recruitment process, in order to find out what motivates them. The respondents also believed that the most important competences were related to the personality of a candidate, rather than to her theoretical knowledge. Being able to build and maintain relationships both internally and externally, feeling comfortable when working in teams and being good at prioritizing were all competences that the respondents lifted as vital in order for someone to become a
successful auditor. Moreover, the respondents explained that there are tests regarding competence (both theoretical and social) during the recruitment process. The respondents explained that a candidate partakes in three separate interviews, meeting a total of four different people that later decide whether or not to offer that candidate a job. By meeting a candidate on several separate occasions, the respondents believed that it becomes clear if a candidate’s personality will fit in well with the rest of the organization.

We were informed that there had been very little turnover of junior auditors within firm B over the past couple of years. The respondents believed that it is easier to retain personnel in smaller cities, since external job offers from other employers are not as common as they are in larger cities. They also believed that there is a stronger solidarity and fellowship in smaller offices, something which many employees value greater than increased salaries. However, the respondents mentioned that there are some benefits to turnover, as it gives other employees opportunities that can only be created by someone else leaving. Furthermore, the respondents explained that those who actually leave often do so due to one of two reasons. Either they do not want to sacrifice the time and effort required to write the test to become an authorized auditor, or, they simply want to work with something else.

The respondents explained that they are sure that there are some candidates who see a job in firm B as a springboard on to something else, but they also believed that their firm had become much better at finding long-term employees now compared to a couple of years ago. Furthermore, the respondents explained that the up or out system does not exist within their firm, since they try to retain all of their personnel.

5.2.2 Interview with JA B1

The respondent explained that she first came in contact with firm B through their presence at the university where JA B1 studied at the time. The respondent also mentioned that she had never taken part in any of the case-nights or other student activities that firm B offers, but had only been in contact with the firm through her university. However, she did attend some case-nights at other auditing companies, but still felt that firm B fit her best. According to the respondent, she knew a couple of people working at firm B that not only informed her about what it was like to work there, but also encouraged her to apply for a job. She claimed that having friends who worked in the firm also had an impact on her choice of workplace.
The respondent described the recruitment process, and how she first sent in a CV and a personal letter to firm B. She explained that she was invited to an interview held by HR B1 and an authorized auditor. The interview focused on her previous experiences and what she wanted to achieve in the future. Before attending her second interview, she conducted a personality test at home. The results were later discussed during the second interview with another employee from the HR-department. Furthermore, the respondent explained that she finally met with the office manager and HR B1 for a third interview, before learning that she got the job.

The respondent stated that she had very little information on what it meant to work as a junior auditor when she was appointed, and said that those who were hired simultaneously for the same position shared her confusion. Nevertheless, she believed that the job offered the possibility to meet clients and to “get out and see the world” rather than to sit behind a desk all day. Having worked for approximately six months, the respondent that felt her previous expectations were accurate and that “no day is like the other”.

The respondent explained that the possibility to work in teams and to learn from those with more experience motivated her vastly. The constant personal development and the fact that she learned new things all the time also motivated her. Furthermore, she explained that she had always been very competitive, which also motivated her to perform well and to always improve herself. She experienced that motivation was something that was thoroughly discussed throughout the recruitment process, and believed that the firm wanted to make sure that she was motivated enough to perform efficiently even during peak season. Moreover, the respondent believed that analytical skills were important as an auditor, but still emphasized that social skills were the most important skills in order to succeed as an auditor. When asked if she had done any form of competence tests to get her job, she vaguely remembered doing a math and writing test during the recruitment process, but did not perceive them to be as important as the personality test and the interviews.

When asked about the generally low entry-level salary, the respondent explained that she had experience from other industries where the entry-level salary was a bit higher, but the wage-development stagnated quickly. The respondent argued that while her entry-level salary might not be as high (as in other industries), the potential of future wage-development was much more lucrative to her. Because the firm also pays for extensive education for all their
employees, the respondent felt that the entry-level salary was not an issue. Finally, the respondent did not believe that the up or out system existed within firm B.

5.2.2 Interview with JA B2

The respondent explained that she had been working in firm B for approximately six months, and that she got appointed during the same time as JA B1. The respondent described that she first came in contact with firm B at the school where she was studying at the time, when the firm promoted its case-nights. She applied and was invited to participate in one of firm B’s case-nights, and believed that it was a great experience as she had the opportunity to learn more about auditing. Furthermore, she explained that the event was a good introduction to firm B, and that she quickly decided that she wanted to work within the firm. She also explained that other than the positive “gut-feeling”, the fact that firm B invested a lot of time and effort into its employees made a big impact on her decision to join the firm.

The respondent described how the recruitment process had transpired for her, and explained that firm B did a lot of advertising at the school where she had previously studied. After she had seen one of the job advertisements, she sent in her CV and personal letter. She later got invited to an interview where she met with HR B1 and an authorized auditor who worked at firm B. After the first interview, the respondent explained that she conducted a personality test and a competence test from home. She later got called to a second interview with another person from the firm’s HR-department, in which they discussed her results on the two tests. Finally, she was called to a third interview where she met HR B1 once more, and with the office manager. After the third interview, she was informed that she had gotten the job.

The respondent told us that she did not have any expectations on the work itself, as she felt that she was not well informed on what auditing actually meant. However, she did expect the firm to educate and teach her about her new job. She also explained that the firm did not convey any specific expectations on what she was supposed to know, but rather felt that the firm wanted to “shape her in its own way”. Having worked at firm B for a couple of months, she explained that the expectations she had beforehand were accurate. She even said that the firm had exceeded her expectations in terms of education, as she felt that the firm had put an enormous amount of time and resource into learning and educating her about her new job.
The respondent explained that she was motivated by both positive and constructive feedback. She also felt that appreciation received from her colleagues and bosses motivated her. Furthermore, she explained that she learned new things all the time, something which also motivated her. She felt that motivation was discussed thoroughly throughout the recruitment process, and believed that it was important for individuals to be motivated by their job in order to perform well.

The respondent believed that it was important to have a general understanding of organizations, and to be knowledgeable of business in general in order to become a good auditor. “Because clients often turn to their auditor when they have questions regarding their business, it is important to stay updated in order to help them”. The respondent also believed that social competence was important, as it is necessary to establish and maintain relationships with colleagues and clients. The respondent believed that the personality test and the interviews were the firm’s way of testing the social competence of its candidates. Furthermore, she did not believe that the firm put any emphasis on testing other competences, as she believed that the firm was mainly interested of the personal aspect. Moreover, she believed that she fit in well with her firm, and described herself to be very outgoing just like many of her colleagues.

The respondent did not believe that the generally low entry-level salary was an issue, and felt that it was fully understandable seeing how her firm invests enormous resources to develop its employees. However, she did believe that it could be a bit unreasonable to work 60-65 hours a week during peak season, but also acknowledged that it was not fair to make that judgment as she had not been able to benefit from working long hours just yet (being able to take a much longer vacation during the summer). Finally, she did not believe that the up or out system existed within her firm, but rather believed that the firm wanted each of its employees to stay for as long as possible. The respondent had never experienced that her firm put any sort of pressure on her to advance upwards in hierarchy, which she believed further proved her point.

5.3 Firm C

Firm C was a member of the Big 4. When interviewing the HR-respondents, there were two females, (HR C1 and HR C2), that sat in during the entire interview.
5.3.1 Interview with HR C1 and HR C2

The respondents had vastly different experiences, as HR C1 had worked with recruiting at firm C for approximately six years and also had experience from recruiting in other industries as well. HR C2 had been involved in firm C’s recruitment process for approximately six years, and had been working as an auditor for sixteen years. The respondents explained that their firm worked intensively with its employer-branding program, and that the firm invested a lot of resources into its social media marketing. In addition to this, the firm also has close relationships with various schools and universities, where they both seek and attract candidates. When asked about the firm’s marketing activities, the respondents mentioned a variety of ways in which they interact with students. Guest lecturers, inviting students to the firm’s office, case-nights and clubs where they invite students to different activities, such as running, were all mentioned as ways of connecting with students. The respondents believed that case-nights were the best way to connect with students. Case-nights allowed the firm’s recruiters to meet candidates in work-related circumstances, and gave the recruiters a chance too see how candidates worked in groups and what roles they took on when trying to solve a problem. The respondents also believed that candidates appreciated the opportunity to partake in such activities, and that the activities were beneficial for both candidates and firm C.

The respondents believed that the stereotypical image of an auditor being grey and dull was totally misleading, as the job requires social skills and the ability to build relationships with different clients. The respondents explained that their firm uses social media to portray the image of an auditor in a desirable way. In addition, candidates are also allowed to meet with current employees of firm C, in order to be able to ask questions and to form their own opinion on what it means to be an auditor. The respondents believed that they have the possibility to influence a smaller group of people by interacting with them, but also believed that it was up to the audit industry as a whole to come together and help change the stereotypical image.

When asked about how their firm communicates its strengths, the respondents answered that the firm’s own employees explain and describe what it is like to work at firm C to those that are interested. Through the use of social media, firm C allows its employees to describe why they chose to work at the firm, why it is a good workplace and what a normal day for that specific employee can look like. Furthermore, the respondents explained that they hire students to take care of more standardized tasks, something which gives students valuable
experiences and an insight into the firm. The respondents believed that there was still a lot of work to be done in order to eliminate the expectation gap regarding how students perceived the work of an auditor. Moreover, the respondents explained that their own expectations on the candidates were mediated through the job advertisement and throughout the various interviews. Since they believed that there was still a rather big gap in students’ expectations on work as an auditor, the respondents emphasized the importance of being transparent and clear about what working within firm C actually meant throughout the recruitment process.

The respondents believed that there is a big difference in what candidates value and care for nowadays, compared to the candidates that the respondents recruited some years ago. Since the respondents believed that “candidates today are much more interested in having a balanced life”, the respondents felt that they have to adapt in order to stay competitive when recruiting. The respondents also experienced that recently hired candidates are much more interested in what their work “gives them in the long run”, and often wonder about “what do I gain from this” and “what do I learn from this”.

The respondents also described the general recruitment process. It starts with the candidate partaking in some tests online that focuses on logical reasoning as well as personality. The results from the tests are then compared to the requested profile for the job at hand, and if there is a match, the candidate is invited in for a first interview. In the first interview, the candidate meets with HR C2 and a junior auditor, who describes what it is like to be new in the firm, and what it is like to work as a junior auditor. After the interview, HR C2 and the junior auditor assess whether they believe that the candidate should move on to interview number two. In interview number two, the candidate meets with HR C1 for a more profound interview, in which they discuss the candidate’s result on the personality test. If the candidate is deemed to fit in at the firm, they move on to a third and final interview, where they meet with the recruiting manager. After the third interview, HR C1, HR C2, the junior auditor and the recruiting manager all discuss what they thought of the candidate, and whether they believe that they should hire him/her.

The respondents believed that it is very important for candidates to be ambitious and to have an inner motivation in order to become a successful auditor. The respondents also explained that candidates’ motivation is tested through the personality test that they partake in before the interviews. Furthermore, the respondents explained that logical reasoning, analytical skills,
being able to deal with different issues at once and being thorough when analyzing, are all skills that are important to possess in order for someone to become a successful auditor. Just like our other respondents, the HR-respondents from firm C also believed that social skills were necessary and vital in order to become a successful auditor. The respondents also mentioned that it is important to be flexible, since the work of an auditor is seasonal and can be very demanding during January, February and March. While the respondents believed that their firm’s newly recruited junior auditors often possessed the important competences, the respondents also believed that some of them did not have an accurate conception on what hard work really meant. Furthermore, the respondents did not believe that education prepared students for a career in auditing, and often felt that graduates’ auditing knowledge was substandard. The respondents explained that they judged the competence of their candidates by looking at the competence tests done by the candidates, but also by looking at candidates’ previous job experiences to assess what competences they might have picked up, (i.e. accounting from working as an accounting assistant). Furthermore, the respondents did not believe that the entry-level salary was an issue, as it included so much more than just the monetary value of compensation. The respondents argued that if the health benefits, lunch benefits, other benefits and overtime compensation was taken into account, the salary was actually rather high in comparison to entry-level salaries in other industries.

Even though the respondents did not have any exact numbers on their firm’s turnover of junior auditors, they estimated that it was somewhere around 15 %. The respondents explained that there is generally, in all industries, a higher turnover of staff nowadays compared to a couple of years ago, due to a more vibrant and attractive market for talented individuals. Furthermore, the respondents explained that the employees that leave firm C often get a position with a client, in which they are involved in the decision making on what firm to choose in auditing matters. The respondents continued by explaining that relationships with companies can often be tightened when alumni from firm C work at those companies. However, the respondents were clear on that losing employees is ultimately something negative, as it means that firm C loses competent people.

Finally, the respondents explained that they did not believe that the up or out system existed within their firm. The respondents talked about the fact that all people have different qualities, and that an employer has to accept that the learning process is different for each individual.
The respondents emphasized that they try to help all of their employees, and that they continuously meet with their employees to set individual targets and goals.
6. Analysis

The analysis will present the gathered information by connecting it with the material used in the theoretical framework. The chapter will also include our own reflections and thoughts regarding the collected information. Our original model has also been developed as a result of our analysis, and an extended model will be presented in the end of this chapter.

6.1 Marketing

All of the respondents’ firms had a lot in common in regards to marketing activities and in how they approached and interacted with potential candidates. Sending out auditors to hold guest lectures, organizing various activities in schools and universities, inviting students to case-nights and individual meetings and being active on social media were all ways that the firms commonly used to interact with students and candidates. The activities aimed to increase the level of exposure of the firms and to help the firms’ recruiters to come in contact with interesting individual. The various activities did not only help the firms to come in contact with potential recruits, but they also helped the firms to market themselves as attractive employers. This is consistent with the study made by Collins and Stevens (2002), who state that an effective marketing mix helps to improve organizations’ brand image, something which contributes to attract the best and brightest job seekers. By meeting and communicating with students and candidates, the HR-respondents from firm C said that they could better understand what motivates and entices students nowadays. Much like Chia’s (2003) study suggests, the HR-respondents also said that they could use the information obtained from communicating with students to know what aspects to market and advertise in order to attract candidates. Firms could also use the information to adjust to the present requirements and desires of students in order to potentially avoid future turnover.

The HR-respondents from the three firms all believed that their case-nights, where the firms invite students to their office and let them participate in auditing-solving matters, were the best form of marketing activity. From the respondents’ perspective, case-nights allowed for them to create deeper relationships with potential recruits. It also gave the HR-respondents a chance to see how the candidates performed in groups, and how they approached difficult tasks. All of the HR-respondents claimed that they often considered previously established relationships, created from occasions such as case-nights, when it was time to appoint new junior auditors. The HR-respondents also believed that meeting students through case-nights
helped to minimize the expectancy gap, as it allowed for students to actually visit an auditing firm and experience what it is like to work with auditing.

By establishing relationships with candidates through different marketing activities prior to the actual recruitment process, our interpretation is that firms believe that they form a better understanding of their candidates. The HR-respondents from firm C explained that there is a lot to learn about individuals that does not become apparent during an interview, but can rather be seen through case-nights and other interactive activities. Respondent JA B2 explained that her visit to a case-night at firm B, led to her preferring firm B over other firms that she had been in contact with. In other words, marketing activities are important in order for firms to establish closer relationships with candidates, while it also helps the candidates to form an opinion of their future employer.

The marketing activities main objective is to entice and attract candidates to the marketing firm. However, we believe that creating relationships with candidates before they start working within a specific firm can be a way to proactively impact the tenure of candidates’ appointment. Since the interviews with the HR-respondents showed that they believed that the marketing activities had multiple objectives, such as creating relationships and gaining exposure, it is interesting to consider whether the activities can be used as a tool that impacts candidates’ future tenure. A good first impression can create the foundation on which an individual then builds their own conception of a company, which is why the first interaction between a firm and its candidate is very important.

6.2 Expectancy gap

There was no doubt that all of the HR-respondents believed that candidates nowadays have different expectations on both their employer and on the work itself. All of the HR-respondents from the different firms explained that candidates value their personal life in a more apparent way than what candidates did a couple of years ago. This perception is shared by Twenge et al. (2010), who claim that millennials put greater emphasis on leisure time in comparison to previous generations. Candidates also have more questions regarding an employer’s social and environmental commitment. The HR-respondents from firm B believed that candidates nowadays are more knowledgeable and aware of the environment, and that they often asked questions regarding corporation sustainability and how the firm involves itself in society.
All of the HR-respondents agreed that it is vital for them to meet the changing requests from candidates in order to stay competitive and attract the best candidates. This agrees with Durocher et al. (2016) who claim that the competition over the best talents is fierce among auditing firms. The HR-respondent from firm A explained that her firm tries to offer their employees a “complete package” by involving health and fitness benefits that employees can use in their spare time. The respondents from firm B and C explained that their firms also offer the employees benefits that are not directly linked with work itself in order to become more attractive as an employer. Even though we perceived that the HR-respondents implied that benefits were added so that their firms would become more appealing to job seekers, the addition of benefits should also impact the tenure of the firms’ current employees, as it should create further incentives for employees to remain within their specific firm.

Crain and Phillips (1996) claim that students occasionally have unrealistic expectations in terms of job duties and responsibilities, which respondents from both firm A and firm C partially agreed with. The HR-respondent from firm A claimed that new recruits often believe that they will meet with clients directly after being appointed, which is not realistic. The HR-respondent also believed that some new recruits have an over-reliance in their own capabilities as a result of having studied for three years at a university. The HR-respondents from firm C argued that the education that their recruits had received from university was non-sufficient in terms of auditing knowledge. The respondents also believed that some recruits did not have a basic understanding of what it actually meant to work as an auditor, something which both JA B1 and JA B2 agreed on:

“I didn’t have any big expectations on this (working as an auditor), as I didn’t know what I was actually going to do” – JA B1

“I didn’t have many expectations on auditing since I had a pretty bad understanding on what it meant to be an auditor” – JA B2

In order to give candidates accurate expectations, the HR-respondent from firm A said that she explains very clearly during interviews what candidates should expect if they were appointed. She also informs the candidates about what a day of work can look like for an auditor, and what the candidates initial time as employees will be like. The HR-respondents from firm B believed that it was important to be honest and clear about what candidates should expect to not create confusion. The respondents also mentioned that they always give practical examples of their expectations on the candidates, in order for them to be better
prepared when starting their job. The HR-respondents from firm C explained that they try to include their expectations in their job advertisements, and that they believe that it was important to be honest and clear throughout the interviews with their candidates. The respondents also explained that there is always a junior auditor present during the first interview, so that the job seeker can ask questions about what it is like to be new at the firm. All of the firms’ HR-respondents also explained that those who are appointed receive an individual supervisor, who helps them to adapt and adjust to their new workplace.

6.3 The recruitment process

The recruitment process was quite similar in all three firms. All of the HR-respondents explained that previously established relationships with students are considered when it becomes time to hire someone new. Furthermore, all of the firms’ HR-respondents described the first interview as an opportunity to learn more about the interviewee, but also as an opportunity for the firms’ recruiters to explain more about the advertised job.

“When they come in to the first interview, we explain a lot about the role, but we also listen to the presentation of the person” – HR B1

The HR-respondents from firm B and C explained that their candidates conduct various tests, and that the results from those tests are discussed during the second interview. All of the respondents described the second interview as more profound, and explained that candidates were asked to answer how they would react in certain scenarios. The respondents from firm B and C also explained that their candidates attend a third and final interview in which they meet the recruiting manager. After all interviews have been conducted, the recruiters and office manager make a jointly decision on whether to hire the individual. In conclusion, the recruitment process was very similar between the three firms. The biggest difference was the fact that firm A did not carry out any tests during the recruitment process. Even though both firm B and firm C conducted some tests, all of the firms’ HR-respondents agreed that the personality and personal chemistry experienced from the interviews were the deciding factors when deciding which candidate to hire.

It is obvious that all firms put a lot of time and effort into the recruitment process in order to hire quality people that the firms’ recruiters believe will perform well at their specific firm. When asked if her firm could do anything differently during the recruitment process, one of the junior auditors replied:
“I mean it took a long time. They told me I got the job in January, and at that time I had been a part of the recruitment process since November, so that’s a very long time. A lot can happen in three months” – JA B2

Just like the junior auditor explained, a lot can happen in three months, whether it is other job offers or changes in one’s personal situation. The extensive and thorough recruitment process held by the firms can result in the loss of some potentially successful candidates, but it can also allow the time needed for firms’ recruiters to evaluate on whether a candidate will be a good fit or not. In terms of turnover issues, shortening or simplifying the recruitment process in any of the firms could potentially result in higher turnover, as recruiters would not be given the sufficient time to make proper evaluations of their candidates.

6.4 Motivation

All of the firms’ HR-respondents emphasized that it is important that their employees possess intrinsic motivation in order to become successful in their individual firm. As previously mentioned, firm A did not have any instruments to measure the motivation of their candidates during the recruitment process. The respondents from firm B and firm C explained that the personality tests they used included questions that helped them understand what motivated their candidates. Furthermore, all of the HR-respondents believed that candidates’ motivation is displayed throughout the interviews, and through discussing candidates’ future goals and ambitions, the recruiters can better understand what drives the candidates.

“Partially that you have an inner driving force, and that you don’t expect anyone else to continuously push you” – HR B1

“That you are driven by knowledge, and by learning” – HR B2

“To be ambitious and have an inner driving force to perform well” – HR C2

In regard to the answers given by the HR-respondents from the different firms, it is important for auditors to be ambitious and to have a thirst for knowledge. Furthermore, the HR-respondent from firm A explained that an auditor should be motivated by interesting tasks. Moreover, HR B1 believed that an auditor’s work is ever changing, and felt that an individual should be motivated by constantly doing different things in order to become a successful auditor.

Ahmad et al. (2015) and Ahmed et al. (1997) studies showed that students did not value intrinsic factors as highly as they valued extrinsic rewards and benefits. However, the junior
auditors interviewed for this study explained that they are mainly motivated by intrinsic factors rather than extrinsic rewards:

“I’m allowed to take a lot of courses, and of course it’s very motivational to learn new stuff all the time. When you have been around for a while you also get more involved... For example, I got to sit in at a client meeting this Friday, so I develop all the time which motivates me very much.” – JA B1

“... And the fact that you learn, because you learn so very much all the time, and I would say that that motivates me” – JA B2

“I think it’s very interesting to learn and understand things, and primarily I see this as something where I develop, that I am always moving forward.” – JA A

In other words, the junior auditors are motivated by personal development and by learning new things, which is exactly what the HR-respondents believed should motivate individuals in order for them to become successful auditors. Because the junior auditors possess the motivational factors that the HR-respondents deemed as desirable, the “match” can be credited to the firms’ recruitment process. Candidates driven by extrinsic factors might have been eliminated from the recruitment process due to their driving forces not being what the recruiters sought after. Intrinsic motivation is also something that Ahmad et al. (2015) believe is important in order for employees to stay long-term. Since the interviewed junior auditors were all motivated by personal development, and since they all agreed that they were constantly learning new things, the workplace of firm A, B and C evidentially provide good conditions for junior auditors to stay long term.

6.5 Competence

Employees are considered to be the most important component in a professional service firm because of the skill and knowledge they possess (Teo et al., 2014). The interviewed HR-respondents generally divided competence into two different categories, theoretical and personal competence. Theoretical competence includes skills that are often learned through education or work experience, while personal competence includes communication skills, social competence and teamwork ability. All of the firms’ HR-respondents agreed that candidates that are hired often have a good understanding of accounting because of their educational background. However, the respondents from firm C firmly believed that candidates had basically no understanding of auditing after they had graduated.
Both firm B and firm C test the theoretical competence of their candidates, while firm A does not focus at all on the theoretical competence during the recruitment process. The HR-respondents from firm B explained that it is important for an auditor to be flexible and to be able to adapt to change. The HR-respondents from firm C said that they preferred candidates who were:

“Logical and analytical. Focused on solutions. Being able to deal with multiple issues at once, that that’s something that is seen as positive, and that you’re able to deal with it. Being thorough, although not too thorough.” – HR C2

Furthermore, it was clear that all of the HR-respondents valued the personal competence of their candidates.

“We look at the social competence as it is very important for us” – HR A

“When it comes to the personal, it is important that you’re good at building and maintaining relationships” – HR B1

The respondents confirmed that communication skills were among the most important attributes as an auditor, just like Palmer et al. (2004) suggested in their study. While auditing knowledge and each individual firms’ “way of work” are taught to employees through courses and education, social skills are something that candidates are expected to possess before they start working at a firm. The interviewed junior auditors also believed that the interviews in the recruitment process focused on their personal skills rather than on their theoretical knowledge.

6.6 Person-Job/Organizational fit

Because employees that fit in well with their organization is less likely to quit during their initial employment (Wanous, 1992, as cites in Breaugh & Starke, 2000), it is important for firms to make sure that their employees feel a connection and a fit in order to avoid turnover. The junior auditor from firm A explained that he had been a part of some other firms’ recruitment process as well, but felt that the casual and relaxed atmosphere in firm A suited him better. The respondent also explained that he chose firm A because, during the recruitment process, he had met employees who he felt shared his “philosophy” and approach to work.

Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) suggest that an individual’s attitude influence the fit and/or attraction that individual feels towards a certain job or organization. As previously
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established, being social and outgoing are key features in order to become a successful
auditor, which consequently means that firm look for those features in candidates. One of the
junior auditors explained that she fitted in well with her organization, as she considered herself to be outgoing and social. She further explained that since many of her employees were also outgoing, she felt that she got along well with them and therefore with the organization as a whole. This proves that peoples’ perception about themselves impact how they believe that they fit in with others. In other words, it is important for firms to make sure that a potential recruit can blend with those who are already employed by the firm. The HR-respondents from firm B explained that even though the candidates as individuals are always the main focus during the recruitment process, consideration must be given to how those individuals will fit in and match with the firm’s current employees. Furthermore, the respondents explained that they also try to determine whether their candidates will enjoy to work as an auditor in their firm.

6.7 Turnover

The HR-respondents from firm B and firm C explained that turnover might vary a lot between a firm’s different offices, based on the size of the city where that office is located. Firm B’s office was located in a medium-sized city, and the firm’s HR-respondents explained that they did not experience the same turnover issues as other offices located in bigger cities. When asked why the respondents believed that it differed from office to office, they replied:

“I think it’s a combination (of internal and external factors). On one hand there are a lot more offers, and it’s easier to change jobs (in the big cities). Our personnel get headhunted as well, quite often actually, but I think it’s even more usual in the bigger cities. And as for why people in our firm not accepting job offers from external employers, I think it’s connected with the camaraderie in our office.” – HR B1

The respondents from firm B believed that there exists a fellowship at their office that can only flourish in smaller offices. The respondents believed that the fellowship impact employees to stay at firm B, even when offered jobs with higher salaries. Moreover, the respondents explained that it is much easier to attract job offers in the bigger cities, because of the number of companies located there. The availability of jobs obviously impact employees’ decision to switch from one workplace to another, and the fact that it is external factors that ultimately decides whether employees stay with their firm agrees with Cappelli’s study (2000, as cited in Armstrong, 2009).
All of the interviewed HR-respondents agreed that employee turnover could be beneficial for their firm:

“It’s always good for an organization to get a little, to get in new fresh blood who views things in a different way, with a fresh pair of eyes” – HR A

“Yes, it gives others new possibilities, absolutely. Some people actually enjoy it, to get a little too much responsibility, because then they see it as a challenge that they can grow into” – HR B1

“… It shows that our auditors are of high quality... When they leave, they often go to a position within another company where they are heavily involved in who to work with in auditing, so hopefully they have a positive attitude towards us and chooses to work with us in auditing matters” – HR C1

All of the HR-respondents agreed that some turnover could be healthy for a firm as it allowed for new ideas to flourish. The respondents explained that having alumni that worked in clients’ organizations could often strengthen the relationship firm and client. The HR-respondents from firm B, in which only one junior auditor had left in the last couple of years, explained that as long as they do not experience the turnover rate as an issue, there was no point in adding precautions to stop turnover. Furthermore, the HR-respondents from firm C stated that it was not turnover itself that was an issue, but rather the timing of someone leaving that could be problematic for their firm.

6.8 Up or out

The data collected from our interviews indicates that the up or out system does not exist within the firms where the respondents worked. The definition of the up or out system states that employees must reach the next level in hierarchy within a given amount of time, or else the firm will encourage them to seek jobs elsewhere (Baden-Fuller & Bateson, 1990). While it became obvious that the firms’ HR-respondents expect their employees to continuously develop and expand their knowledge, there was no indication that they demand that their employees advance in hierarchy. The HR-respondents from firm B and C explained how junior auditors, in agreement with their individual coach, set up personal goals and objectives based on what they want to achieve in their career. The respondents from firm C also explained that firms must accept the fact that individuals have different learning abilities, and that it takes more time for some to achieve their goals. Moreover, the interviewed HR-respondents explained that they do not force struggling employees to leave, but rather offer them extra help and guidance to reach their individual goals.
Since it can be a difficult task to get HR-personnel to admit that their firm systematically forces employees to quit, we also interviewed some junior auditors to get their view on whether they believed that the up or out system existed in their firm. When asked if they believed that the up or out system existed within their firm, the respondents answered:

“No, there are people who are not authorized auditors that have been working here for ten years” – JA B1

“... But nothing from the firm, the firm absolutely doesn’t push anyone to leave, they are happy as long as people are staying. They feel that it is sad every time someone decides to leave. They have never said that there is any demand that you have to climb (in hierarchy), never.” – JA B2

While firm B’s junior auditors felt that the up or out system did not exist within their firm, the junior auditor respondent from firm A believed that his firm encouraged him to advance in hierarchy.

“That is really hard for me to answer right now, but it does feel like they encourage you to move towards partnership. More so here than in any of the other firms that I visited” – JA A

The answer indicates that the individual felt encouraged to advance in hierarchy, but it does not indicate that he believed that he would be pushed out of the company if he did not advance. The HR-respondent from firm A explained that even though someone might not reach partnership, there is a lot of specialist roles where employees can fill an important function for firm A.

We believe that there might be a possible connection between the low turnover rate of junior auditors in firm A, B and C and the perceived absence of the up or out system. Malhotra et al. (2010) state that the up or out system creates a highly competitive environment that consequently might lead to work overload and work related stress. Furthermore, the study by Pradana and Salehudin (2015) show that work overload is the main reason for high turnover. Therefore, it can be assumed that the absence of the up or out system leads to less work related stress, which consequently results in a lower turnover rate.

While the majority of our collected data suggests that the up or out system does not exist within the respondents’ firms, the respondents’ positions might affect their answers. Neither JA B1 nor JA B2 believed that the up or out system existed within firm B. Since they had only been appointed for approximately six months, it can be argued that they have not been at firm B long enough to actually experience whether up or out system exists. Furthermore, the
HR-respondents might be convinced that the up or out system does not exist because they do not feel like they take conscious actions to make employees leave. However, highly set goals and individual targets might unintentionally make employees quit, which would mean that the up or out system, in a way, actually exists. Since we did not have the opportunity to interview people who had left the firms, we cannot confirm or reject the idea of firms indirectly “pushing” employees out of the company due to the difficulties in achieving individual goals.
6.9 Extended model

**Figure 2. Extended model**
The extended model shows how our collected data has impacted our initial model. The new box “Match expectations” aims to visualize how the recruiting firms try to minimize the expectancy gap throughout the entire recruitment process. The gathered information showed us that firms’ representatives try to explain and inform students what it is like to work in auditing by interacting with them through various activities. The firms’ HR-respondents also explained that they inform and give clear examples of what it is like to work as an auditor throughout the selection process, something which also works as a way of giving the students more accurate expectations.

As can be seen in the extended model, “Attraction” has been divided into two separate boxes, “Activities” and “Job advertisement”. “Activities” are focused on exposing the firms’ brand, informing students about the firms and, most importantly, establishing relationships with students. While the activities are of a more general nature and not focused on appointing candidates, “Job advertisement” is directly focused on hiring new employees. Since the interviewed HR-respondents explained that previously established relationships were always taken into consideration when appointing, the arrow between the two boxes aims to visualize that firms often hire candidates who they have previously met with. The box “New applicants” has been added, as the firms often advertise a specific job through various mediums, where new applicants that have no previous connection with the firm are given the chance to apply.

The “Motivation”, “Competence” and “Person-job/organizational fit” now shows the attributes that the HR-respondents believed to be important within each individual area. The HR-respondents believed that an individual should be motivated by interesting tasks, personal development and a thirst for knowledge. They also believed that an individual should be ambitious and possess an inner driving force in order to become a successful auditor. While theoretical competence was not something that the HR-respondents believed to be absolutely vital, they still mentioned that an individual should be able to adapt to new situations, possess a logical and analytical ability and have the ability to handle multiple tasks at once. Furthermore, the HR-respondents all explained that personal competence was extremely important in order for an individual to become a successful auditor. Being social, outgoing, a team player and being able to create and maintain relationships were all attributes that the HR-respondents looked for in their candidates. In order for someone to fit in well at a firm, the HR-respondents believed that it was the recruiters’ job to determine whether the candidate
would be compatible with the firms’ current employees. It was also believed that the match between an individual and a firm would be better if they shared values and if the individual would fit in to the organizational culture.

As can be seen in the extended model, both case-nights and personal competence has been highlighted. Because all of the HR-respondents explained that case-nights are the most important and successful form of activities when attracting personnel, it has been highlighted to visualize its importance. Moreover, the interviewed HR-respondents emphasized personal competence when selecting a candidate, which is why it has been headlined in the model.
7. Conclusion

Our conclusions will be presented and discussed in this chapter. The theoretical and practical contribution that this thesis provides will also be presented. Lastly, this chapter will present suggestions for future studies.

7.1 Conclusion

After discussing and analyzing the recruitment process of three individual firms, we have realized that these firms invest a lot of time and resources into finding the right candidate. As both Armstrong (2009) and Luburic (2014) argue that the employment selection affects companies’ overall performance, the recruitment process is important in order for firms to do well. The process extends beyond the actual recruiting part, as auditing firms in general seem to focus on establishing relationships with interesting candidates even before the firms advertise a job. Marketing activities and cooperating with schools and universities are priorities for the firms in this study, as it allows them to attract the best and brightest candidates. The firms’ marketing activities also allow the firms to better understand the factors that entice students. This agrees with Chia’s study (2003), which suggested that firms could specialize and improve their recruitment process by understanding those who they wish to hire. All of the HR-respondents also agreed with Durocher et al. (2016) who claimed that the competition among auditing firms to attract good candidates is fierce. Therefore, the HR-respondents believed that it is important to establish early relationships with students in order to be able to attract the best and brightest candidates.

While the studies made by Nga and Mun (2013) and Ahmad et al. (2015) suggested that fewer people are interested in seeking a job within auditing, our results showed that the HR-respondents felt that they had a lot of talented candidates to choose from when appointing. When appointing, all firms have their own ways of determining who the “right candidates” are. Firm A solely focuses on the interviews, while firm B and firm C also involve tests that measure the motivation and competence of their candidates. It became apparent that the three areas of focus in our thesis (motivation, competence and person-job/organizational fit) were all important for the firms during the selection process. As Ahmad et al. (2015) state that intrinsic motivation is something that someone must feel in order to stay at a firm long-term, it is important for firms to assess what motivates their candidates. Our results show that the HR-respondents valued intrinsic motivation highly, and that they often hired people who were driven by intrinsic factors. In accordance with the study made by Ahmad et al. (2015), the
firms’ search for candidates who possess intrinsic motivation should provide a good basis for a long-term employment. Furthermore, our results contradicts the results in the study made by Ahmed et al. (1997), which claimed that auditing students did not value intrinsic factors. The junior auditors interviewed in this thesis explained that they were mainly motivated by personal development and their thirst for knowledge.

Our results show that the HR-respondents believed that personal competence was extremely important. Furthermore, all of the HR-respondents believed that the interviews were the best way of finding out whether candidates were social and outgoing. Our results agrees with the study made by Palmer et al. (2004), which claimed that communication skills and interpersonal skills were some of the most important skills for an auditor to possess. Moreover, the study made by Jackling and De Lange (2009) showed that graduates who start to work within auditing does not possess the right knowledge to become successful auditors. Our interviewed HR-respondents agreed that those who were recruited often had minimal knowledge of auditing, which is why the firms immediately trained and educated their recruits. While Kulkarni et al. (2015) state that people who are under-qualified for a job eventually leaves it, our results did not indicate that any of the firms had any issues related to under-qualified staff. The constant education and training, as well as the shown patience and help that struggling employees receive according to the HR-respondents, might help to prevent turnover due to under-qualified staff.

While our original model visualizes the auditing firms’ recruitment process as divided, as if the firms would focus on “attracting the right candidate” and “selecting the right candidate” separately, the collected information suggests that the firms themselves does not believe that there is a clear distinction between the two. Since the marketing activities ultimate goal is to establish relationships with students who one day might become suitable employees, the recruitment process is constantly ongoing. Furthermore, it did not become apparent that the firms deliberately take precautions to make sure that candidates will be long-term employees during their recruitment process. The future tenure of the firms’ candidates did not seem to be directly discussed in any of the firms’ interviews, which indicates that the length of an appointment is not something that the firms focus on during the recruitment process. However, given the “pre-recruitment” activities, in which firms establish relationships with candidates, and the depth and quantity of the interviews during the recruitment process, it can
be argued that firms unconsciously take measures that impact how long their employees will stay at the firms.

While all HR-respondents interviewed for this study agreed that turnover ultimately is something negative, it was commonly said that there are also benefits and positives of having some turnover within an organization. The opportunity for other employees to step up and contribute with “new, fresh ideas” was mentioned as something positive that was caused by turnover. The study made by Iyer et al. (1997) that suggested that alumni could be valuable assets for firms, was also something that was agreed on as a positive by all of the HR-respondents.

The purpose of this study is to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments work with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective. As the firms’ HR-respondents did not view their current turnover situation as problematic, it did not appear as if they deliberately include a turnover perspective when recruiting junior auditors. However, it can be argued that the firms’ recruitment process of junior auditors is so developed and well designed that it automatically eliminates those who would quit early on in their career due to motivational, competence or person-job/organizational issues. Should any of the firms simplify their recruitment process, it could be assumed that the turnover would increase as a consequence.

While the main purpose of this study is to explore how audit firms’ HR-departments work with the recruitment of junior auditors from a turnover perspective, the information collected from the various respondents also led to conclusions regarding subjects that were not primarily intended. As both JA B1 and JA B2 agreed that they barely had any expectations on what it actually meant to work as an auditor, it can be discussed whether the firms do a good enough job to present the job tasks of an auditor. While all of the HR-respondents claimed that they both explain and show their candidates what it means to work as an auditor, JA B1 and JA B2 lack of expectations suggest that firms would benefit from developing new ways of mediating job descriptions to their candidates. Giving candidates a more accurate perception on what it means to work as an auditor could potentially help firms to avoid hiring individuals who are not enticed and motivated by the tasks of an auditor. More accurate expectations could also help candidates who are actually intrigued by the tasks, to better prepare for work as an auditor.
7.2 Theoretical contribution
Many studies have been done on turnover from an individual’s perspective. These researches have focused on factors that influence the individual’s decision to leave, rather than on what organizations do to avoid it from happening. Our results provide an HR-perspective on the actual recruitment process, while our analysis aims to show the connection between the firms’ recruitment process and the effect it might have on turnover. This thesis can be used as a supplement for future studies concerning the recruitment process in the auditing industry.

7.3 Practical contribution
Both HR-departments and students who are interested in pursuing a career within auditing can benefit from this thesis. Students can use the information presented in this thesis to better understand the individual qualities that audit firms look for when appointing. It can also prepare students heading into a recruitment process with an auditing firm, as this thesis describes the recruitment process of two Big 4 firms and one non-Big 4 firm. The information presented in this thesis can also be used by firms’ HR-departments, as it presents the junior auditors point of view as well. The results from our interviews with the junior auditors suggest that firms could benefit by improving their communication with their candidates in order to give them more accurate expectations on the work of an auditor.

7.4 Future studies
Since our research focused on the auditing firms entire recruitment process, future studies could continue to “dig deeper” into some of the subareas presented in this thesis. As our results indicated that the up or out system did not exist within the respondents’ firms, future studies could focus on whether that is actually the case, or if our result is misleading due to the position and/or experience of our respondents. Furthermore, the HR-respondents believed that they put a lot of effort into explaining an auditor’s role, while the junior auditors explained that they had a minimal understanding of what the work actually meant. It could therefore be interesting to explore how firms can improve in mediating the responsibilities and tasks of an auditor, as it could give their candidates more accurate expectations and a better start in their work life.
Reference List


Appendix

Appendix 1: Standardized template of email in English

Hey!

We are two students, Andrei and Dawei, who are currently studying our third year in accounting and auditing at the University of Kristianstad. We are currently writing our bachelor thesis, where the research question is: “How are audit firms HR-departments working with recruitment and turnover issues among junior auditors?”

We are fully aware that you all probably have a lot to do during this hectic time. We would still like to ask if someone at your firm could assist us in our work, and attend an interview where we could ask a few questions. While we would be extremely grateful if you could meet with us and assist us in our writing of our bachelor thesis, we also believe that we can contribute with some interesting thoughts and ideas that might benefit your firm.

We would like to interview someone who is involved in the recruitment and employment of junior auditors. We would also appreciate if we could get to interview some of your recently employed junior auditors.

Our hopes are to carry through the interviews somewhere between week 15 and week 19. Of course, we will adjust to your schedule and when you have the time to meet. If you have any concerns regarding what interview questions will be asked, feel free to contact us!

Hope you can find time and opportunity to meet!
Thanks in advance,
Andrei and Dawei
Appendix 2: Standardized template of email in Swedish

Hej!

Vi är två studenter, Andrei och Dawei, som läser tredje året Redovisning och Revision på Högskolan i Kristianstad. Just nu håller vi på med vår kandidatuppsats som har frågeställningen; ”Hur arbetar revisionsbyråer med rekrytering och personalomsättningsfrågor”. 

Vi har full förståelse för att ni alla säkert har mycket att göra under denna hektiska tid. Vi skulle ändå vilja fråga om någon/några av er skulle kunna tänka sig att ställa upp på en intervju för att hjälpa oss få svar på de frågor vi har. Förutom att vi skulle vara extremt tacksamma och uppskatta möjligheten att få komma till er för att ställa ett några frågor, så tror och hoppas vi också att vi kan bidra med en del intressanta tankar som förhoppningsvis kan gynna er.

De vi främst är intresserade av att komma i kontakt med är de som jobbar med rekrytering och anställning av revisorsassistenter. Vi är även intresserade av att intervjuar någon/några av er senast anställda revisorsassistenter.

Vi har planerat att hålla våra intervjuer någon gång mellan vecka 15 till och med vecka 19. Givetvis anpassar vi oss efter när ni har möjlighet, oavsett när det än är. Har ni några funderingar kring vilka frågor som kommer ställas så får ni mer än gärna höra av er!

Hoppas att ni finner tid och möjlighet till att träffas!

Tack på förhand,

Andrei och Dawei
Appendix 3: Interview guide for HR-departments in English

Interview guide – HR – English

General questions

- How long have you been working with recruitment?
- Have you worked with recruitment in any other industry?
- Do you see any noticeable differences between recruiting junior audit assistants and recruiting for other positions?

Attraction

Main question: Would you like to tell us about how you attract the right candidates?

Follow up questions/topics:

- Different types of marketing activities (”student-nights”, university co-operations)
- What are the purposes of the different activities?
- Which activity fulfills its purpose in the best way?
- Communication of firm strengths.
- Counteract weaknesses (the stereotypical image of the auditor) through job ads
- Can excessive communication of firm strengths lead to false expectations for the candidate?

Main questions: What expectations do you feel that applicants have when applying to work for you? How do those expectations agree with your wishes regarding the jobseekers expectations?

Follow up questions/topics:

- Applicants expectations on work assignments and responsibilities

Main question: How do you, during the recruitment process, mediate the expectations that you have on those that you chose to hire?

Follow up questions/topics:

- Do new recruits usually live up to your expectations? (Yes or no question)
- If no, why not?

Main question: Do you notice any differences/difficulties when recruiting junior auditors today, in relation to when you recruited a couple of years ago? What are they?
Follow up questions/topics:
- Generation Y (those born between the 80’s and 90’s)
- Different values (private life, development opportunities, work environment, salary)
- Different expectations on the employer
- Do you adjust your marketing plan according to these values and expectations when advertising a job that is directed towards millennials?

Selection
Main question: What should motivate a junior auditor in order to thrive and develop at your firm?
Follow up questions/topics:
- Intrinsic (self-esteem, self-determination etc.)
- Extrinsic (monetary rewards, partnership etc.)
- Measurement / assessment of motivation during the recruitment process.

Main question: What type of competence do you find vital for the recruit to have when starting to work as a junior auditor for your firm?
Follow up questions/topics:
- Why are these competences important?
- In what way do you test these competences during recruitment?
- What competences, that you value, are recruits often missing?
- Is the level of education of those junior auditors that you hire normally adequate to give them a good start with your firm?

Main question: How do you make sure that the candidates you recruit will fit in well with your organization?
Follow up questions/topics:
- Evaluation/assessment of the candidates.
- Candidate’s desires and goals, as well as the expectations of the firm.
- How are you dealing with the issue of low-starting salaries? (Hard to be a good fit if the candidate believes they are worth a higher starting salary than offered)

Turnover
Main question: How large is the turnover of junior auditors in your firm?
Follow up questions/topics:
• What are your general views on junior auditor turnover? (positive/negative)

• Pros and cons of turnover:
  o Pros: Stronger connection with clients
  o Cons: Costs, loss of knowledge

• When turnover among your junior auditors occur, who is generally leaving? (the most talented or those who are not as talented)

• Literature suggests that many students use a job in auditing as a “springboard” on to something else. Is this something that your firm are experiencing, and in that case, what are your views on it?

Main question: In research and literature, there are often talks about the “up or out system”. Is that something that exists in your firm?

Follow up questions/topics:
  • How does your firm practice that system?
  • What are the positives/negatives of the system?

Main question: Do you usually follow up on the reasons to why junior auditors leave your firm? If yes, what are they?

Final questions
  • Is there anything that has not been brought up that you feel are important when it comes to recruiting?
  • Is there anything that has not been brought up that you feel are important when it comes to how your firm deal with turnover?
  • Do you feel that there is anything that your firm could do differently when recruiting in order to get junior auditors to stay at the firm for a longer period of time?
Appendix 4: Interview guide for junior auditors in English

Interview guide – Junior auditors – English

General questions

- How long have you been working within your current firm?

Attracting

- How did you first come in contact with your firm?
- In what ways were you in contact with your current firm, before you started working?
- What were your experiences from the different interactions with the firm?
- What made you apply for a job with your current firm?
- What were your expectations on the job/firm before you started working?
- What were these expectations based on?
- Did your expectations change during the recruitment process?
- In what way did the firm during the recruitment process mediate the expectations they had on you?
- Do you consider the expectations you had before you started working to fit well with the reality? Why/why not?
- What, other than the work itself, did you value when you decided to start working within your current firm?

Selection

- What motivates you into performing well?
- Did you experience that the firm questioned your motivation motives during the recruitment process?
- In what way does your firm help in increasing your motivation?
- What forms of competence do you feel is important in order to become a successful auditor?
- Did you feel that your firm tried to test if you had these competences during the recruitment process?
- Do you feel that your firm tried to understand your goals and desires?
- Would you say that you fit well into the organization? Why/why not?
- What values do you share with your firm?
• Research suggests that the entry-level salary in auditing is relatively low. Do you consider that to be a problem? Why/why not?

Turnover

• In research, there are often talks about the up or out system and its existence within auditing firms. Do you feel that the system exists within your firm?
  o If yes:
    ▪ How does that work in practice?
    ▪ What do you believe are the benefits and disadvantages of having such a system?

Final questions

• Is there anything that you consider to be of importance regarding the recruitment process that has not been brought up during this interview?
• Do you feel that your firm could do something differently, in order to get recruits to stay for a longer period of time?
Appendix 5: Interview guide for HR-departments in Swedish

Intervjuguide – till HR/rekryterare

Under varje del (Marketing, Expectancy Gap, Motivation, Kompetens, Person-organisation fit, Turnover) finns där totalt mellan 1-3 huvudfrågor. Under varje fråga så finns där följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen som kommer lyftas om det inte berörs i svaret på den huvudsakliga frågan.

Generella frågor

- Hur länge har du jobbat med rekrytering?
- Har du jobbat med rekrytering i någon annan bransch?
- Ser du några märkbara skillnader mellan att rekrytera juniora revisionsassistenter och att rekrytera till andra positioner?

Attract

Marketing

- Skulle ni vilja berätta om hur ni arbetar för att attrahera rätt kandidater till att söka sig till er.
  o Följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen:
  o Olika aktiviteter (studentkvällar, skolbesök osv.)
  o Vad är syftena med de olika aktiviteterna?
  o Vilken aktivitet fyller sitt syfte bäst?
  o Kommunicering av styrkor.
  o Motverkan av svagheter (stereotypiska bilden av revisorn)
  o Diskutera hurvilda överdriven kommunikation av styrkor kan leda till felaktiga förväntningar hos den sökande.

Expectancy gap

- Vilka förväntningar upplever ni att de som söker sig till er har? Hur väl matchar det de förväntningar ni vill att de ska ha?
  o Följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen:
  o Sökandes förväntningar på arbetsuppgifter och ansvar.
- Hur gör ni för att under rekryteringsprocessen förmedla vilka förväntningar ni har på de ni anställer?
  o Brukar de förväntningar ni har på de ni rekryterar uppfyllas under deras första tid som anställda? (Ja/Nej-fråga)
o Om nej:
  • Varför inte?

  • Märker ni någon skillnad/svårighet vid rekrytering av revisorsassistenter idag, i förhållande till när ni rekryterade för några år sedan? Vilka?
    o Följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen:
      o Generation Y (dvs. de som är födda runt 80-talet fram till mitten på 90-talet)
      o Annorlunda värderingar (privatliv, utvecklingsmöjligheter, arbetsmiljö, lön)
      o Annorlunda förväntningar på er som arbetsgivare
      o Anpassar ni er på ett särskilt sätt efter dessa värderingar/förväntningar vid marknadsföring av tjänst som riktar sig mot den yngre generationen?

Selection

Förklara att vi i vår uppsats har valt att fokusera på tre huvudsakliga områden; Motivation, Kompetens och Person-Organisations matchning. Be respondenten att förklara hur deras rekryteringsprocess i korta drag generellt ser ut.

Motivation

  • Vad anser ni bör motivera en revisorsassistent för att trivas och utvecklas hos er?
    o Följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen:
      o Intrinsik (självkänsla, självbestämmande osv.)
      o Extrinsic (monetära belöningar, partnerskap)
      o Mätning/bedömning av motivation under rekryteringsprocessen.

Kompetens

  • Vilken typ av kompetens anser ni det vara viktigt att den rekryterade har när den ska börja jobba som en revisorsassistent hos er?
    o Följdfrågor/diskussionsämne:
      o Varför är dessa kompetenser viktiga?
      o På vilket sätt testar ni dessa kompetenser under rekryteringen?
      o Vilka kompetenser som ni värderar, saknar ofta de som ansöker om jobb hos er?
      o Brukar utbildningsnivån hos de revisionsassistenten ni anställer generellt vara tillräcklig för att ge dem en bra start hos er?

Person-jobb/organisation fit

  • Hur gör ni för att rekrytera personer som kommer passa in i er organisation?
    o Värdering/bedömning av kandidater.
Kandidatens önskningar och mål, samt förväntningar på organisationen.

Hur hanteras problematiken kring låga ingångslöner. (svårt att bli en bra fit om kandidaten anser att den förtjänar en betydligt högre ingångslön).

Turnover

- Hur ser personalomsättningen ut för era revisorsassistenter?
  - Hur ser ni generellt på personalomsättningen av revisionsassistenter? (positivt/negativt)?
  - Fördelar/nackdelar med personalomsättning.
    - Fördelar: Starkare relationer till kunder
    - Nackdelar: Kostnader, förlorad kompetens
  - Vem är det som lämnar (de mest framstående eller de som inte riktigt lyckas)?
  - Litteratur visar att en del använder arbete inom revision som en sprängbräda till något annat. Upplever ni detta och hur ser ni isåfall på det?

- I forskningen talar man ofta om up or out, känner ni igen det hos er?
  - Om ja:
    - Hur fungerar det i praktiken här hos er?
    - Vad anser ni att det finns för fördelar med up or out?
    - Vad anser ni att det finns för nackdelar med up or out?

- Brukar ni följa upp anledningen till varför de revisorsassistenter som slutar väljer att göra så? Om ja, vad är de vanligaste anledningarna?
  - Följdfrågor/diskussionsämnen:
    - Lön
    - Generation Y

Avslut

- Är det någonting som vi inte har tagit upp som ni anser vara viktigt när det kommer till rekrytering?
- Är det någonting som vi inte har tagit upp som ni anser vara viktigt när det kommer till er hantering av personalomsättning?
- Anser ni att ni i dagsläget kunde/borde göra något annorlunda vid rekrytering av revisorsassistenter för att få in kandidater som stannar längre?
Appendix 6: Interview guide for junior auditors in Swedish

Intervjuguide – till revisionsassistenter

Generella frågor

- Hur länge har du jobbat inom din nuvarande organisation?

Attract

Marketing

- Hur kom du först i kontakt med företaget som du jobbar på idag?
- På vilka olika sätt var du i kontakt med företaget innan du började jobba här? (exempelvis via studentkvällar osv.)
- Hur upplevde du de olika interaktionerna med företaget?
- Vad var det som gjorde att du sökte dig till företaget du är på idag?

Expectancy gap

- Vad hade du för förväntningar på jobbet/företaget innan det att du hade börjat jobba?
- Vad berodde dessa förväntningar på?
- Ändrades dina förväntningar under rekryteringsprocessens gång?
- På vilket sätt förmedlade företaget under rekryteringsprocessen de förväntningar de hade på dig?
- Anser du att förväntningarna du hade innan du började jobba stämmer väl överens med verkligheten? Varför/varför inte?
- Vad, förutom själva arbetet i sig, värderade du när du bestämde dig för att börja jobba på företaget?

Selection

Be den intervjuade att beskriva hur denne upplevde rekryteringsprocessen, från början till slut.

Motivation

- Vad motiverar dig till att utföra ett bra arbete?
- Upplever du att företaget under rekryteringsprocessen ifrågasatte vad som driver/motiverar dig?
- På vilket sätt bidrar företaget till att öka din motivation?
Kompetens
- Vilka kompetenser upplever du är viktiga för att bli en framgångsrik revisor?
- Upplever du att företaget under rekryteringsprocessen försökte identifiera ifall du besitter dessa kompetenser?

Person-jobb/organisation fit
- Upplever du att företaget under rekryteringsprocessen försökte förstå dina mål och önskvärden?
- Skulle du vilja påstå att du passar väl in i företaget? Varför/varför inte?
- Vilka värderingar delar du med ditt företag?
- Anser du att den generellt låga ingångslönen inom revision är ett problem? Varför/varför inte?

Turnover
- I forskningen talar man ofta om up or out, är det något som du upplever existerar på ditt företag?
  - Om ja:
    - Hur fungerar det i praktiken här hos er?
    - Vad finns det för fördelar/nackdelar med att jobba inom ett företag som applicerar detta system?

Avslut
- Är det något som vi inte har tagit upp som du anser vara viktigt när det kommer till rekrytering?
- Anser du att företaget kunde/borde göra något annorlunda vid rekrytering av revisorsassistenter för att få in kandidater som stannar längre?