



**COMPANIES' PERSPECTIVE TO
JOB SHADOWING PROGRAM OF
HAMK INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
DEGREE STUDENTS**

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Työn nimi Companies' Perspective to Job Shadowing Program
of HAMK International Business Degree Students

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Yritysten ja ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijoiden välistä yhteistyötä edistäen, tässä opinnäytetyössä tutkitaan uuden tukikeinon mahdollisuutta edistää opiskelijoiden työelämäyhteyksiä. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää mahdollisen työn varjostamisen ohjelman hyötyjä ja haasteita yritysten näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tuottaa tietoa, jonka avulla voidaan arvioida mahdollisuuksia toteuttaa ja suunnitella työn varjostamisen ohjelma sekä havaita tekijöitä, joiden avulla paikalliset yritykset saataisiin mukaan toimintaan. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja on Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun (HAMK) International Business (IB) -koulutusohjelma.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu organisaation kehittämisestä ja henkilöstön kehittämisestä. Opinnäytetyön teoreettisessa osassa pureudutaan pääkäsitteisiin. Tutkimusaihetta koskevien tieteellisten julkaisujen vähäisen määrän vuoksi aiempia tutkimuksia työn varjostamisen ohjelmista terveydenhuollon alalta ja johtamiskoulutuksesta sekä Suomessa työn varjostusta hyödyntäviä hankkeita käsitellään laajemmin. Tutkimuksessa toteutettiin puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja Pirkanmaalla ja Kanta-Hämeessä sijaitsevien yritysten ja organisaatioiden edustajien kanssa sekä paikallisen lukion opinto-ohjaajan kanssa, jolla on kokemusta työn varjostamisen ohjelman toteuttamisesta. Tutkimuksesta ja suosituksista rajattiin pois pedagogiaa koskevia teemoja.

Tutkimuksessa havaittiin useita hyötyjä yrityksille ja työntekijöille. Yritykset osoittivat kiinnostusta osallistua mahdolliseen työn varjostamisen ohjelmaan, mutta asettivat osallistumisedellytyksiä ilmenneiden haasteiden vuoksi. Tutkimus kuitenkin osoittaa, että haasteisiin voidaan vastata ohjelman huolellisella suunnittelulla. Suoritetun tutkimuksen perusteella suositellaan HAMKin IB -koulutusohjelmalle työn varjostamisen ohjelman pilottiversio suunnittelun aloittamista ja sen kehittämistä yhteistyössä sidosryhmien kanssa. Korkeakoulutuksen ammattilaisena toimeksiantaja vastaa yksityiskohtaisempien toteutustapojen tutkimisesta sekä arvioinnista.

Avainsanat työn varjostaminen, jatkuva oppiminen, työssäoppiminen, organisaation kehittäminen, oppiva organisaatio

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Abstract

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Promoting cooperation between companies and the students at University of Applied Sciences, this thesis studies a new possible means of support connecting students with work life. The aim of this study was to explore the benefits and challenges of a possible job shadowing program from the perspective of companies. The outcome of the study would provide information to evaluate implementing and design a job shadowing program as well as detect factors to engage better with local companies. This thesis was commissioned by Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) International Business (IB) degree.

The theoretical framework of the study consists of Organizational development and Human Resource Development. In the theoretical part of the thesis, the main concepts are defined and discussed. Due to the small number of scientific publications on the research topic, previous studies on job shadowing programs in the health care sector and management training as well as projects utilizing job shadowing in Finland are discussed more broadly. In the empirical section of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the representatives of companies and organizations located in Pirkanmaa and Kanta-Häme regions as well as with a student counsellor of a local upper secondary school having experience implementing a job shadowing program. The study and recommendations do not delve into pedagogy, as this thesis concerns only the field of business.

The study found various benefits for the companies and employees. The companies showed interest in participating in the possible job shadowing yet set conditions for participation due to challenges. However, the research shows that challenges could mostly be tackled with careful planning of the program. Based on the research and study conducted, a recommendation for HAMK IB to design a pilot job shadowing program and develop it in cooperation with stakeholders is given. As professionals of higher education, it is left for the commissioner to make judgement and further study on more detailed implementation methods.

Keywords job shadowing, continuous learning, work-based learning, organizational development, learning organization

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1 Introduction

Promoting social responsibility and diversity are hot topics in the current Finnish labor market. Finland's Ministry of the Interior (n.d.) sees immigration as one solution to the current problems of ageing working population and labor shortage in some sectors in the Finnish labor market. In 2019, one year after graduating from Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), 48% of foreign higher education students worked full-time in Finland, while 27% had emigrated. (OPH, n.d.) To encourage and attract international graduates and researchers to settle in Finland, and prevent the so-called brain drain, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (n.d.) encourages to foster a more international working environment.

Elfving (2023), criticizes the Finnish government's decision not to continue funding the education of international students in the UASs from the beginning of 2024. Elfving notes that if the government doesn't take part in funding, UASs do not have an obligation to invest in integrating students to Finnish labor market. Elfving's concerns towards the new funding model paint a picture of potentially losing skilled workforce as investing in the integration of international students can be seen as part of the solution for the challenges of Finnish labor market. (Elfving, 2023)

Simultaneously, the pressure faced by an individual to find a job is mounting. Rights to study in Finland are strictly controlled and the problems consists of balancing between obtaining a residence permit, narrow social networks, and meeting the criteria of personal capital and earned income within limited working hours in jobs probably not corresponding to the education. (Ndomo, pp.73-76) Additionally, during the ongoing government term, stricter livelihood requirements will be introduced, and naturalization requirements are being tightened. (Ministry of the Interior, 2023)

Motivated by these challenges, the author based this thesis on questioning how international students of a UAS can be better supported to find employment and settle in Finland? Acknowledging the recognized success factors of continuous learning and diversity in the workplace, this thesis introduces a mutually benefitting program, job shadowing. As the implementation is dependent on many factors, the exploration on whether such program should be implemented is begun reflecting the previously done studies and programs implemented and followed by a study of the preconceptions and receptiveness of possible cooperative host companies.

The commissioning party of this thesis is Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), International Business (IB) degree program. HAMK is a multidisciplinary higher education institution located in Kanta-Häme region, Finland (HAMK, n.d.-a). HAMK has been determined building a strong international higher education community and increasing the offering of degree programs in English. The number of applicants for these degree programs has increased steadily over the past few years. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, n.d.-h)

The thesis will examine a new possible way for the HAMK IB degree program to offer low threshold co-learning opportunities through a job shadowing program conducted between companies and IB students. This thesis aims to give material to foster and develop a meaningful engagement and mutual benefits between HAMK IB, its students, and local companies. Thus, the research question for this thesis is: What are the benefits and challenges companies located in Pirkanmaa and Kanta-Häme region see with regards to a possible job shadowing program conducted between HAMK International Business degree students and companies? The commissioning party has not conducted any prior study about this topic.

The theoretical framework of the study consists of Organizational development and Human Resource development, also referring to the promotion of continuous learning and social responsibility. The empirical study examines possible benefits and challenges companies presume to occur if taking part in a job shadowing program. The study also aims to assess companies' interest, perceived need, and feasibility of participating in a job shadowing program. The outcome of the study should provide information for HAMK IB to evaluate implementing a pilot job shadowing program as well as detect beneficial cooperation factors to engage local companies in the co-operation.

Since the research is conducted for a Finnish commissioner, and the topic is highly related to Finnish society, some Finnish sources were used to provide relevant information in this thesis.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 HAMK International Business degree (BBA)

Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) is a multidisciplinary higher education institution in southern Finland which operates in seven campuses in Kanta-Häme region and offers online study opportunities. (HAMK, n.d.-a) Staff and students constitute a team of nearly 10 000 people in fields of bioeconomy, health, education, business, design, and technology. (HAMK, n.d.-a)

The core mission of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) is to provide higher degree education based on work life requirements and development as well as research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities. (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 § 4) As a statutory duty UAS must also “promote industry, business and regional development and regenerate the industrial structure of the region” as well as provide continuous learning in carrying out their mission. (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 § 4; 1368/2018 § 4) According to the Finance Committee of the Finnish Parliament (2023), UAS do not currently have obligation for responsibility reporting. Though, due to ownership steering, responsibility reporting is developed in cooperation with UAS and the State. (Talousvaliokunta, 2023)

Being a part of The Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) of nine cooperating non-metropolitan European higher education institutions, HAMK shares a common mission of securing economical, ecological, societal, and cultural sustainable progress within its region and among its stakeholders. (HAMK, n.d.-g) To help reduce existing regional development disparities in the EU and to increase the competitiveness of the regions, RUN-EU universities provide green, digital and inclusive skillsets to their students and academics. (Regional University Network, n.d.) As stated in HAMK’s Sustainable Development Programme, all degrees in HAMK will include sustainability studies and all future academic theses will consider its own research topic in terms of sustainable development. (Häme University of Applied Sciences, 2022, p.5)

According to the Rectors’ Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene ry, 2023), 65% of UAS graduates stayed in their study region one year after graduation. Especially in smaller study regions, more UAS graduates are employed compared to university graduates. (Arene ry., 2023) In 2019, one year after graduating from UAS, 48% of

foreign higher education students worked full-time, while the proportion of unemployed was 3%. 10% of graduates continued to study alongside work and 4% studied full-time. 27% had emigrated and the remaining 13% were in some other or unknown situation. (OPH, n.d.)

HAMK's Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), International Business (IB) degree provides cross-cultural business development skills and competences. The studies are held in English and consists of 210 credits taking approximately 3,5 years. Learning to plan, organize, and manage business with sustainably conscious, data-driven, and entrepreneurial point of view is at the heart of HAMK IB degree. Graduates can find employment, for example in the fields of digital marketing, human resources, or international sales. (HAMK, n.d.-e) Currently there are around 850 international students in HAMK (HAMK, n.d.-c). In 2022, 30 international students completed a degree in Business and administration in HAMK. (Vipunen, 2022) Individually, a student gains practical experience in the field through a 30-credit work placement. (HAMK, n.d.-e)

Connecting students to work life, HAMK offers support through education, work-based learning, and stakeholder activities. Students are also encouraged to actively participate in other opportunities, such like workshops, student union activities, and recruitment events as they increase networking with professionals in the field and are great opportunities to practice pitching and self-marketing. During studies, HAMK's IB students participate in various working life-oriented projects developing their skills needed in their future career. (HAMK, n.d.-f). For example, providing a "Market Entry" market research to co-operating partners, the students develop the skills needed in their future career as they gain their core competence about e.g. global business environments and digital marketing. (HAMK, n.d.-f)

Projects, such as Häme Smart Growth, bring companies together with higher education students. Häme Smart Growth is a project that develops the internationalization and innovation prerequisites of micro and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) in Kanta-Häme. (Linnan Kehitys Oy, 2020 & HAMK, n.d.-d) One objective of the Häme Smart Growth project is developing an operating model that supports the co-development and internationalization of educational institutions, students, and companies. In the service concept for sustainable international growth, HAMK's IB students provide company-specific services, such like industry and competitor analysis or consulting in sustainability, that complement the tailor-made design sprints for companies operated by Linnan Kehitys Oy. (HAMK, n.d.-d).

According to OECD, international students are “those who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country of study” (OECD, n.d.). To promote integration and employment of international, non-native students, IB degree includes 10 credits of Finnish language studies. Also, financial scholarships based on skills and progress in Finnish language can be granted within specified terms. (HAMK, n.d.-i) Open to all international students in HAMK, Language Cafés operated by the Talent Boost team are held once a week in both Valkeakoski and Hämeenlinna. (Li, 2024) The Language Café is a place to meet new people in multicultural environment and practice to speak Finnish. (Li, 2024)

The national Talent Boost program in Finland promotes the immigration of international talents, their integration into Finland, and aims to improve the employment of international experts already in Finland. (Talent Boost, n.d.-a) & HAMK, n.d.-b) Higher education institutions operate in various cooperative roles in the program, and internally they focus on the integration of international students by developing their language proficiency and supporting their employment. (Talent Boost, n.d.-b) HAMK’s own Talent Boost builds a better student-company connection and provides consistent support for international students helping them integrate into Finnish society and labor market. Currently, two Talent Boost Mentors offers a variety of guidance from competence, networking, job hunting and career to establishing a life in Finland including learning Finnish language and everyday life in Finland. (HAMK, n.d.-b)

According to HAMK Talent Boost specialist Tiina Björkskog (personal communication April 12, 2024), it has been noticed in their work that international students find it difficult to gain company contacts. The situation makes it more difficult to find an internship, thesis work and employment. Björkskog estimates that there are many factors behind the phenomena. As one main factor, they mention that there are attitude related challenges within companies due to language skills as well as the lack of recognition of competence. Acknowledging these challenges, HAMK Talent Boost strives to create different models for corporate collaboration, which makes it easier to get to know international experts. They mention job shadowing as one of these low-threshold services, although the service is still in its early stages, and the experience of organizing it cannot yet be analyzed in more detail.

2.2 Continuous learning

Continuous learning is not only important for individuals operating in the current learning society but also for organizations competing in international markets. (Tynjälä, 2008, p.131) According to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (n.d.), continuous learning responds to the “need to develop and renew competence at different stages of people’s lives and careers”.

Tynjälä (2008, p.132) states that according to Eraut (2004b) and Marsick & Watkins (1990) learning in a workplace environment differs from learning at school or in a university environment. Learning in the educational system is based on formal, intentionally planned educational activities whereas learning at work is mostly informal in nature. (Tynjälä, 2008, p.132)

Johnson & Majewska (2022) have compiled features describing formal, non-formal, and informal learning. According to Johnson & Majewska (2022, p.8) formal learning is characterized by features and structures that provide a clear framework for progression including predefined learning objectives. Formal learning is typically facilitated by educational institutions in which curriculum guidelines emphasize measurable outcomes, such as recognized qualifications. It engages both educators and learners, however prioritizing achievement and skill development within structured environments over socialization. (Johnson & Majewska, 2022, p.8) Non-formal learning is diverse and flexible with varying levels of structure and formality. It can occur within educational settings and linear objectives but mostly does not lead to formal qualifications. Learning is often voluntary and driven by intrinsic motivation. Non-formal learning complements formal education, although its connection to socialization may vary. (Johnson & Majewska, 2022, p.14) Informal learning, according to Johnson & Majewska (2022, p.18), is flexible and unrestricted by traditional educational boundaries. With no formal structure and recognition, informal learning can occur anywhere. As it is driven by intrinsic motivation and individual needs, it promotes holistic development and fosters socialization. (Johnson & Majewska, 2022, p.18)

Eraut (2004, pp.266-267) presents four main types of work activity that were found to regularly give rise to learning. First, participation in group activities including teamwork towards a common outcome. The activities may vary from responding to external change to working in a group set up specially for a purpose such as audit. Secondly, working alongside others enables learning by listening and observing. It provides the opportunity to learn new

practices and perspectives and become aware of different expertise as well as tacit knowledge. Thirdly, tackling challenging tasks can lead to increased motivation and confidence if well-supported and successful. Last, working with clients as the knowledge of them and their problems or requests is increasing, and some new ideas might arise from their joint consultation. (Eraut, 2004, pp.266-267)

Fostering continuous learning within organizations, the 70:20:10 model is a framework aimed at expanding learning and development beyond traditional methods into the workflow. (Arets et al., 2016) The model emphasizes that most learning occurs within the workplace through informal and social interactions. From the ratios, “70” represents experiential and situational learning, including addressing challenges and learning through support doing the work. The “20” represents social learning and learning through others, including such like, collaboration, feedback, and mentoring. The “10” represents structured or formal learning, including such like, training, courses, and programs. Aiming to an effective total solution, a whole 100 being filled, the 70:20:10 design serves as a catalyst for changing mindsets and approaches to learning within organizations. (Arets et al., 2016)

Tynjälä (2008, p.140) presents that workplace learning happens in different forms. Tynjälä (2008, p.140) distinguishes three basic modes of workplace learning. Referring to studies by Eraut et al. (1998), Eraut (2004b) and Marsick & Watkins (1990), Tynjälä (2008, p.140) mentions the first mode being incidental and informal learning, which takes place as a side effect of work. The second mode is intentional, but non-formal learning activities related to work. These activities include such like mentoring and intentional practicing of certain skills or tool use. The third mode is formal on-the-job and off-the-job training. Workplace learning is dependent on many contextual factors related to the workplace environment as well as the individual’s position in the workplace as they may vary from trainees to experts and superiors influencing the conditions and processes of learning. (Tynjälä, 2008, p.140)

Tynjälä (2008, p.132) calls attention to recognize that the workplace is not a unified environment for all learners. Due to differences in working cultures, people’s situations, educational backgrounds, and organizational positions, learning in the workplace differs. Tynjälä (2008, p.132) notices that, to a growing extent, the workplaces do not only provide a learning environment for employees, but also for students.

The Interagency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET) (2022) defines work-based learning as all forms of learning that takes place in a real work

environment providing individuals with the skills needed to successfully obtain and keep jobs as well as progress in their professional development. The most common types of work-based learning are apprenticeships, internships, traineeships, and on-the-job training. Apprenticeships provide occupational skills typically leading to a recognized qualification by combining learning in the workplace and a school-based structured way of learning. Generally, the apprentice is considered an employee who has a long work contract and a salary. Traineeships and internships are training periods in a workplace complementing formal or non-formal education programs. Duration is from a few days or weeks to months, and they may include a work contract and payment or not. On-the-job training is the most common form of work-based learning as it takes place in the normal work setting. (IAG-TVET, 2022, p.2)

The IAG-TVET (2022) lists work-based learning benefits to individuals, employers and society describing it as a “win-win” for the economy and society. For individuals it offers personal and professional development and faster school-to-work transitions leading to improved employability and better access to jobs. Employers can benefit from advanced technical and job-specific skills and higher productivity which can lead to growth. Benefits of efficient recruitment as well as social engagement and workplace diversity are also recognized. Society benefits include enabling employment of less advantaged groups, better human and social capital and overall economic development. (IAG-TVET, 2022, p.4)

According to Tran & Soejatminah (2017, Abstract) integrating work experience and learning in higher education is a complex. Challenges among international students arise due to visa status, cultural expectations, recognition of skills across cultures, language competency, and local employers’ attitudes toward international students. Therefore, fostering the relationship between education providers and companies enhancing work-based learning opportunities for international students and their integration is crucial. (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion)

The finding of Tran & Soejatminah (2017, Discussion and Conclusion) suggests that students being exposed to relevant workplaces does not automatically lead them to quality work placement experience. Tran & Soejatminah (2017, Discussion and Conclusion) list a variety of actions educational institutions should consider supporting international students to access and experience high quality work placements culminating in a more inclusive study environment. Educational institutions are encouraged to bring clarity on what counts as “relevant” work placements for international students. They should foster collaboration with

stakeholders educating international students on work rights and enhance their overall work readiness. Educational institutions should consider developing a coherent and structured approach at the institutional level and strategies to foster the relationship with companies and organizations to arrange meaningful work-based learning opportunities for international students. The expectations and responsibilities of all stakeholders related should be clarified and organizations hosting international students should be provided with information regarding the implementation, such as, pay entitlements and the number of hours students are expected to work. Also, developing mechanisms and policies to support companies, and additionally offering them incentives is to be considered. (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion)

Referring to Ramakrishnan et al. (2018) Otache & Edopkolor (2022, Introduction) state, that work placement learning (WPL) not only enables students to learn the practical aspects of the subjects studied at university and develop hands-on skills, but experience workplace culture and affirm their career goals and aspirations increasing their chances of securing employment after graduation. According to Otache & Edopkolor (2022, Abstract), the existing literature indicates a positive correlation between WPL and student employability, but the underlying mechanisms remain insufficiently explored. The study by Otache & Edopkolor (2022, Abstract) was conducted in two Nigerian higher education institutions gathering data from students. The findings of Otache & Edopkolor (2022, Discussion and conclusions) suggest that WPL boosts students' satisfaction with their study program, increases their commitment to the study program as well as makes it easier for them to accomplish their academic objectives eventually affecting student employability.

Tynjälä (2008, p.134) notes not to highlight only the positive aspects of learning in the workplace, such as gaining independence to work and developing vocational skills. According to Tynjälä (2008, p.134), as demonstrated in a study by Tynjälä and Virtanen (2005), vocational students reported them learning undesirable things, such as bad practices and how to shirk responsibilities during their on-the-job training. Tynjälä (2008, p.134) underscores the importance of recognizing that learning in the workplace may not always lead to desirable outcomes and can sometimes reinforce negative aspects of the work environment.

2.3 Job shadowing

In this chapter, the author introduces definitions of job shadowing from different sources. To provide explanation to the concept including its different types and approaches to it, relevant research, projects and entities utilizing job shadowing are being reflected. Previous studies found on job shadowing present the activity mostly from a student perspective mostly in a positive tone. Exploring knowledge base, the author found other written forms for job shadowing, including “Job Shadowing”, “job-shadowing”, “work shadowing”, and “shadowing”. The time this thesis was written, The Finnish Thesaurus and Ontology Service’s General Finnish ontology (YSO) database did not provide definition for job shadowing nor in its other written forms in English or Finnish.

2.3.1 Definition

Sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) is an internet-based bibliographic and full-text database of education research and information. The ERIC by Institute of Education Sciences (n.d.-a), defines “Job Shadowing” as “an activity in which an individual spends time with a worker on the job, observing actual workplace tasks in order to explore a potential career interest”. To clarify the activity that happens during job shadowing, the term “observation” is defined. According to Institution of Education Sciences (n.d.-b) observation is defined as “directed or intentional examination of persons, situations, or things to obtain information”. The definition is complemented with the statement that observation includes “the quantified values by which observed facts are represented” (Institution of Education Sciences, n.d.-b). The ERIC categorizes job shadowing under “Experiential Learning” and suggests related terms such as “Career Education”, “Career Exploration”, “Education Work Relationship”. (Institution of Education Sciences, n.d.-a)

Sakoda & Takahashi (2014) approach the “job shadowing” definition according to the purpose of it. In their study, job shadowing is described as a tool to migrate a student from school to the occupation by combining learning, separate and simultaneous, at school and workplace. The primary purpose of job shadowing for students is stated to gain information and skills of academic ability related to labor market requirements for all students entering work life or continue to study (Sakoda & Takahashi, 2014, p.198). The flowchart, “Job Shadowing Type Internship Standard Procedure Chart”, Sakoda & Takahashi present illustrates the three phases of procedure: career design, job shadowing experience and

application to job hunting. The subcategory element “Shadowing” of the job shadowing phase is elaborated to include observation and guidance from management (Sakoda & Takahashi, 2014, p.200).

In “Job Shadowing Guidelines” by Manchester Metropolitan University job shadowing is considered to happen internally and does not take part involving students or other participants outside the organization. Job shadowing is described as an activity where an individual has the opportunity to work, learn, and develop within the current role alongside more experienced colleagues to gain experience and insight of the role. Though, job shadowing can also be arranged as a part of individuals career development into a different role. (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016, p.3)

Manchester Metropolitan University (2016) describes roles and duties for the job shadowing participants. A visitor is an individual employee who considers career developmental needs. They should give reasoning why they are doing the shadowing and what are they hoping to achieve. The visitor should discuss with the line manager about the career developmental needs, job shadowing purpose and time consumption. The line manager arranges and designates the best host for the visitor if the developmental need is within the current role of an individual. The host is the employee who agrees to be shadowed. If the job shadowing benefits the individual's career development in general, the line manager may suggest contacts or put the individual in touch with an expert, though the main responsibility of the arrangements is on the individual. The visitor should now, either with the line manager or the host, set objectives for the job shadowing sessions. The host should consider if the time is suitable for the shadowing to take place. They need to evaluate the length of each shadowing session and ensure that their work obligations are being done while having someone to host. Finally, following the agreed shadowing program is important so that the visitor can review the experience and the participants can discuss the outcomes as well as make plans for the future. (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016, p.4)

Manchester Metropolitan University (2016) categorizes three different types of job shadowing. “Observation fly on the wall” refers to an activity where the visitor spends the agreed period observing the typical day to day work of the host including multiple activities from interacting with the customers to attending meetings. It is stated that this type of shadowing works best when a visitor is considering a career in a role that the host represents. As the host provides opportunities for questions and a de-brief, both parties benefit from the job shadowing. In “Regular Briefings Burst Interactions” type of shadowing,

the visitor will shadow the host only for specific activities. The host gives a short brief to an activity, which is then conducted and gone through afterwards. It is stated that this type of shadowing works best when the visitor works near to the host as the host should be able to advise the visitor of dates and times of specific activities without it becoming disruptive. The extension of the observation model is “Hands On job sharing”, where the visitor starts to work with some of the tasks they have previously observed whilst being closely supervised by the host. This provides the visitor with hands-on experience of the role but asks for more case-based individual attention. (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016, p.5)

University of Cambridge (n.d.) is in line with the Manchester Metropolitan University (2016) naming three participants involved in the job shadowing activity. A slight difference in terms occurs as the host and the line manager is accompanied by “the shadowee” instead of “the visitor” used by (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016, p.4) University of Cambridge (n.d.) also categorizes three type of job shadowing, though referring to them as “Observation”, “Regular Briefings” and “Hands on”. For what it comes choosing the right job shadowing type, University of Cambridge (n.d.) also follows involving the host, the shadowee and their line manager to the discussion.

Häkkinen (2011), though names the role of the person differently. Instead of “the host” the person to be shadowed is named as “the recipient”. The author considers this term as more distinct and clearer. Describing the participants as suggested would reduce the possibility of misunderstanding, especially in a situation where the shadowing activity occurs in an organization involving a visitor outside of it. The author considers that “the host” could otherwise be understood as either the person to be shadowed (recipient) or the organization the job shadowing occurs in (host).

In their study Nicolini & Korica (2024) propose to differentiate the structured shadowing concept from the conventional job shadowing concept. Nicolini & Korica (2024) refer structured shadowing as a pedagogy that enhances traditional job shadowing concept with pre-, intra-, and post-shadowing support.

2.3.2 Research on job shadowing

Exploring the knowledge base, the author found much research among healthcare concerning job shadowing but faced difficulties finding literature and academical articles among business field. Various research study job shadowing as a practice to introduce

nursing and other healthcare students to a specific role of an experienced professional in the field they study in. Such literature from business related professions was proved more difficult to find. This absence is also noted by Nicolini & Korica (2024) who state that despite the widespread use of job shadowing, academic attention to it has been limited and critical examination and scholarly exploration towards job shadowing is needed.

Monahan et al. (2018) study gives a typical illustration of such healthcare related research on job shadowing. For this thesis the study offers an alternative viewpoint for individually conducted job shadowing. In “Medical and pharmacy students shadowing advanced practice nurses to develop interprofessional competencies” by Monahan et al. (2018) job shadowing project among volunteered second year medical and third year pharmacy students shadowing an advanced practice nurse is described. These four-hour job shadows were conducted in pairs aiming to increase students' knowledge of the professional's role. Assessment of knowledge was done before and after the project. The results consider job shadowing experience effective in developing interprofessional collaborative practice of the students. Monahan et al. (2018) state that job shadowing can increase the students' awareness of the role and improve interprofessional collaboration as well as enhance teamwork, all leading to improved communication.

“Maximizing the Shadowing Experience: A Guidance Document” by Irby et al. (2016) offers a pharmacy profession host site viewpoint on what to consider before implementing a job shadowing program and during it. The shadowing experience is described as more passive since the visitor is to observe or “spectate” under direct supervision. The article includes the possibility of the shadowees being potential career changers and emphasizes the importance of ensuring a beneficial and compliant shadowing experience for both the observer and the host site. Irby et al. (2016) note that maintaining patient privacy and care standards while offering insights into the pharmacy profession should be considered. Benefits listed include gaining firsthand exposure to pharmacy practices for potential career changers and allowing organizations to showcase their values and potentially recruit future candidates. Irby et al. (2016) suggest written guidelines for shadowing experiences to at least prioritize patient confidentiality and suitability of participants. Regular reflection on the shadowing processes is recommended to assess its value. Ultimately, the article states that the goal of job shadowing is to provide a valuable learning opportunity for observers without imposing undue burden on hosts or sponsors. (Irby et al., 2016)

Sakoda & Takahashi's (2014) paper "A study on building an efficient job shadowing management methodology for the undergraduate students" concerns a job shadowing project at the International University of Kagoshima, Japan. In the project, business students shadowed a business owners' private secretary for a day to gain practical knowledge in daily decision making, solving problems, and managing change. This project was introduced in 2010 as a national policy to improve the declined employment rate of university graduates in Japan. (Sakoda & Takahashi, 2014, p.197)

The effectiveness of the job shadowing project in this paper is assessed through student questionnaires and company evaluations. Based on the results, Sakoda & Takahashi (2014, p.200) present a "Job Shadowing Type Internship Standard Procedure Chart" to illustrate the employment enhancing program students should follow. From the three main phases, or components, positioning the "Job shadowing" experience in the middle of the procedure chart strengthens the previous "Career Design" component and eases the following "Application to Job Hunting". Essential for job shadowing experience, during the Career Design component students should seek direction to their desired career, find suitable hosts and send applications. The Job Shadowing component begins with the students doing preliminary research of the industry, business manner and the company they are going to conduct the job shadow in. During the shadowing students should observe the desired managerial role and receive guidance from the management. The shadowing should, for example, provide the students with acquisition of a management role model and gain motivation for employment. Based on the job shadowing experience, the students should widen their perspective and look for possible employment from a range of industries and businesses. Sakoda & Takahashi (2014, p.200) list self-examination and reflecting personal skills to the job shadowing experience also being an important of the job-hunting process.

Due to aspects and evaluation criteria of the student performance during a job shadow, the author considers the assessment and results of Sakoda & Takahashi's (2014) paper culturally biased. Though, the author does not consider them affecting the positive outcomes of a job shadowing program which was interpreted to reinforce the job-hunting skills and improve the employment rate of the students.

Nicolini & Korica (2024) introduces and examines the potential benefits of "structured shadowing" in the field of management education. Firstly, Nicolini & Korica (2024, Introduction) propose to differentiate the concept of structured shadowing from a conventional definition of job shadowing. Whereas job shadowing is considered as a simple

and unstructured observation, structured shadowing, according to Nicolini & Korica (2024, Introduction), refers to a pedagogy that enhances traditional job shadowing concept with pre-, intra-, and post-shadowing support. To ensure appropriate design and preparation, management of the student's experience, and facilitation of reflective activities, Nicolini & Korica (2024, From shadowing to structured shadowing) note that structured shadowing requires substantial investment of human and material resources.

Through formative evaluation, Nicolini & Korica (2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing) conducted a structured shadowing-based course designed for final-year undergraduate students at a UK business school. A study unit on managerial work designed around structured shadowing was run for four consecutive academic years, each involving around 30 students. As a part of the module, paired students shadowed the senior managers of various organizations and industries for three to four days (Nicolini & Korica, 2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing). Before the shadowing, students participated in interactive lectures in which they were familiarized with previous observational studies from the managerial work and prepared to the shadowing experience through discussion on various practicalities from desirable behavior to learning requirements. During the shadowing students were encouraged to take plenty of notes and were also offered peer-support to reflect and discuss emerging emotions or issues. After the shadowing, the students wrote brief analytical reports and attended a small group discussion in class focusing on the most memorable instances of noticing something unusual or significant that had affective or cognitive resonance. After the discussion, the students wrote essays where they reflected how their observational findings could be applied to their own learning and career development. (Nicolini & Korica, 2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing)

Nicolini & Korica's (2024, Introduction) study reveals that structured shadowing-based module assisted students in bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical managerial applications. The experience also helped students dispel preconceptions and enabled them to appreciate the complexities of managing while examining their future managerial profile. According to Nicolini & Korica (2024, Introduction) structured shadowing is a promising concept and a pedagogical approach for enriching management education.

2.3.3 Projects and entities utilizing job shadowing in Finland

Observing the study topic in different operating environments within Finland, the author presents relevant projects and entities utilizing job shadowing. Implemented between 2018

and 2020, the KOKOMA initiative was a joint educational project of Metropolia Polytechnic, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Southeast Finland University of Applied Sciences, LUT University, and it was coordinated by LAB University of Applied Sciences. During the KOKOMA initiative, an online study module (MOOC, Massive Open Online Course) was developed to strengthen the entrepreneurial capabilities of higher educated immigrants. (Ikäheimonen et al., 2020, p.7)

Developing the online study module, two twelve-week pilot training courses were carried out including guidance and local training days. (Ikäheimonen et al 2020, p.7) According to the online pilot material, (Metropolia, 2019) one of the education themes involved student job shadowing an entrepreneur. The pilot material presents information on what job shadowing is, what are the objectives and benefits for students, and instructs students to how to conduct it. In the pilot, the time spent for job shadowing was recommended to be from 1 hour to a day, and the hosts were not obligated to provide anything other than give consent to students to perform the shadowing (Metropolia, 2019, p.3). To help explain the purpose of the visit to the host company, the students were provided with an informative cover letter. (Metropolia, 2019, p.3).

Ikäheimonen et al. (2020, p.5) summarize that the online module helped students identify and express their skills, developed their entrepreneurial capabilities, and promoted the development of a business plan. Also, facilitating students' activities in the Finnish cultural environment provided the students' knowledge of the Finnish entrepreneurial environment and fostered their Finnish language skills. (Ikäheimonen et al., 2020, p.5) Unfortunately to the research of this thesis, Ikäheimonen et al. (2020) did not collect data about the experiences companies had providing the job shadowing opportunity for these students.

Ikäheimonen et al. (2020, p.2) consider the online module unique in the Finnish education market. For example, the entry level recommendation for participants in the module is A2.2. (The CEFR Levels 2020), which refers to an evolving level of basic language skills whereas many other courses demand more advanced language skills. (Ikäheimonen et al 2020, p.2) The study module, contents of the training, and a guidebook for teachers are currently freely available. (Ikäheimonen et al 2020, p.7)

Observing the study topic as a possible promoter of diversity and inclusion discussion in a workplace, the author presents an example of a job shadowing concept developed by a third sector organization. The Vates Foundation is a third sector organization in Finland who acts

as an expert organization for the equal employment of people with disabilities, long-term illnesses, and people with partial work capacity (Vates Foundation, n.d.-b). Organized by the Vates Foundation since 2014, the national “Job Shadow Day” aims to influence attitudes and highlight the skills and motivation for employment of people with special needs. Globally, the Job Shadow Day takes place across the Europe and Canada, and is originated to Ireland, where it has been held since 2009. (Vates Foundation, n.d.-a)

Organizing successful encounters between hosts and visitors is at the heart of Job Shadow Day. Taking a part to Job Shadow Day includes a written agreement binding the visitor, the organization sending the visitor, and the host entity. The concept enables the visitors to get a closer look at their dream job and evaluate whether the job would suit them. In Finland, this activity is seen especially suitable for young people to find a meaningful study path and therefore information on educational institutions is provided during the day. (Vates Foundation, n.d.-a) The Vates Foundation notes that although Job Shadow Day is not an actual job search event, the visitor and sending organization might want to think in advance about the possible follow-up path to a successful job shadowing. (Vates Foundation, n.d.-a)

The Junior Chamber International (JCI) in Finland is a network offering a growth platform for better leadership and sustainable change. Renewing leadership together, JCI is also connecting young people looking for leadership training with companies. (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-a) Since 2013, the Päivä Johtajana (Eng. “Day as a Leader”) project provides an opportunity to follow the work of a leader for the day and learn about leadership on a practical level. (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b) The experience provides young people between the ages of 16 and 24 perspectives to their own career and study plans and enables networking. There is one main implementation week of the project in a year. (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b)

According to JCI Finland (n.d.-b), while developing young people's skills the leaders involved in the project get an opportunity to promote their company or work community in a positive way. Leaders get to know young people's views, values and ideas about working life while providing them tips and support planning their future. (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b) In the renewed project, it is possible for young people to receive monetary compensation as the Work Pilots online platform connects visitors and host companies. In this case, participation costs for the host company though it is used to support local chambers and cover the expenses related to e.g. mobile and payment service, and the projects management. (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b)

2.4 Companies' interest

This chapter presents the viewpoint of companies and organizations through a theoretical approach. The possible benefits and challenges for participation are considered limitedly from the most relevant aspects of business in context with job shadowing.

2.4.1 Organizational development and Human Resource Development

Organizations face constant change requiring adaptation. External changes include such as new legislation and competitors or advancements in technology, and internal changes can occur within such as leadership, company culture, and personnel. (CIPD, 2023) Companies can achieve sustained success by embracing change and committing to continuous improvement. (Maryville University, n.d.)

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2023) defines organization development as “a planned and systematic approach to enabling sustained organizational performance through the involvement of its people”. According to Zentis (2024), OD is “a systematic application of scientific behavioral techniques and processes that provide a way to plan, develop, and align an organization’s strategies, structures, and processes to enhance effectiveness”. OD aims not only one but several goals, including a series of research-based steps, but it is stated that the benefits far outweigh the costs. (Maryville University, n.d.) There are different models providing a clear framework to help organizations lay out an action plan, such as Lewin’s Three-Step Model, Business Process Reengineering (BPR), and McKinsey 7-S Framework. (Maryville University, n.d.)

Facing increasing competition, technological advancements, and changing customer preferences, organizations need to become “learning organizations”. (Garvin et al., 2008) According to Garvin et al. (2008), three essential factors for organizational learning and adaptability can be recognized. These so-called building blocks of a learning organization are supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes and practices, and leadership behavior that provides reinforcement. (Garvin et al., 2008) Each building block contains specific components that can be measured separately aiming to provide an analysis of an organization's learning capabilities. Garvin et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of ongoing dialogue and self-reflection in promoting and fostering organizational learning. Most importantly, organizational learning is heavily influenced by the exemplary behavior of

leaders as if they cherish alternative points of view, employees are more likely to offer new ideas. (Garvin et al. (2008).

According to ICS Learn (2021) a strong company culture is crucial for any organization to thrive and succeed. Company culture influences every aspect of an organization, from its daily operations to strategies, shaping its brand identity, employee engagement, retention rates, and beyond. Company culture is constantly evolving in response to changes in the industry, new leadership, shifting demographics, and other internal and external influences. (ICS Learn, 2021)

The experience gained during the Finnish eOSMO initiative shows that competence management is a broad entity. (eOSMO, 2011-b) The basic process of competence management, according to eOSMO (2011-b), includes defining the core competencies and competence objectives, carrying out competence inventory, developing and implementing competence development plans, and assessing the effectiveness. Since the areas of competence management were found linked, it is necessary to also consider other aspects, such as anticipation of the future and competence needs, leadership that promotes learning, and a culture that promotes renewal and learning to achieve the objectives. (eOSMO, 2011-b) The results of successful competence management can be seen, for example, in more advanced operating methods and fulfilled strategy as well as new innovations and even improved financial result (eOSMO, 2011-a).

Among others, changes in technology, globalization, equality of opportunity, and the changing nature of work shape the workplace and future of Human Resource Development (HRD). (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020, p.45) According to Torraco & Lundgren (2020, p.41), HRD is today diffused and integrated broadly into leadership and supervisory roles and is no longer promoting learning and development among employees on its own. Referring to Poell (2017) and Poell et al. (2018), Torraco & Lundgren (2020, pp.55-56) suggest HRD to foster a culture of continuous learning where employees should be given more reliance on self-reflection, self-direction, and experience-based learning. By aligning employee expertise with strategic goals, Torraco & Lundgren (2020, p.56), see HRD as an integral part of overall organizational strategy contributing to business growth and development.

Human Resource (HR) leaders can influence company culture by taking an active approach working with the executive team and stakeholders. (ICS Learn, 2021) Together they should establish a clear vision evaluating their current culture, assessing opportunities, and creating

a strategic plan to align the culture with its values and goals. For successful implementation of the strategic plan, it is crucial that all employees, regardless of their level, understand their role in embodying and fostering the company culture. (ICS Learn, 2021)

To keep up with the change new technologies and society demands, it's crucial to have personnel that is adaptable, forward-thinking, and willing to learn. (ICS Learn, 2021) Building a culture that promotes continuous professional development, HR department should prioritize acting as a role model within a company, embodying the behaviors and values the organization promotes. By doing this, they develop strong bonds of trust with their teams and so contribute to their coworkers' contentment and fulfillment. (ICS Learn, 2021)

ICS Learn (2021) lists actions and essential strategies that HR departments can implement to promote learning, fostering employee development and growth within organizations. HR departments should invest in employees' professional qualifications and accreditation as well as make digital learning available on-demand allowing them to lead of their own education. With in teams, HR should encourage social and collaborative learning and set up coaching and mentoring programs. (ICS Learn, 2021)

According to Häkkinen (2011) job shadowing enables the spreading of good practices and increases cooperation between work communities. When telling about one's own work and answering the questions of the visitor, the recipient structures and analyzes one's own activities. Thereby, the recipient becomes more aware of their position. (Häkkinen, 2011)

Illustrating new economy requirements, Mosley & Schmidt (2017, Chapter 1, Building a Strong Employer Brand) state that there is a greater rivalry for talent than ever before, and employer branding can have a favorable effect on an organization's performance. Mosley & Schmidt (2017, Chapter 1, What Is Employer Branding?) provide a simplified explanation to employer branding by describing it as a process in which the organization should first create a distinctively great place to work and then develop a positive reputation ensuring the right talent knows how great the organization is.

According to Mosley & Schmidt (2017, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding), organizations having a strong employer brand can gain multiple benefits. The essential value of creating a work environment in which employees are fulfilled by their work and are proud of the company culminates in employee engagement which leads to enhanced customer satisfaction. A workplace of engaged people attracts more qualified candidates,

reducing the overall cost of recruitment. As the organization is accompanied by the most talented individuals in the industry, the achieved collective intelligence, creativity, drive, and determination lead not only to maintaining but gaining a competitive advantage. Therefore, higher levels of employee engagement lead to higher levels of productivity and customer satisfaction, which after all, keeps the business running. (Mosley & Schmidt, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding)

2.4.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The European Commission has defined CSR as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society” (European Commission, n.d.). To become socially responsible, companies must operate under legislation and integrate a variety of social, environmental, ethical, consumer, and human rights concerns into their business strategy and operations (European Commission, n.d.). CSR provides important benefits for companies, such as risk management, customer relationships, HR management, ability to innovate, and eventually profit. Yet, there are expectations of companies preventing, managing, and mitigating the negative impacts they might cause, including the impacts within their global supply chain. (European Commission, n.d.) Therefore, CSR should be company led. (European Commission, n.d.)

In close cooperation with business, trade unions and non-governmental organizations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) introduced an alternative term: Responsible business conduct (RBC). (European Commission, n.d.) The OECD defines RBC as "making a positive contribution to economic, environmental and social progress with a view to achieving sustainable development and avoiding and addressing adverse impacts related to an enterprise's direct and indirect operations, products or services." (European Commission, n.d.).

In the EU, all large companies, defined as having over 250 employees and a 40 million (€) turnover, are required to publicly disclose information on their operational practices and management of social and environmental risks. (European Parliament, 2022) The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) aims to enhance corporate accountability by compelling companies to reveal their influence in areas such as the environment, human rights, social standards, and work ethics. Importantly, the CSRD lays the groundwork for global sustainability reporting standards, granting investors access to reliable, transparent, and comparable data. (European Parliament, 2022)

Transition to a greener economy has the potential to contribute to economic growth and boost job creation (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, p.5). As many existing jobs are changing and new types of jobs are being created, the labor market asks for “skills for the green transition”. These are a broad set of technical and transversal skills and competences, but also “knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live, work, and act in resource-efficient and sustainable economies and societies” (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, p.5). Equipping young students with these “skills for the green transition” as well as giving persons in employment upskilling and reskilling opportunities to adapt and anticipate changes, play essential roles in green transition. Various learning environments and approaches provide learners opportunities to develop these skills in practice. Learning at the workplace offers access to new practices and technologies as it exposes learners to changes while they happen. (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, pp.6-7)

The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning (2022) lists enabling conditions to maximize the positive effects of work-based learning on the green transition. In this context, the author points out a favorable, conducive, and supportive learning environment, and the commitment of companies to sustainability and work-based learning. The role of work-based learning on the green transition should be understood from a systemic perspective where the green transition ecosystem involves and connects for greener economies, societies, and life. (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, pp.10-12)

The author acknowledges the difference between the premises of this study, focusing the environment of UAS in higher education (HE), and The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning as they focus on vocational education and training (VET). Though, similarities in the possible effects and advantages can be presumed since both VET and UAS environment involve practical work placement studies for students. Additionally, the RUN-EU network membership binds HAMK to a common mission of securing sustainable progress among its stakeholders providing green, digital and inclusive skillsets to students and academics. (HAMK, n.d.-g; Regional University Network, n.d.) Cooperation in this context can be considered an essential act of CSR. (European Commission, n.d.)

Kiradoo (2022, p.148) states that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has become increasingly significant in today's organizations. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-a), DEI refers to the idea that “all people should have equal rights and treatment and be welcomed and included, so that they do not experience any disadvantage because of

belonging to a particular group, and that each person should be given the same opportunities as others according to their needs”. Kiradoo (2022, p.149) suggest strategies for organizations to achieve and sustain a diverse workforce. To summarize Kiradoos findings, organizations should focus on implementing inclusive hiring practices and DEI councils, providing DEI training, and ultimately, creating an inclusive workplace culture. (Kiradoo, 2022, p.149)

According to Feitosa et al. (2022, What is the diversity, equity, and inclusion approach?) DEI strategies can play a crucial role in helping organizations to transform their culture in order to improve productivity. From the premises of ensuring the fair treatment of minoritized employees, key components of DEI strategies include the self-examination of privileges and biases, understanding of structural systems, as well as dismantling of systematic differences in many subgroups related to main human resource functions. (Feitosa et al., 2022, What is the diversity, equity, and inclusion approach?)

According to Hunt et al. (2015, p.1), more diverse companies are better able to attract and employ top talent and improve their employee satisfaction and customer orientation as well as decision making. The process is stated to create a positive loop where gains build upon each other, resulting in continuous growth (Hunt et al., 2015, p.1). Taking full advantage of the opportunity that a more diverse talent pipeline and leadership team represents, organizations should attract, mentor, sponsor, develop, and retain the next generations of global leaders at all levels of their organizations. However, increasing diversity in the organization is more difficult due to various obstacles, such as unconscious bias. It is important that companies have a robust program of transformation to become a more diverse work environment, and that the leadership team is visibly committed to it. (Hunt et al., 2015, p.1)

2.4.3 Stakeholder engagement and employer branding

Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.-b) defines a stakeholder as “an employee, investor, customer, etc. who is involved in or buys from a business and has an interest in its success”. Kujala et al. (2022, A Guide for Stakeholder Engagement Research) propose a new definition for stakeholder engagement as “the aims, activities, and impacts of stakeholder relations in a moral, strategic, and/or pragmatic manner.”

REC Impact (2022) by the University of Amsterdam, lists reasons why companies should consider collaborating with universities. Companies cooperating with universities can, among other things, gain a competitive edge in the market, build network, develop new technologies and drive innovation due to access to expertise, talent pools, funding, and most modern facilities within universities. (REC Impact, 2022) In general, relationships between companies and universities can yield mutual benefits strengthening and creating a collaborative ecosystem for future opportunities. (REC Impact, 2022)

Reflecting on the possible job shadowing program, the author points out reasons applicable in this context. Firstly, cooperation can bring companies together with diverse and high-potential individuals leading to successful internships and future employment opportunities. (REC Impact, 2022) Secondly, universities can offer companies research and development opportunities helping them to stay competitive and adapt to rapidly evolving markets. (REC Impact, 2022) Thirdly, the transfer of knowledge between academia and industry enables transforming discoveries into best practical applications, products, and services nurturing a long-term strategic relationship for mutual benefit. (REC Impact, 2022)

Adams (2022) emphasizes the significance of employer branding in today's competitive job market attracting top talent. Accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, applicants are more aware of the importance of organizational purpose, team cohesion, and employee experience, demanding leaders to demonstrate their company values ever more. (Adams, 2022) Standing out in the talent marketplace, Adams (2022) suggests focusing on three main components to enhance a company's employer brand.

Firstly, as modern job seekers are aware of the impact the company reputation have on their own reputation, and the way other people perceive them through it, employer's reputation weighs in their decision to apply for a job or accept a job offer. (Adams, 2022) According to Adams (2022), top talent gravitates towards companies that provide opportunities for ongoing development both inside and outside the office, have specific personality appealing culture and work environment, and focuses to impact society positively, both internally and externally. Secondly, job seekers evaluate the relation what they give to what they get. According to Adams (2022), companies should foster a positive employer-employee relationship that involves aspects like benefits, work-life balance, and career growth opportunities that align with employees' personal and professional goals. A strong employer value proposition (EVP) ensures alignment between expectations, rewards, and the desired employer brand. (Adams, 2022) Thirdly, as the company employees experience the EVP

positively, they are likely to experience working for the company positively, leading to better overall performance. (Adams, 2022) According to Adams (2022), satisfied current and former employees as brand ambassadors can be an invaluable source of candidate referrals, reinforcing the desired employer brand attracting top talent.

Reis et al.'s (2021, p.1) research shows that employer branding is an important tool to talent management attracting and retaining the best employees. According to Reis et al. (2021, p.18) employer branding has become essential to organizational success as it encompasses "the employer brand proposed value and fundamental dimensions to employees' attraction and retention such as affective commitment, rewards strategies, commitment expectations, reputation, or employees' development". Interestingly, Reis et al. (2021, p.19) also discovered that employer branding is beginning to have an effect on the macro (extra-organizational) level due to the creation of national employer branding.

3 Methods

At the planning phase of the thesis, the author determined the research question. Considering the study environment and reflecting the research question, the goal of this study is to describe and explain human experience. The author is interested in the perspectives of participants, and thereby the research method is qualitative. (Lincoln, 2021, p.3)

Qualitative research uses various research methods, such as interviews, surveys, and observation to collect information, or so-called data. (Lincoln, 2021, p.3) Data refers to "the facts and figures collected for records or any statistical investigation" (Adams et al., 2014, p.70). Raw data refers to information collected directly from study participants such as information about participant identity, digital recordings of interviews, or consent forms which are considered unprocessed. Raw data is being processed for analyzing purposes, for instance a researcher transcribes digital recordings. After processing, raw data is destroyed. (Lincoln, 2021, p.103) Primary data refers to such data that has been generated by new research. Secondary data refers to collected data that another research generated. (Adams et al., 2014, p.70).

This research uses both primary and secondary data to compose an answer to the research question. The raw and primary data of this study was collected by the author through

interviews and participant observation. The secondary data of this study includes sources and studies introduced in Theoretical framework which are later reflected in Results.

An interview as a research method is data collecting through a specific kind of conversation between people that has a distinct purpose, protocol and roles of the interviewer and interviewee. Pre-formulated questions lead the interview as the goal is to let interviewees express their thoughts and describe their experiences. In a face-to-face interview the researcher communicates with the interviewee in real time. A researcher can benefit from the real time situation by asking clarifying questions or asking the interviewee to provide examples. (Lincoln, 2021, p.111)

The advantages of the chosen method are for the interviewee not to have to leave the workplace, being able to suggest the place or environment of the interview, and so feel more comfortable. Flexibility would be the key benefit of choosing an online environment besides recording of both images and sound. Though possibilities of slow internet connection and decreased ability for interviewer to see the body language and facial responses of the interviewee would be considered distractions. (Lincoln, 2021, p.115)

The semi-structured interview method refers to an approach where the interview questions lead the interview situation yet supplementary questions to the original reply can be asked. These in-depth interviews tend to last longer but offer rich information in quantity (Adams, 2014, p.144). According to Lincoln (2021, p.168) open-ended questions give respondents more freedom to reply whereas in forced-choice questions respondents are to choose only one response from a selection of given options.

Adams et al. (2014, p.92) state that even though observation is a data collection method in its own, it should be included to research whichever other data collection method is utilized. The author analyzed objectives, such as tone of voice and body language used by the interviewees however, only to evaluate the pleasantness of the interview situation and the veracity of the responses.

The author presumed some challenges to these methods such as time consumption and analyzing difficulties, as well as the possibility of bias in the interviewees responses and possibility of affecting the responses subconsciously. Being the only interviewer, it was for the author to evaluate and plan her own behavior before and in every interview situation. Lincoln (2021, p.112) states that a novice researcher must remember to keep the role of

“invited outsider”. The author acknowledged to avoid any verbal and physical expressions, such as tone of voice, that could have affected the interview situation, behavior, response or answers.

To find interviewees, companies and organizations located in HAMK's operating area that regardless of the field would be suitable for IB students to perform such job shadowing were charted. The aim was for the respondents to have sufficient knowledge in the fields of business and personnel, so the respondents were sought among experts working in HR. Such representatives were approached via e-mail and after affirmative answers, interview schedules were agreed. Additionally, an opportunity arose to interview a student counsellor of an upper secondary school in the region who had experience implementing a job shadowing program among students a couple of times.

To ensure ethical values and adequate participants information, following the example by Lincoln (2021 p.311), the author provided interviewees a data management plan and asked for their consent to participate in the study. The author took research ethics into account and conducted the study with honesty and integrity. The data of this study was collected from online video call interviews conducted by the author. A total of 3 representatives of companies or organizations were interviewed. The research interviewees stay anonymous, yet they are confirmed by the author who owns the rights to raw data. (See Appendix 5)

Two kinds of semi-structured interviews were conducted. The first kind was conducted with a student counsellor. For this interview, the author formed 9 open-ended questions which are listed on Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The second kind was conducted with representatives of companies and organizations. For these interviews, the author formed 10 open-ended questions which are listed on Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. To reveal and correct errors, the questions were tested beforehand as Adams et al. (2014, p.147) recommend.

The interviews took place from 27.3.2024 to 13.4.2024 and they were limited to meeting the participants once. Each interview session lasted from 22 minutes to 27 minutes. At the beginning of each interview, the author asked permission to utilize the data in her thesis, clarified that the raw data is handled only by the author and how the data would only be utilized in and for this thesis. The promise was granted by each interviewee. During or after the interview session the interviewees had the opportunity to express their own personal opinions outside the predetermined questions. Some questions provided more thorough answers as they were replied more comprehensively including evaluation of the possible

implementation method. In the beginning of interviews with the representatives of companies and organizations, the author provided the definition and explained the different forms of job shadowing concept. Also, the commissioner was introduced as well as the premises and the preliminary role of the study.

Analyzing the results of semi-structured interviews the author utilized the transcriptions of online video calls. The author read through the transcripts several times aiming to identify and categorize key themes and overarching patterns in the data as Lincoln (2021, p.199) suggests. Also, some sub-themes and interesting quotes were identified to gain more nuanced insights of the perspectives of the participants.

4 Results

This chapter presents the findings of semi-structured interviews with the representatives of companies and organizations as well as with a student counsellor of an upper secondary school. The findings are compared with the knowledge base presented.

Interviewee X works in a managerial role within Human Resources in a large organization in the technology industry. In the organization of interviewee X, they have implemented internal job shadowing previously. Interviewee Y works as an HR Specialist in a large company in the industry sector. Interviewee Z works as a HR manager in a large organization within the paper industry. In the organization of interviewee Z, they have implemented internal job shadowing previously. The student counsellor works in an upper secondary school in the HAMK operative region. The school has experience implementing a job shadowing program among students a couple of times.

4.1 Companies' benefits

The benefits that emerged from the interview are providing the employee and company new skills and knowledge, enabling the employees to evaluate their practices, reinforcing employees professional proud and enthusiasm to work, affecting positively to stakeholder engagement and the company's CSR as well as giving the opportunity to impact the company's employer branding.

4.1.1 New skills and knowledge

Interviewees X and Y identified that employees would benefit from having the opportunity to hear the latest news from students on what is happening inside academia. Interviewee Z stated that students could transmit new ideas, new ways of thinking and new perspectives.

Interviewee Y stated that students could transmit new ways of thinking, new practices, as well as knowledge of trends, and the biggest breaks of the future, such as usage of artificial intelligence. Through job shadowing, employees are offered the opportunity to social and collaborative learning since they as recipients share knowledge and information with students. (Häkkinen, 2011) An opportunity to transfer knowledge between academia and industry was acknowledged also by the REC Impact (2022).

Interviewee X presumed that employees could learn coaching and supervisory skills as they would encourage and advise students how to evolve and help them find a direction for their career. Considering the recipient's role including features of coaching, job shadowing can be seen as a part of the employees' personal and professional development. (IAG-TVET, 2022) ICS Learn (2021) mentions setting up coaching and mentoring programs as a part of HR actions encouraging social and collaborative learning within teams. The author assumes effective results in learning and self-development would occur with students as well.

4.1.2 Evaluating employees' own practices

Interviewees Y and Z noted that students might raise questions that make the employees evaluate their own working practices. Interviewee Z considered it valuable that the employee is being asked about things that seem obvious to the employee. As the employee becomes more aware of their practices, they are more likely to perceive new ways of working, which again can be beneficial at the organizational level. Interviewee Y noted that the students might even challenge the practices of the company.

According to the student counsellor, it can be challenging for the recipients needing to explain their job description to students, or like in their case, evaluate the positive and negative sides of their job. As it would not be something that occurs frequently, it would ask the attention and time of the recipient employee. Irby et al. (2016) took a position on this by stating that job shadowing should not impose undue burden on hosts or sponsors. Though, as Häkkinen (2011) presents structuring and analyzing their own activities and explain them

to the visitor, the recipient can become more aware of their position in the company. According to IAG-TVET (2022), self-evaluation and developed self-direction skills culminate in advanced job-specific skills. Giving employees more reliance on self-reflection self-direction, and experience-based learning again fosters a culture of continuous learning. (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020, pp.55-56)

4.1.3 Enthusiasm and professional proud

Interviewees X and Y mentioned that being able to help a student find direction for their own career would bring joy and pleasure for the employee. Interviewee X mentioned that many of their employees enjoy working with students. They continued exemplifying that when an employee gets to showcase their work and the company, the enthusiasm students express is contagious. The employees can feel excited once again about the work they are doing and feel proud of their work. The student counsellor has received positive feedback from the recipients expressing how exciting and fulfilling an experience they had overall.

The author considers that encouraging employees to participate in the job shadowing activity illustrates and reinforces company values and culture. Torraco & Lundgren (2020, p.56) state that actions of HRD contribute to organization culture, business growth and development. Giving employees more reliance on self-reflection, self-direction, and experience-based learning fosters a culture of continuous learning. (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020, pp.55-56). Additionally, as Garvin et al. (2008) present, organizational learning and adaptability can be built on supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes and practices, and leadership behavior that provides reinforcement. According to Mosley & Schmidt (2017, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding), strong employee engagement augur good employee branding which attracts top talent in recruitment.

4.1.4 Stakeholder engagement

Interviewee X mentioned that it is overall important to cooperate with universities. Interviewee Z commented that job shadowing would be a new and interesting way to collaborate with higher education. According to the student counsellor, the job shadowing program has spawned more collaboration. The student counsellor estimates that the job shadowing program has increased the visibility of their upper secondary school as such cooperation has been easier and the school has hosted more company visitors since starting the program. They have found the companies attend more actively to different activities the

school arranges and the companies contact the school with a lower threshold. Additionally, one large organization had invited a significant number of students to job shadow their employees in different departments and organized other company visits as well.

As the positive experience of the upper secondary school shows, cooperation between work communities had increased. (Häkkinen (2011) Therefore, a job shadowing program has potential strengthening and creating cooperation between companies and HAMK IB. (REC Impact, 2022) The company is provided with an opportunity to transfer knowledge between academia and industry as well as build network and discover diverse and high-potential students leading to successful recruitment opportunities. (REC Impact, 2022)

4.1.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

Interviewee Y stated that job shadowing would be a way to implement the company's social responsibility (CSR). Participating in job shadowing, companies can integrate social, environmental, ethical, and human rights concerns into their operations (European Commission, n.d.). Sharing knowledge and raising questions of CSR related topics during a job shadowing can be considered gaining and spreading of the "skills for the green transition". (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, p.5). Participating in job shadowing, companies provide a learning venue providing students and employees opportunities to observe and develop these skills in practice, and thereby, are involved in the green transition ecosystem. (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, pp.6-7;10-12)

By providing HAMK IB students with job shadowing experience, companies would have the opportunity to develop their company diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies. (Kiradoo, 2022, p.149) Companies' DEI strategies, such as, self-examination of biases and dismantling of systematic differences in subgroups related to HR functions, can transform company culture to improve productivity. (Feitosa et al., 2022, What is the diversity, equity, and inclusion approach?) More diverse companies are found more likely to create a positive loop of continuous growth. (Hunt et al., 2015, p.1). Job shadowing can be considered as attracting and developing the next generation of a more diverse talent pipeline. (Hunt et al., 2015, p.1) Thereby, attending a job shadowing program companies can make a positive contribution to social progress implementing and developing their CSR activities.

4.1.6 Employer branding

Interviewee X stated that their cooperations with universities are highly based on employer branding. For them, it is important that they illustrate a positive and potential employer and wish to be remembered at the time people are seeking work. The experience of cooperating with them should be felt positive for students as they, or someone in their communities, might be their future applicants and employees. Interviewee Z exemplified that compared to e.g. career fairs, job shadowing would provide enough time to showcase the company activities for students.

As Adams (2022) suggests, companies should focus on their employer brand as there is competition of talent. Hosting students, employees have the power to reinforce the desired employer brand of the company. (Adams, 2022) By leading the company culture, management can ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the impact they have bringing company culture to life. (ICS Learn, 2021) Strong employee engagement augur good employee branding which attracts top talent in recruitment. (Mosley & Schmidt, 2017, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding)

Interviewee Z noted that the company gets to test and hear how the work, work community, and their image shows in the eyes of potential employees. This way the company can influence the creation of the right expectations enhancing their recruitment processes. On the other hand, they considered it a possibility to gather information about working life expectations of the new generation of employees and thus prepare for them.

Therefore, employer branding links also to Kiradoos findings (2022, p.149) presenting that organizations should, among other, focus on implementing inclusive hiring practices and creating of an inclusive workplace culture to achieve and sustain a diverse workforce. As Adams (2022) states, top talent flows to companies offering opportunities for ongoing development, a matching company culture, and focusing to impact society positively.

Interviewee X considered that the job shadowing program at its best could produce the company long-term relationships through employment, exemplifying that an enthusiast student might start as a summer substitute and continue from there on. The student counsellor stated that one of the reasons they implemented the job shadowing program was to let students discover many new career opportunities and bring visibility to smaller sectors. They have found students typically having an interest in the most famous and visible fields

such as economics, medicine, and law. According to the student counsellor, job shadowing program has broadened students' perspective on the possibilities of different careers.

By engaging companies with the students through the job shadowing program, the upper secondary school and its students as well as companies have gained benefits. By bringing together the needs of working life and education emerges also in the study of Sakoda & Takashi (2014). The mutual benefit of fostering stakeholder relationship and engagement has also been recognized by REC Impact (2022) within the field of university education. Cooperation has led to employment opportunities for the students and the school has gained visibility and collaboration measured by the increased number of visitors and contacts. (REC Impact, 2022) The student counsellor has identified positive effects in the visibility of smaller sectors through job shadowing, which the author considers illustrating and being a part of employer branding. (Reis et al. (2021, p.1)

This ideology of bringing together the needs of working life and education emerges also in the study of Sakoda & Takashi (2014), as they implemented their project as a national policy to improve the declined employment rate of university graduates. Reis et al.'s (2021, p.1, p.19) research not only show that employer branding is an important tool to talent management attracting and retaining the best employees, but also discovered that is starting to provoke impact at extra-organizational (macro) level due to the creation of national employer branding. This can be seen in the statement of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland (n.d.) encouraging to nourish a more international working environment.

4.2 Companies' challenges

The challenges that emerged from the interviews were time management, organizing implementation, confidentiality, designing a clear structure as well as attracting recipients.

4.2.1 Time management and implementation

Interviewees X and Y stated that finding time would be a challenge as resources are needed for both planning the structure of the job shadowing beforehand and implementing it.

Interviewee Z considered whether the employee can give enough time and attention against expectations. The employee should have the ability to prioritize work tasks, ensuring the work progress and providing the student with a meaningful experience. Interviewee X noted

that there is a chance of over planning the implementation and not leaving enough time for discussion. Interviewee Y expressed their concern, stating that the experience might stay superficial for the student if the time spent shadowing is too short. Interviewee X presented an idea of whether the shadowing should take two days or be spread within a longer time scale and include short observation sprints of different tasks within a team of employees. Additionally, the possibility of remote activities was mentioned as such would be more flexible, yet more challenging to implement in terms of confidentiality.

All interviewees mentioned that the company should sign a non-disclosure agreement with students. Interviewee Z noted that employees manage much various information and for that reason the topics of discussion should be agreed in advance.

In the upper secondary school, job shadowing activity takes one student working day, which equals six hours. The student counsellor has expressed a cautious desire to allow students to spend more than one day job shadowing. However, acknowledging the fast pace of the studies and not wanting to risk that the student would be left behind, they settle for one day activity.

Time spent in the job shadowing activity is in line with the previous studies. The variation lies between the KOKOMA initiative flexible one hour up to one day (Metropolia, 2019, p.3) and Nicolini & Korica (2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing) three to four days, whereas most of the shadowing activities last from 4 hours (Monahan et al., 2018) to one day (Irby et al., 2016; The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b; Vates Foundation, n.d.-a)

To support companies and employees organizing their work and managing time before and while hosting a student, the author sees it essential for HAMK IB to design a framework and provide instructions conducting a successful hosting. As requested, the topics of discussion should in most parts be agreed on in advance and to be included in the framework design, yet students should be prepared to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Not to burden the recipient too much, there should be left time for sudden and necessary work tasks for them to perform. The possibility of involving not only one but a team of employees should be considered as an implementation option as it could enhance social learning in the team. (Arets et al., 2016)

4.2.2 Structure

All the interviewees concluded that a structured program would help the company and the employee to organize the job shadowing in a meaningful and informative way providing a good experience and a realistic image of the job for the student. Interviewee X noted that the capacity of the company to host is dependent also on whether the implementation would be on-site.

In the upper secondary school, job shadowing activity is a part of a compulsory student counselling course. Among the school, job shadowing is experienced as a good model to familiarize students with working life. The student counsellor stated, “not knowing a better way to introduce young people to the world of work than getting them in there”. The student counsellor has found that job shadowing gains the students’ understanding of their future career path. The goal for the activity is to seek direction for their future academic studies and career. Through job shadowing activity, the students are offered an opportunity to see in practice how the assumptions they have to specific occupation correlate with reality.

Previous studies have shown job shadowing to be an effective method to combine theory and practice as well as introduce student to work life. Nicolini & Korica’s (2024, Introduction) study reveals that structured shadowing-based study module helped management students to establish meaningful connections between theory and practices. Monahan et al. (2018) state that job shadowing can increase the students’ awareness of the role and improve interprofessional collaboration as well as enhance teamwork, all leading to improved communication. Sakoda & Takahashi (2014, p.200) consider self-examination and reflecting personal skills to the job shadowing experience also being an important of the job-hunting process. The author finds this illustrating social responsibility and making a positive effort for the students to transition more smoothly to work life.

In the upper secondary school, the students seek a person with a higher education degree to shadow. During the job showing students ask questions from the recipient of their career path and request them to evaluate the positive and negative sides of their job. After the job shadowing, students write a report about the findings and assess their experience and current interest in the career.

From the categorization of three types of job shadowing by the University of Cambridge (n.d.), the upper secondary school’s job shadowing activity is closest to “observation”. The

job shadowing program of the upper secondary school has a structure to help the students to establish meaningful connections. There are questions the students must find answers to while shadowing and a report they write after the activity. Though, during the interview, there was no mention of peer support and so the implementation differs from Nicolini & Korica's (2024) study. The students' independence is supported and gained as they must find jobs to shadow by themselves. According to the student counsellor not all the students consider it easy to find a workplace they would like to conduct the job shadowing. The student counsellor has identified for example reservedness and shyness among the students causing this challenge. The school had tested a model in which the school provided some pre-arrangements with the local companies, but the model was abandoned as too many companies were left without a pre-promised student.

To support companies and employees prepare for hosting and ease their time management, the students could send the framework and their questions in advance. It would allow the recipient to form more detailed answers, gaining the students' understanding of the role. Supporting independence of the students finding a suitable recipient is essential, yet as Tran & Soejatminah (2017, Discussion and Conclusion) encourage, educational institutions should foster collaboration with stakeholders and arrange meaningful work-based learning opportunities for their international students.

4.2.3 Attracting recipients

All the interviewees found it challenging for the company to attract enough employees to participate. Reasons listed included ability and willingness to host a student, heavy workload, and the recipient role might be considered as extra. Interviewee Z presented a concern whether they would have enough volunteer employees suitable for IB (BBA) students to shadow and mentioned that the English language skills of the recipient employees should be good enough, as having a mutual understanding of the matters being discussed would be essential. Interviewee X noted that the capacity of the company to host is dependent on the roles students request to shadow.

Interviewee X noted that the employee might face such a situation for the first time and thereby feel unsure of the expectations. Interviewee X noted that some employees might suffer from the feelings of being under pressure, being under surveillance or arising thoughts about whether they are doing their job correctly when they are shadowed. The student counsellor stated that the variety of participant personalities might bring up its own

challenges as sometimes the chemistry between the student and the recipient might not work. Besides reports written by the students, the upper secondary school has not collected data about the job shadowing program. Yet, the student counsellor has received positive feedback from the recipients expressing how exciting and fulfilling an experience they had overall.

As Irby et al. (2016) states, the goal of job shadowing is to provide a valuable learning opportunity for visitors without imposing undue burden on recipients. The previous implementations have very different environments, such as upper secondary school preparing students to higher education institutions, the KOKOMA initiative (Ikäheimonen et al., 2020, p.7) strengthening the entrepreneurial capabilities of higher educated immigrants, and management training (Sakoda & Takashi, 2014; Nicolini & Korica, 2024) proving that job shadowing recipients can overall be found even within various fields. Unfortunately, there was no data found on how the hosts and recipients in these implementations were found. The author assumes that volunteer recipients could be found more easily if an encouraging and collaborative learning culture occurs in the company. The company should also consider easing the workload of the recipient for the time job shadowing takes place.

4.3 Interest for participation

At the beginning of the interview, interviewees X and Z shared clear positive first thoughts and considered the job shadowing concept interesting. At the end of the interview, interviewees X and Z stated their organization being tentatively interested in participating in the job shadowing program. Interviewee Y stated them not being interested in participating yet as the program is at too early stage in design. Additionally, their HR department would be out of the question participating in the program due to the high information security risks.

All interviewees asked to know more of the objectives, requirements, and structure of the job shadowing program. Interviewees X and Y considered they have the capacity in the organization to participate in the program, yet they would need to know more about the implementation, its frequency, and volume. Interviewee Z considered that internal discussions would anyway be needed. Interviewee X concluded that they should always look at the situation for participation on a case-by-case basis. Interviewee Y suggested a new round of interviews once the program has framework, and a clear concept can be presented.

Interviewee Z thought that the job shadowing concept could also function between their employees and external students since they have gained good experience utilizing it internally. Interviewee Y considered the concept would be beneficial and interesting for students to see what the job looks in practice. Interviewee X considered that the phase of studies the job shadows would make a difference in its results. If the student performed the job shadowing at an early stage, they would be better able to plan their specializing studies.

Giving an example of mentoring programs, interviewee Z stated that that all participants should be prepared and informed accordingly to guarantee a valuable experience for all. Interviewee X has found in practice that there must be clear instructions for job shadowing clarifying the objectives of each participant. Interviewee X noted that practical instructions to follow for companies would be important to reduce uncertainty and the workload faced by companies.

Interviewee Y stated that if the student would spend time in the company for a longer period, the company would need to put in a lot of effort, and in exchange for that some clear benefits for the company would be expected.

The job shadowing program continues at the upper secondary school as there are seen lots of benefits. Most of their students have liked the job shadowing and reported the activity being the best part of the course. Additionally, they have received positive feedback from the recipients. Although, the student counsellor refers to the obligations of the curriculum to guide and familiarize students with working life.

As Nicolini & Korica's (2024) study shows, structured job shadowing helped students to establish meaningful connections between theory and practice. Analyzing the insights interviewees present, a mostly positive tone of understanding the students' perspective can be interpreted. On the other hand, the companies are not obligated to provide such activities, whereas UASs have statutory duties (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 § 4), making the cooperation with companies a necessity. Since the demand for the objectives, requirements, and structure of the job shadowing program for companies highlighted from the answers, it is for HAMK IB to respond those before proceeding further in cooperation.

5 Recommendations

Job shadowing should be considered as an opportunity to teach and share the ideology of continuous learning. As Tynjälä (2008, p.131) states, it is not only important for individuals but also for organizations. Fostering the relationship between education providers and companies enhancing work-based learning opportunities for international students and their integration is crucial (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion). Organizations can foster continuous learning utilizing the 70:20:10 framework, where the “20” represents social learning and learning through others, including such like, collaboration, feedback, and mentoring. (Arets et al., 2016)

Job shadowing has been shown to be an effective method to combine theory and practice as well as introduce students to work life. Nicolini & Korica’s (2024, Introduction) study reveals that structured shadowing-based study module helped management students to establish meaningful connections between theory and practices. The student counsellor interviewed stated their point summarizing of “not knowing a better way to introduce young people to the world of work than getting them in there”. Monahan et al. (2018) state that job shadowing can increase the students’ awareness of the role and improve interprofessional collaboration as well as enhance teamwork, all leading to improved communication. Sakoda & Takahashi (2014, p.200) consider self-examination and reflecting personal skills to the job shadowing experience also being an important of the job-hunting process, which the author finds illustrating social responsibility and making a positive effort for the students to transition more smoothly to work life.

Within the business studies, as presented by Nicolini & Korica (2024) and Sakoda & Takahashi’s (2014), the job shadowing concept is considered suitable for enriching management education. The Finnish KOKOMA initiative included job shadowing to their online module created to strengthen the entrepreneurial capabilities of higher educated immigrants and found it helping students to identify and express their skills, developing their entrepreneurial capabilities and providing the students’ knowledge of the Finnish entrepreneurial environment as well as fostered their Finnish language skills. (Ikäheimonen et al., 2020, p.5) Due to the lack of literature discussing job shadowing in other business-related professions, applicability to BBA studies can only be hypothesized. The absence of academic attention to job shadowing is also noted by Nicolini & Korica (2024).

Based on the findings, the author proposes further studies, design, and implementation of a

pilot job shadowing program for HAMK IB degree program. The author does not take position should the commissioner conduct such job shadowing program with only international students or all IB degree students, and thus this study applies to all IB degree students in HAMK. The study and recommendations are limited not to discover further on pedagogy, as this thesis concerns the business field. Therefore, it is for the commissioner to make judgement and further study on more detailed implementation methods as professionals of higher education.

Previous job shadowing implementations support one-day implementation. In the interview, the student counsellor stated their job shadowing activity taking six hours. The variation lies between the KOKOMA initiatives flexible one hour up to one day (Metropolia, 2019, p.3) and Nicolini & Korica's (2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing) three to four days, whereas most of the shadowing activities last from 4 hours (Monahan et al., 2018) to one day (Irby et al., 2016; The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b; Vates Foundation, n.d.-a). Based on the suggestions and assumptions emerged during the interviews, time used for job shadowing should be announced in hours within one pre-designed day including a sprint or sprints of observation as well as in-depth discussion.

As presented by the interviewee X, the author agrees with the possibility of some remote activities could be included as they would be more flexible. Yet also agreed such implementation partly more challenging considering what can be shown within confidentiality and how to conduct job shadowing remotely. Therefore, as suggested by interviewee X, short observation sprints of different tasks within a team of employees within a longer time should be considered as one option for implementation.

Previous studies have implemented their job shadowing program by either pairing two students for one recipient as in studies by Monahan et al. (2018) and Nicolini & Korica (2024) or involving one student per one recipient as in the study by Sakoda & Takahashi's (2014), the KOKOMA initiative (Ikäheimonen et al., 2020, p.7) and Päivä Johtajana (Eng. "Day as a Leader") project (The Junior Chamber International, n.d.-b). According to student counsellor not all the students consider it easy to find a workplace they would like to conduct the job shadowing. The student counsellor has identified for example reservedness and shyness among the students causing this challenge. Considering of the HAMK Talent Boost specialist Tiina Björkskog (personal communication April 12, 2024) statement of international students finding it difficult to gain company contacts, the author suggest that the shadowing could be conducted in pairs, to lower the threshold for more reserved students. Additionally, one

should consider the possibility of language barriers as noted during the interviews. Some international students could benefit from pre-arranged host companies to perform the shadowing in (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion), and thereby HAMK IB should provide some contacts for potential organizations able to invite visitors speaking English and evaluate the implementation on a case-by-case basis.

The findings of the semi-structured interviews showed that the biggest uncertainties for companies to participate in the program were related to the objectives, requirements, and structure. Therefore, the concept of the job shadowing program should be designed properly. The author suggests that the job shadowing is implemented structured. This implementation form is considered well-functioning according to the student counsellor of the upper secondary school. Also, pre-, intra-, and post-shadowing support should be included as shown effective by Nicolini & Korica (2024), and the student counsellor, who had experience of their students finding the recipient and writing a reflective report. Preparing a framework of the objectives and requirements, HAMK IB replies to the conditions the interviewees stated to increase their interest in participation. To define and set meaningful objectives, HAMK IB should consider the following aspects.

The pre-shadowing support for students could include such activities as getting to know the Finnish work culture and norms of behavior. The students should do background work in defining the preferred occupation they wish to shadow and aim finding it by themselves as suggested by the student counsellor interviewed. Doing background work studying the field, company, and occupation students could set themselves objectives for the job shadowing. Though, as stated by Björkskog (personal communication April 12, 2024), it is more difficult for international students to gain company contacts. Therefore, to improve the international students' opportunities participating in the job shadow concept HAMK IB should acquire collaborative companies having a mutual understanding of this beneficial relationship context. (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion).

To gain more information about the professional requirements of position, as they have done in the upper secondary school, students could prepare questions for the recipients. As the interviews showed, being able to give enough time and attention to the student was considered a challenge among the companies. Therefore, the author suggests sending these, possibly role and career related, questions beforehand on email. Giving the recipients time and opportunity to reflect could help structure the day and produce more comprehensive answers, gaining insights for the students.

Interviewee Y stated that if the student would spend time in the company for a longer period, they would expect some benefit in exchange for their efforts. This proposal included an idea of students offering a briefing of, for example, AI and prospects for the field. Currently, HAMK's IB students provide company-specific services in Häme Smart Growth project, such as consulting in sustainability. (HAMK, n.d.-d) Reflecting the current work-based learning opportunities to the ideology of equipping students with "skills for the green transition" (The Inter-Agency Working Group on Work-based Learning, 2022, p.5), and the RUN-EU network mission of securing economical, ecological, societal, and cultural sustainable progress within its region and among its stakeholders (HAMK, n.d.-g) the author suggests following for HAMK IB's consideration. During the job shadowing activity, students could provide the hosting company or the recipient employee with a CSR related briefing or a case study as working life-oriented project developing their skills needed in their future career. (HAMK, n.d.-f) As in Häme Smart Growth, those subjects could be predefined by HAMK IB and chosen by the company or employee who hosts the student. (HAMK, n.d.-d)

The study by Nicolini & Korica (2024, Examining the value of structured shadowing) included post-support activities. The author considers students reflecting their observational findings to their own learning and career development through small group discussions and essay writing applicable in the implementation of HAMK IB. According to the student counsellor interviewed, the post-support is also conducted in the upper secondary school where the students write reports assessing the suitability of the shadowed occupation for themselves.

Fulfilling its mission of providing higher degree education based on work life requirements and development as well as providing continuous learning (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 § 4) the author suggests HAMK IB to consider collecting feedback from their students and companies participating in job shadowing program for developing the program and consider it as pedagogical possibility as well.

Reflecting on Arene ry's (2023) insights on students staying in the study region and OPH's (n.d.) statistics of the employment rate of foreign students, the author considers it essential to keep HAMK's operating region attractive to IB students and support them transitioning to work life. Since HAMK degrees concern international students as well, their special needs must be considered in the provided activities to promote employment in Finland and locally.

6 Conclusion

This thesis examined a new possible way for the Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) International Business (IB) degree program to offer low threshold co-learning opportunities through a job shadowing program conducted between companies and students. The thesis aimed to give material to foster and develop a meaningful engagement and mutual benefits between HAMK IB, its students, and local companies. The theoretical framework consists of Organizational development and Human Resource Development highlighting the importance of continuous learning and social responsibility.

Job shadowing has been shown to be an effective method to combine theory and practice in education as well as introduce students to work life, yet the academic attention to it has been limited. (Nicolini & Korica, 2024, Introduction) By fostering the relationship between education providers and companies work-based learning opportunities for international students can be enhanced. (Tran & Soejatminah, 2017, Discussion and Conclusion)

Facing increasing competition, technological advancements, and changing customer preferences, organizations need to become “learning organizations”. (Garvin et al., 2008) Job shadowing offers an opportunity to teach and share the ideology of continuous learning, which according to Tynjälä (2008, p.131) is not only important for individuals but also for organizations. Referring to Poell (2017) and Poell et al. (2018), Torraco & Lundgren (2020, pp.55-56) suggest fostering a culture of continuous learning where employees should be given more reliance on self-reflection, self-direction, and experience-based learning. Higher levels of employee engagement lead to higher levels of productivity. (Mosley & Schmidt, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding) Reis et al.’s (2021, p.1) research shows that employer branding is an important tool for talent management attracting and retaining the best employees.

A study was conducted to find the benefits and challenges companies located in Pirkanmaa and Kanta-Häme region see with regards to a possible job shadowing program conducted between HAMK International Business degree students and companies. The research is qualitative, and the research method is semi-structured interviews. Main benefits found for companies include providing the employee and company new skills and knowledge, enabling the employees and companies to evaluate their practices, reinforcing employees professional proud and enthusiasm to work, affecting positively to stakeholder engagement and the company’s CSR as well as providing the opportunity to impact the company’s

employer branding. Main challenges found for companies include time management, organizing implementation, confidentiality, designing a clear structure as well as attracting recipient employees to participate in the program.

Based on the findings, the author proposes HAMK IB degree program to design and implement a pilot job shadowing program. Designing the program in collaboration reinforces stakeholder engagement (Mosley & Schmidt, Chapter 1, Recognizing the benefits of employer branding) and develops education in line with the UAS mission (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 § 4; 1368/2018 § 4), and the RUN-EU mission of securing economical, ecological, societal, and cultural sustainable progress within its region and among its stakeholders (HAMK, n.d.-g).

The author suggests further research testing the job shadowing program as proposed in practice as a pilot version and collect feedback from both students and companies. Additionally, a study of the benefits and challenges of remote job shadowing could be seen relevant to conduct as collaboration with a researcher in the field of pedagogy.

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Appendix 1. Interview questions for representative of an educational institution.

1. What kind of the experiences were gained implementing a job shadowing day?
2. In what form was the job shadowing program carried out?
3. How did the collaboration proceed? Who contacted whom?
4. Was any data collected?
5. How did the companies take or react to the program?
6. What follow-up actions or collaborations emerged from the program? (Why not?)
7. Has the program been repeated or is there a new event being planned?
8. What benefits have you experienced from implementing the program?
9. What benefits do you assume companies will receive when they provide students with the opportunity to job shadowing?
10. What kind of challenges do you assume companies will face when they provide students the opportunity to job shadowing?

Appendix 2. Haastattelukysymykset oppilaitoksen edustajalle.

1. Millaisia kokemuksia työn varjostamisen päivän toteuttamisesta kertyi?
2. Millaisessa muodossa järjestämänne työn varjostamisen päivä toteutettiin?
3. Kuinka yhteistyö eteni? Kuka otti yhteyttä keneen?
4. Millaista dataa siitä kerättiin?
5. Miten yritykset suhtautuivat tai reagoivat ohjelmaan?
6. Mitä jatkotoimenpiteitä tai yhteistyötä ohjelmasta syntyi? (Miksi ei?)
7. Onko ohjelmaa toistettu tai onko suunnitteilla uutta tapahtumaa?
8. Mitä hyötyä olette ohjelman järjestämisestä kokeneet?
9. Millaisia hyötyjä oletat yritysten saavan järjestäessään opiskelijalle mahdollisuuden työn varjostamiseen?
10. Millaisia haasteita oletat yritysten kohtaavan järjestäessään opiskelijalle mahdollisuuden työn varjostamiseen?

Appendix 3. Interview questions to representatives of companies and organizations.

1. What kind of thoughts does the presented job shadowing program evoke?
2. What kind of things should your company consider before participating in the program?
3. What benefits do you presume the employee being shadowed to gain participating in the job shadowing?
4. What benefits do you presume the company to gain participating in the job shadowing?
5. What could participation in the program produce for the company at its best?
6. What challenges do you presume the employee being shadowed to face participating in job shadowing?
7. What challenges do you presume the company to face participating in job shadowing?
8. Does your company currently have the capacity to participate in the program?
Additional questions: What are they like? What's missing?
9. As a company, are you tentatively interested in participating in the program?
Additional question: How would your interest increase?
10. Finally, are there any thoughts you would like to share?

Appendix 4. Haastattelu kysymykset yritysten ja organisaatioiden edustajille.

1. Millaisia ajatuksia esitetty työn varjostamisen ohjelma herättää?
2. Millaisia asioita yrityksenne tulisi ottaa huomioon ennen ohjelmaan osallistumista?
3. Millaisia hyötyjä olettaisit varjostettavana olevan työntekijän saavan osallistuessaan työn varjostamiseen?
4. Millaisia hyötyjä olettaisit yrityksenne saavan osallistuessaan työn varjostamiseen?
5. Mitä ohjelmaan osallistuminen voisi yritykselle parhaimmillaan tuottaa?
6. Millaisia haasteita olettaisit varjostettavana olevan työntekijän kohtaavan?
7. Millaisia haasteita olettaisit yrityksenne kohtaavan osallistuessaan työn varjostamisen päivään?
8. Onko yrityksellänne valmiuksia osallistua ohjelmaan tällä hetkellä?
Lisäkysymykset: Millaisia ne ovat? Mitä puuttuu?
9. Oletteko alustavasti kiinnostuneita osallistumaan ohjelmaan?
Lisäkysymys: Miten kiinnostuksenne kasvaisi?
10. Onko jotain ajatuksia, joita haluaisit jakaa tähän loppuksi?

Appendix 5. thesis data management plan_arvela

The author, commissioning company Häme University of Applied Sciences, International Business degree, and thesis supervisor from Häme University of Applied Sciences have signed a thesis agreement.

The data for the thesis is collected through semi-structured interviews with company representatives and experts of study field. Interviews are conducted online via Teams application. The author will record the interviews and save them as separate files in the author's personal secure cloud service.

The interviewees are asked for their oral permission to collect and save the data for research purposes. In this thesis, if not personally agreed otherwise, data will be presented in a way that it cannot be connected to specific person or company. Indirect personal data, such as the role of the interviewee, will be described in this thesis in a way that interviewee and their company stay anonymous.

The author owns the rights to data collected. The author stores the data securely for one year after the approval of the thesis. After, data will be destroyed. The author does not plan to utilize the gathered information for any further research or else.