Effective Events?

A quantitative study analyzing if event marketing can help business students find a potential employer

Authors: Marina Björnström
         Maja Lundmark

Supervisor: Nils Wåhlin
Abstract

The main object of this thesis is to study and explore if students at Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE) can find potential employers through Event Marketing (EM). The authors will analyze EM as a tool for interaction and information, and if these tools will help students gain more knowledge about companies that can make them more interesting as potential employers. Previous research was found regarding both EM and Employer Branding (EB), however there was little research found on how they can be used together. There was also little research to be found from business students point of view since in both EM and EB the previous research had rather been done from a company standpoint. Therefore, with the aim to fill these research gaps the following research question was formulated:

*Does event marketing help business and economics students find potential employers?*

The study uses a deductive research design with a quantitative research strategy, and the data was collected using a self-completing questionnaire. The authors adopted objectivism and positivism as their research philosophical standpoints. The sample was drawn though multi-stage cluster sampling, the samples selected contained 384 students enrolled at USBE and 132 replies was received and analyzed. The questions in the online self-completing questionnaire were designed to measure variables such as information and interaction.

Findings indicate that EM does help Umeå business and economics students find new potential employers. However, students do not feel that they learn that much about new companies, they do not feel that they are interacting with companies and they do not feel that they are gaining more knowledge about a company at an event.

The findings contribute to the research field of business administration. Specifically, the merging of EB and EM and how it is perceived from a student’s point of view rather than from a company’s perspective. The students do believe that events are an effective way to meet companies, however the empirical results from event attendees show differently. The theories within the subject and the answers from students regarding if they believe in EM or not are counterintuitive. Therefore, this study opens up possibilities for future research.
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1. Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to give the reader information and serve as an introduction to the thesis. The chapter starts with a presentation of the chosen subject and continues with a background to inform the reader and lead them onwards to the definitions and theoretical gaps that exists in current research. Based on these gaps, the research question and objective are derived.

1.1 Choice of Subject

When choosing a subject to write a thesis about one should not only find something that is interesting, but also something that is relevant and contemporary. Since both authors are soon graduating from Umeå University they have thought about their future options and which companies they would like to work for. One can see a trend in these kind of thoughts for most of the student groups that are studying at Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE). Except for those who have plans to continue studying, many are wondering about where to work and some might even panic because they do not have any idea which company they are interested in. Due to the setup of the education at USBE, most business students have selected a field of study within for example finance, marketing, management etc. But despite that they have chosen a field, they still need to find an employer that are looking for the knowledge they have acquired during their studies. Finishing your studies is just a starting point of your future career and acquiring a workplace is something that is very competitive and quite challenging. There are only a limited amount of employers and every year more and more students graduate. Many students consider it very beneficial to find a workplace even before they have graduated, either in the form of part-time employment, internship or writing a thesis on commission for a company to establish a relationship with them. Despite this some students can find it frustrating to search for companies and might even have a hard time knowing where to start.

The two authors both have previous experience within the labor market, and have been working with employer branding (EB) and event marketing (EM). When discussing the future both of them realized that they have had the same concerns as many other students they regularly meet regarding where to work after university is over. This made them think about how student actually choose which employer to apply to and how to actually find them. The combined previous labor market experiences made them wonder if the students are able to find their future employer at the university campus through the different events that the students have the opportunity to attend to. Consequently, that both students and employers can benefit from meeting at events.

1.2 Background

Even though the unemployment rate among young people, ranging in the age of 15-24, currently is as high as 22,1% in Sweden (Nannesson, 2016) the Swedish employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen) reports a growing shortage of specific skills in both the public and private labor market (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2015). In 14 out of 21 counties in Sweden the recruitment issues have increased during 2015, and they are also expected to continue in 2016 (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2015). Thus, making it increasingly important for companies to attract new and talented employees and work with their brands as employers.
Every year an organization called Universum Global makes a survey on Swedish students to measure which companies are the most attractive to work for. When looking at the results from 2015 specifically for business and economic students in Sweden (Universumglobal, 2015), the top three employers to work for is:

1. Google  
2. H&M  
3. IKEA

In an attempt to analyze why these, and other companies, are the more attractive choice Academic Work and TNS Sifo (Academic Work, 2015) have conducted a survey regarding what business and economic students in Sweden believe are the most important factors for a company as an employer. The survey concluded the top three factors to be:

1. Good leadership/A good manager  
2. Good possibilities for personal development  
3. A pleasant work environment

A prognosis for 2016 (Saco, 2014) stated that for a recently graduated business or economics student there is a balance within the labor market. Meaning that the acquired number of employees within this area is approximately the same as the economic students graduating. Thus, graduating economic and business students can be more reserved about choosing their employer.

There are many ways for students to learn more about potential future employers such as social media, Google, the company's own website etc. However, some companies have seen the potential to use the university campus as a way to reach potential future employees due to that they can present themselves in front of specific student groups that are studying within a field relevant to their business. Companies can choose to attend work fairs, guest lectures and such. as a part of their marketing strategy to enhance their brand as an employer.

Despite the practical use of this type of event as a part of a company’s branding, there is little research about combining events and the branding of the status one has as an employer. There is also a trend to direct academic research regarding the attractiveness of employers towards companies rather than towards potential employees even though they both would benefit from it. As evident above, there is research about what makes an employer attractive towards potential employees, however there seem to be a lack within the academic field regarding how students actually efficiently can receive this information about a company.

1.3 Theoretical Background and Research Gap

1.3.1 Definition of Employer Branding (EB)

The concept of Employer Branding (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 187) emerged into the scholarly world in the mid 90's. It consists of "functional, economic and psychological aspects, and have a personality in the same way as a product brand" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 187). Thus, it can be seen as the brand a company has as an employer.

EB can be described as a three-step process (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, pp. 502-503). First, the company defines their Employer Value Proposition (EVP) as employers, second they
concern themselves with external marketing targeted to potential employees, and third the internal marketing to existing employees. It can be summarized as how the employer make themselves an attractive workplace (Kapoor, 2010, p. 53) and how they will keep their employees within their organization (Berthon, 2005 p. 168) without losing them to their competitors. This thesis will mainly focus on the external marketing aspect of EB.

1.3.2 The External Marketing of EB

People are constantly exposed to different kinds of marketing, whether if it is advertising, product placement or events. Much of the research regarding EB has focused on either characteristics and how the employer need differentiate themselves from their competitors (Moroko & Uncle, 2008, pp. 164-165) or the EVP that the company can provide to employees and/or different stakeholders (Foster et al., 2010, p. 403). Gomes and Neves (2011, p. 687) explain that promotion of EB has been linked to various types of marketing and Sivertzen et al. (2013, p. 473) acknowledge that there is a growing trend in using social media for this purpose. They further explain that research suggest that use of social media can help create a good reputation for the company as employers (Sivertzen et al., 2013, p 479). Other examples how companies can market their EB is through the companies own webpage, creating posters, TV-commercials etc. (Dyhre & Parment, 2013, pp. 148-150).

1.3.3 Definition of Event Marketing (EM)

It is important to notice the difference between events and Event marketing (EM), a company can simply have an event without using it as a marketing tool (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 16). Thus, one definition of EM can be marketing and branding done through events.

EM can also be described as a way to create a communication and dialogue with the consumer through a personal meeting (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 24). One strength of EM is the interaction and the possibility to build and maintain relationships (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 23) with consumers, hence it is an effective way to communicate directly to a specific target group (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 15). The implementation of EM can be used to influence consumer's knowledge, image and emotional attachment to the brand (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006, p. 646). It aims to strengthen emotional bonds to customers by providing a brand experience (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006, p. 315). The authors of this thesis argue, that in the same way as EM effect consumers it should effect potential employees e.g. students and therefore could be successfully combined with EB.

1.3.4 Research Gap

Previous research done by Edwards (2009, p. 9) suggests that EM may have a positive effect on EB if companies are seen sponsoring event at locations such as universities at the same time as having an active recruitment process. Dyhre & Parment (2013, p. 150) have the same trail of thoughts and suggest that attending recruitment fairs, career days and events can be a good way to find these potential employers. Even though there are research for companies regarding the implementation of EM and most universities offer different types of events for students to meet companies at, there is barely any research done in this area with the students in focus. The few researches the authors of this thesis found about this is regarding EB and business students in India (Agrawal, 2012). However, the application to other countries does not seem to exist. Agrawal (2012) also solely focus on EB as the central context, meanwhile
he does not connect it to EM or other marketing practices per se. The authors of this thesis are therefore going to try to connect the concepts of EB and EM with a viewpoint of the students at USBE to find out if they perceive EM as a way to help them find potential employers.

1.4 Research Question

*Does event marketing help business and economics students find potential employers?*

1.5 Objective

The objective of this thesis is to test if EB done through events could help students at USBE find employers; therefore, the aim is to generalize the results for students at USBE not at a national level. Furthermore, the authors will analyze EM as a tool for interaction and information, and if it will help students gain more knowledge about companies that can make them more interesting as potential employers.

This study will be done from a student’s perspective on EM, and will try to analyze the correlation between the two major aspects of EM; interaction and information. This will be analyzed with the concept of EB which suggest the interest in a company that the student have after meeting them at an event. Hence, the focus will be on students and if they can find their future employer through events, rather than if it is effective for companies.

1.6 Delimitations

This thesis study was limited to students at Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE). The limitations to USBE were made due to the lack of recourses and time for the authors of this thesis to gain access to business students in all of Sweden. Therefore, the generalization of this thesis will be limited to students at USBE. It can also be seen as a delimitation that the study is limited by its research strategy. A quantitative approach will be able answer yes or no to the research question given, not explain why.

1.7 Interview with a Company

Despite that the authors have previous knowledge regarding EB and EM, a semi-structured interview (Saunders et al., 2008, pp. 320) with one of the leading companies within an economic field in Sweden was conducted. The interviewed company was offered the option of anonymity, which they accepted to be able to speak more freely about their strategy regarding EB and EM. Therefore, they will be addressed as “the company” or “the interviewed company” from here on. The interview was done in order to get more contemporary information about how this combination is used in practice since there is little research done in the area. Even if the purpose of this study is to investigate from a student point of view it is also important to understand that companies actually use EM to market their EB and if they believe that it is effective in order recruit potential employees. This interview will also be analyzed together with the results of the study to investigate if there is a possible correlation between the current theories within the subjects, the practical use and the results that the authors of this thesis will receive from this study. By doing this type of analysis the authors will be able to see if the theories do conform with the practical use of EB and EM by this particular company. The interview has also been used as a support when
creating the survey and connecting the concepts EB and EM to each other. Therefore, the aim of this interview was to gain more knowledge on how events actually are used as a tool for employer branding.

The company chosen has a high visibility on USBE, they have several events for USBE’s students each year and have recruited students from the school on several occasions. The following text is derived from the company’s replies and their opinion of EB, EM, and their thoughts about reaching out to students in general.

The company explained that a few years back they started a more structured and focused student activity program to market themselves better towards students. They have decided upon a number of universities from where they are going to brand themselves and recruit talents. Employees at each location are chosen and get free disposal of a budget. They also have freedom to engage in the activities they deem fit for that particular location, with the condition that they meet up and discuss with the person who is nationally responsible for this program. Together they are building a strategy in order to inspire and motivate the organization in these events. They are also evaluating what has worked and not so that they can learn how to work efficiently with recruiting and branding in the future.

By looking at the top companies in this field, this company has noticed that the way they have built up their strategy around student activities has both similarities and differences from the other leading companies. They talked a bit about future kind of marketing for EB such as making movies. This is something they have noticed that some of the competitors are doing right now. Those companies are trying to express a feeling through a movie but the interviewed company does believe that it does not create personal interaction. However, they also explain that using videos is a good twist in trying to work within EB.

This company has different branches and depending on which one they are interested in recruiting potential employees for, they start the recruitment period at different times. For some of the branches they do the recruitment when necessary and others they work in cycles. During the fall semester they usually are organizing bigger events to meet many students and work a lot with branding because they believe that a strong brand is a good foundation for any company. Toward the spring semester they start doing smaller events where they can have fewer students attending to get to know them better and create a relation to them.

For this company, the type of event they are conducting are often dependent on which university they are organizing it at. For example, they have noticed that some university students’ benefits from events where they are learning how to make a better résumé. The company feel that it would be a shame to miss good potential employees just because they have never really learned how to create this important document. They are also trying to complement the event with personal contact such as help the students by offering to read the résumé before the student apply for a job, if they think that this person is a good potential employee for them.

The company explains that it is not always the information that is the crucial part when trying to recruit students. If a student is interested in a company, they can easily find information about them online such as what services the company have. That is why it is more important to try to explain for example the values and diversity of the company’s tasks. They are using different tools to find out what values and attributes the students are looking for and are actively trying to communicate how they are working with these. They are also trying to
communicate the diversity of the tasks to show the depth of the company, though they also explain that at some universities they are aiming to recruit students from one of their branches due to the high quality of that particular education at the university. They further explain that sometimes there is need for a more generic presentation of the company and sometimes there is a need to give specific information about the tasks and other useful things that shatters the students view of the profession. The reason is because the company has noticed that there are a lot of people that have an impression of potential tasks, however they are not always in accordance with the truth. The company is trying to give students a more accurate picture of the profession and how it is to work for them.

The company believes that the strength of EM is that there is a possibility to break the ice and meet a lot of students at the same time. They also believe that events are attractive to students. It is more efficient to get in contact with a student at an event than just talking to them in the hallway of the university. However, depending on which event that is being organized sometimes there is a chance that students attend because they are more interested in the actual event than the company organizing it. They also explained that despite that the event can be used to create relationships and work as a catalyst for interaction with the students, they do believe that since there is more than one student at the events, it does not create the personal relation that is needed when recruiting and attracting a talent.

The company believes that it can be a quite scary thing to enter the labor market after finishing an education, many students might feel very small and vulnerable in front of larger companies. Many companies believe that by just having an event it will make students send an application to them. However, this company believes that the best talents are those you need to actively search for. They believe that a high amount of bigger events is not really efficient because despite reaching out to masses, you need to create a kind of relation to the ones you want by investing personal time in them, such as eating lunch together or call them. This company explains the value of showing that they care and that they value the student as a person in order to recruit them to the company. No matter what kind of event you are conducting the feeling of being personally noticed is a good way to attract good talents. For the company this can be considered bothersome but the attention to this student can be crucial for successful recruitment.

One of the positive factors about having an event is that an employer can create a type of gut-feeling. Students might be looking for something that can separate the companies because many companies within the same field offer the same type of services and tasks. By creating a relation to the students and give them a good gut-feeling about the company can mean that they are more likely to apply to them. In order to manifest this particular feeling they are trying to create, they make an analogy with the British marathon runner Mo Farah. When he won the Olympic Games he became so happy that he did a gesture where he put his hands on his head in order to create a heart-shape with his body. The company said that they want to give this kind of feeling to the students when they apply to them too, the feeling of that the company really care about the applicant. They further explain that many of the students, especially right after graduating, do not have the patience to wait for an offer of a company, despite that they are interested in working for it. The labor market is probably a scary place for them and not many people can keep their cool and wait for an offer from the company they really want to work for. If the company can create this good gut-feeling, together with the personal contact, the company has a good chance of recruiting not just good employees, but the best. This is what the company believes differentiate a good recruitment process from a great one.
2. Theoretical Methodology

This chapter will discuss the philosophical standpoints for the study as well as the previous knowledge that might influence the results. The chapter will also mention and motivate the choice of research design, strategy, and ethical considerations. It ends by discussing the process for the literature search and why the different sources were chosen.

2.1 Previous Knowledge

The authors of this thesis are Maja Lundmark who is currently studying the Service Management Program and Marina Björnström who is studying the International Business Program, both at USBE. When discussing previous knowledge, it was difficult to pinpoint down a decent definition of knowledge but Johansson-Lindfors (1993, p. 32, p. 76) divide it into three different types: Theoretical, general and authors viewpoint. She further explains that the theoretical knowledge is obtained through education, the general knowledge depends on experiences throughout a person’s life, and the authors viewpoint is the way the researcher views on the development within the relevant subject. However, the latter does not cover previous knowledge, which means it will not be addressed here.

The theoretical knowledge obtained within the subjects of EB and EM has been conveyed through courses at USBE within management and marketing. Despite touching upon these subjects during the years studying at USBE there has been no specific courses for EB or EM for neither of the authors. Their studies have been more general about management and marketing or focused on other aspects where EB and EM have been mere concepts. The courses taken at USBE does however give the authors enough theoretical knowledge about marketing and management to draw dependable conclusions and analyses within the subject. It can be seen as negative not to have studied these in depth. However, it is also arguable that due to that the authors are not limited to previously specific knowledge obtained they are more open to choose relevant theories without being influenced.

For general knowledge, one of the authors have been working within EM both as a part of her profession and as volunteer work during her time enrolled as a student USBE. During this time there has been hands-on experience of how important and useful events are in order to promote successful branding. The events have been everything from a so called "show and tell" about the product to inviting potential clients to meet-and-greet mingle events. No matter which type of event the author has worked with one important aspect has been information sharing. There have not been any official evaluations after these events but the employees have noticed an increase in the amount of products sold or the amount of clients interested in the company after these events.

The other author has worked during her time at USBE with EB and EM combined. The main tasks have been the practical use of EB to show that the company they worked for is a good employer and to attract potential employers to the company. Therefore, the author has first-hand experience from a company perspective on how one can use the combination of EB and EM.

Another aspect of general previous knowledge is that the authors themselves have attended many events as students wanting to learn more about potential employers. This can be seen as helpful when conducting a survey since the practical experience can help describe and exemplify events and situations and therefore make it easier for the responder to understand
the question. Also, the authors have knowledge about that not all events are good events. The performance of events very much depends on the organizer and the company, and as all marketing it can be performed well or not. The authors believe that well performed events can be effective, but not well thought through or preformed events can be destructive.

The previous experiences from both company and student perspective provide a broader view which the authors argue can generate in a less biased survey and thesis. The knowledge from both sides makes a good foundation for conducting this kinds of research since most of the literature have more of a company perspective and this thesis will take on a student view. The authors need this perspective to adapt the company literature to the student view in order to conduct a relevant thesis.

These previous experiences have a possibility to influence the outcome of the study. However, since the authors are aware of this it is easier to keep an objective viewpoint. They have seen the importance and usefulness of EB and EM in practice and the perception the employer has on the effectiveness. Due to the objective nature of the methodology and statistical analysis, the author’s previous experiences should not affect the results, only the choice of subject.

2.2 Ontology

Regardless of what study one are conducting there are philosophical decisions that need to be addressed regarding how to tackle the research. The first step is to decide the ontological view of the study. Ontology (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 20; Saunders et al., 2008, p. 110) is “nature of reality” or “nature of social entities” and lays down the foundation about what there is to know, how it is organized and how it exists. Bryman and & Bell (2011, p. 20) explain that the main concern is if there are other external social actors that influence reality and despite having similar conceptual frame Saunders et al. (2008, p. 110) also further explains that it is about questioning assumptions of how things work. The two most common ontological views are objectivism and subjectivism.

When the external actors are not influencing the social world, it is called objectivism (Saunders et al., 2008, p.110). Just as the term suggests, it is about objective views on how things work. The most common view when conducting quantitative studies is objectivism because quantitative data should not be influenced by your own subjective thoughts (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 21).

Due to the lack of research done within EB and EM combined, the authors aims to generalize the answer to the research question and not answer why or how. A generalization can be done by conducting a quantitative study and since the most common ontological view, a mentioned before, for these types of studies are the objective ontology the authors will take this standpoint. No matter the authors standpoints and subjective thoughts, this thesis will be based on empirical evidence drawn from a survey and no conclusions will be drawn without empirical or theoretical support.

2.3 Epistemology

After deciding upon the ontology the next step is to further consider the next philosophical viewpoint. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 15) and Saunders et al. (2008, p.112) explains epistemology to be “what is acceptable knowledge”, or the nature of knowledge. A researcher needs to question what is knowledge and how to obtain it. Further, they need to ask if the
knowledge obtained is valid or not. Therefore, the epistemological standpoint the authors
decide upon lays downs for example the ground of how to conduct the study, how to search
for theories within the subject and the scrutinizing of the data that the authors can find.
Within Epistemology there are several of different ways to approach your research:
Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2008, p.119). All of
these are different views of whether or not you can understand the “social world by applying
natural science on it” (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 15).

This study will take on a positivistic (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, pp. 15-16; Saunders et al.,
2008, pp. 113-114,) viewpoint of epistemology. The concept assumes that you can derive
facts about the world and behavior by using scientific methods (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p.
15; Saunders et al., 2008, p. 113). The propositions development in this thesis is based on
research of previous theories and will be tested in order to see if they are applicable in this
particular setting (Saunders et al., 2008, p. 113). When analyzing the data, it is important to
be objective and avoid biases as much as possible (Saunders et al., 2008, p. 114).

This study is adopting a positivistic epistemology because it is trying to connect if EB can be
used to attract students through EM with the help of statistical analyses of students’
perspectives on events, which represents the application of natural science to define the social
world. Further, to be able to develop a measurement of this, the authors have researched
theories from the subjects and through them develop the propositions. By using statistics and
gathering of quantifiable data the results of the survey is analyzed through statistical software
to keep the objective mindset and draw conclusions as free of subjectivism as possible.

2.4 Research Design and Strategy

The research design (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, pp. 40-41) is supposed to be a plan of how
the authors are going to conduct a good research and analyze the data. This study has
undertaken a deductive approach (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 11). This concept implies a
research method where previous theories and research is reviewed and analyzed, to finally
form propositions that will be tested on the data collected (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 11).

After deciding upon the deductive approach to use for the study, the authors started to search
for theories within the fields of EB and EM. When the theories had been scrutinized and
criticized they started to draw up a research question and decide upon appropriate
propositions based on it.

After the propositions were generated the authors choose a research strategy i.e. "a general
orientation to conduct of business research” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26). One can either
have a quantitative or qualitative research strategy, and for this thesis a quantitative approach
was selected. A quantitative approach aims to quantify the data collected and test it against
previous research and theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27). Hence, quantitative studies aim
to find statistical relationships between different variables (Sanders et al 2009, p.414), and are
therefore also useful when generalizing the results from a study. The main argumentation to
why the authors selected a quantitative study is that there is limited research done in this
particular area and therefore they wanted to generalize a study as a platform for future
research. Another argument for the research strategy is that usually the usage of a deductive
research design implies that one also uses a quantitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell,
2011, p. 27). A quantitative study also fits well with the authors previous choices in both the
ontology and the epistemology section, since both positivism and objectivism has a connection to quantitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27).

The authors were aware that there is some critique against using a quantitative research approach. Some argue that quantitative research has difficulties explaining social norms because they believe that this cannot be done though numbers and statistical analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 167). The authors have therefore adapted to this fact by trying not to measure values or other such elements that are subject to too much personal interpretation from the individual. Instead they have grouped questions together to make them more quantifiable in the same way as previous studies have done by for example expressing these in the form of information sharing of attributes etc. (Mosley, 2007, p. 131; Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 51).

Another aspect of quantitative research that is often criticized is the importance of using the right measurements. The questions need to ask the right things in order to draw correct conclusions from them. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 168) What the authors asks for should be clear enough so that the respondents can interpret it in the same way as the author. Furthermore, these answers needs to be interpreted by the authors in the same way as the respondents intended (Sanders et al., 2009, p. 372). The authors have had this in mind when they conducted their research and made the questions while considering the above mentioned dilemma.

After deciding on a quantitative study the authors have decided to use a self-completing survey as the research method instrument (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 41). After forming questions with the propositions as the foundation, a trial-survey was created and sent out to selected individuals that were not a part of with the population for the study. This trial was sent out because the authors wanted to ensure themselves of the quality of the survey and if there is issues with the dilemma mentioned in the paragraph above. After discussing with the test participants, corrections and clarifications were made and then the real survey was sent out. More detailed description about the questions can be found in section 4.1 Survey design. In a deductive approach (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 11) the next step after collecting the data is the analysis of it. After the analysis it is time to once again analyze the theories that was found at the beginning of the study and try to match them against the authors results.

In order to be able to answer the research question Does event marketing help business students find potential employers? The authors have decided to measure the variables interaction and knowledge. The reason for choosing these two are because in theories regarding EB and EM, these have been important factors. Besides trying to see if they effect EB and EM separately, the testing aims to see if there is a correlation between them.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Some can argue that ethics is an important part of life, just as it is important for every study. Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 183-184) define ethics in a business research setting as “appropriateness of your behavior in relation to the rights of those who become subject of your work, or are affected by it”. When making a study the researcher will constantly have to make decisions regarding ethics (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 80). Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 128) makes a general division of ethics into harm, lack of informed consent (anonymity), invasion of privacy, and deception. For studies conducted at USBE there is ethical guidelines that needs to be followed (Umeå School of Business & Economics, 2015, p. 6). As many ethical
guides it addresses for example the questions about the four categories: inconvenience (harm), consent, deception and plagiarism. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 132) explain that it is nearly impossible to be able to identify every situation where ethical issues can arise, nevertheless it is important to avoid, as far as possible, to expose participants to cases where ethics can be questioned. Due to this the authors have used the guide from the university as a foundation throughout the whole research process and have had constant ethical discussions. They have taken decisions to prevent as much unethical behaviors are possible and tried to identify what can be seen as unethical and not.

Despite that different people have different perception of what is ethical and not (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 123) there are two major viewpoints within ethics according to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 184): Deontological and teleological. The former states that there is no situation where a researcher should be unethical or in any way act without moral. In contrast, the latter states that sometimes one can justify “lesser ethical actions” such as deception to reach certain results. This study will follow the deontological view, not only because the ethical guidelines that each student is required to have in consideration when writing a thesis for the university, but also because the authors would like to remain credible and conduct a study that is in accordance to their personal moral views.

When it comes to harm, the research should not cause physical nor mental harm (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 160). This goes for both the participants and the non-participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128). The authors of this study does not believe that the study causes the students that participate any harm or stress in any way because of the nature of the subject and the re-assurance that the survey is voluntary, confidential and that the data are only available to the authors of the study. The questionnaire was also sent out through email in order for the participants to be able to fill it out privately and individually. Lack of consent (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 132) in this study does not raise any unethical criticism due to the previous reasoning with the nature of the survey. The purpose is also stated in the opening letter in order to make sure that they understand why this study is conducted and as explained before, the anonymity is ensured. There are a few background questions in the survey, however they are very general and no one can trace the answers back to any of the participants. The authors also have provided their own contact information both at the beginning and the end of the survey if there would have been any questions.

Because the survey for this thesis was sent out electronically, one need to consider netiquette (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 194). It covers everything form forwarding notes from an interview to the possibility of identify participants. Because both authors themselves are enrolled at the university and could possibly identify participants based on their email, they decided that it would be the most ethical to let a third party, a student counselor, be the one to send out the email. The counselor also has a possibility to send out emails so that one participant cannot see who else the email was sent to. All of this to ensure that there is no breach in the anonymity towards other participants or the authors, even after publishing. A reminder email can be seen as invasion of privacy (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 187) and the authors were debating if this was an ethical option for them or not. However, they decided to post a text in the voluntarily educational groups on Facebook, encouraging students to look at their email. This could be seen as an unethical decision, however the purpose of that group is for educational use, sharing of information about things going on at the university and is completely voluntarily to join. Due to these criteria the authors decided that it would not be considered unethical.
Last of the four important ethical considerations regarding the study is deception. The authors have been careful not to write anything that can be perceived in the wrong way and they have stated the purpose of the study in the opening letter. They have also tried not to ask any questions that can skew the results of the study. In order to lay groundwork for future studies the authors asked the participants to choose the one channel they believe is the best way to meet companies. Since the questionnaire is mainly about events, this could be seen as a leading question. People might already have events in the back of their minds and unconsciously choose that as their answer. The authors do however justify this question by the fact that it is not going to be analyzed within the study as a correlation between any variable, but merely be used as groundwork for future, perhaps qualitative, studies where these type of questions can be analyzed more in depth to get a better understanding of where students prefer to meet companies. They also have remained objective when analyzing and not in any way manipulate the results they have gotten from the data.

When conducting the interview with the company, the authors started out by explaining the purpose of the study and the purpose of the interview. This was also stated at the end of the interview in order to make sure that the company have understood what the interview was for. The author promised anonymity for the company too, since strategy can be a delicate subject for certain industries. After transcribing the interview, the authors removed information that can be used to identify the company and sent the interview for approval from the company. When the authors received permission from the company, the interview was added to the thesis.

2.6 Literature review

Choosing which theories to base a study on can be tedious but are very necessary (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 59). The reason for reviewing previous literature is according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 92) to answer questions such as “What is already known about this area?”, “What concepts and theories are relevant to this area?”, “Are there any inconsistencies in findings relating to this area?” etc. It is also important to find theories behind the claims because the thesis will most likely be compared to other people’s research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 60). Reviewing literature will help the researcher gain more knowledge about the subject (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 60) and increase the creditability of the content (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 91). The authors did not want to use articles that was too old because they did not want to expose the thesis of using outdated theories, which in turn would make the results questionable. The authors used one article for the definition of one of the concepts from the early 90’s, however the rest that was used is from the year 2004 and later. There are two main subjects that the authors needed to find theories within in order to create a good basis for this research: EB and EM.

2.6.1 Search Engines and Scientific Articles

In order to find reliable theories to use as a foundation the authors first needed to find appropriate databases in which they could find relative theories within the field of business and economics. As a first step the authors used the Umeå University Library general search to find books and articles. This search engine can also direct you to different databases, as will be explained further down. The choice of having this as the authors primary source of theory searching strategy was made based on that internet based search engines will generate in up-to-date theories (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 89) and all of the articles found though this database
can be filtered to only scientific articles that are peer-reviewed and full text, which means that they have been scrutinized and published in a scholarly journal or academic setting. As a complementary search tool they used Google Scholar, which is a search engine for articles. This engine also allows the researcher see how many times a specific article have been cited. As a general rule of thumb one can assume that an article that has been frequently cited, can be quite useful but still need to be evaluated. The searches through google scholar cannot be filtered to peer-reviewed or full text, however the authors are aware of this. If an article has been found on google scholar, an additional search through the university library has been made in order to ensure that it is in fact scientific. If an article has not been found to be peer-to-peer reviewed from a reliable database through the "double search", that article was not used. If the authors have felt that they cannot validate the article, they have been cautious to use it. Because of this, there are only scientific articles mentioned in this thesis, which insures the quality of the theory provided in the thesis. The authors feel confident that the articles used is of a high standard and quality.

In addition to these two search engines, the authors also used specific databases designed for business and economics such as Taylor & Francis, EBSCOhost, Inderscience Publishers, and Emerald Journals. These have been found through the university library search engine. Taylor & Francis is a database that collaborates with universities and publishes other scholarly articles. Due to this one can assume that there is some serious research done on the articles that are published there. EBSCO is a host for databases within a range of subjects where one can choose the option to filter the articles published from academic journals or articles written with academic purposes. Inderscience Publisher is an academic publisher that published peer-per-viewed journals. Emerald Journals does not per se states that they are affiliated with researchers or universities, however when the authors have used this database, they have as with every search filtered the results to peer-to-peer reviewed articles. The databases where the authors have found their theories from have all been scrutinized and discussed if they can be creditable to use in this study.

2.6.2 Books

The books provided in this thesis was mainly so called course literature, these books are often theoretical and based on scientific research. However, some were not. The authors of these books have used their own practical knowledge from the business world, rather than theoretical knowledge. In relation to this study, the authors of this thesis argue that the books provide both a theoretical and a practical knowledge to base the proposition on. Since sometimes theory is not sufficient to how the real world works, the authors believe that these books has strengthened the argumentation for the propositions. However, it should be mentioned that the practical knowledge was from a company’s point of view and not from the students.

2.6.3 Websites

There are a few websites provided in this thesis but the authors have scrutinized the websites and only referred to what they perceived to be reliable data. For example, the survey mentioned in the introduction was conducted by Academic Work and TNS Sifo. TNS Sifo is a well-known and established statistical company in Sweden and therefore the authors deem this survey to be reliable to use for background purposes. It can also be mentioned that the
websites referred to in this thesis have mainly been in the introduction so it does not affect the results of this study, but just the previous background knowledge.

2.6.4 Literature Review Employer Branding

The authors started their literature review by deciding upon relevant key words that is associated with the two concepts. For EB, the main key-words and articles/books chosen is:

Table 1. Literature Review Employer Branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key words</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Name of Article/book</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster, Punjaisri, &amp; Cheng (2010)</td>
<td>Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Emerald Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agrawal (2012)</td>
<td>Attracting talent from Indian B-schools through employer branding: a mediation model</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Inderscience Publishers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Searching for these keywords and trying to find out more about the subject, the authors noticed that there is not much written in general and more or less the same articles came up as a result. The articles used are both for definitions of concepts and to find underlying theories of EB. The authors have aimed to use contemporary articles and books, however when defining the concept EB the authors chose to use one of the first articles mentioning the concept (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). There is a risk that using this particular article are not relevant in today’s society but this definition of this concept is backed up with several other sources more up to date. Despite that the article itself are quite old, the authors argue that since this is a well-known and well-used definition, it is relevant to used it in this thesis.
2.6.5 Literature Review Event Marketing

For EM, the main key-words and articles/books chosen is:

*Table 2. Literature Review Event Marketing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key words</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Name of Article/book</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event Marketing, Events, Marketing Communication, Experimental Marketing, Marketing Interaction, Psychological Contract</td>
<td>Crowther, &amp; Donlan (2011)</td>
<td>Value-creation space: The role of events in a service-dominant marketing paradigm</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zarantonello, &amp; Schmitt (2013)</td>
<td>The impact of event marketing on brand equity The mediating roles of brand experience and brand attitude</td>
<td>Printed article</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lanner &amp; Söderberg (2006)</td>
<td>För 50 000 Skojar vi till det lite: Om konsten att lyckas och misslyckas med event marknadsföring</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close, Finney, Lacey, &amp; Sneath (2006)</td>
<td>Engaging the Consumer through Event Marketing: Linking Attendees with the Sponsor, Community, and Brand</td>
<td>Printed article</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tafesse (2016)</td>
<td>Conceptualization of Brand Experience in an Event Marketing Context</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these key words were used in different combinations when searching for literature. The list is also something that has been growing over time and is nothing that the authors decided upon beforehand, the same goes for the search for EB. The more articles they read the more key words was developed and investigated further in order to find more relevant theories and concepts to use.

For both EB and EM there are a few additional articles more directed towards value creating theories. Despite that these articles are regarding both the field of EB and EM, the authors decided that they would suit better in a qualitative study where it is easier to define personal values through a more in depth interview instead of in a study where one is trying to generalize findings. The authors have therefore not specifically asked for these things in their survey nor used these theories in their study. They have however rather used indirect questions that are in line with previous research and general theories within EB.
2.6.6 The Literatures Direction Towards Companies

When searching for literature to use for this study the authors noticed that most of the theories mentioned are with the perspective of how the companies perceive EM and EB. The students’ perspective, or any target group within these subjects, is barely represented by the literature today. All of the theories used in this thesis have been directed towards students instead of for the company. However, this is why the authors chose a deductive approach and aim to test if these theories can be applied to business students at USBE. They also found that most of the literature within EM is mostly directed towards when selling a product. Despite that these theories are not precisely what this study is about, the authors have found them to be adjacent and accurate enough to be able to be applied here.
3. Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework is to present the current theories and practical use of the concepts in this thesis. It starts with a theoretical overview to help the readers understanding of how the concepts can fit together. It continues with an introduction of the academic theories within the subjects EB and EM that will lead to the derivation of the propositions used in this study.

3.1 Theoretical Overview

Throughout the theoretical chapter the concepts EB and EM are going to be connected to each other through similar theories. To help guide the reader through this chapter a theoretical overview is presented below.

![Theoretical Overview Diagram]

*Figure 1. Theoretical Overview*

This visual overview is intended to be used as a tool for understanding how the different concepts and main variables are theoretically interconnected to each other.

In short terms the connections between EB and EM can be described as EB done through events. The event provides an opportunity for interaction and can be used by the students to ask questions or in other ways gain what they perceive to be relevant information or knowledge for them. The event also provides a brand recognition opportunity so that the students can learn about completely new companies. This will ultimately result in the students finding potential employers.
3.2 Theoretical Background Employer Branding (EB)

In the introduction the authors defined EB as the brand a company has as an employer. One can argue that the fundamental of the concept is that human capital brings value to the company, and if one invests correctly in the right people, the performance of a company will be enhanced (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 505). Recruiting new employees is therefore important for the continued growth (Jain & Bhatt, 2015, p. 635). Foster et al. (2010, p. 401) also explain that employers can use EB as a tool to make sure that the right kind of people gets recruited. A company often attracts the "right kind" of talent by expressing their organizational attributes (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 52; Jain & Bhatt, 2015, p. 635; Mosley, 2007, p. 131) in order to differentiate themselves in some way from their competitors so they are viewed as more desirable working place (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 502; Mosley, 2007, p. 131). Examples of attributes that can be emphasized are corporate culture, career prospects, brand name, compensation etc. (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 53). Using EB to attract employees can thus create a new competitive market for organizations that is mainly about finding the right talent, not just finding the right customers (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 52).

In order to make sure companies hire the desired talents, the employer should strive to create a “psychological contract” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 504) with people possessing the right competence to create a type of loyalty to the organization (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, pp. 51-52). Creating this contract with potential employees can help them receive a more developed picture of how it really is working at the company (Foster et al., 2010, p. 403).

3.2.1 Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

Most companies working actively with their EB have some sort of promise of providing a good working place for their employees (Dyhre & Parment, 2012, p. 93). This promise should be truthfully for those currently working for the company but should also attract potential employees. This promise is called Employer Value Proposition (EPV) (Dyhre & Parment, 2012, p. 93) and should be the core of a company's EB. The EPV should be clear, true, concrete, and different from those of the competition (Dyhre & Parment, 2012, p. 97).

Students encounter different companies every day but they do not necessary see them as an employer of choice. The EVP is the promise that the company makes to the potential employee of how they will act as an employer (Dyhre & Parment, 2012, p. 93) and therefore can get students to see the attractiveness of the company as an employer.

3.2.2 Marketing EB and EVP

When a company has a clear EVP the next step is how to communicate it in the right way to the right target group. As previously mentioned in the theoretical background, companies can use a lot of different types of marketing when promoting EB, and the selection of the channel often depend on their target audience (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 51). There are many ways to reach potential employees for example through job portals, company visits, presentations etc. (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 55). Since it is becoming a more and more digitalized world, much focus in external marketing of EB has been undertaken to make sure that companies manage the digital channels in a strategical way (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 55). Performing this kind of external marketing aims to attract the best employees and make the company an
employer of choice for them (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 505). However, as most brands, the perception of the employer brand depends on the segment, and can alter based on gender, age, culture etc. (Jain & Bhatt, 2015, p. 637). Hence, one need to adjust the external marketing according to the desired target group and at the same time help strengthen your image as an employer (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 502). The potential employee needs to perceive the company's attributes as something unique and desirable to them (Leekha & Sharma, 2014, p. 51). Companies therefore need to be aware of research such as Academic Work and TNS Sifo's (Academic Work, 2015) survey about what students find attractive in employers, as well as they need to be aware how students search for employers today to insure the right usage of external channels.

Companies often market themselves to increase consumers' awareness of their brand (Duncan, 2002, p. 736), and in the same way they need to market their EB and EVP to show off the right attributes in the right way, to the right people. The problem with branding and the marketing of the EVP is that measuring changes in attitudes and opinions is difficult, since these changes exist only in people's minds (Duncan, 2002, p. 736). However, the use of EM has shown to be effective when trying to change attitudes in customers (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013, p. 25) and therefore could be effective when marketing and branding EB and EVP as well.

### 3.3 Theoretical Background Event Marketing (EM)

EM has been growing concepts ever since it first started to be used in the 80's (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 18). Behrer and Sandgren (1998, pp. 20-21) claims that there are three main arguments why EM is a growing trend amongst organizations:

1. The economical incitements of finding new communication channels have increased. Companies are in general trying to be more and more cost-efficient and this, which effects the marketing budget (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 20).

2. New demands on company's marketing have emerged. There is an increasing customer-focus that emphasizes the importance of value creating advertisement. Traditional marketing can be viewed as more informational than communicational, were as the EM creates an interactional platform (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 66).

3. The experiences and the knowledge of EM have increased, and therefore the implementation processes are nowadays more standardized, making it easier to implement in organizations. (Behrer and Sandgren, 1998, pp. 20-21)

EM is however still seen as a form of experiential marketing (Zarantonello, 2013, p. 3; Wood, 2009, pp. 249-250) and is recommended to be used by those who want to do something new and different (Wood, 2009, p. 255). Nevertheless, a well thought through and thoroughly executed event does give a good possibility to break through the advertising noise that consumers are constantly a subject to today (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 62).

#### 3.3.1 Definition of Events

EM has previously been defined as marketing and branding done through events. A question that needs to be addressed is: what is an event? According to Wood (2009, p. 248) "all events can be seen as (or more importantly used as) 'marketing' events". Wood (2009, p. 248) also
argue that all events can communicate something, but that it is important to limit the variety of events one uses for the solely purpose of marketing. Due to that the concept itself are quite wide, the authors of this thesis found it to be of importance to add limitations to the definition and therefore determine it to be, in this thesis, either recruitment fairs, mingle events or guest lectures.

The biggest recruitment fair at the campus of Umeå University is called Uniaden which attracts many business and economics students every year. At this event many companies have a promotion stand where the students talk to them and either ask questions or listen to what the company has to say about themselves. At guest lectures different companies can present themselves for the students and/or their field of business through a brief lecture. The third type of event is mingle events with companies. Some companies arrange these events where student can meet the company during more relaxed conditions.

3.4 Propositions

3.4.1 Proposition 1 & 2 – Learn About New and Old Companies

The objective of this thesis is to research if EM is a way for students to find potential employers. One of the basic prerequisite in this is to actually find a company. If you do not know that a company exists, it can be difficult to research information and decide if one would like to work there or not.

Close et al. (2006, p. 420) explain that one can use events as a way to “communicate with the brand” because it creates a kind of interactivity that traditional marketing cannot give (Close et al., 2006, p. 422). Due to this, the phenomenon of EM is growing as an alternative way of marketing to create relationships with the costumers (Tafesse, 2016, pp. 35-36). Despite that this concept is up and rising, Sneath et al. (2005, p. 380) argue that events are more beneficial for companies when the attendees already have previous knowledge about them and that the potential target group do not really notice companies they have not heard of before. This argumentation is however derived from within a setting when a company is a sponsor of events and are also viewed from a company’s perspective. Despite this perspective, the authors of this thesis decided to test if other types of events (guest lectures, mingle events and recruitment fairs) than sponsorship is an efficient way for students to learn about new companies. Hence, the first proposition to be tested is:

**P1 Students who go to events learn about new companies they have not heard of before**

As a contrast to the first proposition and to test if the theory Sneath (2005, p. 380) presents is applicable to students, the second proposition is to examine if students who meet companies they already knew existed, will learn more about them when attending an event.

**P2 Students who go to events learn more about companies they already knew about**

3.4.2 Proposition 3 – Students Who Go to Events Interact with Companies

In all kinds of brand marketing, communication between the business and the consumer has always been acknowledged as an important part. Research is now suggesting that increasing interactivity is a critical part of brand communication (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006, p. 315).
One can argue that marketing EB can be done in the same way as when marketing any “ordinary” brand to consumers. Hence, the authors of this thesis argue that interaction would be an important part of the EB as well. Interaction can be defined as “mutual or reciprocal action where two or more parties have an effect upon one another” (Grönroos, 2011, p. 244). In this thesis interaction is defined as a two-way communication, a dialogue of some sort, between two or more parties.

Grönroos (2008, p. 37) suggests that by focusing on and creating interactions between consumer and company, regardless if it is continually or sporadic, one enables the possibility of creating a relationship. The interaction opportunities, and possibility to create experience, between the company personnel and consumers presented at events are one of the things that differentiate EM and are critical for a successful implementation of an event (Wood, 2009, p. 251). The interaction given when performing EM also creates a platform for creating and maintaining a long-term relationship with the attendees (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 59). If an organization continually strive towards interactive communication, this could lead to a stronger brand relationship for the costumer (Grönroos, 2008, p.27), or in this case, a stronger EB relationship with the potential employees (i.e. students).

The before mentioned theories are, as many other marketing concepts, directed towards companies and how important the interaction is for them. However, the interaction and the building of relationship is important for the consumers and in this case potential employees as well. Research suggests that potential employees compare their personal requirements for the job as well as personal traits and values to the one of the company (Foster et al., 2010, p. 403). If one participates in an event and are exposed to the possible interaction opportunities, one has first-hand experience of the brand and are “better equipped to anchor multi-sensual brand experiences in the world of customer feelings and experiences” (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006, p. 646). One therefore can argue that interactions are a valid foundation for students to do an assessment of their personal match to the company. In order to do this, they need to interact with the company and create a dialogue, not just attend an event. Thus, the authors of this thesis would like to measure if students actually interact with the companies at event, which leads up to the proposition.

P3 Students who go to events interact with companies

3.4.3 Proposition 4 – Students Who Go to Events Receive More Knowledge

The authors argue that interaction is important due to the information exchange, or knowledge, that occur during events. As mentioned before, this is what differentiate EM from other types of marketing. Since the definition of interaction is a two-way communication the authors want to see if the students and companies interact with each other in a way that actually leads to more information about the potential employer and not just dialogue in general. In this study, the authors argue that in order to gain knowledge about a company at an event, one will have to receive information. Therefore, information and knowledge will be used interchangeably throughout the study. Despite that there is a difference in the concepts.

According to the book Event Marketing: a management guide (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 1) one aspect of EM is that it is crucial for successful communication and a way to reach larger target groups (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 20) where the attendees are “more open
and receptive" (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 2) to the organization. One can therefore argue that if a student attends an event they should be more open to the company's information sharing.

The information provided in company websites, Facebook posts, commercials etc. is limited. Even if a company has a well thought through website with all the information they can think of, the website will still be restricted because it is a one-way communication channel. Grönroos (2011, p. 244) suggests that there is a co-creation of value when interaction occur and without this interaction there can be no joint value creation. One can therefore argue that in the interaction provided by EM is a way for both students and companies to get the value they want from the interaction. For example, it was mentioned in the background that both company culture and leadership is very important aspects in a future working place for business and economics students in Sweden. One can argue that this aspect is not easily explained in a text on a website but questions such as these can be answered in a dialogue, hence the interaction moment.

EM can be seen as catalyst to create relationship and dialogues (Crowther, 2011, p. 24) but this does not mean that students gain from mere interaction. The authors of this thesis believe that there need to be something else to the equation. Foster et al. (2010, p. 405) proposed that interaction can give perspectives, and these can be important when choosing an employer. In order to gain these perspectives, the authors of this thesis therefore argue that the students need useful information about the company. Having all of this in consideration, the fourth proposition will be:

**P4 Students who go to events receive more knowledge about the company**

3.4.4 Proposition 5 – Interaction at Events Results in Students Being More Inclined to Apply to the Company

Crowther & Donlan (2011, p. 24) see events as a strategic tool that works as a catalyst for creating interactions. One can argue that if a company is arranging or attending an event, there is an opportunity for interaction where the company can engage attendees in a different way (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013, p. 11) than other types of marketing. Engaging the potential employees, actively work with EB and EVP, and giving knowledge about them and their values (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 503) to potential employees is the strength of events (Crowther & Donlan, 2011, p. 24; Wood, 2009, p. 252). Sharing the values and attributes can make the company more attractive (Jain & Bhatt, 2015, p. 635). Drengner & Jahn (2008, p. 144) say that increased interaction with customers and the company can influence the brand image. Hence, the authors of this thesis want to test the possibility that if the students (i.e. costumer) have a better perception EB (i.e. brand image) the students will find the company more attractive as an employer and therefore will be more likely to apply. This attractiveness and perception of the brand is believed to be achieved through interaction. So in order to generalize if this opportunity for interaction can give incentives for the student to apply to the company, the fifth proposition becomes:

**P5 Students who have interacted with a company at an event are inclined to apply to that company**
3.4.5 Proposition 6 – Students Who Receive Knowledge at an Event Are Likely to Apply

Sneath (2006, p. 380) believes that it is good for consumers to interact with the product in order to change their thoughts about them. Despite that they are explaining how the interaction between the consumer and the product itself can increase sales (Sneath, 2006, p. 379; Close et al., 2006, p. 422) and help them change their perception of the product (Sneath, 2006, p. 379), the authors of this thesis believe that there is an interchangeability between the product and the company in these theories. To relate these theories to this thesis one can say that the author believes that interaction with the company at an event can increase the attractiveness and change the perception of the company.

When using an event to sell something, either a service or a product, one is most likely to try to explain why this is the best product or service out on the market, just as one are most likely to talk about why the company is better than its competitors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 502) when using EB. When considering to apply to a company the students can consider different factors that may not be clear on the company webpage or similar and therefore the authors of this thesis previously argued that interaction is a way for them to gain more specific knowledge (see Proposition 3 and 4). For this proposition the authors want to see if this type of individualized and specific knowledge about the company as an employer will make them more likely to apply. This creates the proposition:

**P6 Students who have received knowledge about a company at an event are likely to apply to that company**

3.4.6 Proposition 7 – Students Who Interact with Companies Receive More Knowledge

The interviewed company explained that it is not always the generic information that is important when trying to recruit students because they can find much of this kind of information about the company online. They do however emphasize the importance of trying to share attributes, diversity of the tasks and the profession itself in order to create value. Different researchers argue on what gives value to a company: Crowther & Donlan (2011, p. 24) say that an event has to have successful dialogues, Drenger & Jahn (2008, p. 139) say that it is the detailed information gained meanwhile Close et al. (2006, p. 430) says that it is about knowledge of offerings from a company. The authors of this thesis argue that the bottom line of all of these argumentations are sharing of information and knowledge with your costumer in order to encourage them to engage in purchases or application to the company either at the event or later. As argued before, since events can be used to create an interaction (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013, p. 11) the authors of this thesis argue that if students are exposed to situations where these dialogues can take place between a potential employer and themselves, they have the possibility to learn more specific and personalized information about the company. The authors therefore would like to investigate, as proposition 7, if:

**P7 Student who interact with companies at events do receive more specific information**
3.3.7 Proposition 8 – Students Who Met a company at an Event Are More Interested in Them as an Employer

When trying to attract potential employees, external marketing of EB is essential (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p.503) and as Foster et al. (2010, p. 403) points out; one way to have a strong EB is by creating a psychological contract with the potential employees. This contract will increase the possibilities for an application to the company (Foster et al., 2010, p. 405). However, just because students have met a company at an event does not mean that it is relevant to apply to them right now or that the company is suitable to them. Due to this the authors of this thesis wanted to not only show the connection between meeting a company at an event and send an application to them, but also investigate if events can create a general attraction to that company. Just as argued in the previous proposition about branding and dialogues, the same argumentation pattern is used to derive this proposition. If the students interact with a company at an event, and assuming that they receive more specific information about that organization, they are more likely to feel interested in that organization. Creating this interest in a company can be seen as the psychological contract the potential employer creates with the student. The authors therefore argue that meeting a company at an event can create an interest in them as an employer, which leads them to the proposition:

P8 Students who have met a company at an event are more interested in that company as an employer
4. Practical Methodology

This chapter presents the survey design, sampling method, and how the data was collected. Errors and criteria in business research are addressed to enhance the credibility of the research.

4.1 Survey Design

4.1.1 Self-Completing Questionnaire

Researchers always face several important decisions regarding their study and one of them is what type of data that needs to be collected: Primary or secondary (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 256). The authors found a lack of research within the area, which lead to that they desired to generalize findings, therefore the decision to collect primary data was made (see 4.2 Data Collection). According to the authors of this thesis, conducting a self-completing questionnaire (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 176) for collecting this type of data was most suitable. This type of quantitative study has the advantages that it is quicker to administer (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 223) which is important for this thesis since it has a strict time limit. Self-completing questionnaires also have the absence of the “interviewer effect”, meaning that there will be no effect on the respondents’ answers from the interviewer’s gender, age etc. There is no interviewer variability in this type of questionnaire either. Hence, the questions will appear in the same way and will be asked in the same way for each respondent. There is also a convenience for the respondents since they can answer it whenever they want (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, pp. 223-233). The authors believe this can decrease the possibility of non-responses.

The authors are however aware of the negative aspects of conducting a self-completing questionnaire. These aspects include, no help for the respondents if they have problems answering a question and there are no possibilities to elaborate the answer more than the response alternatives allow (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 233). The authors nevertheless believe that the positive aspects of having a self-completing questionnaire exceeds the negative.

4.1.2 The Design of the Self-Completing Questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire is very crucial when collecting data. Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 371-372) believes that the design process of the questionnaire lays down the ground for the validity and reliability of a study, where the questions asked need to be clear enough to be interpreted and decoded in the same way by both the respondent and researcher. If there is a gap, there is a chance that the result from the survey can be questioned and/or bias can occur. The questions were derived from previous research by looking at key terms they have used and formulate a question based on them as a foundation. The authors decided to create the survey in Google Forms as an online survey. This program does create an Excel Spreadsheet of the answers automatically. It can be downloaded and immediately uploaded in the statistical analysis program Minitab, the chosen program for the analysis. Minitab was chosen because it is a statistical program that the authors have previously used in their statistics course and it contain all the functions and tests that is needed for this study. The full survey can be found in appendix 1.
The self-completing questionnaire for this thesis contains three parts. The first is a background section where the participants needed to answer a few background questions such as what gender they identify themselves as, age, current studies, if they have attended any events etc. These questions are of the nominal type (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 418) and the participants were presented with not only answer such as “yes” or “no”, they were always presented with an option “other” or “I do not know” to secure that everyone can answer the questions. The purpose of these questions were to ensure two things: That the participant is a part of the cluster that was randomly selected and to ensure diversity within the cluster.

The second section presents questions regarding attendance at events, and were therefore the main part of the survey. The questions regarded the opinions of the respondent and were designed with a Likert scale where they could choose any number from 1 to 5, where 1 being not at all and 5 being very much (Appendix 1). This type of scale was chosen in order to more accurately measure the correlation between the questions. Also, the authors believed that choosing numbers on a scale could capture the nuances of the replies. This type of questions also produces ordinal data. Throughout this section there was a brief explaining text immediately underneath almost all of the questions which defined the concepts being asked for, to make sure that the respondents define the concept in the same way as the authors does. The questions start with “in general” because the authors are aware that events can be both good and bad and since they were not trying to analyze a specific event, they took a decision to ask the questions in a more general way.

The issue with this section is that the authors did assume that people have attended events. In order to prevent people that have not attended events to answer this section the authors wrote an introduction where they explained that students who have not attended events should not answer this section. For the first three questions they asked about different types of events. Due to the survey creating program there was no possibility to add an option "I have not attended". However, these questions were not mandatory so if a participant have not attended for example a mingle event, they can just skip that question and answer the next, if they desire.

For each of the proposition that the authors have derived, they have connected the questions according to the following:

Table 3. Questions Connected to the Proposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>9 (Uniaden), 10 (Guest Lectures), 11 (Mingle Events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>12 (Knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>13 (Ask Questions), 16 (Interactions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>12, 14 (Attributes), 15 (Information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>13, 16, 18 (Likeliness to apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>12, 14, 15, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 15, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17 (Interested in a company)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who have not attended events at Umeå University, hence do not fulfill earlier mentioned criteria, have the possibility to proceed to section three. This section asks general
questions regarding the students view on EM as a way for them to find potential employers. The first question regarded what the students believe is the most efficient way to meet employers. The following two questions deals with the students’ opinion, weather if they have attended an event or not, if they believe that events can help them find employers and if they are interested in attending events to find future employers. The authors decided to have these last questions in order to lay a groundwork for future research. If the authors can see that there is an interest in events and if students believe that events can be used to meet companies, they argue that the results can lay a foundation for a future qualitative study.

4.1.3 Sampling Method

Probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 213; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 179) are a preferred sampling method when conducting surveys because everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected to participate as a sample. It is also the most likely to not contain much biases hence it is a good method to use when trying to generalize findings. Amongst the different probability sampling methods, the authors have chosen to conduct a cluster sampling (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 230; Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 181-184). This type does divide the populations into different clusters and then some of the clusters are chosen at random to become the sample. The authors found some natural divisions of the students group studying at Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE) and decided to choose year (set of two semesters) of study as their clusters.

One of the more negative aspects of cluster sampling is if the people in the cluster themselves are too alike (Zikmund et al., 2012, p. 398) they will not represent the population in an accurate way, especially when there is a lot of difference between the clusters. However, at Umeå University a student is first and foremost a part of a program and then within the program one can choose a field of study. But just by dividing the students based on the year they are studying at Umeå University means that the authors can capture students from each program and each field. This makes them believe that there is a good diversity within the clusters but not too much difference between the clusters themselves.

The authors used a third party to distribute the survey to the chosen clusters. They contacted a student counselor and asked if there was a possibility for that person to distribute the survey to the students. Previously students enrolled at a program at USBE have had access to a student email list to all students studying business or economics but the authors were informed that due to a security breach that lead to privacy issues in the system the IT department decided to withdraw the access to that list. This means that the authors of this thesis do not personally have access to a complete sample frame (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 217), however the student counselor does. The motivation to using a third party in this case means that the authors could reach their population without overstepping any privacy issues, see section 2.5 Ethical Considerations.

Using a third party also secures the anonymity of the sample. When discussing with the third party about possible ways to reach the students the authors was informed that some of the students at the university have tied their own personal email to the email list, which means that if the authors would have gotten access to that list, they would also have a possibility to access personal information about those students. Also, there is a chance that the authors could recognize an email address to someone they know, which could compromise the anonymity of the participant. One drawback of using the third party is that despite that their
database should be up to date, there is no way for the authors to guarantee that all of the email addresses they have is updated or correct.

4.1.4 Sample Size

In order to be able to generalize a population with accuracy you need to have a sample size that is “big enough” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 218). There is no right or wrong when it comes to the size but there are a few things to keep in mind such as absolute size, time, non-response, heterogeneity and kind analysis (Bryman & bell, 2011, p. 187). The “right sample size” is most likely going to be a judgement call (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 218) but it is important to make sure that the sample is big enough to be able to draw conclusions about the population (Moore et al., 2011, p. 187). There are statistical ways to calculate what the needed sample have to be, however this can be quite difficult since one need to know the actual standard deviation of the population, which is in most cases unknown (Moore et al., 2011, p. 345). Since the authors do not know this, they had to rely on the law of large numbers (Moore et al., 2011, p. 264) and central limit theorem (Moore et al., 2011, p. 271). The former says that the more observations one has the closer the sample’s mean is to the actual mean of the population. This can also be relied on, even if the data does not follow a normal distribution (Moore et al., 2011, pp. 45-46). There is also a law of small numbers (Moore et al., 2011, p. 266) which states that randomness cannot occur in small numbers, which also emphasize that you need a “big enough” sample. Central limit theorem states that if you have randomness in your sample and your sample is large, one can assume that there is a normal distribution (Moore et al., 2011, p. 271).

In this study the sample were approximately 384 students enrolled at USBE, out of which the authors received 139 replies but 132 replies could be included in the study. The 7 that was removed did not belong to the clusters and therefore was not included in the analysis. The authors decided to have two clusters in the sample in order to manage to get a higher sample size, because this total number is dependent on how many students that are in each cluster. The number of responses is large enough for the authors to assume that one can rely on the law of large numbers and the central limit theorem when analyzing the collected data. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 218) also says that a sample size over 30 most likely have a normal distribution and since that the actual sample size the authors received are more than that they assume that the data has this type of distribution. This makes the authors more confident that they could use statistical inference (Moore et al., 2011, p. 152) from this particular sample.

4.2 Data Collection

When collecting data there are two types of data that you can collect: primary and secondary data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 256). Secondary data (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 28) is data that have previously been collected by other researchers etc. for the purpose of their study. The benefits of using this type of data can be that it is less expensive and can save time (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 72). The problem with it is that it sometimes can be hard to use it for the purpose of the study oneself are conducting, hence the data might not match the purpose of this study. Another issue can be that the quality of the data is hard to assure (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 73). The authors discussed if this was a proper idea, however they concluded that since this type of study is fairly new, the data available would much likely not accurately help answering the research question nor the propositions. Therefore, the authors decided to collect primary data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 256). This will give them the advantage of making sure that the
methods used to collect the data fits the study (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 72) and that the authors can be in charge of every step of the data collection, from deciding how to collect to interpreting it (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 77). Benefits can also be that the authors can ask questions that are specifically designed for the purpose of the study, which they felt was necessary in order to be able to find correlation between the students’ perception of the employers at events.

4.3 Data Analysis

When deciding upon what kind of analysis to conduct there are a limited amount of statistical tests that can be conducted. The authors will have one population, students, that they are going to test their propositions on. This is also from where the sample is derived. The design of the questions in the survey are, as mentioned before, of Likert type. The replies from this type of data are ordinal (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 418) and the statistical tests are chosen accordingly. Below there is a summary of which proposition that is connected to which question and what type of test the authors have decided to perform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Type of Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>9, 10, 11</td>
<td>T-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>T-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>13, 16</td>
<td>T-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>12, 14, 15</td>
<td>T-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>13, 16, 18</td>
<td>Spearman Rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>12, 14, 15, 18</td>
<td>Spearman Rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>12, 13, 14, 15, 16</td>
<td>Spearman Rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17</td>
<td>Spearman Rho</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the first couple of propositions, 1-4, the analysis is going to be done by first conducting a t-test and then looking at the mean, median and the standard deviation from the data collected. The t-test will give us a p-value from where a conclusion if the data is significant or not can be derived. The chosen significance level is 5% to give the authors a 95% confidence interval, and therefore the p-value are not allowed to be higher than 0,05. If it it above the accepted level, there is no empirical evidence that can help the authors accept the proposition, and therefore it will be rejected based on insignificance. Then the authors of this thesis will look at the mean. In the t-test the authors of this thesis will test if the mean is above the “neutral-mean 3” (Boone & Boone, 2012, p. 2), since it is a 5-point scale. Anything above 3 can indicate a positive result. These propositions are connected to the questions 9-16.

For the next two propositions, 5-6, a Spearman correlation test (Puth et al., 2015, pp. 77-78) is going to be conducted against question 18. The Spearman correlation test was selected due to the nature of the data, ordinal. Puth et al. (2015, p. 78) and Boone & Boone (2012, p. 3) explain that if the data collected is ordinal it is impossible to make a Pearson correlation because this particular test is designed for interval scales. This type of test is also limited to linear correlation (Puth et al., 2015, p. 78) and since the authors cannot make an assumption of linearity with confidence, Spearman’s rho is chosen. The significance level is the same for these propositions as before, 5%. The authors will look at the p-value first and then see if
there is any correlation. If it is a perfect correlation, the value will be -1 or 1 (Moore et al., 2011, p. 95). The closer to 0 it is, the weaker the correlation.

For propositions 7-8, Spearman’s correlation test is going to be used. Also, as argued in previous section, the p-value will first be analyzed to ensure that the data is significant. For proposition 7 the questions 12, 14 and 15 are tested against 13 and 16 respectively. For proposition 8 the questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16 are tested against question 17. The number and short describing text for each of the questions can be found in Table 3.

Some of the propositions contain multiple questions, which means that there is a risk of mixed evidence in the results. If such results will appear, the authors of this thesis will label the proposition with “mixed results” and will not be able to help the authors answer the research question. If this occurs, they will discuss it in relation to both the research question and separately from the rest of the propositions. They will also present it as an additional comment to the answer of the research question and raise suggestions for future studies regarding that particular proposition.

In addition to these tests, a number of variables are going to be tested through multiple regression (Hair et al., 2003b, pp. 296 – 297) to see if there is a correlation between them that can help the authors lay a groundwork for future studies. The spearman rho will however be the main basis of the analysis for this thesis. The table below shows which variables, predictor, are going to be tested against which response for the multiple regression analysis:

**Table 5. Response and Predictor Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Variable</th>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>13, 16</td>
<td>P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>12, 14, 15</td>
<td>P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13, 16</td>
<td>P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16</td>
<td>P8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all of these tests, if the majority of the propositions are rejected, the research question will also be interpreted as having a negative result. For the proposition testing, if there are more than one variable tested, the same reasoning will be applied. If the majority of the questions will be rejected, the authors will interpret it as a rejection.

### 4.4 Errors

There is always a chance of errors in any research. Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 196) mention four types that are the most common ones: Sampling, Sampling-related, Collection, and processing. The first is when the sample does not represent the population (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 177) and are one of the types of errors that is hard to completely eliminate (Bryman & Bell, p. 179). The authors have used a type of probability sampling to lower the risk of this. Sampling-related (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 176) is about when there are errors connected to the sampling approach, such as non-response or bad wording of the survey. The authors have tried to word and explain everything as clear as possible in order to avoid this. The non-response factor that the authors are unable to control are those students who choose not to participate due to that they are not interested in events or if they are not interested in
answering surveys in general. These factors are always important to have in mind, however since the study is about question the students who have attended events, the authors does not believe that the non-response from people not interested in events created biases. The ones who for some reason did not answer the survey due to lack of convenience might possess valuable information but as mentioned before, the authors are unable to control this type of non-response. Collection error (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 196) can occur when there is for example administration issues while collecting data. The authors do believe that this is not an issue. Processing error (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 196) can occur when the authors are trying to code the answers. Since the answers are recorded digitally and the author are not going to process the data by de-coding text on a paper into numbers on a screen, hence this error is also being avoided as far as possible.

4.4.1 Lurking Variables

Lurking variables (Moore et al., 2011, p. 121) are variables that the author did not account for in their testing, but is something that can explain a variable. These are hard to account for in advance and can be crucial when it comes to trying to explain correlations (Moore et al., 2011, p. 121). In this study there is a high chance that there is lurking variables that can affect the results of the study. This is especially true for the later propositions where the authors are trying to explain the correlation between different variables. The authors have tried to account for this problem by scrutinizing the existing theories to see what those authors believe are the variables within EM and EB. The authors of this study have then tried to adjust for the different variables when constructing the survey and model.

4.4.2 Missing Data

Missing data (Hair et al., 2003b, pp. 229-230) is something the authors need to take into consideration when analyzing. They can cause issues with validity and most likely comes from data collection or data entry (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 229). The authors have decided to follow Bryman & Bell’s (2011, p. 338) example and code every missing data variable as “0”. If there is no missing data, they do not include this “0” in the results. The authors will however in the analysis part declare how many missing data they have received for each question, if they received any.

4.4.3 Analysis Errors

When analyzing the data there are a few issues to have in mind. When doing multiple regression analyses there are a chance of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2003b, pp. 303). This occurs when independent variables are correlated to each other (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 303) and are explaining the same thing. If the correlation between the two variables are high, it can create instability in the multiple regression testing (Moor et al., 2011, p. 610). One way to lower the risk of this is also to test the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) (Moore et al., 2011, p. 610; Hair et al., 2003b, p. 305). The higher the VIF value, the higher correlation there is between the two variables (Moore et al., 2011, p. 610) and can indicate high multicollinearity and cause problems in a multiple regression analysis (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 297). If the value is near 0 (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 305), there is no correlation meanwhile if it is 10 it is a high correlation (Moore et al., 2001, p. 610). In general, if it is 1 there is some type of correlation, however it is less likely that it will cause any problem with the testing of these variables in the same model (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 305). The Cronbach alpha is also going to be calculated
in order to see if the questions actually answers the same thing. If there is a high VIF value and a high Cronbach alpha, one can assume that they are correlated and the authors should proceed with caution if they decide to include all of these variables when they test the propositions. If the VIF value is high and the Cronbach alpha is high, the authors will assume multicollinearity between the variables. Also see explanation of the alpha in section 4.5.1 Reliability.

The authors will look at the R-squared (R-sq) when they conduct the multiple regression analysis. This can give an indication of how much of the variance that can be explained by the variables (Moor et al., 2011, p. 106). The higher this value are (in percent) the more the variables explains the response (Moore et al., 2011, p. 599). The authors have used the R-sq adjusted because it takes in consideration the number or variables that are tested, and can therefore be more accurate than the “normal” r-sq.

Another issue that needs to be addressed when testing propositions is the possibility of type 1 and type 2 errors (Moore et al., 2011, pp. 382-383). Type 1 is when a researcher rejects a proposition when it is true and the opposite, accept a proposition when it is false, for type 2 (Moore et al., 2011, p. 382). These cannot be completely avoided at all times, however by implementing random sampling to the study and use the laws of probability (Moore et al., 2011, p. 217) one can determine how likely it is that these two types occur (Moore et al., 2011, p. 383). By using a fixed significance level (Moore et al., 2011, p. 358), and the results is higher than the pre-determined value, one can reject the proposition they are testing (Moore et al., 2011, p. 383). A common significance level is 0,05 (Moore et al., 2011, p. 358), which the authors have also used in this study. If the P-value is above 0,05, there is no empirical support for the proposition.

The author conducting tests also need to look at outliers (Moore et al., 2011, p. 21) because they can skew the results, especially when calculating mean. If there are outliers within the data, the authors will report this in their findings and plot it in a box plot in order to give a visual to the reader regarding this issue. They will also consider them when they are analyzing the results, especially for the propositions where they mainly are using mean as their main source for rejecting or accepting the proposition. One way to do this is to also include the median when presenting the result and have both median and mean in mind when drawing a conclusion about the data.

4.5 Criteria in business research

4.5.1 Reliability

The reliability criterion evaluates if the results of the study are repeatable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). Hence, if one where to conduct the same research again it would provide the same results. This is especially important for quantitative research, because the measurements play a big part and therefore need to be stable (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41).

One important aspect of reliability is the internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 158), which is a measure of how consistent the answers of the participants are. It does measure the means of a question and compares it to the other replies the same person has chosen to see if there is a consistency in the answers. The Cronbach alpha (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 159) does take all of the means from each participants and calculates all the possible averages of a so called “Split-half test” (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 397). The result will be a number between 0
and 1 (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 159), where 1 indicates a strong internal reliability and the closer one gets to 0, the less it becomes. This is a way to see if the questions are related and are answering the same thing.

Table 6. Cronbach Alpha (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 172)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0.60</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.60 - 0.69</td>
<td>Ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.70 - 0.79</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 0.80</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study the authors have asked some questions that can seem as related to each other. These are questions about if students can gain knowledge, interaction and interest in a company. Making a Cronbach test on these different variables is to see if there is an internal reliability in the participants’ answers, that is if they are answering the questions consistently (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 397) and if the questions themselves are answering the same thing. The latter is also important to test to ensure that there exist little multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2003b, p. 303). According to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 159) an alpha result from 0.8 and up has a strong internal reliability, however as low results as 0.7 has been accepted as decent and have been used throughout studies. Hair et al. (2003a, p. 397) explain that they do believe that 0.6 is considered “unsatisfactory and marginal”. They also emphasize that a researcher should be critical to these numbers because it is a possibility that they alone cannot ensure validity to the data (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 397).

The Spearman correlation test was selected due to the nature of the data, ordinal. Puth et al. (2015, p. 78) and Boone & Boone (2012, p. 3) explain that if the data collected are ordinal it is impossible to make a Pearson correlation because it is designed for interval scales. This type of correlation is also limited to linear correlation (Puth et al., 2015, p. 78) and since the authors cannot make an assumption of linearity with confidence, Spearman’s rho was chosen.

4.5.2 Replication

Replication is, as the name implies, the fact that other people should be able to replicate the study. In order to do so, the authors must provide the readers with their procedures in detail (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 41). The authors of this thesis provide a structured and thoroughly thought through methodology were each if the research steps are presented in detail in order to enable replication.

4.5.3 Validity

Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 42) states that “Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research”. There are different types of validity; measurement, internal, external, and ecological (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 42).
**Measurement Validity**

Measurement validity concerns the question of whether or not the measurements created actually measures the right thing (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 42). This validity mostly applies to the quantitative research (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 42) and is therefore highly relevant to this thesis.

The authors decided upon the measurements (i.e. variables) knowledge and interaction. This decision was based on theories mentioned in 3. Theoretical Framework. Many of the theories provided in that section talk about interaction and sharing information but from a company’s point of view. As a complementation to these theories, the authors wanted to see if this also can be applicable to the student groups. One possible critique against these measurements is the subjective interpretation of the variables interaction and information. How much interaction one have received at an event is subjective and therefore for example a ranking of "three" on the Likert scale can mean different things for different people.

In addition, how many events the student have attended and the ranging quality of these events also matter since the respondents were asked to rank everything in general. If the respondents have attended five events and the majority of these was perceived to have great opportunities for interactions and the rest were not that good, what will the general answer be? This reasoning can be applied to the variable knowledge as well. However, the authors deem this generalization necessary since they are unable to conduct a survey in direct connection to a specific event. If they would have had this opportunity, they could have been able to ask for this specific events’ quality, hence increase the accuracy of the replies in connection to that event. This would also imply that they would not be able to generalize the result to the connection between EM and EB and how it can help students find employers in general, but more connected to that certain event or company.

**Internal Validity**

Internal validity addresses the issue of causality, hence whether or not a conclusion based on a causal relationship between two or more variables is accurate or if there can be other variables intervening and causing the relationship (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 42).

The authors do believe that one advantage of the combination of EB and EM is that a co-creation of value occur with interaction between students and companies. However, it can be hard to measure what specific value is, since it is subjective. As stated before, value is grouped together with sharing of information just as previous studies have done. Therefore, the authors decided upon interaction and knowledge as the measurements variables in order to be able to generalize the results. These will help the authors find if EM can help students find their future employers. It should also be acknowledged that a complementary qualitative study can be conducted to see if there are more potential variables that create value to the students and if these variables are intervening or causing a relationship between the variables tested in this study.

**External Validity**

External validity raises the question if the results and conclusions can be generalized outside the specific context of the thesis. Hence, this is the issue of how people are selected to participate in the survey (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 43). For this thesis a cluster sampling
(Saunders et al., 2009, p. 230; Bryman & Bell, 2011, pp. 181-184) are selected. This sampling method is more closely described and motivated in the section 4.1.3. Sampling Method. In order to provide this thesis with a good external validity and be able correctly generalize, the authors limited their population to USBE’s students. With this population, the authors believed that they would be able to obtain a big enough sample with a sufficient response rate. This has been developed further in 4.1.4. Sample Size.

Another aspect of the external validity is the conceptual model provided in this thesis. The authors have tried to generalize this model, therefore it can be applied to different target groups than the one specified in this thesis, such as engineering students or equivalent.

**Ecological validity**

Ecological validity criterion addresses the fact that research provided from the study should aim to be implementable to the daily life and its conditions (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 43). Whereas the previous validity criterion is relatively easily fulfilled when conducting a quantitative study, it can be argued that surveys have a hard time fulfilling this criterion. Answering a survey, and the lack of dialogue it provides, can give a limited ecological validity. (Bryman and & Bell, 2011, p. 43) It can in other words be hard to adapt numbers and statistical measurements in a social setting. The authors of this thesis believe that a well-designed survey and a thoroughly thought through analysis can help improve the ecological validity. However, since this thesis have a quantitative research strategy there will always be limitations.
5. Results

The result section presents the empirical findings from the data collected. It starts with descriptive statistics of the sample for the background section from the survey. It continues with the mean tests for proposition 1-4, and then the Spearman rho’s correlation tests and multiple regression analysis for proposition 5-8. After the propositions, students’ own thoughts regarding events are shown through descriptive statistics. The results end with a Cronbach Alpha analysis of the internal reliability of the questions.

5.1 Background Questions

The testing of the results in this study will start with descriptive statistics (Hair et al., 2003a, p. 232) of means, medians and standard deviations. As mentioned before, the background questions in section one was to make sure that the sample contains the people from the cluster and to make sure that there was diversity within the targeted cluster. The students that for some reason had replied to the survey and did not fulfil the requirements were removed from the results of the survey, to secure that there were not any biases due to that they did not belong to the cluster. All of the results of section one can be seen as visuals through graphs in the appendix 2.

Out of the 132 students that had replied and belonged to the sample, approximately half identified themselves as female (49,2%) and half as male (50,8%). There were none (0%) who identified themselves as other. In this category there was good diversity. The range of the age groups were 22-24 years old (64,4%), 25-27 (18,9%), 28-30 (9,8%), 19-21 (5,3%) and 31 and over (1,5%). In this group there were less diversity, however the reason to that was probably due to the education system where generally many students start university studies quite soon after finishing 12th grade. There was however some diversity, despite that students within the age 22-24 were the largest group.

![Figure 2. Genders and Figure 3. Age](image-url)

Question three and four in section one were to ensure that the students belonged to the right cluster. The ones that did not belong to the right cluster was excluded from the analysis in the study. 94,7% replied that they were currently studying business and economics and the other 5,3% of the participants did not. The latter was not included when analyzing the results. The result of question four regarding which semester they were enrolled in were: 5-6th semester (48,4%), 7-8th Semester (35,5%), 3-4th semester (8,9%), 1-2nd semester (6,5%) and other
(fifth semester) (0,8%). The clusters that were randomly selected was semester 5-6 and semester 7-8, which means that the others were excluded from the analysis of the results.

5.1.1 Diversity Within the Cluster

Questions five and six were also to ensure the diversity within the cluster. For the former, there was 88,8% who replied that they were planning to graduate within two years. Once again there was not much diversity, however this was expected since the random selection of the clusters ended up being the last two year of studies within USBE. The authors did not see this as a negative result and argue that since the students were soon graduating university, the likelihood of them having thought about employers and where to work were high. The authors therefore argue that it can be an advantage for the study due to that the following questions in section two was very contemporary for them. Question six was closely related to questions five and asked if the students were planning to enter the labor market after their studies. 69,6% answered that they were planning to work within their field of study. 18,4% said that they had not decided upon which field, 4,8% answered that they were not planning to enter the labor market and 7,2% did not know.

5.1.2 Previous Attendance at Events

Question seven was asked to ensure that the students in this survey had any first-hand experience with events. The question was also asked so that students who had not attended events can easily skip ahead to section three, which means that the authors did not waste their time by requiring them to answer questions they did not need to. The question was also included in the survey so that the authors could ensure that only students who have attended events had answered section two. No students who answered that they had not attended events or didn’t know if they had attended events did answer section two. This means that the authors could trust that there was no mismatch between attending events and answering section two, which is designed for those who actually had practical experience.

Question eight was a follow-up question to question seven and the purpose of this question was to find diversity. This question consisted of three different possibilities to answer how many events they had attended: 1-2 events (45,6%), 3-4 Events (31,6%) and 5 or more (22,8%). The percentage of each answer was fairly close to each other which means that in the cluster students had attended different amount of events.

5.2 Proposition 1 & 2 - Learn About New and Old Companies

The first three questions (9, 10, 11) in section two of the survey were regarding if students feel that they, in general, learn more about previously unknown companies at different types of events. On the forth question the authors asked if the students felt that they gained more knowledge about a company they already knew about at events. The means, median, p-value and standard deviations are presented in a table on the next page.
Table 7. Mean Testing P1 & P2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniaden</td>
<td>3,10</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>1,01</td>
<td>0,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lectures</td>
<td>3,42</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>0,96</td>
<td>0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingle events</td>
<td>2,89</td>
<td>3,00</td>
<td>1,03</td>
<td>0,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already known company</td>
<td>3,40</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>1,03</td>
<td>0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these four questions had a normal distribution (Appendix 3). The p-value for meeting companies at Uniaden and at mingle events are above the significance level of 5% (0,05) and therefore they will be rejected. For the question regarding if students learn more about companies at guest lectures, the p-value is 0,00, the standard deviation 0,96 and the median was 4. It is important to notice that there were 3 outliers (Moore et al., 2011, p. 17) that choose that they did not learn about new companies at guest lectures and 7 outliers that chose that they did not learn more about already known companies at events. These outliers could possibility skew the result of the mean, which makes it more important to also look at the median when analyzing the results. The outliers have not been excluded from the analysis.

Figure 4. Boxplot P1 & P2

5.2.1 Results for Proposition 1 & 2

The results from questions 9-11 that regarded if students gained knowledge about either new or already known companies showed that the data for Uniaden and mingle events were insignificant. Students gave a general answer that they learned more about companies at guest lectures, however since two out of the three questions connected to the authors lack empirical evidence and therefore proposition 1 is rejected.

If students learned about companies they already knew about before attending the event, the t-test showed a p-value of 0,00 and the mean were slightly higher (3,4) than “neutral 3”, but this included the 7 outliers. The median also showed a high result, 4, which gave an indication that students feel that they in general learned more about companies they already knew about at events. Therefore, proposition 2 was accepted.
5.3 Proposition 3 - Students Who Go to Events Interact with Companies

There were two questions regarding interactions: if students were asking questions at events and if they believed that they were interacting with companies at events. These two both had normal distributions (Appendix 3). The mean for if students were asking questions at events were 2,74 and for interacting with companies it was 2,89. For both of them the median were 3. The p-values are 0,99 and 0,85. The standard deviation was 1,17 for asking questions and 1,09 for interaction with companies. For these two questions there were no outliers.

*Table 8. Mean testing P3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At events</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>2,74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,17</td>
<td>0,99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>2,89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,09</td>
<td>0,85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1 Results for Proposition 3

The p-values for both of the questions were above the accepted significance level, therefore the authors do not have empirical evidence to accept the proposition. Therefore, proposition 3 was rejected.

5.4 Proposition 4 - Students Who Go to Events Receive More Knowledge

The three questions for proposition 4 were if students felt that they get increased knowledge about a company at an event, if they learn about a company’s attributes at an event, and if they felt like they get more information at an event compared to for example the company’s webpage. The mean, median, p-value and standard deviation are presented here:

*Table 9. Mean Testing P4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific information</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>3,40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,03</td>
<td>0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>3,01</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,01</td>
<td>0,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>3,04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,08</td>
<td>0,36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the three questions had a p-value above the significance level, meanwhile if students gained more knowledge at an event had an acceptable p-value. The latter had a mean of 3,40, median of 4 and a standard deviation of 1,03. This question also had 7 outliers. A boxplot of the questions can be seen on the next page.
5.4.1 Results for Proposition 4

For the majority of the questions the p-values were too high, therefore the authors lack empirical evidence to accept the proposition. Students feel like they are gaining more knowledge about companies at events, however since two of the three variables showed insignificance results, proposition 4 is rejected.

5.5 Proposition 5 - Interaction at Events Results in Students Being More Inclined to Apply to The Company

For proposition 5, the authors did a correlation test between question 18, which was the likeliness to apply to a company they had met at an event, and question 13 and 16 respectively. For the former (Question 13) against if they were likely to apply to a company after meeting them at an event (Question 18), the spearman rho was 0,16 with a p-value of 0,08. This showed that there was almost no correlation between asking questions at events and the likeliness to apply. In addition, the p-value was higher than the significance level of 0,05 that was chosen for these tests. For the latter (question 16), the spearman rho was 0,35 with a p-value of approximately 0,00. This showed a weak correlation between interaction and the likeliness to apply to a company after an event.

Table 10. Spearman’s Rho P5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman rho test</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposition</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Likeliness to apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A multiple regression test for these three questions was also conducted where the question 18, likeliness to apply, was the response variable and asking questions at events and interaction at events were the predictors. The results are presented on the next page.
The p-value for asking questions at events was quite high in this test meanwhile the question about interaction was low. The high p-value could be a concern for the result which means that one should care when interpreting the results. The VIF (Variance inflation factor) were at 2.09 for both and the R-squared adjusted (R-sq) were 14.03%. The R-sq shows how much the predictors explain the response. The higher percentage it is, the more the predictors explain the response.

The correlation table at the bottom (Table 11) show the correlation between the variables. For this correlation test, the spearman rho was also used. This table is also to show the correlation between the predictors.

5.5.1 Results for Proposition 5

The correlation between interacting and asking questions at events showed a p—value of 0.00 and a correlation of 0.71. This high correlation can indicate that interacting with companies at events and asking questions are highly correlated. Due to this high correlation only one of the variables needs to be analyzed together with the response variable 18, likeliness to apply to a company. Interaction with companies at events (Table 10) showed an acceptable p-value (0.00) and also indicated on a weak correlation (0.35) in the spearman’s rho test. Therefore, proposition 5 is accepted.

5.6 Proposition 6 – Students who Receive Knowledge at an Event Are Likely to Apply

A correlation test for proposition 6 was conducted between the likeliness to apply to a company that the students had met at an event and the three questions about if they felt like they get more information at an event, if they got to learn about a company’s attributes at the event and if they gained more knowledge about a company at events. In general, the spearman rho showed approximately 0.5 in correlation with a p-value around 0.00.
Table 12. Spearman’s Rho P6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman rho test</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0,58</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>0,48</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More Information</td>
<td>0,47</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The multiple regression test for these questions showed a low p-value for increased knowledge against likeliness to apply. For both if students learned about the attributes and if they gained more information than for example the webpage the p-value was 0,10 or higher. The VIF values ranged from 1,68 to 1,72. All of the questions had a correlation with each other approximately around 0,50 with p-values approximately 0,00. The R-sq adjusted is 32,11%. All of these results can be seen below.

Table 13. Multiple Regression and Correlation P6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple regression</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>R-sq (Adj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>1,69</td>
<td>32,11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>1,72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More Information</td>
<td>0,10</td>
<td>1,68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Likely to apply</th>
<th>More information</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More information</td>
<td>0,47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td>0,48</td>
<td>0,53</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0,58</td>
<td>0,50</td>
<td>0,56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-Value</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.1 Results for Proposition 6

The spearman rho testing for the different variables versus likeliness to apply all showed a low p-value together with a moderate correlation. The variables also showed a moderate
correlation with each other. However, since all of them are significant and showed a correlation to likeliness to apply (Table 12), proposition 6 is accepted.

5.7 Proposition 7 – Students Who Interact with Companies Receive more Knowledge

For proposition 7 the correlation testing was conducted between question number 13, if they asked questions at an event, and number 16, if they interacted with companies. These two both touched upon the question about interaction, hence they were chosen for this test. They were tested against the questions regarding information: If students gained more knowledge, if they got to know about a company’s attributes and if they gained more information than the webpage. The results from the testing are presented below:

Table 14. Spearman’s Rho P7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
<td>0,20</td>
<td>0,03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,43</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,24</td>
<td>0,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0,34</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,55</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,35</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen by the results, the spearman rho ranged between 0,20 to 0,55. The highest correlation (0,55) was between if students interacted at events and if they learned more about a company’s attributes. The second highest correlation was with learning about attributes against if they asked questions. This test gave a value of 0,43. All of the p-values for all of the correlations were below the significance level of 0,05.

The multiple regression test for question 15, Information as a response gave a p-value above 0,05 for question 13, asking questions and 0,00 for question 16, interaction. The VIF value was 2,07 and the R-sq adjusted was 12,47%, which could be interpreted as gaining more information about a company at an event was 12,47% explained by asking questions and interaction with the company.

The correlation test between the response and the predictor shows that there was a strong correlation between interaction with companies and asking questions. The correlation between the rest of the variables were under 0,35. In this test all of the p-values were approximately 0,00. The results are presented on the next page.
Table 15. Multiple Regression and Correlation P7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>R-sq (Adj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Asking Questions</td>
<td>0,93</td>
<td>2,07</td>
<td>12,47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Interact with companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>0,35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions</td>
<td>0,24</td>
<td>0,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
<td>~ 0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7.1 Results for Proposition 7

For all of the questions regarding interactions and asking questions to gain knowledge, information about attributes and information showed low correlation, all with p-values below the significance level. Therefore, due to the p-values and the correlation in the spearman’s rho test (Table 14), proposition 7 is accepted.

5.8 Proposition 8 – Students Who Met a company at an Event Are More Interested in Them as an Employer

For the last correlation tests the authors have tested the interest in a company that a student gained at events against questions regarding information, interaction, meeting at events etc. A table with the questions are presented on the next page:
Table 16. Spearman’s Rho P8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Uniaden</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guest Lectures</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mingle events</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already known company</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Likeliness to apply</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposition 8 was the one where the most correlation tests was conducted. As can be seen in the table the correlation rho ranged between 0.23 and 0.63. The highest correlation was that students that are interested in a company were more likely to apply to that company. This number indicated a moderate correlation. The rest of the results were under 0.47 which indicated a moderate to low correlation. The variable that received 0.47 was between being interested in a company that a student had met at an event and learning more about an already known company. All of the p-values for these tests were approximately 0.00. See table 16 above.

Table 17. Multiple Regression P8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple regression</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>R-sq (Adj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Uniaden</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>31.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Guest Lectures</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mingle events</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Already known companies</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The multiple regression analysis for the variables that affected interest in a company had various of p-values. The ones that had under the significance level was students who meet new companies at events such as Uniaden and when they met companies they already know about. All of the other questions had a p-value that were too high. The highest VIF values
were 2.27 and 2.47 for the questions that deals with interaction: 13 and 16. For the rest they were slightly higher than 1. The R-sq adjusted number was 31.31%.

Table 18. Correlation P8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Ask questions</th>
<th>Interact with companies</th>
<th>Already known companies</th>
<th>Uniaden</th>
<th>Guest lecture</th>
<th>Mingle events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already known company</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniaden</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lectures</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingle events</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in a company</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
<td>~ 0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the different correlations between the different variables, the only one with a strong correlation was between asking questions and interacting with companies at events. This has also been shown before in this result section. Other than that there were not many values that were high enough to be able to conclude a fairly strong correlation with confidence. Most of them showed a weak to moderate values. The p-values for most of the variables were fairly low, and within the significance level.

5.8.1 Results for Proposition 8

The last proposition for these tests were to show if there was a correlation between meeting a company at an event and if that made the students interested in it. All of the p-values were under the significance level and showed low to moderate correlations in the spearman’s rho (Table 16) test. Therefore, proposition 8 is accepted.
5.9 Summary of the Propositions Results

All of these tests have been conducted to either reject or accept the different propositions. A summary for the rejection or acceptance of all of the different propositions are presented below:

*Table 19. Rejection or Acceptance of the Propositions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Reject/Accept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Rejected *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Rejected *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Rejected *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Accepted *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the propositions that have a star behind their results are the propositions that contain variables that had insignificance results. Due to that some of the variables in the proposition showed a result where there is a chance that they do not represent the population, i.e. statistical insignificance, they have not been included in the analysis regarding if the proposition is accepted or rejected. The results in this summarized table therefore only contains the results of the variables that showed statistical significance.

Only including the statistical significant results can skew the results of this study, however including results that show a p-value above the accepted significance level can skew the results even further. Therefore, the authors of this thesis decided that the most accurate way of presenting the results was to interpret the variables with significance results, but present the insignificance ones too so that the reader can see that some of the propositions does include insignificant results that has not been analyzed towards the final result. One solution for this problem can be done in a future study where each of the variables are tested as one hypothesis instead of a bundle of variables leading up to one proposition.

In addition to the insignificance results, each of the propositions contains more than one question that has been tested to either accept or reject the proposition. For the results that have shown significance results, different levels of correlation have been found. Due to the subjective nature of the analysis the authors have not reflected upon the level of correlation, they have focused on merely present if there is a correlation or not. In order to determine the impact on each variable, with different levels of correlation, has on the proposition a further study could be conducted where each proposition and variable is analyzed more in depth.

Since the authors of this thesis cannot find significance for some of the variables, the following discussion will focus only on the variables that showed significance.
5.10 The Students Own Thoughts About Events

For the last part of the survey, section 3, descriptive statistics are shown here. This is due to the nature of the questions and were designed as a base for future research. The questions started with asking what the students believed to the best way for a business student to learn about a company as an employer. As can be seen in the pie chart below, 53.0% answered that they believe that events are the best way. The other answers were company webpage (15.2%), Google (11.4%), Social Media (10.6%), University news channels (2.3%), Advertising (0.8%) and other (6.8%). This showed that students thought that events were the best way to meet employers. This can be seen in the figure below.

![Pie Chart of meeting companies](image)

**Figure 6. Where can Students Meet Companies?**

The next question was about if the students were interested in events to meet potential employers. The mean for this question were 3.75, with a median of 4 and a standard deviation of 1.08. This question did not have any outliers. These results showed that students have a tendency to be more interested in using events as a way to find potential employers. See *figure 7* below.

![Histogram - Interested in events to help you meet employees?](image)

**Figure 7. Are Students Interesting in Meeting Companies at Events**

Last question was if the students believed that events could help a business student find future employers. The mean for the replies were 3.57, standard deviation was 1.10 and the median was 4. For this question the results were more evenly spread amongst the replies ranging from 3 to 5. Due to the high median and the semi-high mean, even here the
conclusion drawn was that students were more inclined to believe that events could help them find future employers. See figure 8 below:

Figure 8. Do Students Believe That Events Help Them Find Future Employers?
5.11 Cronbach’s Alpha

In order to verify the internal reliability and validity of the questions, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each of the questions that could possibly answer the same thing. The calculations gave the following results:

Table 20. Cronbach Alpha Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in a company</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the questions regarding knowledge, the alpha was calculated to 0.85, which indicates that there is an acceptable level of internal reliability. From the survey, question 12 (In general, to what extent do you feel like you gain increased knowledge about an already known company at an event), 14 (In general, to what extent do you feel that you gain information about the company’s attributes at events?) and 15 (In general, to what extent do you feel that you get more information about a company at an event, compared to the information that is available on for example their webpage?) was used to calculate the results of internal reliability about knowledge. For the questions that addressed the interaction between a company and a student, the alpha derived was 0.84. This also indicates a strong relationship between the questions. The questions in the survey that addressed interaction was 13 (In general, to what extent do you ask questions to companies at an event?) and 16 (In general, to what extent do you believe that you interact with companies at an event?). These two were used to calculate the internal reliability. For the last Cronbach alpha test, the interest in a company students have met at an event was calculated to 0.79. The number is high on an acceptable level, which therefore can be accepted as reliable. The questions used for this calculation was 17 (In general, to what extent do you feel more interested in a company as an employer after meeting them at an event?) and 18 (In general, to what extent do you feel that you are more likely to apply to a company after meeting them at an event?). All of the alphas that had been tested with these variables were high, which indicates that they do have internal reliability.
6. Discussion

The discussion part is to present different argumentations for the results. Each proposition is discussed together with the theories used for deriving them. The results from the students’ own thoughts about events section are also discussed. A summary where the research question is discussed together with the concepts of EM and EB comes thereafter. This discussion leads to the evaluation of the conceptual model and suggestions for future research along with the limitations of this thesis.

6.1 Discussion of Propositions

6.1.1 Discussion Proposition 1 & 2

P1 Students who go to events learn about new companies they have not heard of before

P2 Students who go to events learn more about companies they already knew about

The findings of the survey show that proposition 1 is rejected, which means that a student who goes to events does not learn about companies that they have not heard of before. The authors find this interesting since events such as Uniaden have many companies attending, and therefore they believed that the opportunity for finding information about a new company for students would be high. They themselves have also attended events were they learned about new companies along with having previous experience within the field of EM. There is a possibility that if a student goes to an event were they find many unknown companies, they might not learn much else but recognition of the new brand name. However, the findings for proposition 2 suggest that students who goes to events does learn more about companies they already had knowledge about. This suggest that if a student have brand recognition, an event will enable them to learn more about the already known company.

These findings support the theory presented in section 3. Theoretical Framework, were Sneath (2005, p. 380) suggest that events are more beneficial for companies when the attendees already have previous knowledge about them. In the theoretical framework there is also mentioning of Close et al.’s (2006, p. 420) reasoning that one can use events as a way to “communicate with the brand”. Branding might not be about learning about the company, more just enabling the recognition of the brand. The questions asked in the survey connected to these propositions was asked in a way that the respondent had free interpretation of what it means to "learn" about a new company. Therefore, the authors argue that "learning" about new companies does not necessary need to be the same thing as brand recognition.

The company that the authors interviewed explained that their strategy for events during the fall semester are mostly to brand themselves, then at the spring semester they start with more interaction and building a relationship with the students. If most of the companies having events have the same strategy, it could have affected the results of the study since the survey for this thesis were distributed during the spring semester. Therefore, the intimate events where they are aiming more towards creating relationships might not have occurred yet during this semester. However, since the clusters that were chosen for the study ended up being the later part of the university years, many of the students might have had the opportunity to meet companies at more relationship building events. However, these types of event may not have been top of mind in the survey.
As seen in the argumentation below for proposition 3, there is low interaction at event. And perhaps if one has low interaction (like at branding events) it can be understood why the students feel like they do not "learn" about new companies.

6.1.2 Discussion Proposition 3

**P3** Students who go to event interact with companies.

The results for proposition testing for P3: Students who goes to events interacts with companies shows that students who attend events does not seem to have a dialogue with the companies they meet there. Both the results of if they are themselves asking questions and if they do feel like they are interacting with companies show that there is a lack of interaction, according to the students’ point of view.

The theories that exists today regarding EM give an emphasis on how for example interaction is a crucial part of the brand communication (Whelan & Wohllifei, 2006, p. 315) and that it can be used to create relations no matter if it is continuously or just one time (Grönroos, 2008, p. 37). The students at USBE does not seem to experience this kind of interaction when they are attending events. A possible explanation to this could be, just as the company interviews pointed out, that their main events are more about branding and being seen around campus, not necessarily recruit students. However, just being seen around campus might not create the necessary interaction that creates the strong relationship that Grönroos (2008, p. 27) suggest is needed for a strong brand.

There is also a possibility that the effectiveness of the interaction between companies and students is what can affect the result. If neither the company nor the student initiates a conversation, there will be no interaction. Since the result show that students in general do not ask questions, it lies upon the company to ensure dialogues. However, If the event strategy is branding, it might not be prioritized. As Crowther & Donlan (2011, p. 32) explain, depending on the efficiency of the event it can be both destructive and productive and since there seem to be a lack of interaction at the events at USBE, the events might not be seen as efficient by students. This is however a question that needs to be further explored until a certain conclusion about this can be drawn.

6.1.3 Discussion Proposition 4

**P4** Students who go to events receive more knowledge about the company

Proposition 4: Students who go to events receive more knowledge about the company is also rejected. The results showed that students where quite indifferent with if they felt like they learned more about attributes, got more information or knowledge when attending events.

When conducting events one of the goals should be to reach a larger target group (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 20) and communicate perspectives (Foster et al., 2010, p. 405) of a company. Since the students feel like they are not really receiving this type of information or gaining more knowledge about a company at an event they have attended does not seem very efficient. The benefits of sharing information at events is that the receiver are more open and receptive (Behrer & Sandgren, 1998, p. 2) and probably the students’ openness are not
exploited by the companies when the strategy is, yet again, to just be seen and create brand awareness.

As been discussed for proposition 3, if there is no interaction the authors believe that it can be hard for students to be able to get more knowledge about companies, such as attributes or general information that they cannot find online on the company webpage. Another question that should be discussed is the perception of knowledge. This is a concept that can be perceived by students in different ways. For some students’ knowledge might be to merely recognize a company’s logo meanwhile for another it could be to actually know about the company more in depth such as strategy or leadership. If many students perceive it as the latter, it is no surprise that the mean and median is quite low for this proposition. Companies might be reluctant to share that kind of information with students at events. Students therefore might do believe that they do not receive that much more additional knowledge than they already know or can find online.

Some students might also search for information before the event, and if the company does not share anything else than can be found on their webpage, such as salary or specific tasks, it should also be no surprise when students does not learn more about them at events.

6.1.4 Discussion Proposition 5

**P5** Students who have interacted with a company at an event are inclined to apply to that company.

The results show that proposition 5 is accepted, this means that the students who have interacted with a company at an event are likely to apply to that company.

Mentioned theories state that one of the strengths with EM is that they can encourage (Lanner & Söderberg, 2006, p. 23) and work as an initiator (Crowther & Donlan, 2011, p. 24) for interactions. Interaction has been defined as a two-way dialogue between the student and the company in this study. The quality of this dialogue has not been tested, just if there is one. Hence, the results indicate that an interaction can be what motivate a student’s desire to apply. Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013, p. 11) mention that event can be used to engage customers (i.e. students) and maybe this is why the students who have interacted with a company at an event are more inclined to apply to that company.

Drengner & Jahn (2008, p. 144) believe that interactions can influence the image of a company, the authors believe that dialogues that bring a positive outcome for the students, might encourage them to apply. For example, a company could have a meaningful interaction with a student where they share information about their leadership or other relevant topic. This would make the students aware of this types of values in the company and give them a positive view after the interaction (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p. 503; Jain & Bhatt, 2015, p. 635).
6.1.5 Discussion Proposition 6

**P6** Students who have received knowledge about a company at an event are likely to apply to that company.

Proposition 6 is one of the few propositions in this study that was accepted. This means that students that feel that if they have received knowledge about a company at an event they are likely to apply to that company.

The authors believe that it is knowledge and interactions with a company that are determinants for finding a good employer at an event. The results of proposition 3 have already shown that students at USBE does not believe that they receive interactions at events, and yet the correlation between gaining knowledge about a company and the likeliness to apply to a company is quite high. This can be quite counterintuitive when thinking about it in an event setting. In addition, the analysis of the results for proposition 5 and 6 shows that interaction does not increase the likeliness to apply but knowledge does. If all of this are true, it should mean that the students are receiving knowledge about a company in some way that is not defined as a two-way dialogue at events. The authors believe that this could possibly come from pamphlets, speeches or even word of mouth from friends they met at an event. These are however, mere speculations and any certain conclusions cannot be drawn about from where the students receive this knowledge. The results of these propositions are important to notice nevertheless.

In the 3. *Theoretical Framework* the importance of EVP and communicating it in the right way (Dyre & Parment, 2012, p. 93) was addressed. Since proposition 6 is accepted, one can argue that students who have received knowledge about a company (i.e. their EVP) are more likely to apply to them. EVP is the promise that the company make to the potential employee of how they will act as an employer (Dyre & Parment, 2012, p. 93), hence this information is important for students to gain attractiveness of the company. Perhaps it is easier to communicate EVP at an event than through one-way communication channels. The company that was interviewed for this thesis had the strategy to do branding and relationships building events. At the branding events the company are mostly giving out information about the company as a one-way information sharing. At the relationship building events the students might get a chance to learn a bit more about the company, like the possibility to learn about EVP (Dyre & Parment, 2012, p. 93). This also indicated that the type of event can play a part in effectiveness of the information sharing.

6.1.6 Discussion Proposition 7

**P7** Student who interact with companies at events do receive more specific information.

Proposition 7, students who interacts with companies receive more specific information, is accepted. This means that the students in general receive more information about a company at an event.

From the results one can also see a correlation between if students learn more about attributes at events and interacting at events. One can therefore suggest that this proposition might be connected with proposition 5 “*Students who have interacted with a company at an event are*
inclined to apply to that company”. If the students gain more specific information about a company when interacting they might be more inclined to apply. Crowther & Donlan (2011, p. 24) emphasize the importance of a dialogue at an event, the authors argue that this dialogue (i.e. interaction) that occurs at event provides the student opportunity to ask the questions that feels relevant to them. Hence, they receive the specific knowledge due to the provided opportunity to ask the questions they themselves believe are relevant when searching for an employer.

The results of this proposition is also highlighted by Drengner & Jahn’s (2008, p. 139) theory that says that detailed information sharing is important for the customers and company. Hence, information sharing seems to be important for students in the same way as this theory suggest that it is important to customers. This is also backed-up by the Close et al.’s (2006, p. 430) who emphasize that knowledge sharing is also of importance in EB.

6.1.7 Discussion Proposition 8

**P8** Students who have met a company at an event are more interested in that company as an employer.

Proposition 8 was accepted which means that students at USBE feels that meeting companies at events make them more interested in the company as employers.

In section 3. *Theoretical Framework* the authors mentioned the importance of building a psychological contract in order to make students apply for a company (Foster et al., 2010, p. 405). The authors therefore suggest that meeting companies as events can be a way to build a relationship between the student and the company and therefore enable this contract that make the student interested in the company as an employer.

In this study, 53% of the respondents thought that events were the best way to learn more about a company as an employer (Appendix 4), which is in line with the results of proposition 8. In 3. *Theoretical Framework* the authors mention the theory from Backhaus & Tikoo (2004, p.503) that suggest that external marketing of EB is essential and these results suggest that EM is a good way for students to find interesting employers.

6.1.8 Ambiguous Results - Propositions

Some of the propositions did contain multiple questions that have each given a different level of correlation. Some of the results also showed insignificance. This can cause problem when it comes to the analysis of the data collected. Excluding insignificant results can cause the overall results to be skewed, however including them can cause more harm than good for the study. Including results that does not have significance would mean that the authors possibly include results that might not represent the population accurately. Excluding these would mean that the authors lower that risk. The level of correlation has not either been reflected upon since it can be a subjective matter, despite that there are guidelines regarding which results should be considered high correlation and low correlation. Therefore, to stay objective the authors of this thesis decided to only present the results and open up the opportunity for future studies regarding the level of correlation, and which should be considered high or low.
6.2 Summary Discussion

All of the propositions are supposed to help the authors answer the research question *Does event marketing help business and economics students find potential employers?* As stated before in section 4.3 *Data Analysis*, if the majority of the propositions are accepted the answer to the research question is positive.

Many theories say that information sharing such as from Forster et al. (2010, p. 403) and interactions such as from Zarantonello & Schmitt (2013, p. 11) are the strength of EM and EB, therefore the authors have relied on these and similar theories when they have conducted the study and created the propositions. Their previous knowledge within these subjects and the interview that was made with the company also laid the foundation to the belief that EM and EB are used together at events. The authors believed that there are interactions and sharing of information at events at Umeå University and therefore the results would indicate that events help the students find attractive future employers due to the knowledge and interaction variables. The results indicate that the students gain information about already known companies but there is no empirical evidence that they receive this about new companies. Five of eight propositions were created on the variables Interactions, knowledge, or information. Therefore, when these variables showed a correlation for the students at USBE many of the propositions could be accepted and the authors could give the research question a positive answer.
7. Conclusion

The purpose with the conclusion is to answer the research questions and to see if the purpose of the study is fulfilled.

7.1 Does event marketing help business and economics students find potential employers?

Research question: Does event marketing help business and economics students find potential employers?

Answer: Yes, event marketing does help business and economics students find potential employers. However, students do not feel that they learn that much about new companies, they do not feel that they are interacting with companies and they do not feel that they are gaining more knowledge about a company at an event.

The purpose of this study was to analyze if EM can be used as a tool where students can interact and gain knowledge about companies. The authors also wanted to test if the information and interactions that usually occurs at events are utilized to present companies attributes and make the students interested in the company as an employer. The authors have been able to achieve this purpose. They have been able to show that the current theories within EB and EM are being utilized here in Umeå too, despite that students find that some of the parts of these concepts are not being utilized to the fullest.

The main focus of many of the previous research within both EM and EB are with a company's point of view. Due to this the authors finds it important to also get additional perspective of these two concepts. Having just one perspective on the theories means that the real effectiveness and how the target’s experiences are not represented in the existing literature, until now. These findings do contribute to the research field within business administration, more specifically when merging EB and EM from a student’s point of view.

This thesis is important since the students at USBE do believe that events are an effective way to meet companies, and the empirical results from event attendees support this. This gives additional creditability to the current theories within EB and EM. However, there were some variables in the testing that have shown insignificant results, which made the authors not able to accept some propositions and therefore needs to be investigated further.

This thesis presents a correlation between knowledge and likeliness to apply to a company. This supports the idea that EM do seem to be an effective way for business and economic students in Umeå to learn about companies, which is in accordance to the common belief from the students at Umeå University and therefore events is a good tool for finding a potential employer.

7.2 Future Research and Limitations

7.2.1 Future Research

The purpose of this study was to generalize, hence the quantitative study. In future research the authors do however recommend the usage of qualitative studies. The findings show that 53% of the respondents thought that events were the best way to learn more about a company
as an employer (Appendix 4). This indicate that the target group actually believe that it is a good way of learning about potential employers, however some of the tests of the variables were insignificant and therefore the authors could not accept some of the propositions. The reason can be debatable and variables such as quality of the event could be researched further. One suitable research strategy for this could be a qualitative study. It is also possible to conduct a similar quantitative study but construct the survey in another way to try measure the variables differently.

The multiple regression analysis in this thesis does give a starting point for future research where the researcher can test different combinations of variables to try to explain what makes students apply to a company after meeting them at an event. Therefore, the authors also recommend an additional future research to find out more about the combination of these variables when applying to a company.

In the discussion the authors talk about good and bad events. This is also something that could be researched further: What is a good event and what is a bad event from the students’ point of view? Which aspects decides the quality? Which variables at events are the ones that student value? Is it like the company interviewed for this study says: personal contact? In that case, how does students (and companies) learn to have good interactions, resulting in knowledge at events? Values and perceptions can be hard to measure since there are individual (Duncan, 2002, p. 736) and these are areas that would benefit from a qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding in to the perceptions and important values.

How can companies be perceived as good employers if they do not manage to share knowledge? Events can work as a catalyst for dialogues (Crowther & Donlan, 2011, p. 24), however the students do not feel that there is interaction between them and a company at events. The perception could be that it is the companies’ responsibility to initiate contact with them, meanwhile the companies themselves might only wish to brand themselves, just at the interviewed company does during the fall. If this is true, then there is a mismatch in the perception of the goal of the event between the student and the employer. The conclusion from this can be that they companies and students’ perception are different. However, since this is mere speculations the authors also suggest conducting for example a mixed study where both companies and students can come together and find what is missing between them when it comes to promoting EB through events.

This thesis has restricted the concept of EM to events lectures, and mingle events. Since it is a wide concept with many different meanings depending on which scholar you are referring to and the time restriction there had to be a limit to the most relevant events the business students have an opportunity to come in contact with during their time at Umeå University. Therefore, another possible research area to examine is to research a particular event separately or different types of events.

7.2.2 Limitations

One limitation to this study is that the random selection of the clusters was students who have studied a few years at USBE. Due to this, there is a chance that they have already met many of the companies that are frequently presenting themselves at different events. Despite that there is diversity within the cluster this chance still exists and can therefore make it hard to draw a proper conclusion about if they learn more about either new or already known companies. Also, these students do not believe that they are interacting at events and if they
do not feel that this exists, it can be difficult for them to utilize the event to the fullest and therefore might experience it as an event that was not particularly beneficial for them. This makes the authors suggest to conduct studies on a different population to be able to see if students really do not learn about new companies at events.

As mentioned in 1.6 Delimitations, there was only data from USBE students in this study. Therefore, it can be discussed whether the results can be implemented on Swedish business students in general or just in Umeå. The authors believe that this study could be tested on a more national level in order to see if the results are limited to this region or if students in general, throughout Sweden or any other country, are perceiving events in the same way. The model and the theories are general enough to be able to be applicable to other target groups, hence to find if it is a national opinion or not, the authors suggest to continue researching on a national level.
8. References


APPENDIX 1

Survey - Event marketing and Employer Branding

Hello,
We are Maja Lundmark och Marina Björnström and are two students at Umeå University that are doing a bachelor thesis about if events can be an efficient way for business students to learn more about a company. We would like to know how students perceives events held at Umeå University, such as Uniaden, guest lectures and company mingle events. We are trying to collect opinions about the information provided to students and if they are willing to apply to a company after meeting them at events. This survey will be completely anonymous and are voluntarily. No one except us two students will have access to the data collected in this survey.

The survey will take less than 5 minutes.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us:
Maja: malu0294@student.umu.se
Marina: mabj0094@student.umu.se

Your opinion is very valuable for us!
Thank you for your time,
/Maja and Marina

* Required

1. 1. What gender do you identify yourself as? *
   Mark only one oval.
   
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Other

2. 2. What is your current age? *
   Mark only one oval.
   
   ☐ 18 and under
   ☐ 19 - 21
   ☐ 22 - 24
   ☐ 25 - 27
   ☐ 28 - 30
   ☐ 31 and over
3. Are you currently studying business or economics at Umeå University? *
   If no, please proceed to question no. 19 on page 3
   Mark only one oval.
   – Yes
   – No
   – Other: ___________________________________________

4. If yes, which semester are you currently enrolled in?
   Mark only one oval.
   – 1-2 semester (first year)
   – 3-4 semester (second year)
   – 5-6 semester (third year)
   – 7-8 semester (fourth year)
   – Other: ___________________________________________

5. Are you planning to graduate within 2 years?
   Mark only one oval.
   – Yes
   – No
   – I don’t know/Other

6. Do you plan to enter the labor market after graduating from Umeå University?
   Mark only one oval.
   – Yes, within my field of study
   – Yes, but I have not decided in which field
   – No
   – I don’t know

7. During your time at Umeå University, have you attended any event (Uniaden, guest lectures, mingle events) where you can meet companies?
   If no, please proceed to question no. 19 on page 3
   Mark only one oval.
   – Yes
   – No
   – I don’t know
8. If you have attended said event(s), approximately how many events per year?
Mark only one oval.

- [ ] 1 - 2
- [ ] 3 - 4
- [ ] 5 or more

Questions about Events
This page is for those of you who answered that they have attended events at Umeå University. If you have not, please just click "next" at the bottom of the page to continue to the next section.

9. In general, to what extent do you feel like you learn about new companies at recruitment fairs, such as Uniaden?
New = Companies you did not know existed before
Mark only one oval.

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10. In general, to what extent do you feel like you learn about new companies at guest lectures?
New = Companies you did not know existed before. Guest lectures = When a company holds a presentation of themselves or their business, arranged by for example a student unions or the university.
Mark only one oval.

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11. In general, to what extent do you feel like you learn about new companies at mingle events?
New = Companies you did not know existed before. Mingle events = Dinners with a company or similar relaxed activity, After Study Pub (EPP) or other relaxed atmosphere gatherings
Mark only one oval.

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12. In general, to what extent do you feel like you gain increased knowledge about an already known company at an event?
   Already known = Companies you have heard of before
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Very much

13. In general, to what extent do you ask questions to companies at an event?
   Questions can vary from general questions about the business to more specific about the company
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Very much

14. In general, to what extent do you feel that you gain information about the company’s attributes at events?
   Company attributes is what is important to you for example leadership, salary, growth opportunities, company culture etc.
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Very much

15. In general, to what extent do you feel that you get more information about a company at an event, compared to the information that is available on for example their webpage?
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Very much

16. In general, to what extent do you believe that you interact with companies at an event?
   Interaction = A two way dialogue between two or more parties
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Very much
17. **In general, to what extent do you feel more interested in a company as an employer after meeting them at an event?**  
*Mark only one oval.*

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18. **In general, to what extent do you feel that you are more likely to apply to a company after meeting them at an event?**  
*Compared to before meeting them at the event*  
*Mark only one oval.*

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**Thoughts about events and companies**  
This section is for your general thoughts about the combination of events and companies in general, no matter if you have attended one or not.

19. **What you believe is the best way for you as a business student to learn more about a company as an employer?** *  
*Please pick one alternative*  
*Mark only one oval.*

- Events (Uniaden, Guest lectures, mingle events)
- Company Website
- Advertising (Commercials)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat)
- University news channels (Newsletters, webpage etc.)
- Employment service (Arbetsförmedlingen)
- Google (Or similar web searching tools)
- Other

20. **To what extent are you interested to attend events to meet potential employers?** *  
*Event meaning recruitment fairs, guest lectures, mingle events*  
*Mark only one oval.*

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21. To what extent do you believe that events can help you as a business student find your future employer? *

Event meaning recruitment fairs, guest lectures, mingle events

*Mark only one oval.*

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Not at all | Very much
APPENDIX 2

Figure 1 – What Gender do you identify yourself as?

Figure 2 – What is your current age?
Are you studying business or economics?

Figure 3 – Are you studying business or economics?

Which semester are you studying?

Figure 4 – What Semester are you studying?
Figure 5 – Are you planning to graduate within 2 years?

Figure 6 – Do you plan to enter the labor market?
Figure 7 – Have you attended events at Umeå University?

Figure 8 – How many events have you attended?
APPENDIX 3

Below are a selection of the graphs produces during the proposition testing. For the first propositions (P1 – P4) histogram and boxplots are presented. For P5-P8 fitted line plot and a normal probability plot are presented.

Figure 1 – Histogram for learning about companies at events

Figure 2 – Boxplot for learning about companies at events
Figure 3 – Histogram for different interactions

Figure 4 – Boxplot for different interactions
Figure 5 – Histogram for different knowledges

Figure 6 – Boxplot for different knowledges
Figure 7 – Fitted line plot for interactions

Figure 8 – Normal probability plot for interactions
Figure 7 – Fitted line plot for learning about attitudes vs. likeliness to apply

Figure 8 – Normal probability plot for learning about attitudes vs. Likelihood to apply
Figure 9 – Fitted line plot for knowledge vs. Likelihood to apply

Figure 10 – Normal probability plot for knowledge vs. Likelihood to apply
Figure 11 – Fitted line plot for information vs. Likelihood to apply

Figure 12 – Normal probability plot for knowledge vs. Likelihood to apply
Figure 13 – Fitted line plot for interaction vs. Receive more information

Figure 14 – Normal probability plot vs. Receive more information
Figure 15 – Fitted line plot for meeting a company vs. Interested in a company

Figure 16 – Normal probability plot for meeting a company vs. Interested in a company
APPENDIX 4

Figure 1 – Pie chart for what students does believe are the best way to meet companies

Figure 2 – Histogram for if students are interested in events to help them meet potential employers
Figure 3 – If students believe events can help them find potential employers