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Master Degree Project in Marketing and Consumption

Match Me if You Can!

Business graduates' engagement with employer brands on social networking sites

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to study the gratifications business graduates seek when engaging with employer brands on the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) LinkedIn and Facebook.

Research Design – The study is anchored in the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) approach, commonly applied for research on antecedents to engagement through different media. First, a pre-study was carried out in order to validate previously identified gratifications sought from the U&G approach and find potential additional gratifications in the context of employer brands. The main study was an online survey of business graduates studying their final semester, resulting in 122 usable responses from job-seeking business graduates in Sweden. The data was analyzed using multiple regression techniques.

Findings –Previous U&G studies contributed with three gratifications sought from engagement in terms of *Information, Entertainment* and *Integration & Social Interaction*. The pre-study led to the findings of two additional gratifications relevant for the study's context of employer brands, namely *Strategy* and *Convenience*. All gratifications except *Entertainment* were tested and recognized as reliable constructs representing the gratifications sought to predict *Engagement with Employer brands*, although different combinations of the gratifications were seen for LinkedIn and Facebook respectively. *Integration & Social Interaction* and *Strategy* predict business graduates' engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn, whereas *Information* and *Strategy* explained engagement on Facebook.

Theoretical & Practical Implications – The findings have implications for future research on engagement on social media and the integration of social media into employer branding. Furthermore, the present research contributes with two additional gratifications sought from engagement on social media: *Strategy* and *Convenience*. Practically, the findings give ideas about how firms can utilize SNSs as platforms in their employer branding initiatives to encourage engagement from potential employees, as long as they pay attention to the differences in structure and atmosphere characterized by different SNSs.

Keywords *Social media, Social networking sites, LinkedIn, Facebook*, *Employer Brands, Engagement, Engagement Behavior, the Uses & Gratifications Approach, U&G, Gratifications sought*

Introduction

Social media is becoming an increasingly popular platform where job-seekers and employers can interact. Recently, Universum, a global leader within employer branding consultancy services, stated that 67% of job-seekers search for information about potential employers on various social media (Van Mossevelde, 2013). Supporting this trend from the companies' point-of-view, 79% of firms currently use or intend to use social media in their marketing activities (Harvard Business Review Analytical Services, 2010) and 44% use it to enhance their employer brand (Fielding, 2014). It is evident that the relationship between employer branding and the use of social media is well established in the business world. Both social media and employer branding have received increased attention in the academic sphere during the last years, although mainly treated as two separate research topics (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Kietzmann et al., 2012; Moroko and Uncles, 2008; Oladipo et al., 2013; Pomirleanu et al., 2013; Schultz and Peltier, 2013). The link between the two research fields has been recognized by Sivertzen et al. (2013), concluding that the use of social media can be an effective tool for employer branding in building a good reputation. This positive relationship between employer brands and social media has shed

light on the possibilities of integrating social media in employer branding strategies, although leaving the question of what factors *predict* the relationship unanswered. In our opinion, and in accordance with suggestions from Sivertzen et al. (2013), there is a need to further investigate the relationship between employer branding and social media by identifying why and how job-seekers relate to employer brands in these digital channels. Understanding the factors behind the positive consequences of integrating social media and employer branding will enable management to efficiently build their employer brands through good reputation, while simultaneously lead the path for deeper insights into this relatively new research field.

Research on social media has increased rapidly, resulting in several theoretical conclusions and frameworks on how companies successfully should manage their consumer brands online (Pomirleanu et al., 2013). A general school of thought is that the emergence of social media has increased transparency, with the outcome of increasingly empowered customers who play a vital role in co-creating brands (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). In order to address the emergence of an empowered consumer base, it has been suggested that firms need to leverage on the new conditions by turning them into sources of *engagement* (Parent et al., 2011). Engagement, in turn, has been shown to have a positive effect on traditional branding objectives, such as loyalty, trust, commitment and word-of-mouth (Vivek et al., 2012). In order to fully leverage on the positive consequences that engagement in social media enables, companies need an understanding of the antecedents to engagement (Muntinga et al., 2011). We argue that the logic of social media enabling increased engagement also applies for firms in building their employer brands, and find it essential to investigate why job-seekers' would choose to engage with potential employers on social media. A common approach to understand why consumers engage in various media is to look at which gratifications they seek from engagement, referred to as the Uses &

Gratifications (U&G) approach (Katz et al., 1974; McQuail, 1983). Having been applied to social media engagement contexts before (B. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2009; Muntinga et al., 2011; Rohm et al., 2013), the U&G approach serves as a suitable theoretical lens throughout this paper.

As social media encompasses many different applications, including blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social world (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), we have chosen to focus our study on Social Networking Sites (SNSs) and specifically LinkedIn and Facebook. The reason behind this choice is in line with the report published by the Internet Infrastructure Foundation in 2013 showing that visiting SNSs is one of the most common online activities among Swedes; 69 % visit social networks occasionally and 44 % do it on a daily basis, where Facebook is the uniquely most common (Findahl, 2013). Being the leading professional social network, LinkedIn is almost a self-evident choice in the context of employer branding.

By focusing on Swedish business graduates at a point in time when job-seeking is highly relevant, we will conduct a quantitative study with the purpose of identifying factors preceding engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook. Anchoring our study in the U&G approach, we adopt the terminology of *gratifications sought* as antecedents to engagement and formulate the following research questions:

> **RQ1:** *Which gratifications do business graduates seek when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook?*
> **RQ2:** *Are there any differences in the gratifications sought between LinkedIn and Facebook?*

Theoretically, an integration of the two mainly separated research fields of employer branding and social media will lead the path for a new research agenda. We expect our findings to provide essential insights to what precedes engagement with employer brands on social media, which can be useful, both for future research on employer branding strategies from the firm's perspective, and for similar studies extended into other segments of job-seekers. As

for the managerial impacts of our study, we believe that our findings will be valuable for successfully adapting current employer branding strategies to SNSs.

Theoretical Framework

Brands do more than just representing a product or service - they provide a focal point of engagement for consumers. When customers meaningfully interact with brands, engagement is expressed behaviorally (van Doorn et al., 2010; Keller, 2001). The theoretical framework starts with an explanation of employer branding, followed by an overview of social media and specifically the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) LinkedIn and Facebook, which mark the context of our study. Since engagement has been argued to be the highest form of brand loyalty in the context of consumer brands (Keller, 2001), it seems reasonable to argue that engagement is a meaningful concept to apply also in the context of employer brands. Pursuing the logic of employer brands sharing similar characteristics with consumer brands (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), we consequently provide a literature review on engagement on SNSs, since digital platforms have changed the conditions for companies in building their brands to attract potential employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Serving as a theoretical lens to understand how media usage reflects the gratifications people seek from engagement, we then discuss the Uses & Gratifications (U&G) approach in order to conceptualize the gratifications sought by business graduates in the context of employer brands. All together, the theoretical framework settles with the formulation of hypotheses.

Employer Branding

Deriving from traditional product or service branding, employer branding denotes the differentiation of a firm's characteristics as an employer from competitive employers (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). More specifically, employer branding has been defined as "a

targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm" (Sullivan, 2004). Just as product or corporate brands, employer brands have been shown to represent both instrumental and symbolic attributes (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). Instrumental factors include job and organizational characteristics such as salary, organizational structure and career development opportunities, whereas symbolic factors are expressed in terms of e.g. innovativeness, competence and excitement (Arachchige and Robertson, 2011). With the organizational culture feeding back on the employer brand, together with the instrumental and symbolic brand associations created by firms through employer branding, the employer brand image is produced which in turn affects employee attraction (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Building on the recent findings by (Sivertzen et al., 2013), stating that social media can be an effective tool in firms' employer branding strategy, it is also valuable to give a brief description of the characteristics of social media and specifically Social Networking Sites (SNSs).

Social Media and Social Networking Sites

Defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61), the phenomenon of social media has transformed the relationships between consumers and companies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). This change has enabled a growing transparency of the marketplace (Yan, 2011) and the power and control of branding and marketing content have started to shift from companies to consumers (Gensler et al., 2013; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) include SNSs as one category of social media which companies can make profitable use of. Just as companies promote themselves,

promoting and branding the self has become an accepted norm even in common people's lives (van Dijck, 2013).

In the scope of this paper, we will study and compare LinkedIn and Facebook, serving as good examples of SNSs in the context of employer branding with regard to the former's outspoken professional focus and the latter's large prevalence. Furthermore, it has been established that over the years, both LinkedIn and Facebook "have gradually tweaked their interfaces and protocols not just to facilitate users, but also to serve businesses and advertisers" (van Dijck 2013, p. 204), suggesting these two platforms as relevant in the context of employer branding. Although the key technological functions of SNSs are basically consistent, they may differ in terms of culture; some sites support existing offline social networks such as friends and families, whereas others help strangers connect based on shared interests and activities (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Both Facebook and LinkedIn deploy similar characteristics concerning connectivity and narrative (van Dijck, 2013). For Facebook, these two principles are adopted to form the personal self-presentation of users' profiles structured in the format of Timelines, chronologically narrating a person's online identity and enabling connectivity between these profiles through social actions (van Dijck, 2013). Compared to Facebook as a general SNS, LinkedIn is a professional social network, enabling members to create professional profiles and connect with companies, colleagues and classmates (Gerard, 2012). In terms of structure, LinkedIn stands out to Facebook's personal profiles by resembling formatted CVs with lists of experience linked to universities and companies (van Dijck, 2013). The focus and professional appearance on LinkedIn rather facilitate users' self-*promotion* than personal self-*presentation* as in the case of Facebook (van Dijck, 2013). These fundamental characteristics of LinkedIn and Facebook will be used to interpret the results from the data collection connected to the following framework on online engagement.

Engagement on Social Networking Sites

As argued by several authors of recent research within the field of social media, companies should leverage on the fact that customers are being empowered by turning this empowerment into engagement with the company online (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Parent et al., 2011; Rohm et al., 2013). The introduction of social media has changed the conditions for customer engagement to occur by facilitating co-creation and interaction, not only consumer-to-firm but also consumer-to-consumer (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Customer engagement is defined as "behaviors [that] go beyond transactions, and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (van Doorn et al., 2010, p. 254). Following this definition, engagement applied to the context of employer brands is interpreted as all actions beyond the transaction of submitting a job application. The behavioral engagement can be expressed in more or less direct or indirect forms (Shao, 2009), including word-of-mouth (van Doorn et al., 2010; Gummerus et al., 2012), online discussions (van Doorn et al., 2010; Gummerus et al., 2012), commenting (van Doorn et al., 2010) and information search (Gummerus et al., 2012). As pointed out by Gummerus et al., (2012, p. 859): "one of the most popular forums in which customers engage behaviorally with firms is social media". Accordingly, customer engagement behaviors within the consumer-firm relationship on social media implies consuming, contributing and creating brand-related content (Muntinga et al., 2011) On Social Networking Sites (SNSs), these are commonly expressed in different forms of engagement behavior such as *Consume Content, Share Content, Comment, Like, Add Friends / Contacts* and *Private Conversation.* We argue that these engagement behaviors are suitable to explore also in the context of employer branding, consistent to the similarities between employer brands and

consumer brands. Antecedents to such engagement behaviors on social media have previously been studied using the Uses & Gratifications (U&G) approach, which will be discussed and used to develop the hypotheses on the gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands on SNSs.

The Uses & Gratifications (U&G) Approach

The U&G approach works as a theoretical perspective used to identify and understand the goals and motivations of consumers in their media usage (Katz et al., 1974; McQuail, 1983). It assumes that media consumers are active and goal-oriented actors who are aware of the motivations behind their media usage, in contradiction to traditional views on mass media where the consumer has rather been seen as a victim (McQuail, 1983). In U&G studies, the reasons behind people's purposive and motivated approach to their use of media are thought to be based on social and psychological needs (Haridakis and Whitmore, 2006), such as the need for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion and escape (McQuail, 1983). Consequently, the selection and use of media will vary according to individual needs (Katz et al., 1974; McQuail, 1983). The U&G approach seeks to explore which gratifications consumers seek in their consumption of media, separating the term gratifications into *gratifications sought* as antecedents to media usage and *gratifications obtained* as consequences of media usage (McQuail, 1983; Muntinga et al., 2011). No universal U&G-model exists, but the most cited and interpreted model derive from McQuail (1983) who identified *Information*, *Entertainment*, *Identity* and *Integration & Social Interaction* as the main gratifications sought and obtained through media usage. Although the model was established more than three decades ago, it has been adapted by many scholars in modern contexts such as Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (B. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2009; Park et al., 2009), online communities (Youcheng and Fesenmaier,

2003) and brand-related user generated content (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011; Rohm et al., 2013).

The U&G theory has experienced a revival in recent years, specifically within the area of social media and customer engagement (Muntinga et al., 2011; Ruggiero, 2000). Most notably, the U&G approach is relevant today because the assumptions of the approach are in line with the characteristics of social media, enabling more interaction, co-creation and empowerment among consumers (Ruggiero, 2000). All four gratifications in McQuail (1983) have been shown as significant when applied to modern contexts, although the gratification *Identity* has received less support in some studies (B. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2009; Rohm et al., 2013). The reason appears to be that social media encourages a social identity created and enhanced by interaction with others, why the gratification of *Identity* instead has ended up as a sub-category of *Integration & Social Interaction* (B. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2009). Consequently, we will focus on *Information, Entertainment* and *Integration & Social Interaction* as the gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands on SNSs. For simplicity reasons, gratifications sought will from now on primarily be referred to as gratifications.

The first gratification, *Information*, has been argued as a prominent motivation specifically when studying U&G in social media contexts (Muntinga et al., 2011). It refers to all informational aspects of media usage, including finding information and news about future events and conditions, seeking advice and opinions and reducing risk in future actions and purchases (McQuail, 1983; Shao, 2009; Youcheng and Fesenmaier, 2003). Consumers use social media for brand-related purposes in order to get timely access to information about brands and products (Rohm et al., 2013), finding inspiration from other consumers and gain knowledge from the company and consumers before future purchases (Muntinga et al., 2011). Related to employer brands, we believe that information might serve as an important gratification as to why students

would choose to engage with employer brands in SNSs and propose the following hypotheses:

> **H1a:** *Information is a gratification sought by business graduates' when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn.*
> **H1b:** *Information is a gratification sought by business graduates' when engaging with employer brands on Facebook.*

Entertainment is the second gratification in McQuail's (1983) U&G-model, supported by many recent studies in social media contexts (Muntinga et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009; Rohm et al., 2013; Shao, 2009). This gratification involves several sub-categories, such as relaxation, escaping from daily routine and problems, emotional release and passing time (McQuail, 1983). It has also been referred to as getting a sense of control in life-situations (McQuail, 1983), such as keeping updated with news in society and among friends and relatives. We argue that SNSs could serve as a tool to keep the job-seeking process in control as well as passing time by engaging with employer brands, leading to the following hypotheses:

> **H2a:** *Entertainment is a gratification sought by business graduates' when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn.*
> **H2b:** *Entertainment is a gratification sought by business graduates' when engaging with employer brands on Facebook.*

The final gratification, *Integration & Social Interaction* refers to all motivational factors related to other people (Muntinga et al., 2011). Consumers tend to use media in order to connect with friends, family and society, belong to groups, seek support and substituting real-life situations (McQuail, 1983; Muntinga et al., 2011). It encompasses both direct and indirect interactions in social media, from reading content to chat with people (Shao, 2009). Related to brands, consumers choose to engage with brands in order to get a feeling of higher interaction and engagement in order to get closer to the company behind (Rohm et al., 2013). Since job-seeking processes involve

connecting and meeting with employees, which potentially can turn out to be future colleagues and managers, we believe that this social aspect of gratifications will be important in engagement with employer brands on SNSs. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

> **H3a:** *Integration & Social Interaction is a gratification sought by business graduates when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn.*
> **H3b:** *Integration & Social Interaction is a gratification sought by business graduates when engaging with employer brands on Facebook.*

Thus, the parts that constitute our theoretical framework are interrelated as follows: *employer branding* sets the context in which we will look at *engagement*, where social media and particularly SNSs provide interesting forums where people, in their role as job-seekers, engage. The U&G approach will be used to further understand what factors precede engagement, by looking into the gratification*s* of *Information, Entertainment* and *Integration & Social Interaction*. In addition, two gratifications (*Strategy* and *Convenience)* were discovered during the data collection process, leading to the development of two supplementary hypotheses presented in the *Methodology* section.

Methodology

Procedure

A two-phased method consisting of a quantitative approach supported with a qualitative pre-study has been implemented in order to answer the research questions in this article (Table I):

> **RQ1:** *Which gratifications do business graduates seek when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook?*
> **RQ2:** *Are there any differences in the gratifications sought between LinkedIn and Facebook?*

Table I. Procedure

Procedure	Test	Methodology	Sample	Objective
Phase 1	Pre-test of pre-study	Qualitative	n = 3	*Check for improvements*
	Pre-study		n = 7	*Identify employer brand specific gratifications*
Phase 2	Pre-test of main study	Quantitative	n = 5	*Check for improvements*
	Main study		n = 122	*Measure Engagement in General, Engagement with Employer Brands and Gratifications Sought from Engagement with Employer Brands*

In the first phase, a focus group was conducted with the aim of mapping current job-seeking behaviors on social media and identifying general motivations behind this behavior. The insights from the focus group were then used to identify relevant measurements for the online survey, in combination with the gratifications sought suggested by (McQuail, 1983). In the second phase, the main study, an online questionnaire mapped the social media engagement savviness, potential engagement with employer brands and gratifications sought among university students enrolled in their last semester on business programs. The survey was distributed by e-mail to business graduates enrolled in their final semester at Swedish universities.

Pre-study

Conducting a focus group prior to designing a quantitative survey is a well-adapted method when the researcher seeks to identify and confirm relevant topics and items (Churchill, 1979; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). It allows for an open and informal discussion on people's behaviors (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008), which were considered as suitable for this study since the research topic covers behaviors of job-seekers in relation to employer brands. Since this research context is relatively new and unexplored, a pre-study in the form of a focus group introduced the research process in order to strengthen the relevance of the theoretically based gratifications as well as exploring new gratifications to investigate further in the quantitative part of the study. The focus group was conducted in an informal and relaxed atmosphere with a sample of 7

respondents, which were all Business Graduates from Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law. The respondents were invited by e-mail where a brief description of the research topic was presented prior to the focus group. A focus group manual was used in order to ensure that the discussion was kept within relevant borders, although the discussion was attempted to be as open and unstructured as possible since this enables the researcher to uncover themes and insights that are new, unknown or unexpected (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Briefly, the focus group started out by discussing current engagement on LinkedIn and Facebook in general, continued by discussions on current job-seeking behavior and opinions on engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook. The focus group was audio recorded and lasted for approximately 1,5 hours. As expected, the gratifications retrieved from previous research (i.e. *Information, Entertainment* and *Integration & Social Interaction*) were identified as relevant, but the pre-study also identified two potential gratifications revealed from common themes during the open discussion. One of them was connected to strategically use Social Networking Sites (SNSs) to create a professional profile and external image of the self. This potential gratification was named *Strategy* and resulted in the formulation of two new hypotheses:

> **H4a:** *Strategy is a gratification sought from business graduates' engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn.*
> **H4b:** *Strategy is a gratification sought from business graduates' engagement with employer brands on Facebook.*

Table II. Identified Gratifications

Gratification	Source	Explanation
Information	Pre-study, McQuail (1983)	*Finding information about companies and industry-specific news and facts*
Entertainment	Pre-study, McQuail (1983)	*Take part of creative, innovative and informal information about companies and employees and use social media as a way of taking control in the job-seeking process*
Integration & Social Interaction	Pre-study, McQuail (1983)	*Network with and find information about employers, employees and private network for career-related purposes*
Strategy	Pre-study	*Using SNSs as a way of specialize one's career profile and create an external image*
Convenience	Pre-study	*Choosing to use SNSs because of it's unique characteristics compared to traditional channels*

Another potential gratification related to the specific format of the discussed SNSs was expressed in the focus group in terms of *Convenience*, including for example the characteristics of provided content as simple, clear and frequently updated. The emergence of this potential gratification developed into a fifth group of hypotheses:

> **H5a:** *Convenience is a gratification sought by business graduates engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn.*
> **H5b:** *Convenience is a gratification sought by business graduates engagement with employer brands on Facebook.*

In total, five gratifications were further investigated in this study, which can be seen in Table II.

Main Study

This research paper is deductive in nature, seeking to test whether established theories apply in specific contexts (Hyde, 2000). Practically, existing U&G theories and findings from the pre-study helped us generate five hypotheses that were tested with a quantitative approach using multivariate analysis techniques. When the researcher takes a deductive approach to theory and research, quantitative methods are most commonly applied since they allow the researcher to describe, explain and predict relationships (Bryman, 2011; Hyde, 2000). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between gratifications and engagement, why a quantitative approach was seen as appropriate to apply. Compared to qualitative methods, where the researcher primarily seeks to explore relationships, the advantages of quantitative studies lies in their ability to draw general assumptions about a population with statistical power by investigating a sample of the population (Vogt, 2011).

In this paper, a survey research was used to collect data, since it allows for a larger sample size, wider geographical distribution and is less time-consuming (Sue and Ritter, 2007). Other tools for collecting data in quantitative research include for example experiments, structured interviews and structured observations (Vogt, 2010). The population in this study is widely dispersed at universities throughout Sweden; therefore a survey research for collecting data was argued to be suitable in order to achieve a representative sample size during a limited period of time.

Sampling Strategy

A self-administered online questionnaire enabled by the web-based survey tool Webropol was distributed to a non-probability purposive sample of 700 Business Graduates enrolled in their final semester before graduation. Based on statistics from SCB (2013) showing that 2134 Swedish Master Students graduated within Social Sciences, Law, Business or Administration in 2013, the population in this research is estimated to be slightly smaller since the number from SCB includes other educational fields than business. The purposive sample was accessed via the administration office at the School of Business, Economics and Law in Gothenburg. Additional respondents were collected through corresponding administration offices at other Swedish

Table III. Descriptive Statistics

Gender	N	%
Female	71	58.2
Male	51	41.8
Total	122	100
Age	**N**	**%**
21-25	66	54.1
26-30	43	35.2
31-35	8	6.6
36-40	3	2.5
>40	2	1.6
Major	**N**	**%**
Finance	8	6.6
Accounting	17	13.9
Business Administration	7	5.7
Marketing	32	26.2
Management	29	23.8
Logistics	1	0.8
International Business	9	7.4
Entrepreneurship	8	6.6
Other	11	9
SNSs Registered Accounts	**N**	**%**
LinkedIn	110	90.2
Facebook	120	98.4

universities and through the researchers' private networks. The survey was distributed by e-mail and the respondents that could be accessed twice received one reminder in order to increase the number of participants in the final sample. To ensure the criteria that the respondents were business students and seeking full-time employment (excluding terminal summer occupations) after graduation, controlling questions on these matters were stated in the questionnaire. The population was judged to be suitable to fulfill the purpose of looking at business graduates' social media engagement with employer brands based on three reasons. First, it is likely that job-seeking is highly relevant for students approaching their final graduation. Secondly, young people are in general the most active

group of the population on social media in Sweden (Findahl, 2013). Finally, graduates are likely to be a popular target group for companies with the purpose to attract and find new employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013)

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

The data collection resulted in a final sample of 122 respondents after cleaning the data. 46 cases were deleted due to high percentages of missing data and/or unfit with requirements of the target group of job-seeking business graduates. Since the survey was sent to 700 respondents, the response rate of 17.4 % (122/700) is relatively low. In general, web surveys have been shown to receive lower response rates compared to mail surveys (Shih and Xitao Fan, 2008). Other possible explanations to the low response rate could be limited access to send reminders and the length of the questionnaire (Deutskens et al., 2004). However, considering the shared characteristics among the people forming the population as all being job-seeking business students, we argue that it is a homogenous group that can be represented by a smaller sample (Schutt, 2012).

The descriptive statistics of the sample are summarized in Table III. The sample consisted of 58.2% female and 41.8% men, with an average age of 26.5 years. Since we applied a purposive sampling technique to reach business graduates, there was no big spread of age. 89.3% of the sample was at the age of 21-30 years; the youngest were at the age 21 and the oldest at the age 50. Half of the sample was majoring within the Marketing and Management disciplines, while the rest were spread between Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, Logistics, International Business, Entrepreneurship and Other Tracks. All respondents had a registered account on at least one of the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) included in this study, with 90.2 % registered on LinkedIn and 98.4 % registered on Facebook.

Table IV. Measured Constructs

Construct		Source	Items
1	**Engagement in General**	Pre-study, Gummerus et al. (2012), van Doorn et al. (2010)	*Consume Content, Share Content, Comment, Like, Follow, Add Friends / Contacts and Private Conversation*
2	**Engagement with Employer Brands**	Pre-study, Gummerus et al. (2012), van Doorn et al. (2010)	*Consume Content, Share Content, Comment, Like, Follow, Add Friends / Contacts and Private Conversation*
3	**Gratifications Sought**	Pre-Study, McQuail (1983), Muntinga et al. (2011), Rohm et al. (2013)	*Items based on identified gratifications: Information, Entertainment, Integration & Social Interaction, Strategy & Convenience (see Appendix I)*

Measurements

With the aim of investigating the gratifications *sought* from business graduates' engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook, three constructs were measured including (1) *Engagement in General* (2) *Engagement with Employer Brands* and (3) *Gratifications Sought from Engagement with Employer Brands,* all measured separately for LinkedIn and Facebook (Table IV). In order to ensure the validity of these constructs, they were all based on the theoretical framework and tested for relevance and validity in the pre-study.

When measuring *Engagement in General,* respondents were asked to rate their current level of different forms of engagement behaviors on LinkedIn and Facebook (see construct 1, Table IV). These engagement behaviors were based on the theoretically established consumer engagement behaviors by Gummerus et al. (2012) and van Doorn et al. (2010), and included the items *Consume Content, Share Content, Comment, Like, Follow, Add Friends/Contacts* and *Private Conversation.* To measure the *Engagement with Employer Brands,* the same items of engagement behaviors were applied although explicitly expressed to be in relation to employer brands. The gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands were measured using items related to each construct (see Appendix I), all grounded in the theoretical discussion and the pre-study (see Table III and IV). All constructs were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 5 = High Engagement and 1 = Low Engagement for measurements 1 and 2, and respectively 5 = Strongly Agree and 1 = Strongly Disagree for measurement 3. Since the present research measures three constructs, Likert-scales are suitable as they are used when the researcher intends to measure one construct with multiple items (Thomas, 2004).

Data Analysis

The results from the online questionnaire were analyzed in four major steps using the software program IBM SPSS Statistics for multivariate data analysis. First, a Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted for the items included in each gratification in order to measure the reliability of the construct. Second, the constructs *Engagement in General* and *Engagement with Employer Brands* were analyzed by comparing mean values between the items of different engagement behaviors. Third, we checked for correlations between the gratifications and *Engagement with Employer Brands* in order to identify the relationships among the variables. Fourth, a standard multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the hypotheses. Using multiple regression is most suitable when the researcher seeks to explain, predict and describe variances between a dependent variable using two or more independent variables (Hair et al., 2010). Assuming that the independent variables *Information, Entertainment, Integration & Social Interaction, Strategy* and *Convenience* predict *Engagement with Employer Brands,* multiple regression was considered an accurate form of analysis.

Results & Analysis

The results from the survey is presented according to the structure of statistical analysis run in IBM SPSS Statistics. First, Cronbach's

Table V. Reliability Analysis of Gratification Constructs

Platform	Information	Entertainment	Integration & Social Interaction	Strategy	Convenience
LinkedIn	0,858**	0,659	0,817**	0,739**	0,753**
Facebook	0,847**	0,627	0,806**	0,815**	0,793**

*** = Cronbach's Alpha > 0,7*

Alpha tests were applied to test whether the gratification constructs retrieved from previous research and the pre-study were reliably measured. Second, in order to see the potential in employer branding on social media, the mean values of *Engagement in General* and *Engagement with Employer Brands* were compared. The third section is devoted the hypotheses testing, where multiple regression analyses were run in order to understand the gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands on SNSs.

Reliability of Gratification Constructs

The items included in each gratification construct were tested for LinkedIn and Facebook in a Cronbach's Alpha analysis (see Table V), with a minimum level of 0.7 as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). *Information*, *Integration & Social Interaction*, *Strategy* and *Convenience* all met the requirement of at least 0.7 in Cronbach's Alpha for both platforms, which confirmed these gratification constructs as reliable for further interpretation in the analysis. *Entertainment*

had a Cronbach's Alpha value below 0.7 for both LinkedIn and Facebook, and was therefore not considered a reliable construct. Subsequently, H2a and H2b stating *Entertainment* as a gratification sought by business graduates from their engagement with employer brands on SNSs were rejected at this stage of the analysis:

> **H2a** *(Entertainment LinkedIn)* REJECTED
> **H2b** *(Entertainment Facebook)* REJECTED

Engagement Behaviors

Engagement was measured in two contexts: *Engagement in General* and *Engagement with Employer Brands*, separately for LinkedIn and Facebook. These constructs measuring engagement consisted of seven different items representing engagement behaviors, namely *Consume Content, Share Content, Comment, Like, Follow, Add Friends / Contacts* and *Private Conversation*. Looking at the mean values for each engagement behavior, *in General* (Graph I) and *with Employer Brands* (Graph II), there are apparent differences between the platforms and between the two contexts. LinkedIn is the only of the two

Graph I. Engagement in General
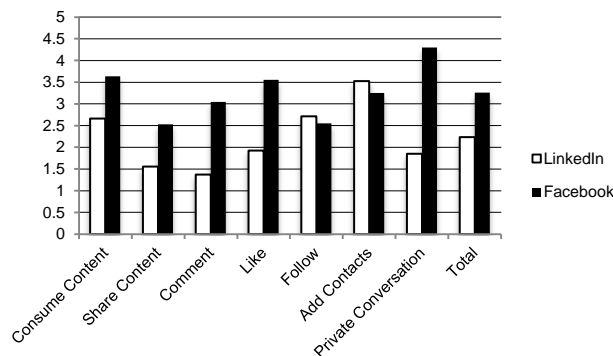
Graph II. Engagement with Employer Brands
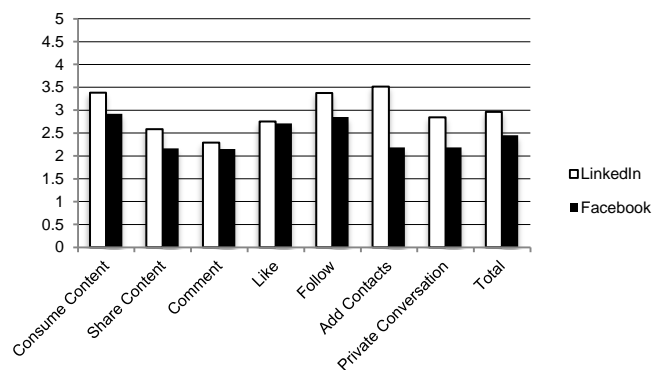
platforms where engagement with employer brands exceeds engagement in general, meaning that the respondents are more willing to engage for career-related purposes on LinkedIn than they currently do. The opposite applies for Facebook, where the respondents seem to be relatively highly engaged in general but show lower levels of *Engagement with Employer Brands*, especially considering more direct engagement behaviors such as *Private Conversation, Add Friends /Contacts* and *Comment*. In sum, Facebook exceeds LinkedIn in general engagement, whereas the conditions are reversed for engagement with employer brands where LinkedIn exceeds Facebook.

Looking into the different engagement behaviors in more detail, LinkedIn showed the highest mean values for *Add Friends/Contacts, Follow* and *Consume Content*, both in general and in the context of employer brands. *General Engagement* on LinkedIn ranged from a minimum mean of 1.37 for *Comment* to the highest mean of 3.52 represented by *Add Contacts*. When looking at *Engagement with*

Employer Brands, the same engagement behaviors represent the ones with the lowest and highest mean values, with *Add Contacts* maintaining the same highest mean value (3.51), and *Comment* a slightly higher (but still lowest) mean of 2.29. Corresponding estimates for Facebook show that *Engagement in General* ranged from 2.53 (lowest) for *Share Content* and *Follow* and the highest mean was seen for *Private Conversation* with a mean value of 4.3. Looking at the *Engagement with Employer Brands* on Facebook, a different pattern was discerned. The engagement behavior in the context of employer brands received overall much lower mean values, ranging from 2.15 – 2.18 (*Share, Comment, Add Contacts, Private Conversation*) to 2.92 (*Consume Content*). In sum, the engagement on LinkedIn seems to be characterized by the same engagement behaviors regardless of the general or employer brand specific context, whereas the engagement behaviors on Facebook change significantly to more indirect engagement behaviors in the context of

Table VI. Correlations LinkedIn

Gratification Construct	Engagement with Employer Brands	Information	Integration & Social Interaction	Strategy
Engagement with Employer Brands				
Information	0,501**			
Integration & Social Interaction	0,543**	0,805**		
Strategy	0,540**	0,598**	0,714**	
Convenience	0,431**	0,627**	0,632**	0,676**

*** = p < 0,005, N = 110*

Table VII. Correlations Facebook

Gratification Construct	Engagement with Employer Brands	Information	Integration & Social Interaction	Strategy
Engagement with Employer Brands				
Information	0,553**			
Integration & Social Interaction	0,485**	0,539**		
Strategy	0,424**	0,522**	0,768**	
Convenience	0,544**	0,691**	0,642**	0,601**

*** = p < 0,005, N = 120*

employer brands.

Gratifications predicting Engagement with Employer Brands

The relationship between the *Engagement with Employer Brands* and the gratification constructs was measured using Pearson's Correlation coefficient (*r*) separately for LinkedIn and Facebook (see Table VI and VII). Although to varying degrees, all gratification constructs showed positive correlations to *Engagement with Employer Brands* on LinkedIn and Facebook respectively. These correlation coefficients were relatively high for LinkedIn and Facebook, ranging from *r* = .501 to .553 for *Information*, *r* = .485 to .543 for *Integration & Social Interaction*, *r* = .424 to .540 for *Strategy* and *r* = .431 to .544 for *Convenience*. The risk of spurious correlations had to be considered since high correlations also existed among the gratification constructs. For example, *Integration & Social Interaction* and *Information* showed a correlation of *r* = .805 on LinkedIn. The problems arising from potential spurious correlations were addressed in the later multiple regression analysis where significant relationships were explored further.

After checking for significant correlations between the gratification constructs and *Engagement with Employer Brands*, the hypotheses were tested using separate regression models for LinkedIn and Facebook (see Table VIII and IX), with gratification constructs representing the independent variables and engagement representing the dependent variable. At the initial stage, all gratification constructs were included in the regression model, followed by gradual exclusion of insignificant independent variables until a final regression model explaining the major gratification constructs predicting *Engagement with Employer Brands* on each platform could be discerned (Hair et al., 2010).

LinkedIn

Looking at Model 3 in Table VIII, *Integration & Social Interaction* (H3a) and *Strategy* (H4a) statistically significantly predict engagement

Table VIII. Multiple Regression Analysis for LinkedIn, showing standardized B-Coefficients

Independent Variable***	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Information (H1a)	0,159	0,160	
Integration & Social Interaction (H3a)	0,198	0,198	0,321**
Strategy (H4a)	0,302**	0,303**	0,311**
Convenience (H5a)	0,001		
N	110	110	110
Adjusted R-square	0,327	0,333	0,330

** = p < 0,005
*** = Dependent Variable is Engagement with Employer Brands

with employer brands on LinkedIn, with an adjusted R^2 = .330, *p* < .005. *Integration & Social Interaction* represented a *standardized β* = .321 at a significance level of *p* = .005, while the correspondent estimates for *Strategy* were *β* = .311 and *p* = .006. *Convenience* followed by *Information* was gradually excluded from the regression model. From these findings, we can draw the following conclusions about the hypotheses related to LinkedIn:

H1a (*Information*)	REJECTED
H3a (*Integration & S. Interaction*)	ACCEPTED
H4a (*Strategy*)	ACCEPTED
H5a (*Convenience*)	REJECTED

The results from Model 3 imply that *Integration & Social Interaction* together with *Strategy* are the major gratifications sought from *Engagement with Employer Brands*, accepting H3a and H4a. *Integration & Social Interaction* held a *β*-coefficient of *β* =.321, although *Strategy* was not far left behind with a corresponding estimate of *β* =.311. *Integration & Social Interaction* was based on items measuring respondents' willingness to engage through retrieving social information about employees and acting out on this social information by contacting current employees. *Strategy* was represented by items that involved a strategic dimension in the

gratifications sought by business graduates, expressed in terms of niching the personal profile and be perceived as ambitious by others. Combined in Model 3, these gratifications serve as explanatory variables to employer brand engagement on LinkedIn with an R^2 of 33%. As seen in Graph I and II (p. 11), *Add Friends / Contacts, Consume Content* and *Follow* were the primary engagement behaviors on LinkedIn. Combining this data with the results from the multiple regression analysis, it is clear that business graduates' propensity to use LinkedIn as a platform to engage with employers are both expressed by indirect (by following and consuming content) and direct (by adding contacts) behaviors.

Facebook

Information (H1b) and *Convenience* (H5b) statistically significantly predict *Engagement with Employer Brands* on Facebook as can be seen in Model 3, Table IX. The model reached a goodness of fit of R^2 = .345, p < .005. *Information* showed a standardized β = .339 with a significance level of p = .001, whereas the estimates for *Convenience* showed β = .309 and p = .003. This leads to the following actions taken about the hypotheses related to Facebook:

H1b *(Information)*	ACCEPTED
H3b *(Integration & S. Interaction)*	REJECTED
H4b *(Strategy)*	REJECTED
H5b *(Convenience)*	ACCEPTED

Accepting H1b and H5b confirms that *Information* and *Convenience* are the gratifications mainly sought from *Engagement with Employer Brands* on Facebook. Based on insufficient levels of statistical significance, *Integration & Social Interaction* (H3b) and *Strategy* (H4b) were rejected as gratifications sought. The standardized β-coefficients of .339 and .309 respectively show that *Information* has the highest predictive power to engagement, although *Convenience* is not far below and both gratifications sought have positive and relatively equal predictive power to changes in engagement. Looking at the items connected to *Information*, confirmation of the

related hypothesis (H1B) means that business graduates primarily use Facebook in order to access different forms of information regarding for example products, corporate culture, vacant positions etc. Accordingly, the items measuring *Convenience* (H5b) suggest that business graduates engage with employer brands on Facebook because of the fast, updated and convenient format. These findings seem to align with the relatively indirect behavioral expressions of engagement *Consume Content*

Table IX. Multiple Regression Analysis for Facebook, showing standardized B-Coefficients

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Information (H1b)	0,307**	0,306**	0,339**
Integration & Social Interaction (H3b)	0,190	0,182	
Strategy (H4b)	- 0,012		
Convenience (H5b)	0,217	0,215	0,309**
N	120	120	120
Adjusted R-square	0,353	0,359	0,345

** = p < 0,005
*** = Dependent Variable is Engagement with Employer Brands

and *Follow,* which in the previous section were found to be the engagement behaviors with employer brands on Facebook with the highest mean values (see Graph II, p. 11).

Discussion

The purpose of this research paper was to identify business graduate's gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook and to explore if the gratifications differed between the platforms. Looking at the results from the present research, it is evident that differences exist, both regarding the engagement behaviors and the gratifications sought from engagement. Of the gratifications included in the hypotheses on what precedes engagement with employer brands *(Information, Entertainment,*

Integration & Social Interaction, Strategy and *Convenience),* all except *Entertainment* were significant in predicting engagement for the platforms, although in different combinations. The outcome that *Entertainment* did not appear as a reliable predictor variable to engagement in the present paper contradicts previous research on engagement on social media (B. Brandtzaeg and Heim, 2009; McQuail, 1983; Muntinga et al., 2011; Rohm et al., 2013). Recalling the items behind *Entertainment,* this suggests that reading entertaining content and passing time are gratifications that are not sought for in the context of employer branding. Job-seeking naturally inhibits a degree of seriousness that could be seen as outweighing the relaxation and leisure that users otherwise satisfy through engagement on social media.

Engagement with Employer Brands on LinkedIn was shown to be predicted by *Integration & Social Interaction* and *Strategy*, while the results for Facebook showed *Information* and *Convenience* as the most prominent gratifications. Despite the differences between the platforms, it should be noted that all gratifications were positively correlated to *Engagement with Employer brands* to some extent for both LinkedIn and Facebook (Table VI and VII). In comparison to previous research on gratifications sought from engagement with consumer brands (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2013; Muntinga et al., 2011; Rohm et al., 2013), no single conclusion can be drawn for the SNSs as a whole because of the differences in which gratifications were primarily sought from each platform. Nevertheless, this paper puts social media in a new context of employer branding, which may require a view of different SNSs as complementary to one another rather than as a whole. Therefore the main findings are subsequently discussed and illustrated by comparing the results for LinkedIn and Facebook.

Differences in Engagement Behaviors

As seen in the results, LinkedIn was the only case where the *Engagement with Employer Brands* exceeded that of *Engagement in General* (Graph I and II), acknowledging this platform as the one with the highest potential for employer branding initiatives. Compared to Facebook, the more direct engagement behaviors (especially *Add Friends/Contacts* and *Follow)* supports the social aspects of why business graduates choose to engage on LinkedIn since they involve direct connection with other users (i.e. potential employers/colleagues). LinkedIn is centered on professional networking (van Dijck, 2013), why it is not surprising that *Add Contacts* is a prominent form of engagement. Nor is it surprising that the motivations behind the engagement include *Integration & Social Interaction* which cover subcategories such as connecting with others (McQuail, 1983; Muntinga et al., 2011) and getting closer to brands by higher interaction (Rohm et al., 2013). The absence of a direct engagement behavior (Shao, 2009) on Facebook such as was found in *Add Contacts* for LinkedIn, suggests that Facebook users prefer a more anonymous relationship to employer brands. Looking at *Engagement in General*, more direct engagement behaviors such as *Private Conversation* and *Comment* were prominent, which further supports this argument. This gap between *Engagement in General* and *Engagement with Employer Brands* on Facebook could possibly be explained by the transparency of social media, enabling consumer-to-consumer interaction (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). The relationship consumer-to-consumer corresponds to job-seeker-to-job-seeker in this context, resulting in a more sensitive relationship since these people might compete for the same jobs. Following this argument, the transparency enabled on SNSs can rather act as an obstacle to direct engagement behaviors, rather than an opportunity as suggested by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004). Another aspect

supporting this argument is that Facebook compared to LinkedIn primarily connects already established contacts whereas LinkedIn facilitates "strangers" to connect based on shared interests such as industries and career opportunities (van Dijck, 2013).

Thus, the findings concerning the differences in engagement behaviors reveal that the context and purpose to engage, in this case revolving around job-seeking, influence the degree of indirect/direct engagement behavior (Shao, 2009). Secondly, differences in engagement behaviors are also dependent on the characteristics of the platform in question, as illustrated in this case by the SNSs LinkedIn and Facebook.

Strategy and Integration & Social Interaction

The present study has contributed to previous research on employer brands on social media with the identified gratification of *Strategy*. Considering the professional purpose of LinkedIn, the individual agenda of customizing the personal profiles to fit certain industries or be perceived as career-oriented fits very well into LinkedIn compared to Facebook. Facebook, originating from already established family- and friends related networks (Boyd and Ellison, 2007), appears as a platform where private and professional purposes may be mixed, which could potentially complicate the creation of an individual professional strategy.

Considering *Integration & Social Interaction*, McQuail (1983) and Muntinga et al. (2011) both highlight "belonging to a group" as a sub-category to this gratification. The present study sheds light on this sense of belongingness expressed by previous researchers through the combination of *Strategy* and *Integration & Social Interaction* as predictors to engagement on LinkedIn. It may be that belongingness to formal or informal groups such as student associations and alumni networks facilitated on LinkedIn is actually an enabler of the personal professional strategy. For example, being part of an alumni network of a prestigious university is in line

with strategically promoting the self (van Dijck, 2013) as ambitious and driven. As seen in the previous section on engagement behaviors in the case of LinkedIn, users are willing to take action by adding professional contacts, whereas in the case of Facebook, adding contacts was not considered an obvious engagement behavior in the context of employer brands. The willingness to act on the social information retrieved from LinkedIn, reveals the potential for SNSs to serve as a platform for interaction between potential employees and employers, as long as the exchange of professional interests is agreed upon by both parts. Furthermore, job-seekers might find LinkedIn as a good substitute for real-life interactions with potential employers, similar to what has been argued for consumer-brand relationships (Muntinga et al., 2011).

In comparison to LinkedIn, where engagement is preceded by *Integration & Social Interaction* and *Strategy*, engagement on Facebook was not predicted by any of the two. This suggests that *Strategy* is related to the professional purpose of LinkedIn, whereas Facebook users prefer to keep professional and private activities separate. Secondly, the rejection of *Integration & Social Interaction* as gratifications sought from engagement on Facebook may be grounded in the same reason: when there is no agreement that the platform serves a professional purpose, referred to as shared interests by van Dijck (2013), users are simply less willing to interact socially with employers. Facebook rather highlights other aspetcs that social media can serve employer branding initiatives, further discussed in the next section.

Information & Convenience

Information and *Convenience* were concluded as the main gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands on Facebook, compared to LinkedIn where these gratifications were rejected. The latter, *Convenience*, is a unique construct developed through the findings in this study, which contributes with essential insights to the research within employer branding and social

media combined. Covering availability, quick access to information and updated and simple content, this gratification construct confirms that business graduates choose to engage on Facebook because of its convenient format. This seem to align with previous research pointing at timely access to information as an important factor to engagement in social media, especially for engagement with brands on Facebook (Rohm et al., 2013). A possible explanation as to why *Convenience* showed the opposite for engagement on LinkedIn, i.e. were rejected as a gratification sought, could simply be that business graduates are less available and/or active on this platform. Having a distinct professional purpose metaphorically referred to as "Facebook in a suit" (van Dijck, 2013, p. 208), it is not surprising that general availability is rather a characteristic explaining engagement on the general platform Facebook than on the specialized platform LinkedIn.

Returning to the statement of "timely access to information" by Rohm et al. (2013), this further supports that *Information* and *Convenience* go hand in hand in explaining engagement with employer brands on Facebook. In accordance with McQuail (1983) who suggest seeking advice, opinions and reducing risks for future purchases as sub-categories to *Information*, these may be considered relevant also in the context of employer branding on Facebook. The information obtained through Facebook for this purpose will not be used in relation to a future purchase, but may well be used in relation to a future job opportunity or a concrete job interview situation.

As the *Information* construct includes mainly hard facts such as application deadlines, a firm's products or services and future events, this kind of information seemed to be of less importance regarding engagement on LinkedIn where the major gratifications sought were *Integration & Social Interaction* and *Strategy*. Looking at the items connected to *Integration & Social Interaction,* it can be argued that this gratification construct also involves informational aspects (McQuail, 1983; Muntinga et al., 2011), although concerning more social aspects

of information. We therefore assume that one reason leading *Information* to be rejected as a gratification sought from engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn may be that LinkedIn users preferably seek social information rather than hard facts, which for example could be accessed on Facebook.

Conclusion

This paper aimed at answering two research questions: (1) "Which gratifications do business graduates seek when engaging with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook?" and (2) "Are there any differences in gratifications sought between LinkedIn and Facebook?"

Overall, business graduates were found to be quite reserved in their engagement with employer brands on SNSs since direct engagement behaviors such as sharing content, liking posts and commenting gained low means for both LinkedIn and Facebook. The results show that the following four gratifications positively correlate with engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook: *Information, Integration & Social Interaction, Strategy* and *Convenience*. Further analysis of these gratifications as well as the different engagement behaviors showed that differences existed between the platforms. Engagement on LinkedIn is predicted by *Integration & Social Interaction* (β = .321) together with *Strategy* (β = .311), covering *Adding contacts, Following* and *Consuming Content* as the most prominent engagement behaviors. Engagement with employer brands on Facebook was predicted by the gratifications of *Information* (β = .339) and *Convenience* (β = .309), and behaviorally expressed in more anonymous engagement behaviors such as *Consuming content* and *Following*. We also looked into *Entertainment* as a possible gratification sought from engagement on the platforms, although it could not be stated as a significant predictor in the present research.

The results from the present research highlight the differences in gratifications sought dependent on the SNS in question. Yet, taking a

holistic perspective on social media, LinkedIn and Facebook are examples that emphasize important aspects to consider when building the employer brand on SNSs. Therefore, we see that the four gratifications *Information, Integration & Social Interaction, Strategy* and *Convenience* are all aspects that should be taken into account when building the employer brand on SNSs, as long as the different SNSs are seen as complementary channels for efficient employer branding strategies.

Theoretical Implications

This research paper has extended the findings from Sivertzen et al. (2013), stating that the use of social media in branding strategies has a positive effect on employer attractiveness, by looking deeper into business graduates' engagement with employer brands on LinkedIn and Facebook. By adopting the U&G approach to identify the gratifications sought from this engagement, we have merged the fields of social media and employer branding which opens up for a future research agenda with a broad spectrum of research topics (see Limitations & Future Research). The present research contributes with the two new gratifications *Strategy* and *Convenience* as sought from engagement on social media in the context of employer branding. It could be interesting to see whether these apply for engagement in other contexts where the goal-orientation of users is prominent, such as for example platforms for dating or specific hobbies. Furthermore, the findings from our study continue to confirm that the original U&G model developed by (McQuail, 1983) still is a useful tool to understand motivations behind media engagement even in modern contexts such as social media and employer branding.

Practical Implications

The integration of social media in employer branding strategies is already established in the business world, although without a theoretical understanding of what job-seekers seek from engagement on social media. Our study provides essential insights on the motivations behind business graduates' use of LinkedIn and Facebook for career-related purposes. As suggested by the differences in gratifications sought from engagement on the two platforms found in this study, it is evident that a universal employer strategy for social media would not be effective. Facebook is primarily used to access updated information in a convenient way, by more indirect engagement behaviors. Focus could therefore be suggested to be put on frequently updating the content on this platform and include simple and quickly accessed information. On LinkedIn, on the other hand, focus is on social interaction and exposing one's professional profile to potential employers – engaging more directly with the employer brand. We therefore suggest that companies should focus on facilitating networking by for example highlighting current employees behind positions and link people to post or job adverts that the job-seeker can contact directly. Following these differences, managers should develop a social media strategy for employer branding where the platforms can complement one another rather than striving for the same goals. Since most of the respondents in our study were registered on both platforms, we suggest that the content on the platforms refers to each other to increase traffic on both SNSs and guide the visitors on how they can use each platform. Similar to both platforms is that highly direct engagement behaviors may be difficult to achieve, such as commenting and sharing posts, why companies should focus on satisfying the major gratifications sought for each platform.

Limitations & Future Research

The present study has limitations, which provide interesting recommendations for future research. First, the size of the sample was relatively small consisting of 122 respondents, which has its implications on the generalizability of the results. Conducting the same study on a larger sample would therefore be desirable to validate the results from this study. Also, applying the research method used

in this article on other and/or broader populations such as graduates within other educational fields or people outside the academic world could provide valuable insights and findings. Second, qualitative methods could be applied in order to get a deeper and more detailed understanding about the gratifications sought from engagement with employer brands found in this study. Third, we have studied employer branding in social media from the job-seeker's point-of-view, why it would be valuable to interpret the findings from our study from the company's point-of-view. Finally, we have focused this research on LinkedIn and Facebook since they are popular and established SNSs, although it would be interesting to see how other SNSs or social media could be valuable for use in employer branding.

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Appendix I. List of Items related to each Gratification

Construct	#	Item
Information	1	*In order to be updated with the latest information and news about the company*
	2	*In order to keep updated about vacant positions and application deadlines*
	3	*In order to get information about future activities and events*
	4	*In order to get information about a company's business strategy and products/services*
	5	*In order to get a better understanding about the corporate culture and working climate*
Entertainment	6	*In order to get a sense of control in the job-seeking process*
	7	*In order to be updated with entertaining content other than strictly career related information*
	8	*In order to see how other jobseeker's and/or consumers interact with the company*
Integration & Social Interaction	9	*In order to build or develop my business network*
	10	*In order to contact current employees in person*
	11	*In order to discover if I have a direct or indirect connection to the company through my private network*
	12	*In order to find information about current employees and their positions*
	13	*In order to get a sense of the fit between my profile and a company based on the profiles of current employees*
Strategy	14	*In order to customize my personal profile to potential employers (such as only following companies within the finance sector)*
	15	*In order to be perceived as driven and career oriented by companeis*
	16	*Because others within my professional category (eg other graduates) are engaged with the specific company*
Convenience	17	*Because I am more available on this platform*
	18	*Because the content on this platform is more simple and clear*
	19	*Because the content on this platform is more updated than traditional channels*
	20	*Because it is a convenient forum somewhere in between a personal meeting and traditional communication platforms*