Case Competitions as a Tool to Build Brands and Reputation

by

Judith Armenteras and Iris Politiek

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Abstract

Aim: We aim to broaden the view and the understanding of what a case competition is and how it can be used beyond its use as an educational method of teaching and learning. More specifically, the purpose is to explore the phenomenon of case competitions as a branding tool from a strategic brand management perspective.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A multi-case study approach inspired by Grounded Theory allowed us to study the involvement of Nespresso, EY, Pfizer, Export Development Canada, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte in case competitions through in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Findings: In our thesis, we define Corporate Case Competitions as an activity where organisations engage in case competitions with the desire to create a strong brand and reputation by offering stakeholders the opportunity to experience their core values. We found that corporations use case competitions with internal as well as external brand building motives with different focus areas per company. Our research showed that case competitions mainly are used with a focus on corporate engagement, employer branding, and establishing a strong corporate reputation. Based upon our findings, we created the Corporate Case Competition Matrix to map how case competitions can be used by organisations. The Corporate Case Competition Matrix identifies four distinct strategies organisations could use depending upon how passively or actively they engage with Corporate Case Competitions.

Originality/Value: Our research is one of the first of its kind as it takes a strategic brand management perspective towards case competitions, exploring its strategic value to build brands and reputation. Additionally, we attempted to reveal the core managerial motives of why organisations engage in case competitions. Finally, a categorisation of potential strategic uses of case competitions adds a deeper understanding of the contemporary concept of Corporate Case Competitions to the field of strategic brand management.

Keywords: Corporate Case Competitions, strategic brand management, case competitions, brand reputation, internal branding, employer branding.

Preface

Ever since our first lecture in brand management where Mats Urde and Frans Melin speak about brand management being "meaning management", we have been captivated by strategic brand management. Our interest in case competitions relates closely to our drives and ambitions. Judith's connection to case competitions relates to competing in the LUSEM Case Competition whereas Iris encountered case competitions during her experience at the John Molson MBA International Case Competition.

In 2018, 36 teams from all over the world flocked to Montreal to participate in the John Molson MBA International Case Competition. Throughout competing in the competitions, we noticed the extensive organisational involvement. Corporations sponsor the events, provide business cases to solve, be present at cocktail parties, or take part in the judging process. We started to wonder why and changed our role from participants to researchers. We were intrigued as did not read about this kind of corporate involvement in case competitions before. When we directed our attention to strategic brand management literature to satisfy our curiosity, we found that these questions have garnered very little attention from a brand management perspective. Therefore, we decided to start our research to uncovering the managerial motives to be involved in case competitions.

In the research we have had an open discussion with international players in the business market such as EY, Pfizer, and KPMG and we gained first-hand insights into their motives to engage in case competitions. What suggests that our thesis might be of special interest for researchers who work in the field of strategic brand management. The research can appeal to those managers who intent to and to leverage on case competitions. Finally, our research might appeal to brand managers and managers who are looking for new opportunities to captivate their stakeholders.

Judith Armenteras i Corominas
Judith.armenteras@icloud.com

Iris Politiek
irispolitiek@gmail.com

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1   Introduction

In this chapter, we note the popularity of case competitions throughout the world and question the reasoning of the organisational involvement in this phenomenon. This international phenomenon awoke our curiosity to investigate the potential of case competitions as a branding tool that may be used to build and maintain a desired brand reputation in the context of strategic brand management. From that perspective, we establish our research aim and purpose to attempt to discover the managerial reasoning throughout our thesis. Then we present the consciously established boundaries of this research in the delimitations section. Finally, we conclude this chapter with an outline of our thesis.

On a global scale, case competitions seem to have gained popularity (Gamble & Jelley, 2014) as students travel to different countries to present their case solutions to challenging business cases. In short, case competitions are "a simulation in which teams of students analyze a business problem and recommend solutions to a panel of judges […] in a short amount of time" (Sachau & Naas, 2010, p.606). The general thought process of business case competitions consists of analysing the situation, identifying major problems, formulating decision criteria, developing alternatives, analysing alternatives, selecting recommendations, and creating an implementation plan (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2007; Menna, 2010). The study of business cases was historically developed as an educational method (Hammond, 2002; Mesny, 2013), "as a centerpiece of management education" (Gamble & Jelley, 2013, p.433). Now business case competitions are a competitive event, "the varsity sport of MBA programs" (Kenan-Flagler Business School, 2018, n.p.).

Whereas the phenomenon initially was closely related to universities, corporate organisations are now more often associated with case competitions. Organisations can organise their own case competition, provide a live case with real-life business problems or engage in sponsorship. Live cases are unsolved cases of business problems that companies currently face or even where "one or more executives are questioned by [participants] to discover the facts of the situation before analysis and action planning." (Calkins, 2001, p.224). KPMG, for example, flew in 22 teams to Kuala Lumpur to participate in their curated KICC global final event (KPMG International Case Competition, 2018). The organisation lets students experience what it feels like to be a KPMG consultant, while for KPMG it might a way to spot talent. It seems that the corporations have found a way to play up their brand in this engaging phenomenon. The shift from case studies as an educational activity to being a corporate activity has gained our interest as we want to find out what the motives of organisations are to become involved in case competitions.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Brand Building Process

We have noted that there is increasingly more attention to building a strong product and corporate brands in the field of strategic brand management. For the purpose of our research, brand building is defined as the internal and external activities that are aimed to create a stronger brand value (Melin, 2002). It encompasses activities that are aimed at stakeholders as "a process based on the interplay between internal and external stakeholders, a process characterised by reciprocal influence and interdependence" (Gromark & Melin, 2011, p.397). Product branding aims to influence customer perception on a certain product, whereas corporate branding attempts to influence stakeholder perceptions regarding the whole corporation (Balmer, 2001).

It is increasingly challenging to find original communication techniques to portray the desired brand image (Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010). At the same time, we believe that the difficulty itself incentivises new communication techniques to reach stakeholders. The rapidly changing business environment where people are constantly dealing with information overload encourages constant innovations, and brand managers need to reinvent their brand communications strategies (Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010). Companies have attempted to use new ways to converse with their customers. The use of ephemeral marketing is an example. It is based on creating content that will disappear, for instance, within 24 hours. An ephemeral format stimulates a sense of urgency by building on the fear of missing out (Rick, 2018). Another example of a branding tool is pop-up stores which, for instance, intends to create engagement with the customer and stimulate WOM by having a temporary physical store that will disappear within any time from one day to a few weeks (Klein, Falk, Esch, & Gloukhovtsev, 2016). Thus, it might be interesting to see if the organisational rationales for being involved in case competitions have something to do with capturing stakeholder attention in a new way.

Within the field of strategic brand management, corporate brand management is gaining more relevance compared to product brand management (Balmer, 2001). The growing trend of product commoditization is believed to contribute to the decrease in value of product brands (Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010). The trend can be related with the fact that corporate brands have certain unique characteristics not shared with product brands (Balmer, 2010). Corporate brands address all stakeholders and do not merely focus on customers (Balmer, 2010). In corporate branding, employees exemplify the corporate values and there is a strong alignment between the organisation and the corporate brand identity (Balmer, 2010). That is why we want to find out if case competitions can contribute to strengthen the corporate brand. In corporate brand management, communication is based on the brand portfolio structure,

which in turn relates to the identity and position of the company's strategic intent (see Figure 1) (Urde, 2018). Therefore, it seems that managers' strategic intent is to coordinate and align corporate brand identity and positioning, brand portfolio structure and communication. Then brand managers efforts attempt to influence the actual image and reputation with constant brand management, and internal commitment and engagement (Urde, 2018).
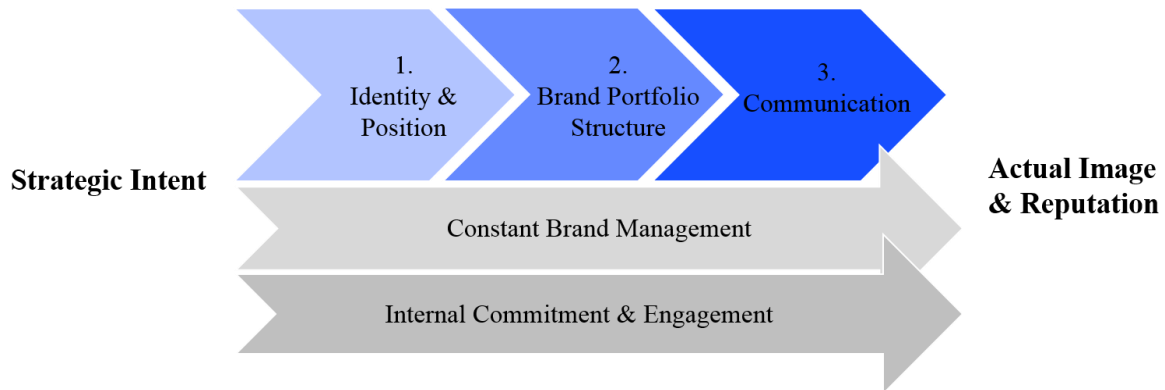
Figure 1 Corporate Brand Management Process (Urde, 2018)

A strong corporate reputation is based on "aggregate perceptions by stakeholders of an organisation's ability to fulfil their expectations" (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 43). Therefore, this research is relevant to explore if organisations engage with case competitions to influence stakeholders' brand perception.

1.1.2 Case Competitions - a Tool to Build Brands?

Literature about case competitions has been closely related to the case study method and have most often been studied in an educational context (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004; Corner, Bowden, Clark, Gibb, Kearins, & Pavlovich, 2006; Credle, Beale, & Maheshwari, 2009; Gamble & Jelley, 2014). They have mainly been published in educational journals. Others focus on the organisational aspect of the competitions and provide insights on how to organise a case competition, how the format could be structured, and how best students could be activated (Menna, 2010; Sachau & Naas, 2010; Maier-Lytle, McGuire, & Ehlen, 2010; Burke, Carter, & Hughey, 2013; Borden & Utter, 2017). However, there is limited literature about case competition from a strategic brand management perspective. We are intrigued to find out what organisations see as the benefit or what kind of strategic objectives they aim to achieve. Therefore, this study endeavours to pave the way by identifying how corporations use case competitions.

1.2   Aim and Purpose

Overall, we aim to broaden the view and understanding of what a case competition is, why organisations become involved, and how case competitions can be used beyond an educational method of teaching and learning. More specifically, our purpose is to explore the phenomenon of case competitions as a branding tool from a strategic brand management perspective. Hence, we want to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is a case competition from a corporate perspective?
- RQ2: Why do corporations engage in case competitions?
- RQ3: How can case competitions be used by corporations?

To work towards fulfilling our aim, we feel the need to evaluate what a case competition is from a corporate perspective since case competitions have such a strong educational background. We look to uncover the characteristics of a case competition from a corporate perspective to establish a distinct concept and thus a clear understanding of the phenomenon. One of the core topics is to establish an understanding of why organisations become involved in case competitions. Therefore, the first research question relates to the value proposition that case competitions bring for corporations whereas the second question relates to uncovering the various motives. We expect that we would be able to analyse organisational motives to attempt to discover how organisations use case competition. Thus, the third question attempts to group and categorise the strategic directions brand managers have when using case competitions.

In our research we focus on strategic brand management theory through a qualitative study by taking the multi-case study approach. Within the multi-case study approach, we will interview representatives and partners of Nespresso, EY, Pfizer, Export Development Canada, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte to unravel their motives and managerial rationales. We will obtain this information through the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews, observations, archival material, and document studies.

From a theoretical standpoint, we intend to contribute to strategic brand management literature by conceptualising case competitions. Furthermore, we seek to map the field of case competitions by unravelling the managerial motives of being involved in case competitions. Finally, we strive to categorise potential strategic uses for case competitions. In other words, we set out to create a framework that enables the analysis and strategic use of case competitions. From a managerial perspective, the framework seeks to empower brand managers or general managers to decide if using case competitions would fit their brand building objectives. Additionally, it might guide the strategic focus of professionals when they do decide to use case competitions.

1.3   Delimitations

Business case competitions will be the centre of this research in contrast to other varieties of case competitions. We will be better able to compare corporate involvement since business case competitions have a similar format and participant group. The emphasis on corporate branding stems from the nature of the case competitions. The branding efforts in case competitions are related to influencing the corporate brand of a corporation, and not to influencing specific products or services (product branding).

We position our research in the field of strategic brand management, which is why we do not emphasise the educational use of case competitions. The scope of our research only includes the history of case-based learning to understand the stakeholder value of case competitions to establish a conceptual foundation of the phenomenon. We do not emphasise how effective the case method of learning is. Similarly, the case competition format or how to assemble a successful case team is not a part of our research scope. Our research is of exploratory nature and we do not focus on covering specific cases in depth. We intent to create a broad overall understanding of the potential uses of case competitions from a strategic brand management perspective. More specifically, we aim to understand the motives and rationales from corporations. Even though we do take three organisational perspectives into account (case competition (co-)organiser, case sponsor, and case provider), we only emphasise on the organisational perspective and not on other perspectives (that of judge, participant, and coach).

1.4   Outline of the Thesis

In **chapter 2** we provide a theoretical background on the key research areas related to our thesis: case competitions, strategic brand management, and internal and external brand building. It reviews previous literature that has been written with the purpose of our paper in mind. With the literature review, we are to be able to compare and contrast our findings to the existing theories in the analysis.

In **chapter 3** we present an outline of how we have approached this research by describing the methodology. Here, we give insight into the argumentation behind our choices and provide a clear reflective section where quality standards surrounding our research are evaluated.

In **chapter 4** we present the findings from our empirical research. Namely, the interviews with the organisations that are supported by quotes and secondary data to describe their motivations and thought processes authentically.

In **chapter 5** we provide answers to the three research questions and present our Corporate Case Competition Matrix in the analysis as a result of the research presented earlier. The framework is built upon the multi-case analysis that will be supported by argumentations from the within-case analyses and cross-case analyses. In the discussion, we systematically combine theory with our empirical findings.

In **chapter 6** we examine our research results in relation to existing research. By looking back at our research process, we elaborate on our expectations and try to present our reasoning on why our expectations have been met.

In **chapter 7** we relate our research findings back to its original aims and objectives. Then we present practical implications and suggestions for further research.

2 Literature Review

This chapter covers three research areas that are aligned with our research positioning. First, we will establish an understanding of the case competition landscape. Our attempt to map the case competition landscape will mainly be established based upon educational literature that creates a broad understanding of the phenomenon. We consider that this will provide the needed foundation to analyse the phenomenon as a potential branding tool. Secondly, to evaluate if case competitions can be a tool to strengthen a corporate brand, we review strategic brand management literature with particular attention on how brand identity is related to reputation. Thirdly, we focus on both the internal and external brand building, to discover if case competitions have the potential to influence both of these managerial disciplines.

2.1 The Case Competition Landscape

We draw on research with an educational positioning since case competition seems to have received little attention from a strategic brand management perspective. We argue that case competitions have moved from giving the academic case study method a competitive twist to being a new potential branding tool that can be used by corporations. We will first review how case competitions emerged drawing on their history from Harvard Business School. Gamble and Jelley's (2014) emphasis on teaching with evidence-based management helps understand the potential motives a corporation can have to engage with the academic community. On the other hand, Maier-Lytle, McGuire and Ehlen (2010), Sachau and Naas (2010), and Borden and Utter (2017) provide us with a clear insight into why case competitions are valuable for another stakeholder group: participants. Finally, by using Corner et al.'s (2006) research, we have a clear picture of the variety and characteristics of business case competitions.

2.1.1 The History of Case-Based Learning

Case-based learning has existed for more than 100 years since Harvard Business School introduced the case-based method in business teaching around 1912 (Hammond, 2002; Mesny, 2013). Historically, the case study method was developed to educate students on how to handle 'real' corporate problems (Hammond, 2002; Shulman, 1986; Credle, Beale &

Maheshwari, 2009; Mesny, 2013). The educational change to case-based learning was spurred by the desire to mimic on-the-job training in an educational format (Gamble & Jelley, 2014). Subsequently, the need is related to the rising complexity of the field of business (Aram & Noble, 1999). Case-based teaching brings "[students] as close as possible to business situations of the real world." (Harvard Business Publication Education, 2018a, n.p.). Real-life business situations are replicated by "time constraints and conflicting goals" (Harvard Business Publication Education, 2018a, n.p.). Thus, a combination of interactivity stimulates discussion and the real-world learning element of the case method, and thus secures the quality of case-based teaching (Shulman, 1986; Ballantine & McCourt Larres, 2004; Shugan, 2006; Harvard Business Publication Education, 2018a).

Gamble and Jelley (2014) see case-based methods staying at the root of business education for the years to come. Similarly, Credle, Beale, and Maheshwari (2009) describe the case method as being notorious "for its ability to enhance students' critical thinking and analytical skills" (p.30). Nevertheless, the authors use the word 'notorious' and not 'proven' to describe the advantage for case competitions which raises the question if there might be a lack of proof of the effectiveness of the method. Case method critics state that some cases give too much information, making the case solving process not realistic (Gloeckler, 2008). Furthermore, it makes the case not fully representative of the real business world, as professionals have to deal with uncertainty in their decision (Gloeckler, 2008). Menna (2010) states that there is no consistent model for case analysis. However, educational institutions have created their process to structure the case analysis. The case method of Harvard Business School consists of various steps that include sorting through information and have recommendations as an output (Harvard Business Publication Education, 2018b).

2.1.2 Stakeholder Motivations in Case Competitions

The most relevant stakeholder groups are the organisation, participants, coaches, judges, and sponsors. Where case competitions first were mainly organised by graduate and MBA programs (Rebeiz, 2011), undergraduate programs are now adopting competitions as part of their educational method (Maier-Lytle, McGuire, & Ehlen, 2010). Subsequently, corporate organisations (co-)organise their own case competitions, such as KPMG and Nespresso.

The Organisation

Companies who organise case competitions might be involved for different reasons. First, Sachau and Naas (2010) highlight that the organisers of the case competition "enjoy having bright and motivated students work on a problem" (p.607). Secondly, when universities host case competitions, it can benefit them from an accreditation perspective (Borden & Utter, 2017) where the university aspires to receive a proof of its educational quality. Thirdly, case competitions might be a low-barrier method to incorporate case-based learning as a part of the

educational curriculum. More specifically, Gamble and Jelley (2014) see case competitions as a growing form of case-based learning adopted by an increasing number of universities and organisations across the world. Case competitions might provide universities the opportunity to use case-based learning without having to redesign their educational philosophy. Fourth, case competitions might have similar benefits to case-based learning as it follows the same philosophy. A critical element here might be the difference in exposure time. Within case competitions participants engage with case-based learning in a short timeframe while embedding the method in an educational institute incentives a continuous expose. Contrastingly, when participants are 'serial case competitors', the argument of difference in exposure times will be refuted due to a similar exposure time. As with case-based learning, case competitions allow connecting the educational and corporate industries, where students and executives are both enriched (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2007).

The Participant

Corner et al. (2006) compare case competition benefits to those of grounded learning (Schwarz, 1985; Mosca & Howard, 1997). Those are "real-world experience, optimized learning transfer, integrated theory/practice, and a shift of learning responsibility to the students" (Corner et al. 2006, p.431). From participating in case competition, participants strengthen four main areas:

1. *Their knowledge* (Maier-Lytle, McGuire, & Ehlen, 2010; Sachau & Naas, 2010; Corner et al. 2006; Weybrecht, 2016; Borden & Utter, 2017). As case teams often work with multidisciplinary teams, resembling a consulting team, participants are exposed to different areas that are not offered in their respective university program (Maier-Lytle, McGuire, & Ehlen, 2010).

2. *Their communications and teamwork skills* (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004; Lee, 2007; Maier-Lytle, McGuire, & Ehlen, 2010; Sachau & Naas, 2010; Borden & Utter, 2017). Communication and other 'soft skills' are critical when working in a team under high pressure. Confidence, motivation and responsibility will be challenged and improved as a part of the case competition learning process (Maier-Lytle, McGuire & Ehlen, 2010).

3. *The ability to manage heavy workload in a set amount of time* (Sachau & Naas, 2010; Borden & Utter, 2017).

4. *Their awareness about "job-related knowledge, skills, and attitude"* (Sachau & Naas, 2010, p.606). Due to the close relationship between case-based learning and case competitions, participants become aware of what is needed in their industry to be a valuable asset. Additionally, training and coaching in the case competition process allow the participants to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Sachau & Naas, 2010).

The Coaches, Judges and Sponsors

As mentioned before, the perspectives of coaches, judges, and sponsors have yet to receive much research attention. At this point, Corner et al. (2006) describe the process of case-based learning where instructors (coaches) become co-participants in learning. They provide student feedback and need to make sure they are aware of the most crucial developments in the field of business. Judges and sponsors of case competitions provide recruitment opportunities (Dunham, 2003; Armstrong & Fykami, 2010) by seeing participants in action, similar to scouting athletes by going to games.

2.1.3 Variety of Case Competitions

A case competition "in general […] creates a real-world experience, optimises learning transfer, integrates theory and practice, and shifts learning responsibility more directly to students" (Corner et al. 2006, p.433). When it comes to case competitions, there are different variations regarding their length, format, type of case, topics, or prizes (Sachau & Naas, 2010; Burke, Carter, & Hughey, 2013). (Co-)organisers of business case competitions are often universities that have the ambition to engage in case-based teaching and learning. Corporate organisations such as Unilever, KPMG, P&G, Nespresso, and L'Oréal among others are opening up their doors with their case competitions. At first glance, these competitions seem to be linked to the company's core values as Nespresso builds upon its shared value approach (Sustainability MBA challenge, n.d.) by focusing the competition on sustainable solutions. Besides organising case competitions, organisations could also connect their brand to the events by acting as a sponsor or by providing cases.

The cases in a case competition can be written cases about historical events or about events that are relevant at the time of case solving. The main difference between a live case and a written case is that a live case focuses on real-life business challenges (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2007). The live case could be a written case and might, for instance, be supported by a presentation. Here, interaction with a corporate client is mimicked; as the students can read the initial material, listen to the live case presentation, and to ask one question per team to clarify the case (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2007).

To conclude, academic research has had a limited attention on case competition (co-)organisers or corporations that provide cases for case competitions. Their motivations might be different from that of educational institutions. Although Sachau and Naas (2010), Borden and Utter (2017), and Gamble and Jelley (2014) present some argumentation why educational organisations are involved in case competitions, however they still leave unanswered how other organisations become involved in case competitions. Therefore, we attempt to build upon previous research to broaden the view and the understanding of what a case competition is from a corporate perspective.

2.2 Strategic Brand Management

In strategic brand management there is strong agreement that it is important to have a solid base of corporate values to build the corporate brand on and to make the company unique in the eyes of the stakeholders (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 2012; Urde, 2013). This solid foundation of values is defined by a brand's identity. By understanding the process of value alignment, it is possible to analyse which values corporations could potentially transfer with case competitions. As we argue that case competitions might be a tool to build brands and reputation. We draw on Urde and Greyser's (2016) corporate brand management and reputation research to establish the link between corporate brand identity and reputation due to the various reputational strategies the researchers describe. The model is of particular interest for this thesis because brand reputation is ultimately based on the company's core values. Thus, maintaining alignment with the corporate brand elements with the brand core and the brand reputation.

2.2.1 Moving Towards Corporate Branding

Where brand management originally began in the business-to-customer industry, it has now, two decades later, gained equal importance in the business-to-business, public, and non-profit industries (Melin, 2002). Companies are gradually prioritising corporate brand strategic decisions over other matters (Melin, 2002; Balmer, 2012). As such, managers try to benefit from corporate brands' value-creating capacity and long-term sustainable advantage (Melin, 2002, Balmer, 2012). This allows them to better overcome the current environmental challenges, such as the crowded product market, short product life cycles, and the implications of technology advancements (Melin, 2002; Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010). Additionally, Hatch and Schultz (2001) acknowledge the cost-efficiency advantage of corporate brands. The authors argue that companies benefit from investing in one corporate brand instead of investing in the branding of every single product. That is, the company invests in the overall corporate brand that encompasses the company's offering (Hatch & Schultz, 2001).

2.2.2 Corporate Brand Identity

Brand identity helps to navigate and drive management decisions (Kapferer, 2012). Accordingly, brand managers should establish a relationship between a company's values and the brand identity to create the brand meaning (Kapferer, 2012). Brand identity is based on solid and recognisable values that indicate the aspired brand associations (Aaker, 1996). Therefore, brand managers' first concern should be to ensure that the brand's core elements

are aligned with the corporate brand strategy to create a strong brand identity. If elements are not aligned with the core values, they can potentially hinder the brand (Kapferer, 2012). Beyond these rationales, "brand identity is […] what the brand stands for, what gives meaning and what makes [the company] unique" (Melin, 2002, pp.118). Brand identity enables a company to stand apart from other companies as a unique unit with its own story and its meaning (Kapferer, 2012). Consequently, Urde and Greyser (2016) define brand management as meaning management.

Kapferer (2012) differentiates six elements that together compose brand identity. The author provides managers with a tool, the brand identity prism, aimed to help to define and understand what their brand is on a strategic level. Since our research highlights corporate brands, Kapferer's self-image and reflection concepts will not be presented here. Those concepts are more relevant for product brands (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The physical concept relate to the tangible aspect of a brand (Kapferer, 2012). Therefore, personality, culture, and relationship are relevant elements to cover for the purpose of this research.

The Personality Element of Brand Identity

The personality element of a brand is understood as the attribution of human traits to a brand (Kapferer, 2012). Aaker (1997) introduced the concept of 'animism' to explain how giving human characteristics to an object or service simplifies the interaction between brand and stakeholders. Communication campaigns should be aligned with the brand personality when it comes to the tone of voice and imagery (Kapferer, 2012). Accordingly, Aaker (1997) highlights that the brand's personality influences how customers perceive actions and behaviours of a company. Moreover, brand personality enables stakeholders to identify themselves with the brand (Kapferer, 2012). Giving human traits to a brand allows for better understanding of the brand and smooths the relationship between stakeholders and the company (Aaker, 1997; Kapferer, 2012).

The Cultural Element of Brand Identity

Culture is considered to be the most important aspect of the brand identity (Kapferer, 2012). According to the Kapferer (2012), culture goes beyond personality as it relates to the ideals, causes, ideas, and values that the brand represents (Kapferer, 2012). Hence, brands can build a much deeper connection with customers who share a similar ideology. Some managers still need to realise "that brands are engaged in an ideological competition" (Kapferer, 2012, p.160) and that the brand needs to be a champion to appeal to their customers. A corporate brand and its identity are constructed based on the organisational culture (Urde, 2013). Looking at culture from another perspective, de Chernatony (2001) remarks the importance of employee perspective, fit, and support of organisational values and culture. The employee perspective is important because employees play a central role in defining the "core nature of

an organisation" (Roper & Fill, 2012, pp. 35). Hence, culture can be noticed through how employees work and interact, or even when managers define short and long-term corporate brand strategies (i.e., defining the corporate mission and vision) (Roper & Fill, 2012).

The Relationship Element of Brand Identity

The relationship element of brand identity can be seen when a corporate brand interacts with its customers (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The interaction between a corporate brand and its stakeholders is shaped by the company's culture and behaviour (Kapferer, 2012). Corporate brands build distinctive relationships with the different stakeholders, and thus multiple relationships are integrated into one corporate brand identity (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The core values of the company, vision, and mission are usually the foundation of the relationship (Kapferer, 2012). Therefore, it becomes very important to communicate brand values effectively. Hatch and Schultz (2001) remark the risks of misalignment between the corporate vision and stakeholder expectations by contributing to a relationship disconnection between the two. Corporations that seek a long-term relationship should prioritise defining an inspiring vision that is supported by the company's values and is suitable for their stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2001).

2.2.3 Connecting Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation

A firm with strong economic stability does not necessarily have a strong reputation (Herstein & Zvilling, 2011). As such, brand reputation also relies on brand management efforts to build and manage the brand (Herstein & Zvilling, 2011). Corporate reputation is built upon the multiple images that stakeholders have regarding a brand (Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Balmer, 1998) during a continuous period (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Hence, corporate reputation gives a holistic view of the organisation as it comprises of both corporate identity and corporate image (Balmer, 1998). As a response to the brand managers' needs, Urde and Greyser (2016) present a managerial tool to define, align, and develop corporate brands by integrating identity and reputation elements and highlighting the elements' relationships (see Figure 2). Urde and Greyser's (2016) the Corporate Brand Identity Reputation Matrix (CBIRM) uses the concept of communication to bridge the gap between a strong brand reputation and brand identity. The CBIRM is based on the company's core values. Building upon the company's promise, the model connects brand identity and brand reputation to aid the management's strategic reasoning.
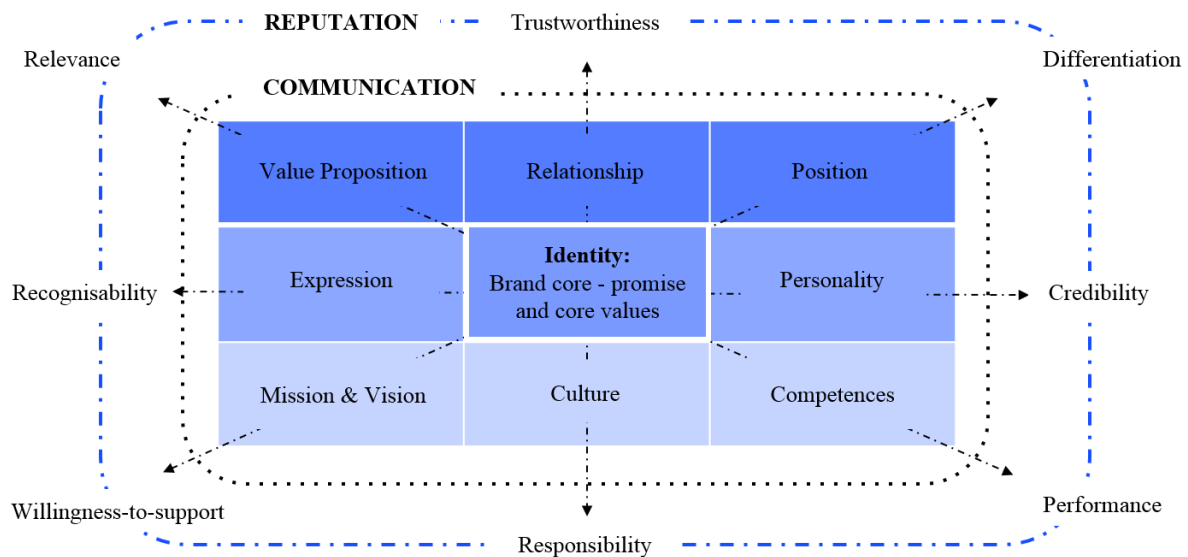
Figure 2 The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (adopted from Urde & Greyser, 2016)

The Strategic Diagonal: From Willingness-to-support to Differentiation

A company's strategy should be guided by the *mission* and *vision* (Urde & Greyser, 2016). That is, to express the purpose and direction of the company (Kotler & Keller, 2016). When a brand's mission and vision are communicated, they turn into stakeholders' *willingness-to-support* when they have similar prepositions (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Therefore, the strategy diagonal also aligns the mission and vision of the company with the intended positioning in the market. The intended positioning, in turn, will shape stakeholders' perception of the company compared to competitors (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The strategic diagonal is the connection between these concepts: *willingness-to-support, mission and vision, identity, position,* and *differentiation* (see Figure 2).

The Competitive Diagonal: from Performance to Relevance

The *competitive diagonal* should be guided by the company's main *competences* (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The company's strengths will influence the stakeholders' perceived *performance* of the company as a reputational element (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Within the competitive diagonal, case competitions can potentially be used as a tool to prove the competences of an organisation by creating challenging cases, offering valuable feedback, and creating innovating learning opportunities. Corporations are offered a chance to highlight their knowledge and skill level through more than marketing or communication messages as the case competitions are interactive and involve both academia as well as the future business leaders. Urde and Greyser (2016) suggest that a successful competitive strategy needs to align the company's value proposition with relevant benefits that the different stakeholders perceive as attractive.

The Interaction Vertical: From Responsibility to Trustworthiness

To guide the organisation's interaction with stakeholders, the CBIRM connects the nature of the *relationship* between the organisation, the customers and other stakeholders with the perceived *trustworthiness* (see Figure 2). Trustworthiness ishow reliable the company is perceived to be (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Similarly, the organisational *culture* will shape the *responsibility* perception of the organisation that influences the overall reputation (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Here, culture is "the way the organization behaves" (Roper & Fill, 2012, p.35).

The Communication Horizontal: From Recognisability to Credibility

Finally, Urde and Greyser (2016) aim to guide communication practices and aid managers to evaluate the *recognisability* and *credibility* perception of the company in the communication horizontal. The company's *expression*, which includes different forms of communication, will influence the company's recognisability (Urde & Greyser, 2016). Recognisability is not only about customers recognising brand signage, but also relates to how different the corporation is perceived compared to its competitors. The authors link the concept of *personality* to the perceived *credibility* of the different stakeholders (Urde & Greyser, 2016) (see Figure 2).

2.3   Internal and External Brand Building

Strategic brand management literature combines internal and external brand building activities to build a strong brand and reputation. In this section, we will explore if case competitions could be used to leverage brands internally and externally. Accordingly, we build upon Whisman's (2009) theory that successful brands should communicate the brand internally and externally. Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) and Kaplan (2017) explain that employees play an important role to build the brand internally. Externally, creating a strong brand can be done by offering customers opportunity to meet, interact, and experience the brand (Kapferer, 2012). Employer branding forms an important motive because it is closely aligned with the described branding potential by the corporations we have researched. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), and Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) describe that employer branding has an external focus because it is about creating favourable expectations for prospective employees specifically. Establishing a theoretical background of the concept allows us to identify which characteristics of case competitions make case competition potentially suitable to incorporate into an employer branding strategy.

2.3.1 Internal Brand Building

Employees play an important role within the corporation, as they can bring the brand to life through their actions and make the brand more tangible (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005; Kaplan, 2017). Efforts to reinforce corporation values and culture are relevant to build a strong brand (Kaplan, 2017). Employees' values and behaviour that support the corporate values contribute to reinforce them and strengthen their credibility (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005; Kaplan, 2017). Accordingly, managers should invest resources to effectively communicate the brand internally and express the relevance of the corporate mission and vision to successfully link the brand core values with the employees (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). A parallel argument is that corporate identity should be aligned not only with the corporate strategic vision but also with the corporate culture (Hatch & Schultz, 2001); therefore, employees seem to play an important role. Leveraging case competitions internally could mean that brands involve staff in the competition to be judges or speakers.

Whisman's (2009) focal point is that successful brands are the ones that can effectively communicate the brand internally and externally. Consequently, those companies' employees become passionate about working for the brand (Whisman, 2009). Likewise, Zyman (2002) argues: "before [managers] can even think of selling [their] brand to customers, [managers] need to sell it to [their] employees" (p.204) making it relevant that internal stakeholders feel identified with the corporate brand (Balmer, 2013). Internal branding communication practices are aimed to enhance employees' corporate engagement by sharing their corporate values (Garas, Mahran, & Mohamed, 2018). As mentioned by Garas, Mahran, and Mohammed (2018), the internal branding initiatives such as case competitions need to be aligned with the corporate values. Values associated with the case competitions might be 'innovate', 'collaborate', 'interact', 'compete', or 'engage' due to its close connection to the educational sector. The process could possibly be strengthened if employees play an active role in case competitions as mentioned before as a judge, speaker, case writer, or case competition organiser. However, effort is needed as internal corporate communications should be consistent with external communications to reduce the gap between customers' expectations and brand-delivered promise (Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Garas, Mahran, & Mohamed, 2018).

2.3.2 External Brand Building

To establish brand engagement, external stakeholders need to be made aware of the existence of a brand. The concept of brand awareness relates to customers recognising or recalling the brand (Aaker, 1991) which leads to strong brand equity and high brand value (Melin, 2002). That implies that customers identify the brand in different situations (Keller, 2006). Keller (2006) explains the concept further by arguing that brand awareness is enhanced when

companies cause specific brand associations that customers can easily remember and distinguish in different situations (Ambler, Bhattacharya, Edell, Keller, Lemon, & Mittal, 2002) - potentially also through case competitions. Although brand awareness is generated at an individual level, Kapferer (2012) argues that it is a collective phenomenon that when a brand is known everyone knows that is known. Therefore, it seems that one of the brand manager's task is to simplify the association process so that the stakeholder can remember the brand without effort. Brand managers should ultimately seek to create a top-of-mind brand (Keller, 2006).

Kotler and Keller (2016) signal a similar relation between brand awareness and brand associations since brand associations "consists of all brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, attitudes." (p.188). These associations differentiate the brand from its competitors by establishing a unique set of attributes that are related to the brand (Ambler et al., 2002). It seems that by establishing strong brand associations, the brand is known for a specific need, and at the same time this might contribute to having stronger brand awareness. For instance, customers' associations are first generated with the brand's tangible aspects (Kapferer, 2012) which is difficult due to the intangible characteristic of a corporate brand. Stronger associations will be generated with concrete experiences (Kapferer, 2012). In other words, those customers have strong brand associations when they have experienced the brand. Similarly, one can think that case competitions could leverage these brand associations.

A brand that customers can meet, interact with, and experience generates a greater customer involvement than others (Kapferer, 2012). The format of case competitions seem to offer an opportunity to generate customer involvement. The extent to which customers talk about the brand and participate in company events are a symptom of customer brand involvement (Ambler et al., 2002). Experiences outside the commercial environment are understood as vivid experiences where the customers are in contact with the company's core values (Kapferer, 2012). Accordingly, this could explain why there is an increasing trend where companies are more involved in events. These events enable the companies to communicate the brand promise and values through non-commercial activities (Kapferer, 2012). Sponsorship is a classic example; however, there are a myriad of other ways a company can be involved in activities that allow customers to be in touch with other customers and with the brand itself.

When a company's involvement goes further than corporate sponsorship during case competition it seems to create exactly this environment to engage with competition participants, other corporations, and the host organisation. Similarly, flagship stores lets customers continuously experience the brand (Kapferer, 2012). On the other hand, a trend is that online stores open physical stores in addition to their online store. These trends and developments might indicate that companies are more aware of the implications of being

involved in non-commercial activities. As such, companies like Starbucks, Zara, Amazon and Google are gradually reducing investments in advertising and increasing investments in promoting their company's non-commercial activities because they aim to build long-lasting relationships with their customers (Kapferer, 2012).

Employer Branding

Employer branding is a part of external branding that is guided by the overall corporate branding strategy, as stated by Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng (2010). Here, employer branding is "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.187). More simply put "the applications of branding principles to human resource management" (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p.501) or "employer attractiveness" (Berthon, Ewing, & Lian Hah, 2005). The target group of this type of branding is external stakeholders (prospective employees). Thus, employer branding is part of external branding. On the other hand, internal branding relates to current employees as a target group. Due to the close connection to corporate branding, employer branding also builds on the foundation that brands need to be based on solid and recognisable values (Aaker, 1996). Within employer branding, the message of what makes the corporation unique should be clearly formulated (Melin, 2002). Additionally, brand associations should be aligned with the brand identity to be successful (Kapferer, 2012). The interrelation with corporate branding creates the corporate values projected through employer branding initiatives. Employer branding initiatives could show the corporate values during recruitment events such as at universities or job fairs. The relevance of employer branding arises from the importance that organisations feel in attracting employees that share the core values on which an organisation is built (Ind, 1998; Hatch and Schultz, 2003). Organisations are ranked yearly by organisations who are dedicated to helping organisations become better places to work and to certify them or even to include them in their yearly competitions (e.g. Great Place to Work, 2016). These certificates or prizes could then be used to verify the success of brands as employers.

One of the elements of employer branding in regards to internal and corporate branding is that the brand should have a unique proposition relating to its employment (Mosley, 2007). Similar to how a brand would have a proposition for its service and product offering, it has to create that for its 'employment offering'. As with other forms of branding the expectations of the target group, in this case potential recruits, needs to be aligned with the real-life experience on the job to prevent unrealistic views and disappointed staff (Conference Board, 2001; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). A mismatch could negatively influence the employee performance and even create a higher staff turnover (Conference Board, 2001; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). To create a realistic perspective on the workplace a company might consider using case competitions as a way to align their employer branding with the employee values. When a corporation actively interacts with prospective employees, the employees can form a

more vivid image of their future careers and work life (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Especially if a corporation would write a business case for a case competition, employees gain better insights into relevant business problems that will show the strategic focus of their organisation. When the new employees are successfully attracted by the values and purpose that the employer branding shows, the employees could move on to being part of the target audience of the internal branding efforts (Foster, Punjaisri, & Cheng, 2010).

To conclude, a brand manager's primary concern should be to build and communicate a corporate promise that guides the corporate strategic decisions collectively (Garas, Mahran, & Mohamed, 2018). Thus, aligning the internal and external communications will contribute to minimising the gap between brand identity and brand image (Balmer, 2013).

2.4   Chapter Summary

Case competitions connect multiple educational stakeholders and offer a valuable learning opportunity for participants to improve their business skills and industry knowledge through real-world learning. Our literature review indicates there is a gap as current research gives little attention to the understanding of how corporations use case competitions strategically from a brand management perspective. This encourages us to build upon existing literature on case competitions to see the potential relevance and applicability of case competitions to connect brand identity and reputation - internally and externally. In this connection, corporations could use their involvement in case competitions to communicate their brand personality and relationship, and take away perceived risks due to stakeholder involvement. It seems to offer an opportunity for employees to engage with the brand in new ways due to the interactive element of acting as a judge, speaker, case writer, or case competition organiser. Regarding external branding, competitions create an opportunity to create brand awareness and to leverage the trend of interaction with customers. Finally, as an extension of the external branding case competitions could potentially yield the real-world learning situation for cases to enhance the recruitment experience. The competitions might offer participants an authentic look at the business problems companies face, or in a sponsorship relationship they might see which initiatives the corporation values to support. The literature review leaves unresolved what the motives of organisations can be what gives an opportunity to open a new area of research.

3 Methodology

Within this chapter, we give an in-depth insight into the choices we made in our research process. The methodology starts with a thorough description of our research approach, research design, and then we give insight into how we collected and analysed our empirical material. The chapter ends with a reflection on the quality of research and limitations where we will introduce how we have worked in situations that could have influenced the quality of our research.

3.1 Research Philosophy

We study the phenomenon of case competitions from a strategic brand management perspective. We acknowledge that one could use different perspectives to analyse the same phenomenon and provide different reasoning that would be equally valid. Similarly, researchers from our field may be able to uncover other interesting findings. The knowledge that we aim to produce is the result of our interpretation of the empirical material collected during our research. Thus, we are not providing a definite answer to the reasonings that corporations have been involved in case competitions. Given our relativistic research philosophy, we do not intend to measure the consequences that case competitions have on corporations. We focus on the understanding of the motives and rationales. Our reasoning about what is the truth is similar to the one presented as weak relativism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). In other words, we believe that there are many perspectives to view reality from and that truth is a compromise (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

The outcome of our research is mainly based on our interpretation of the interviews that we conducted to the brand managers or decision makers. To gain a deeper understanding of the motives and rationales, we selected different industries and also different forms of involvement in case competitions. We conducted interviews to have the opportunity to listen to the managers' stories and experiences when being involved with the phenomenon. We reasoned that the interpretation of the interviews would help us understand managers' motivations. To conclude, our interpretation of knowledge is similar to the one referred to as weak constructionism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Thus, within research reality is socially constructed and given meaning by social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

3.2   Research Approach

3.2.1 Qualitative Research to Conceptualise the Phenomenon

Our research aim is to broaden the view and the understanding of what a case competition is and how it can be used beyond an educational method of teaching and learning. More specifically, we attempt to explore the phenomenon of case competitions as a branding tool from a strategic brand management perspective. Throughout our research, we have focussed on understanding the organisational function of case competitions as a phenomenon. We understand an organisation as a social construct. Here, we believe that social context affects how people in the company act and therefore shape the organisational culture. That means that we have attempted to gather an understanding of managerial practices about the phenomenon of leveraging case competitions as a potential part of a brand-building strategy. Thus, we aimed to gather information about: experiences that the specific companies have had with their involvement in case competitions, and their managerial rationales. Reflecting on experiences gave us insights into critical events that determined how the desired company outcome by engaging in case competitions has been reached whereas the managerial rationales helped us understand why companies use case competitions.

It is highly suitable to conduct qualitative research as our research is of explorative nature (Kvale, 1994; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Our research purpose does not meet a quantitative approach, nor statistical procedures since those have lacked an understanding of the motives and processes of companies that engage with case competitions as a part of their brand building strategy (Kvale, 1994; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Our qualitative thinking is in line with the larger part of brand management research due to abstract meaning of brands and their intangibility (Aaker, 1996; Balmer, 1998; Melin, 2002; Keller, 2009; Urde, 2013; Urde & Greyser, 2016).

3.2.2 Multi-Case Study to Understand Various Perspectives

We chose to design our research around the case study approach to generate theory from case-based empirical evidence (Calkins, 2001; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). More specifically, we decided upon a qualitative multi-case study approach (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). We intensively study businesses that are involved with case competitions to discover why they decided to become involved in case competitions. While single-case studies allow for rich descriptions of the existence of the phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007), and could produce additional additional and better theory (Dyer, Wilkins, & Eisenhardt, 1991), it does not fit our research purpose. A single-case study would not be suitable in order to explore the motivations that various organisation can have to

be involved in case competitions. Since our research relied primarily on a case study methodology, it was more likely to produce theory that is accurate, interesting, and novel (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Case studies focus on specific problems that managers face (Calkins, 2001), which are of high importance to understanding the case competition phenomenon from a brand management perspective. The contemporary phenomenon of the case study thus was examined in its real-life business context (Calkins, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

3.2.3 Inductive Approach to Research
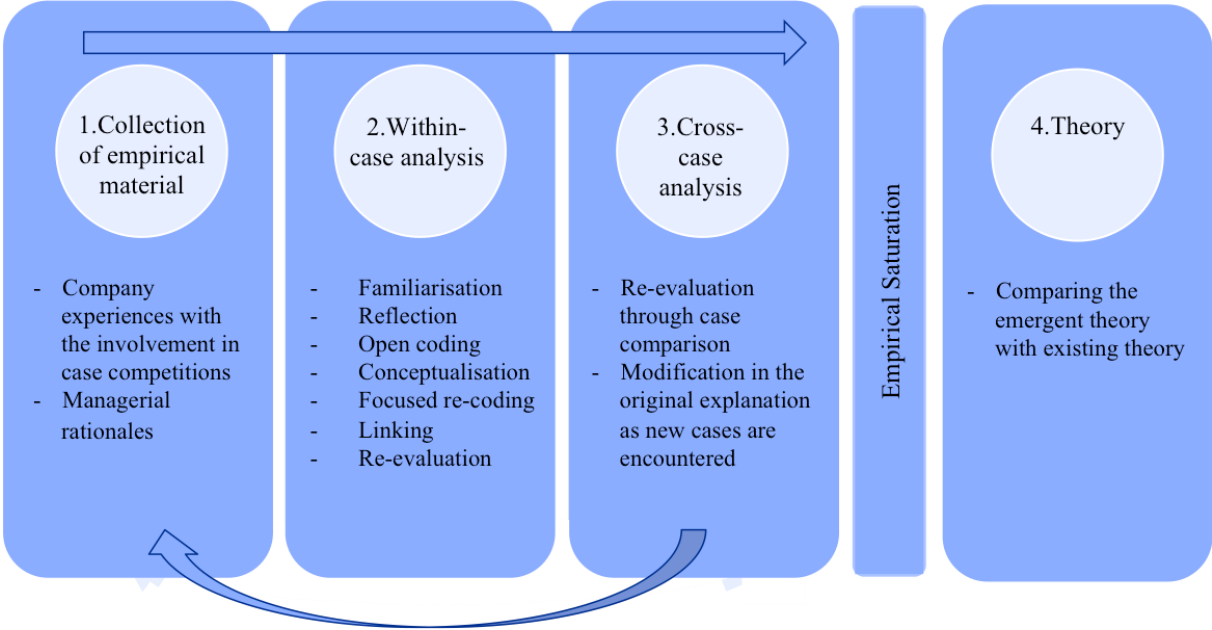
Figure 3 The Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Process Model based upon Opler (1945), Eisenhardt (1989), Ryan & Bernard (2003), Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson (2015)

We created the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Model (see Figure 3) to guide us during the collection of empirical material, within-case analysis, cross-case analysis, and the cycle until we reached saturation. Once saturation was met we were able to compare and contrast emergent theory with existing theory. Our research is of exploratory nature and makes use of a case study methodology. Therefore, an inductive approach was most suitable as it was used to build Grounded Theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). We attempted to construct theory from the case methodology by mapping case competitions and developing a theoretical framework. Within this inductive approach, we have worked in various research cycles (see Figure 3). We compared and contrasted our empirical case materials with the previously conducted empirical research to work towards saturation of information. We conducted additional empirical research when we identified a need for more research because of a lack of that same saturation. Our research, therefore, is theoretically flexible, as we did not start with a hypothesis or theory that limited our thinking nor made us

biased as researchers (Eisenhardt, 1989). Due to our theoretical flexibility, our empirical research was spread over a timeframe of five weeks as a part of the inductive research approach. With this approach, we built tentative results only after analysing the empirical material building on internal validity, raising the theoretical level and sharpening the construct definitions (Eisenhardt, 1989). We compared the empirical analysis with conflicting literature about case competitions, corporate brand management, and employer branding.

After presenting our research design in chapter 3.3, we will elaborate more in depth on each step of the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Process Model (Figure 3) (Opler, 1945; Eisenhardt, 1989; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). More specifically, step 1 - *collection of empirical material* will be explained in chapter 3.4. In chapter 3.5 we will elaborate on the analysis of empirical material. There we will explain step 2 - *within-case analysis* in chapter 3.5.1, step 3 - *cross-case analysis* in chapter 3.5.2, and step 4 - *theory* in chapter 3.5.3.

3.3   Research Design

Case studies are typically based on various empirical sources to be able to create rich empirical material; therefore, we have adopted a similar approach to our research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Creswell, 2013). The advantage of this strategy is that multiple methods of collecting empirical material allow triangulation of empirical material to create a stronger theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

Interviews and Observations as Primary Research

Our primary research consists of qualitative interviews as it enabled us to interact with the interviewees (Kvale, 1994) and to ask questions, aligned with our purpose to better understand organisational motives (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Furthermore, we made use of observations to gather a basic understanding of the phenomenon of case competitions and its potential formats. We understand the nature of interviews "as being within a linguistically constituted and interpersonally negotiated social world." (Kvale, 1994, p.153). Interviews established "deeper, fuller conceptualizations of those aspects of our subjects' [work] lives we are most interested in understanding" (Alvesson, 2003, p.16). Interviews gave us the opportunity to explore in-depth the experience companies have had surrounding their involvement in case competitions (Charmaz, 2006). Here, "interviews provide opportunities for mutual discovery, understanding, reflection, and explanation […] and elucidate subjectively lived experiences and viewpoints" (Tracy, 2013, p.132). We believe that the truth is dependent on social constructs. That is why interviews were suitable to access information by talking about a topic within a specific context (the company's role in case competitions). We would not have been able to understand company motives as deep as we did by only using

observations (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). During the interviews we were aware that the interviewee response was coloured with his or her view of the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

We were able to "transform the interview subject into a productive source of knowledge" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p.121) by making use of the semi-structured interviews and laddering questions (see Appendix A). Our interview approach was semi-structured as it was not a part of ethnographic observation and had a topic guide (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Turner, 2010; Goulding, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). As we were interested in understanding individual rationales from a company perspective, group interviews were not done. It also could have affected the answer respondents would give in that social setting with another respondent (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). This argument can also be applied to why we did not conduct focus groups, as we did not want the interviewees to be influenced by each other (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

Observations were used in the first stage of our research to understand how the phenomenon of case competitions is organised. During the research, we were able to do two types of observations: complete participant and complete observer (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). The opportunity to observe case competitions as participants, enabled us to observe how the EY and Export Development Canada had their sponsorship engagement organised to cross-reference this material with the interview material. Moreover, we adopted an observer role at the KPMG International Case Competition to evaluate the specific format of the competition as well as the engagement that KPMG has within their competition. We also attended the Nespresso Sustainability MBA Challenge Live Case Webinar as observers. In this case, university professors gained insights about how Nespresso's decision-making perspective is organised regarding the case problem. The webinar gave us the opportunity to observe first-hand how the organisation utilises its established connections with the academics after engaging those universities in the case competitions. Furthermore, it allowed us to understand what the underlying motives of Nespresso are to organise its own business case competition.

Secondary Research

The primary research in our study has been supported by secondary research. We have had access to sources such as company yearly reports, archival case competition material (Nespresso, Elisa, Deloitte), sponsorship documentation (EY, Export Development Canada), internal employee feedback on the case competitions (Export Development Canada), online information about the respective case competitions the companies are/were involved in, and online communication via company websites and social media communication. The company year reports allowed us to get insight into the companies' strategic directions and values to be able to do an in-case analysis. On the other hand, the case competition documentations such as provided cases, sponsorship reports, or internal research on the case competitions enabled

us to analyse the company value of case competitions. The use of secondary data enabled us to evaluate the corporate value alignment and the potential positioning with case competition in. Therefore, this secondary information made it possible to write our research case introductions in the analysis and made triangulation of the in-case analysis possible.

Table 1 Overview of Our Research Sources

Research activity	Type of material	Material source	Research material
A multi-case study of the involvement of organisations in a case competition			
Literature review	Secondary material	Academia, research	Text
Document studies	Secondary material	Social media pages and websites of organisations	Motives
Archives	Secondary material	Case material of organisations, sponsorship reports	Relationships
Qualitative interviews	Primary material	Individuals who are a part of organisations	Motives
Observations	Primary material	John Molson MBA International Case Competition, LUSEM Case Competition, KPMG KICC competition, Nespresso Sustainability MBA Challenge live case webinar	Behaviour

In short, our research design is based on a combination of a literature review, document studies, archives, and qualitative interviews ensuring a well-rounded collection of information (Turner, 2010) and the generation of strong theory (see Table 1) (Eisenhardt, 1989; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

3.3.1 Case Sampling

We used theoretical sampling to select suitable case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Goulding, 2011). We sampled the number of cases based on the level of saturation during our research period, which is in line with an inductive approach (Goulding, 2011). In our preparation, we took Eisenhardt's (1989) guideline into account. The guideline states that a multi-case case study often needs four to ten cases (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Due to the fact that we decided to use various companies that are involved on different levels in case competitions we made use of polar types (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Regarding the form of participation, there is a distinct difference between companies who sponsor case competitions, companies who organise their competitions, and the various involvement types. The theoretical criteria (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), or inclusion criteria (Robinson, 2013), used to do the sampling were to have various case competitions in roughly three categories of involvement: case competition sponsor, case provider of a case competition, or (co-)organising a case competition. To make comparison possible all

companies had to be internationally active organisations as they are homogeneous based on psychology (Robinson, 2013) within the polar types (Eisenhardt, 2007).

We were able to use our personal connections to access the case organisations and made use of 'cold calls'. For instance, we contacted the organisation of the MBAICC to bring us into contact with the event's sponsors and to ask permission to contact involved corporations. Since one of us had participated in this event, there was already a certain level of trust when establishing contact making forming new connections easier. We were able to establish a connection with the organisers of the Nespresso MBA Sustainability Challenge via a message to the competition organisation. Since we had no personal connections this contact is established via a 'cold call'. Thus, based on the inclusion criteria and the established contacts we have included seven company cases in our research: Nespresso, EY, Pfizer, Export Development Canada, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte.

Nespresso as Case Competition Co-organiser

Nespresso is the global leader in the coffee industry (Nestlé Nespresso SA, 2018a). The company belongs to Nestlé Group and is present worldwide with more than 12,000 employees, matching our inclusion criteria (Nestlé Nespresso SA, 2018b).

Figure 4 Nespresso (Nespresso, 2018)

The company takes their sustainable aspect beyond their business practices and organises the "Nespresso Sustainability MBA Challenge" to engage with students to solve sustainable problems that can hinder the coffee industry in the future (Nespresso Sustainability MBA Challenge, 2018). Thus, Nespresso is part of the polar type of case competition (co-)organisers. The company does not organise the challenge on its own but with the professional help of INACE Business School and CIMS (Sustainable Markets Intelligence Center) (Sustainability MBA Challenge, n.d.).

EY as a Sponsor of the MBAICC

Ernst & Young (EY) is a global B2B company operating in more than 150 countries and with a workforce of 247,570 in the service industry (Ernst & Young Global Limited, 2018a). EY is a diamond sponsor of MBAICC, which means that they financially sponsor the competition for US$12,500, making the company part of the participation group sponsors (John Molson MBA International Case Competition, 2018a). EY

Figure 5 EY (EY, 2018)

sponsorships are aimed at building stronger communities and they give special attention to education.

Pfizer as a Case Provider for the Commerce Games

Pfizer is one of the world largest pharmaceutical companies (Forbes Media LLC, 2018). The company is characterised by their commitment to society and for their contribution to better health (Forbes Media LLC, 2018). Pfizer's passion is to

Figure 6 Pfizer (Pfizer, 2018)

improve global health, and thus the company takes risks and invests in research and development to discover life-changing innovations (Pfizer, 2018). The company engages in case competitions by writing a case and being a sponsor.

Export Development Canada as a Sponsor for the MBAICC

Export Development Canada (EDC) is a corporation that helps Canadian businesses to trade and invest abroad by providing insurance and financial services (Export Development Canada, 2018). EDC has an international presence in 13 countries other than Canada, and they provided solutions to 183 markets. The

Figure 7 EDC (Export Development Canada, 2018)

company is committed to engaging with the Canadian society. EDC is a premium diamond sponsor in the MBAICC (John Molson MBA International Case Competition, 2018a).

Elisa as a Case Provider for the Crossroads Case Competition

Elisa is the telecommunications market leader in Finland (Elisa Corporation, 2017a). They offer digital services to more than 2.8 million customers in 13 countries and employ over 4,700 people (Elisa Corporation, 2017b). The company is characterised by being able to adapt to the changing

Figure 8 Elisa (Elisa Corporation, 2017)

environment that comes with digitalisation. For example, they offer e-reading services such as eBooks, audiobooks, and downloadable e-readers. Eventually, they decided to write and provide a case about e-reading to the Crossroads Competition.

KPMG as a Case Competition Organiser of the KPMG International Case Competition

KPMG is a known global professional services firm that offers tax, advisory, and audit services to their clients (KPMG, 2018a). The company employs more than 200,000 professionals in 154 countries (KPMG, 2018a). Their employees are driven by the company's values that define how

Figure 9 KPMG (KPMG, 2018a)

they work. For example, they have strong commitment to "inspire confidence and empower change for [their] clients, communities and society at large" (KPMG, 2018b, n.p). KPMG organises the KPMG International Case Competition (KICC) and therefore is a part of the (co-)organiser group in our research.

Deloitte is a brand that represents thousands of independent firms that provide audit, consulting, tax, and risk advisory services to other businesses (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2018). They are present in more than 150 countries employing 263,900 professionals in 2017, all of which share the same corporate culture (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2018). The company's value proposition is "to create an impact that matters in the world" (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2018, n.p.). The company organises its own case competition that is called the Corporate Fight Night. Deloitte reinvented the classic case competition format by using real-life business challenges, but participants present their solution by answering questions in two minutes. In other words, they do not have a 20-minute presentation to sell their idea but are dependent on their answers in the boxing ring which is solely based on a questions and answers session.

Figure 10 Deloitte (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2018)

3.3.2 Sampling of Interviewees

In line with the case sampling approach, the interviewees have also been selected based on theory-guided sampling (Robinson, 2013; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). All the interviewees were actively involved or responsible for the involvement in the case competition and provided us with the material needed to reach our research aims: experiences the specific companies have had with their involvement in case competitions and their managerial rationales. In other words, 'key informants' were selected (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), who ranged in positions from senior vice president to manager (see Table 2).

Table 2 Sampling of Cases and Interviewees

Case no.	Case Company	Industry	Case competition	Sampling group	Engagement activities	Interviewees
1	Nespresso	Fast Moving Consumer Goods	Nespresso Sustainability MBA Challenge	(Co-)organiser	Branded competition, case provider, judge provider	Key Account Senior Manager, CIMS - Sustainable Markets Intelligence Center
2	EY	Professional services	John Molson MBA International Case Competition	Sponsor	Financial contribution, judge provider	Senior Vice President Transaction Advisory Services
3	Pfizer	Pharma-ceutical industry	Commerce Games	Case provider	Case provider, judge provider, financial contribution	Vaccines Canada Lead/General Manager
4	Export Develop-ment Canada	Credit industry	John Molson MBA International Case Competition	Sponsor	Financial contribution, judge provider	Senior Advisor | Community Investment and Corporate Communications

Case no.	Case Company	Industry	Case competition	Sampling group	Engagement activities	Interviewees
5	Elisa	Telecommunications	The Crossroads Case Competition	Case provider	Case provider, judge provider	Director Elisa Kirja
6	KPMG	Professional services	KPMG International Case Competition	(Co-)organiser	Fully independently organised branded competition	Consultant, manager KPMG
7	Deloitte	Professional services	Corporate Fight Night	(Co-)organiser	Case provider, judge provider, financial contribution	Senior Manager | Head of Attraction & Talent Sourcing

The in-depth qualitative interviews lasted for at least an hour. The length of the interview was sufficient to thoroughly speak about the company motives to be involved in case competitions. More details about the empirical material for the seven cases can be found in Table 3, Appendix C.

3.4 Collection of Empirical Material

The *collection of empirical material* was referred as step 1 in the grounded cross-case analysis model (Figure 3). In this research, we have conducted interviews and observations to access company experiences with case competitions and the managerial rationales.

Observations were done during the MBAICC and the KPMG Case Competition. We made field notes, photos, videos, and also use of live streams. On top of this, one of us has participated in the John Molson MBA International Case Competition in Canada from 2 to 7 January 2018. The participation enabled first-hand observations of the companies involved. Furthermore, we were present as complete observers during the final days of the KPMG International Case Competition (KICC) on 30 November and 1 December 2017.

The interviews enabled us to gain deep insights about the managerial rationales. All the interviewees were informed about the aim and the purpose of our research as well as the perspective we took regarding the phenomenon. When it came to conducting interviews, some elements were crucial from our research perspective. First, we believe it is important to establish a somewhat similar to a real interaction. In other words, it was important to establish rapport, trust, and commitment (Alvesson, 2003). Secondly, to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees and to communicate the rights of all parties, the Lund University consent form was sent to all interviewees beforehand (see Appendix B). Thirdly, after the sampling of

the interviews and establishing the initial contacts, all the interviewees were contacted by email to set up an appointment for a personal or synchronous mediated interview (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). At the time of our research we were located in Sweden whereas the interviewees were located in other. Therefore, we conducted synchronous mediated interviews as those resemble face-to-face interviews the most (see Appendix C). These interviews were held via a phone call or, where possible, by using technology such as Skype to mimic a real-life situation as close as possible.

All interviews started with a personal introduction to explain our interest in case competitions assuming that this a common interest to establish rapport. The interview guide makes use of an opening question that is asked to all the interviewees and then questions were generated from the story of the interviewee (Appendix A) (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; McNamara, 2009; Turner, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). We, as interviewers, used laddering techniques to make sure not to affect the interviewee's answers. For instance, we asked questions such as "can you give an example of…?" (laddering down), "why is … important to you?" (laddering up), and "can you tell me about a similar …?" (laddering sideways) (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). To be able to remain as flexible as possible and to be able to conduct a thorough analysis, all interviews were recorded and transcribed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). We made sure both researchers were present for all interviews to allow for different perspectives on the interview, to strengthen grounding, and to pick up on important cues (Eisenhardt, 1989). Interchangeably, one of us was the lead interviewer, while the other made notes and assisted in developing ad hoc questions to probe for specific information that was seemingly relevant.

3.5   Analysis of Empirical Material

As we have adopted an inductive and Grounded Theory approach to our research, the analysis was accordingly designed inspired by the principles of grounded analysis. For our research, this implies that we have been engaged in a research cycle between the phases data collection, in-case analysis, and cross-case analysis as can be seen in the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Process Model (Figure 3) (Opler, 1945; Eisenhardt, 1989; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Below, we will elaborate on step 2 - *within-case analysis*, step 3- *cross-case analysis*, and finally, step 4 - *theory* from the grounded cross-case analysis model (Figure 3).

3.5.1 Within-Case Analysis

During our research, we conducted seven *within-case analyses* (step 2 in the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis process model, Figure 3). The goal of the within-case analysis was to gain familiarity with the data and to generate theory tentatively (Eisenhardt, 1989). The within-case analysis structured by mind maps made it possible to explore the connections between arguments and motives (see Appendix D, Figure 13). The within-case analyses were done by cross-referencing empirical material (primary analysis) with our secondary material sources (secondary analysis) to be able to compare and contrast the empirical findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989; Goulding, 2011). As we transcribed all the interviews, we were able to do a textual analysis, in other words analysing the words and expressions. Observations and secondary data were used to contrast or confirm the primary material. For instance, when EY talked about the match between the values of EY and the MBAICC we made sure to check both the EY year report and the case competition's website to validate the statement to ensure triangulation.

In the within-case analysis, we made use of the seven steps of grounded analysis: 1) familiarisation, 2) reflection, 3) open coding, 4) conceptualisation, 5) focussed re-coding, 6) linking, and 7) re-evaluation (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). In the familiarisation process we were able to obtain a global view on the material. Then, in the reflection, we were able to use common-sense reasoning to gain a general impression of what the material is about and if it supported the existing knowledge (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Open coding allowed us to divide the material into similar pieces of information such as company motivations or company-perceived benefits of the involvement in case competitions (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

The conceptualisation process was the most elaborate process in our research as the key task was to discover patterns in the codes, themes, surrounding repetitions, and similarities and differences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). As we used various thematisation techniques, methods to group and label similar words and thoughts, we benefited from various perspectives to analyse the data (Eisenhardt, 1989). Additionally, according to Opler (1945), a theme can be obvious and subtle at the same time. Therefore, we critically assessed the material at least twice. We identified the theme by asking ourselves: "what is this expression an example of?" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p.87). Since we were used repetitions, and similarities and differences as scrutiny techniques, we "[were] likely [to] produce more themes" than with other scrutiny techniques (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p.103). Cutting and sorting is the most versatile technique as it allows researchers to sort expressions into piles "at different levels of abstraction" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p.103). The linking process' goal was to establish a relationship between the concepts that had been derived from the material (Goulding, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

3.5.2 Cross-Case Analysis

After the second within-cross case analysis, we started with the cross-case analysis cycle, referred to as step 3 in the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Process Model (Figure 3). By comparing and contrasting multiple cases, the cross-case analyses enabled us to identify similarities and differences between the cases. Identifying influences from the contrasts and similarities was already a valuable theoretical contribution on its own, especially in our case where no similar research has been done yet (Eisenhardt, 1989). We made sure that we compared the new within-case analysis to the result of the cross-case analyses to see if a similar explanation could work or if the explanation needed to be altered (Eisenhardt, 1989). What we specifically attempted to do in this process was to refine the definition of Corporate Case Competitions, and to build evidence that measures the construct in each case (Eisenhardt, 1989, p.541). As our research is a qualitative multi-case study, we used the logic of replication to establish internal validity as a series of experiments making it different from using cases to test one predetermined hypothesis (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.5.3 Theory

Finally, once saturation was reached and confirmed, we finished the research cycle and stop the collection of more empirical material. Then, we went to the fourth, and last step of the Grounded Cross-Case Analysis Process Model (Figure 3) - *theory*. Here, we compared the emergent theory from our analysis with existing literature. We paid special attention to contradictions to critically reflect upon our research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). On the other hand, comparison to similar literature improved the definitions of the theory and established a higher theoretical level (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Due to the extensive data we were able to argue why differences and similarities occurred, again to establish internal validity (Eisenhardt, 1989; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). Thus, by designing our analyses inspired by a grounded analysis, we were able to build theory from categories that emerged from the empirical material in line with our research aim and purpose (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015).

3.6 Quality of Our Research and Limitations

Deciding upon a case study methodology also came with some risks as the approach has several known weaknesses. First, the research might generate overly complex theory as a result of the amount of empirical research (Eisenhardt, 1989). Secondly, the research gains detailed information but a lack of depth in the overall perspective (Eisenhardt, 1989). Thirdly, the research results may be narrow and unique for that case, and thus not generalisable (Eisenhardt, 1989; Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Fourthly, the case study methodology might have

conflicting epistemological hypotheses and characteristics (Baškarada, 2014). To address the first weakness, we have made sure to present the theory clearly and understandably by using simplifications such as figures, frameworks, and examples. This simplification allows all readers and the target group of brand managers to understand our research results as we attempted to create a practically applicable theory for the field. The second weakness was addressed by applying a multi-case study approach to be able to compare various companies and draw conclusions from that. Thirdly, we strived to achieve internal validity, not external validity which makes the third point of critique irrelevant in our research, as we do not attempt to reach generalisability. Finally, by having a consistent epistemological approach and by being as transparent as we could be in our research approach the risk of conflicting epistemological hypotheses has been mitigated.

Furthermore, we believe interviews are also subject to a social construct of knowledge between the interviewee and interviewer which is why there is a risk that interviewees give socially desired answers (Kvale, 1994; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015). To avoid affecting the interviewees in any way, we conducted semi-constructed interviews where we used probing and laddering techniques as described. As we believe that qualitative interviews will give the best results in face-to-face settings we aimed to recreate this situation where possible with synchronous mediated interviews (Alvesson, 2003). Another mitigation to avoid bias was to use numerous and highly knowledgeable informants so that the phenomenon of case competitions could be researched from various geographical, industrial, and personal perspectives (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Within the interview process, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) mention two highly relevant ethical issues namely: protecting the interviewees' information and informing the interviewees about the nature of the study. As described in our research approach, we made sure to disclose all relevant information about our research such as its expected publication and the anonymity in our thesis itself (protected by the consent form). Interviewees had the right to choose not to participate in our research at any time if they felt like it.

When it comes to the weakness of case studies having no operational formula (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015), an analytical process figure was created to share our analysis process systematically (see Figure 3). What the analysis process also indicates is that our research aims to reach saturation by having minimal differences between respondents reasoning. We reached this stage after seven case studies as the cross-case analysis of cases four, five, and six did not add new main themes. Again, this relates to the interview sampling where we were able to speak to organisational decision makers and initiators first-hand, and thus additional within-case interviews would not have expected to provide new insights.

To mitigate the risk of intersubjectivity in our analysis (Kvale, 1994), we made sure to not only go through a process of coding and re-coding but also to analyse collaboratively by involving both researchers in this process. Additionally, to discuss the managerial

implications of our research, we have presented our preliminary research results to the organisations who were involved in our research: Nespresso, EY, Pfizer, Export Development Canada, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte. The organisations have received the Corporate Case Competition Matrix and were asked to apply the model with the help of the guiding questions presented in chapter 5. That is how we could determine if and how current managerial and executive employees would use the produced analytical tool.

3.7 Chapter Summary

A qualitative approach to case studies made it possible for us to gather all the material that was necessary. The qualitative approach allowed us to understand why companies become involved in case competitions by gathering material on experiences the specific companies have had with their involvement in case competitions, and their managerial rationales. Since the multi-case study matched our desire to map the landscape; an explorative approach was supported by interviews, documents, archival data, and finally a literature review. The semi-structured interviews to explore seven companies that are involved in case competitions, allowed us to minimise the risks of the researchers influencing the interviewees. Our structure of research inspired by Grounded Theory was in line with the continuous within-case and cross-case analysis that generated strong theory due to triangulation and internal validity. To conclude, this research approach choices were aligned with our research purpose.

4 Empirical Results

We present the main insights into how case competitions are seen as an opportunity to achieve the business objectives of the companies Nespresso, EY, Pfizer, Export Development Canada, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte. Each section describes one company perspective that is based on the within-case study. We touch upon the key drivers, external and internal motives. When identifying the core objective of each case, it allows us to understand their strategic direction. In addition, in each section we highlight a variety of rationales that the corporations base their decision to engage in case competitions on.

4.1 Nespresso as a Case Competition (Co-)Organiser

Key Drivers

The involvement of Nespresso in the Nespresso MBA Sustainability Challenge is mainly driven by creating positive external impact, as mentioned by the Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS (the organisational partner of Nespresso). Accordingly, the value of the case competition involvement for Nespresso is that it allows reaching a normally difficult to reach academic stakeholder group.

> *"The main aim of Nespresso being involved with case competitions derives from its ambition to get more involved in the academic sector. As a company with a strong sustainability mission, they try to give back to different sectors and at different stakeholders. [...] They do it to engage and to share what they do in sustainability."* (Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS)

If Nespresso gives value back to the educational sector with the competition, the company can lay the foundation for a long-term relationship between students and faculties of business schools.

> *"Even judges were saying that a part [of] the challenge itself is Nespresso giving back, or even has the responsibility to share its experience. This judge was saying it would be inconsistent with Nespresso's own philosophy not to have companies, students, and teachers learn from their own experience, not to share its experience and leadership with their stakeholders."* (Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS)

Nespresso chooses to co-organise its competition to create both academic and business value, because the collaboration with business schools secures the academic value. For example, the academic value comes from engaging in real challenges of a company within a constructive learning environment. Furthermore, finalists will not only receive feedback from well-known sustainability professionals and academics, but also from the CEO of Nespresso. Similarly, the collaboration with CIMS relates to writing a neutral high-quality case. CIMS is responsible for the organisation of the competition that is surrounded by the sustainability business problem that Nespresso introduces. To illustrate how Nespresso shares its experience, the winning team prize is a trip to Colombia where "*the students get to see the farmers, to understand the sustainability program of farmers, meet Nespresso representatives, buyers, and other stakeholders in the coffee industry*" (Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS). Thus, with the (co-)organisation of the case competition, the core objective is giving back and connecting various parties such as sustainability experts, senior management of Nespresso, faculty, and students.

External Motives

An additional motive for Nespresso is that the case competition can be use as a PR activity by allowing the creation of social media content. For example, the company wants to be perceived as being progressive, open, and willing to engage. A critical note is that it is difficult to leverage the competition as it relates to balancing the image of organising an authentic sustainability initiative with negative associations. Negative associations that are mentioned might be stealing ideas from young people or using case competitions as a greenwashing activity. To mitigate this critique, the core involvement comes from the "*sustainability genes*" of Nespresso and its philosophy of Creating Shared Value.

Internal Motives

When it comes to the internal benefits that Nespresso receives from the competition the focus is three-fold. First, the company crowdsources smart ideas.

> *"Ultimately, what we want to get out of doing something like this is coming out of it with some really pragmatic and practical initiatives. [..] To give these initiatives like these case studies or the MBA Challenge a longer life. And for us a longer life would be to take some of these incredible ideas and actually, you know, insure that they can be ideas that we could work with and that we can also make part of our longer term People's Strategy."* (Head of Customer Facing, People & Development at Nestle Nespresso)

Secondly, the internal involvement stimulates internal discussions of sustainability challenges within Nespresso as it increases the communication between departments. Crowdsourcing ideas from students is about enriching Nespresso's continuous improvement in sustainability

where the attention is directed to validating ideas. Thirdly, Nespresso uses case competition to understand millennial students better.

> "*[Case competitions] are in particular important to understand since it is not really Nespresso's main market. They would want it, but it is not. Currently, there are more older people, not so much millennials. Nespresso would like to understand this segment of population better.*" (Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS)

Lastly, internal discussion about a relevant sustainability topic helps to connect various employees and departments to share the importance of the development and hence, to make the development of these business initiatives more feasible.

4.2   EY as a Sponsor

Key Drivers

EY is a diamond sponsor of the JMICC and has been involved with the competition for the last 15 years. The initiative highly relates to the company's values and purpose:

> "*building a better working world. [..] Most of [our] sponsorships and community-oriented involvements and donations really focus on two very specific areas: one, being building stronger communities so that is through our charitable donations and the second is very much educationally focussed.*" (EY, Senior Vice President Transaction Advisory Services).

And so, being involved in case competitions is a way to invest in the collective future and provides students with the unique experience to participate. Participating in the competition provides networking opportunities, real business experiences, and social connectivity. Offering that same type of experience on a yearly basis therefore contributes to the society.

> "*If we are able, through our sponsorship, to provide every year, a hundred and forty four students from around the world that same type of experience. Then I think when you multiply it year after year after year, that the network that you can create is pretty significant and so I do believe that there is significant value in that over the long term, that is not necessarily measurable in the short term.*"

One of the primary objectives of the company when investing time and resources, is to increase brand awareness, more specifically, with their future employees and their future clients. Thus, *"one of the reasons why we take such a large role at the John Molson MBA*

International Case Competition is that we have a deliberate approach towards visibility on campuses". EY provides judges, organises networking cocktail events, and has a kiosk during the week. The communication during the event allows EY to share "*multiple voices, multiple faces, and multiple points of views*" to the participants. Besides the community investment, they see the participation as a way to *"play up the brand"* and communicate their desired message during that week.

> *"We want to ensure through our messaging, and branding and communication that no matter how much time [future employees] spend with us, when [they] leave, [they] will have grown as a person and professionally".*

External Motives

The company states that "*branding and visibility are the main*" reasons to become involved. "*And the branding and visibility exists in the recruitment. So the recruitment is sort of the end benefit of it and is the overall visibility and awareness of the firm.*" The best way to promote the firm and "*the best way to promote the loyalty of the firm or the attractiveness of the firm is not to focus on branding the firm; it is about the focus on the development of the people that work within the firm*". Thus, the company uses the case competition to communicate and promote the EY purpose and values. Case competitions provide EY with the opportunity to meet talent from all over the world and they understand the event as a component of their recruitment strategy.

> *"Those are a lot of the characteristics we look for as an employer: the ability to work under pressure, the ability to communicate, the ability to work as a team. And so this is an important competition for EY in order to attract the type of people that we look for pretty much globally."*

Internal Motives

EY also mentions internal motives to participate in case competitions. Aligned with the company objectives, the "*implication in the competition as a sponsor goes well beyond just the check we write every year.*" For instance, EY sees the participation in case competitions as a unique way for employers to gain three important benefits: first, to interact with other judges, and thus the business community during the social events of the competition. Secondly, it gives them the opportunity to interact with students during the networking cocktail. Thirdly, and most importantly, the continuous training and education component that "*allows employees to stay fresh and to think on their feet*". The employees learn from judging the competition. They need to understand the challenges that affect other business and think fast and critically to judge the presenting teams.

4.3 Pfizer as a Case Provider

Key Drivers

The main motive according to Pfizer's Vaccines Canada Lead/General Manager to be involved in case competitions relates closely to corporate engagement.

> *"We want to show the engagement to the society and we are doing it in different ways. Supporting education and supporting the development of young talent, and future leaders is something important".*

This motive is in line with the company's corporate engagement strategy as it is based on "*Pfizer's values: to give back to the community where they are engaged in. So, it is one of our key values, and as such, we were reinforcing with our employees".* Through Pfizer's community investment, they allow students to extend their presentation skills, self-confidence, learn how to work under a certain level of pressure and stress, how to establish a network, and how to build a story within their presentations. Those competences are qualities students need in their future work life. Practically, Pfizer engages in the competition with a threefold of initiatives: corporate sponsorship, writing a live case, and donating a full day of five senior leaders to attend the competition as judges.

The unique academic value of case competitions, and thus community value, as described by Pfizer, is that students learn these skills in an almost real-world business situation. In Pfizer's case, students solved a strategy case that surrounded an ongoing discussion within the company and within the pharma industry in general. Similarly, the competition provides "*an opportunity to interact with business people and to learn also outside the case and outside of the competition.*" Pfizer reflected with the students on the students' perception of Pfizer before and after the case solving which led to interesting insights. The students were now more aware of the purpose-driven mission of the organisation and understood the high-risk operations the organisation faces when developing new pharmaceutical products. Within these competitions, students gain a quick overview of various industries and organisations by solving cases which therefore creates a strong academic value. When a competition only incorporates cases about one industry or one specific organisation, the learning is less diverse and thus less meaningful, relating back to Pfizer's desire to enrich the community.

External Motives

Through case competitions Pfizer can implement their corporate engagement strategy as it yields internal company benefits related to getting fresh company insights. From a recruitment perspective, a strong assessment of potential candidates is possible, similar to a pre-selection process, as case competitions are "*a quick way for organisations to have access, very rapidly,*

to potential key talent available in universities." Since Pfizer provided a case, the firm gained out-of-the-box or innovative perspectives from external stakeholders on how the company could eventually conduct business.

> "*So, for us, it was extremely useful to listen to that and to also get a perspective from a younger audience. [..] Something that we are probably are less familiar with because when we do market research, we would do it may be on an older audience. [..] [Thus,] generation diversity (young adults) in how to address the challenge was also a driver for Pfizer.*"

Internal Motives

Since the Commerce Games (a case competition) the organisation is in the process of inviting case competition participants with interesting solutions. Here they will present their recommendations to a wider group of Pfizer employees. The competition secured stronger internal connections between Pfizer staff that otherwise not necessarily work together on a regular basis when they were writing the case. Finally, judging various business cases and discussing it allowed employees to become aware of the different perspectives they judge the same case with. Where one judge would find communication skills highly important, another valued the solution more.

4.4   Export Development Canada (EDC) as a Sponsor

Key Drivers

One of the main pillars of EDC is their strong commitment to the community, shares the Senior Advisor Community Investment and Corporate Communications of EDC. Accordingly, the company's department of corporate social responsibility is involved in many initiatives that invest in social events with the purpose to "*give back to the community*". In fact, EDC is a diamond sponsor in the JMICC.

> "*The purpose [...] is really to have a relationship with schools and most importantly with students; give them a hand with experiential learning opportunities, so, to better prepare them for country leaders of tomorrow. [...] Case competitions fall into community investment, and it is really our way of giving back*".

Thus, sponsoring case competitions is a unique way for the company to create value to the academic community by establishing long-term ties with students and with the schools. More specifically, EDC is aware that they contribute by giving experiential learning opportunities to

students. They provide specific business knowledge and international opportunities. Besides, participants practise *"those skills of speaking in public, thinking fast and clearly"* when participating in case competitions.

External Motives

EDC does not only establish ties with the academic community, but also with business leaders of different sectors that may result in new business opportunities. For EDC, another main motive is the "*brand awareness and building a brand that is seen as [...] a positive influence in the community.*" EDC understands case competitions as a tool to raise brand awareness and to communicate that they are a good corporate citizen. The organisation wants to be perceived as an active contributor to the community and as a responsible employer. In that sense, they take the chance to decide "*how we want our brand to be out there".* The firm communicates the company values through the judges, networking events, and with the overall presence in the competition.

Sponsoring case competitions is a way to engage with the future workforce. Not surprisingly, the organisation takes the opportunity to *"engage with the future workforce and to meet potential students who might want to come to work at EDC".*

> *"To just expose students to the world of trade, and to show them the opportunities that are out there." "[M]ore selfishly, is the recruitment aspect, because most times we get to meet really bright minds and we want them to come and consider EDC as a possible employer."*

Internal Motives

The company acknowledges the non-monetary participation value of case competitions as a way to increase employee engagement. When employees "*act as the judges and interact with students and universities or colleges in Canada; it gives them a sense of satisfaction for you know, giving back, and sharing that time outside of their normal kind of work portfolio*". Moreover, EDC utilizes case competition participation as a tool to raise internal awareness. Case competitions pave way to incentivise the interest of employees by providing a unique career development opportunity. In fact, EDC sees the employee participation, as judge or speaker, as a chance to "*practis[e] [...] soft skills, like public speaking and company promotion*". These skills are not always possible to practise in everyday work activities. Thus, by offering and sharing employee growth opportunities, their employees might see EDC in a different light.

> *"We also want that employee engagement piece, so if it is just financial sponsorship, we will likely not do it. If there is an opportunity of EDC to be engaged somehow, [...] whether it is through a speaking opportunity or running a trade simulation (sometimes we do that)."*

4.5 Elisa as a Case Provider

Key Driver

Elisa contributed to the Crossroad Case Competition by providing a case, as mentioned by the Director of Elisa Kirja. The main reason why Elisa participated is related to employer branding. In other words, a way to influence how the brand is perceived by students participating in the competition.

> *"The participation has something to do with how we work with students, and that is a larger part of that work of how is our brand known, so that brand image among students. And how [a] desirable working place we are."*

Therefore, writing a case for the Crossroads Case Competition is understood as a unique way for Elisa to show what kind of discussions the company has internally. To *"actually share what the company does. And participating [...] shows how we really work here and what we do as a company and what kind of people work here."* In fact, a managerial objective is to make Elisa a desirable place to work and so *"that is a reason why Elisa participates. If you can have a label to be a great place to work"* students may consider the company as a future employer. The case competition enables them to reach millennials and different academic backgrounds other than purely students with a technical background that might be attracted to the organisation in the first place.

External Motives

Elisa's involvement in the case competition was seen as a unique way to share with participants how the company works internally as compared to other communication techniques. Communication techniques such as social media do not offer Elisa the possibility to let students truly experience how they work internally. Subsequently, Elisa's judges and speakers in the competition were aware that they are representatives of Elisa as a possible employer for all the students in the event. The employees were "representable, approachable" and made sure to have a kind spirit. More specifically, Elisa wants to be seen as a workplace which is similar to a startup that gives freedom and responsibilities to their employees. On top of this, judges invested their time to provide feedback to the participants.

Internal Motives

Elisa's participation in case competitions provided an unexpected benefit to the company. Looking at the students' solutions, *"we had a [...] different thing in mind when we prepared the case"*. These solutions were somehow unforeseen by Elisa, and thus students provided

another angle to the problem with different and innovative ideas. *"The winning team will get to meet the vice president of Elisa, one of Elisa's top leader, and [they] will have nice lunch [...] to discuss their case and their results"*. The company is advancing with selected separate ideas from other teams, and they have "already talked to one of these students at the event [to] do a demo or a short pilot." Finally, the expected benefits of the participation in case competition went beyond those of employer branding, providing Elisa with different perspectives to be discussed internally.

4.6 KPMG as a Case Competition Organiser

Key Driver

Since 1998, KPMG has organised its yearly case competition: the KPMG International Case Competition (KICC). The organisation designs cases for prospective new employees or students that are connected to KPMG's strategic needs. Around 1,000 employees are taking part in organising this event on a global scale. The leading project group consists of both communication and recruitment representatives. Due to the decision to fully organise the competition, without the use of organisational partners, KPMG can tailor the competition to its needs. Within the case competitions, the organisation can attract customers, and employees: *"business leaders in 10, 15, 20 years"* (Consultant, Manager KPMG). The firm uses the competition mainly because of branding and recruitment possibilities.

External Motives

Due to the market development with competitors as Google and tech start-ups attracting talent, the organisation has found a way to connect with students on a global scale.

> *"It is a tough competition to employ the best, and as you know, any type of marketing commercial to attract customers or employees you have to work in stable name and that can only be done by repetitive things. Showing up yourself in career fairs and getting in contact with the students and pushing out through social media and newspapers and articles. And then, case competitions is one of those actions where we try to make a name for ourselves."*

Additionally, putting the competences of the students to the test will allow the organisation to validate candidates and see if they have the potential to become a future partner. Next to the case competition, KPMG also utilises other events or initiatives such as internships, but *"case competitions is one of those ways where you, in a shorter time period than internships, we can actually get very high validity to the recruitment process."*

Within the competitions, "*the most important thing is to create an experience for the students.*" It becomes clear that KPMG values the experience that students gain from participating in the event. Hence, the judge panel does not only consist of KPMG employees but also of academics and industry professionals to be able to offer a complete learning experience. For instance, academia might focus more on the theoretical perspective by rewarding students who apply business models, while on the other hand KPMG places a bigger emphasis on balance in the group, presentation techniques, and on what the solution is.

Internal Motives

Finally, the company uses case competitions within its internal branding strategy as it makes employees feel like a part of something bigger and it is something to be proud of.

> "*But I mean, to work at a company, and you know, that so many people have applied to [...] show their capabilities for the case solving and being a part of the event. I mean, it is just something to be proud of. It creates a buzz, a lot of people are talking about it, and that is fun for the employees.*"

To conclude, KPMG's rationales of organising its case competition relates to both short and long-term objectives as shared by KPMG. The short-term perspective concerns the recruitment objective. The aim is to hire students directly from their participation in the competition as they have proven their presentation techniques, intelligence, analytic skills, and their social abilities. KPMG also perceives case competitions as a long-term investment to its employer image.

4.7 Deloitte as a Case Competition Organiser

Main drivers

Deloitte has a clear understanding of their core motives of organising the case competition Corporate Fight Night. They express three main rationales, namely: being visible, getting to know the students better, and empowering students. Together these three motives will assure added value for both students and Deloitte.

> "*I think that the one can't be without the other. Because if we just want to empower them [students], we might as well give them the money and that is it. We also want them… we also want it, as I said, as a platform to be more visible and to get through them [students] better.*" (Senior Manager | Head of Attraction & Talent Sourcing)

First, being visible is related to utilising the case competition as a brand platform where Deloitte states that "*it is becoming a part of our brand*". Within the case competition and its

unique format, the organisation aims to show the Deloitte culture. They focus on making the brand more approachable by involving partners in the event. On the other hand, Deloitte wishes to develop a different brand image than the one that could be associated with Deloitte. *"Deloitte is a big corporation and it can be sort of old and dusty and boring, so we want to show them the opposite"*. The organisation wants to make sure stakeholders, in particular students, become aware of the multiple layers of the organisation that goes beyond "*being a big audit company*". Through their case competition, Deloitte wants to be perceived as innovative, creative, fun, daring, and trustworthy.

Secondly, the organisation desires to stimulate students to have a more open mind towards Deloitte. They aim to attract males and females who are diverse in thoughts and educational background. This objective directly relates to their core values about diversity and their purpose.

> *"We would like to have more purpose in it than just a written case that the people have to solve. So, when that being said, that is the things that are talking against case competitions, so that is why we actually are designing [...] more purpose-driven events."*

Thirdly, empowering students is vital for Deloitte because the event gives the students a learning experience without Deloitte asking anything in return. The organisation hopes *"that good karma will somehow come back to us"*. Deloitte sees itself benefitting from 'good karma', or a positive brand image, within the student population that might be potential employees and customers in the future.

External Motives

At the same time, the innovative and creative format of the case competition enables Deloitte to differentiate themselves from the competition. Consequently, Deloitte Denmark attempts to attract a broader base of students. "*And we are very dependent on getting the right talent in. so, yes, it is a war for talent. We are trying to win that battle.*" When giving the students the opportunity to participate, Deloitte aims to "*really chart students who are also in, have a big drive and normally are very motivated and like a, how do you say, a cultural bearer in the part of the organisation"*. During the Corporate Fight Night, Deloitte's partners present the solutions to the life-case problem but also offer an *"experience [that] is about experiencing the people. They have to connect with the peopl*e". Seemingly, living up to the brand values that Deloitte described of being innovative and creative.

Internal Motives

The Deloitte employees have expressed their wish to get to know the students who have inspired them during the Corporate Fight Night. The event paves way for partners to also experience the Deloitte brand in a new way since the evening is about connecting with the crowd, and thus e.g. being daring. Finally, Deloitte employees can see their partners' participation as a source of inspiration for their everyday work.

"It's not like that you will see your partners in a Monday morning doing something similar, but still the thoughts behind it is that ok, if they can do that, ok they can also inspire me on a grey Monday, January."

4.8 Chapter Summary

From the various case studies, it becomes clear that all companies have more than one role to play in the case competitions they are involved in. None of the seven companies in our empirical base only engages in corporate sponsorship, as they also see the value in establishing connections with students, other industry professionals, or even internally. The companies engage in activities such as case writing, judging, corporate sponsorship, and (co-)organisation of the competitions. Nespresso, Pfizer, and EDC focus on creating stakeholder value in the educational sector as their main motive. On the other hand, EY, Elisa, KPMG, and Deloitte aim to establish a strong brand as an employer as their priority with case competitions. Additional rationales that are of importance for the studied organisations are the generation of ideas, insights into the millennial customer, and creating a unique form of employee engagement. In the following chapter we will analyse what the implications of these results are.

5 Analysis

By exploring the phenomenon of corporations being involved in case competitions from a strategic brand management perspective, we attempted to understand the managerial rationales. The analysis is built upon our within-case and cross-case analyses where we have identified what a case competition is from a corporate perspective, why corporations get involved and how companies can use case competitions.

5.1 Introducing Corporate Case Competitions

Case competitions originated as a method to educate students with the help of real-life business problems (Corner et al. 2006). Specifically, case competitions were intended to enhance students' learning (Corner et al. 2006). However, with the involvement of corporations in case competitions, we felt the need to redefine the phenomenon. We intend to extend the meaning of case competitions beyond the educational context. Consequently, we hereby introduce the concept of Corporate Case Competition (CCC), where we look at the phenomenon from a strategic brand management perspective. Within CCC we maintain the previous educational meaning of case competitions and add to it by redirecting the focus towards the involved corporations. Therefore, the concept does not only take the educational perspective into account but also the strategic brand management perspective.

We define Corporate Case Competitions as an activity where organisations engage in case competitions with the desire to create a strong brand and reputation by offering stakeholders the opportunity to experience their core values. In other words, a case competition can be referred to as a CCC when one looks at case competitions from the perspective of corporate involvement. The focus is on the involvement of organisations within the event, for instance in a role as sponsor, (co-)organiser, or case provider. The specific corporate perspective is the key difference from the educational perspective that does consider the commercialisation of the event for corporate strategic objectives.

The above definition allows us to understand what a case competition is from a corporate perspective, thus answering research question one. However, to refine the concept of CCC we will elaborate on the motives and rationales for corporations who are involved in case competitions in the next section.

5.2 Organisational Rationales

We explore CCCs as a branding tool that can be used to communicate corporate values to influence stakeholder perception; thus, building brand and reputation - the essence of corporate brand management. Analysing the results, we have identified two major groups of motives: first, internal brand building, and secondly, external brand building. Brand building has been defined as the internal and external activities that are aimed to create a stronger brand value the operationalisation of brand identity vision, mission, and strategies to create strong equity (Melin, 2002). The difference between internal and external brand building is the target group that the activities are directed to: internal or external stakeholders respectively.
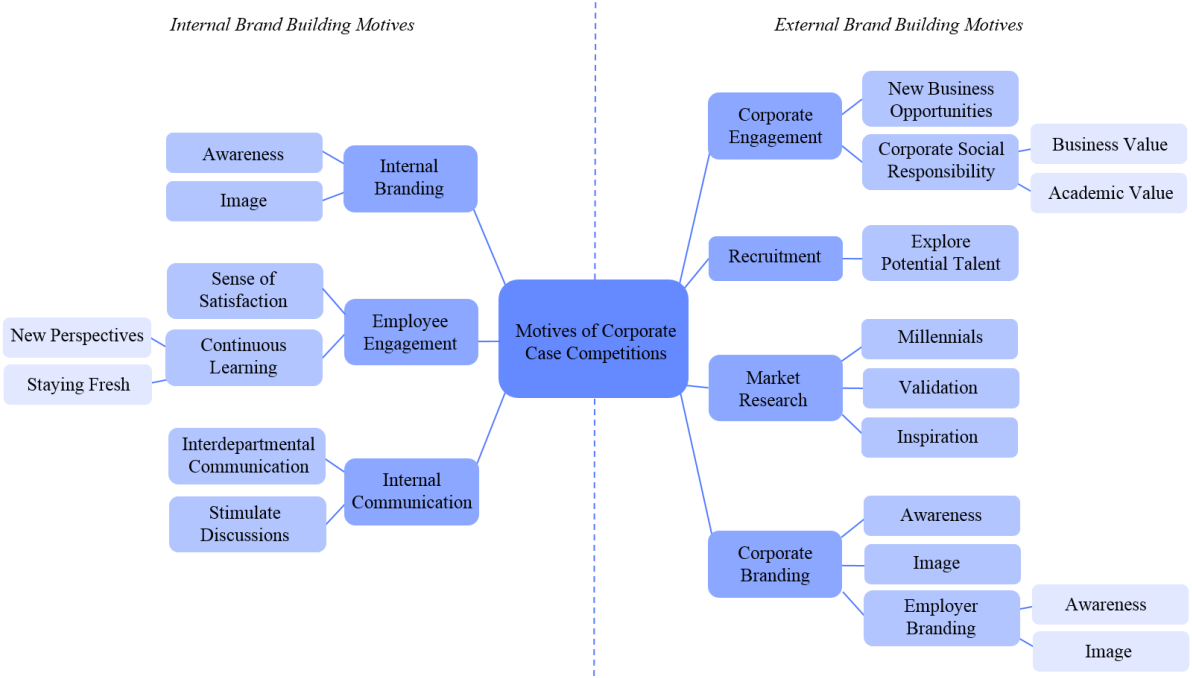
Figure 11 Organisational Rationales of Corporate Case Competitions

5.2.1 Internal Brand Building Motives

Our study has shown that by being involved in CCCs, organisations do not only make external stakeholders aware of their values. It also has a similar effect on internal stakeholders (see Figure 11). We identified three main internal motives: internal branding, employee engagement, and internal communication (see Figure 11).

Internal Branding

The key internal branding elements mentioned by the interviewed organisations are internal brand awareness and internal brand image. The organisations need to be able to 'sell' their

company values to the employees, before they can transmit them through their actions (Zyman, 2002). This process is called creating internal brand awareness. From the results it becomes clear that the organisations mainly want to introduce values of community care and collaboration through the CCCs, which is why this type of event associated with innovation, learning, and collaboration, is suitable.

As stated in the literature review, employees play a crucial role in communicating the company culture (Kapferer, 2012). Employees are shown how the organisation works towards achieving its purpose and living up to its values. For example, if an organisation finds it essential to have a positive imprint on future leaders of tomorrow, then being involved in CCCs creates these internal associations. When employees are present or exposed to CCCs, they will see the learning opportunities that have been created for students and, thus how their organisation works with their values. An exemplification of how the values are experienced by employees is EY. EY is committed to the development of talent in all its forms, and the employee participation in CCCs is presented as an opportunity to "play up the brand" by their employees.

Corporate Engagement

One of the main motives of corporations to be involved in CCCs is related to employee engagement. Identifying the motive of employee engagement is a contribution to existing literature. Within the employee engagement process, employees are stimulated to perform their best and to make them feel a part of the organisation (Balmer, 2013). Additionally, the employee engagement could also give the employees a satisfied feeling to be actively working on the corporate values (Garas, Mahran, & Mohammed, 2018). As mentioned, the staff is a significant influencer on a corporate reputation which is why establishing various engagement opportunities in CCCs is essential. EDC explained that the brand interaction with students and universities make their employees feel satisfied as they were actively giving back to the community. Corporations that are focused on the development of people are engaged in CCCs as it presents a growing opportunity not only for students but also for employees that participate on behalf the corporation.

Internal Communications

Another motive this research has identified is that CCCs provide a chance for staff to interact with other departments and therefore improve overall internal communication. Successful internal communication allows brands to establish an internal brand awareness because the employees are made aware of which values are important and how the working culture should look like in 'their' organisation. Most importantly, the students' presentations might introduce different perspectives to the ones thought of beforehand by the organisation. Hence, they stimulate internal discussions about the business challenge or opportunity. Similarly, the case writing process requires the organisation to decide upon an interesting case topic that

stimulates a learning opportunity for the students and the organisation. The participation itself thus contributes to the creation of a low-barrier atmosphere to discuss and present ideas about the challenges that the organisation or industry is facing.

5.2.2 External Brand Building Motives

The unique characteristic of CCCs relates to its educational background since CCCs are seen as a valuable real-life learning opportunity for students. When working with the results, we have realised that corporations have four main external motives depending on their strategic objectives, namely: corporate engagement, recruitment, market research, and corporate branding.

Corporate Engagement

CCCs provide a way for brands to interact with the target group of academics and students physically. The brand interaction created through CCCs presents an opportunity for the corporations to have stakeholders interact with the brand's culture. Therefore, the organisational motive relates to taking advantage of this opportunity. The educational connection with CCCs might be highly credible and result in trustworthiness due to the overall reputation of the connected educational institutes. In line with the case competition literature, the organisations describe the educational value to be closely related to known advantages of case study learning such as gaining knowledge, practising communication and teamwork, how to deal with stress, and being aware of job-related skills. By choosing to be involved in CCCs, organisations behave in a certain way where they show their culture of investing in the community. As known from strategic brand management literature, bringing the cultural element to life influences the perceived stakeholder responsibility towards the corporate brand (Kapferer, 2012). With that argument, CCCs connect the nature of the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders and the perceived trustworthiness, which are vital elements in the interaction vertical of the Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (Urde & Greyser, 2016). The relationship between the organisation and the stakeholders during the competition influence the brand image directly.

Recruitment

The learning opportunities for students also forms a motive for the organisations when it comes to leveraging CCCs regarding recruitment opportunities since business skills and knowledge are evaluated. Therefore, organisations can see CCCs as a pre-selection process for them to explore and recognise potential talent. This result concurs with the studies of Dunham (2003) and Armstrong and Fykami (2010) who touch upon the recruitment motive that arises when an organisation decides to judge or sponsor a case competition. Our study can additionally contribute by identifying a practical but essential limitation of the recruitment

advantage. Due to the lack of that specific coordination between departments, most organisations understand that the recruitment aspect is a long-term investment when it comes to talent acquisition. Practically, organisations mention that they rarely have direct hires because the companies would need to have an available position when the competition takes place. To fully use this opportunity, an internal alignment between the HR department and the responsible representatives who are involved in the CCCs is needed.

Market Research

The market research rationale is an extension of the current knowledge about the talent pool of bright students at case competitions who work on a business problem (Sachau & Naas, 2010). These students might represent the best from the best schools, as mentioned by many corporations. Nespresso highlights that when students present their solutions in front of the audience, corporations can crowdsource smart ideas and validate existing organisational ideas. Moreover, Pfizer and Elisa acknowledged that students' solutions on the organisational business problems could stimulate internal discussions, and help to generate new ideas. Uniquely, the market research is highly focused on millennial participants who offer insights from their generational perspective. Companies give particular importance to this target group when referring to millennials as "future leaders of tomorrow", "future clients", or "future employees".

Corporate Branding

By engaging in CCCs, one of the leading motives that the organisations mention is to create higher corporate brand awareness and to establish the desired image. It could be an extension to the Corporate Brand Identity Reputation Matrix to present a practical tool to implement a communication horizontal strategy. The values that relate closely to CCCs, according to the organisations, are collaboration, leadership, and innovation. Brand associations with the competition and the brand involvement will allow the corporation to communicate these values as their own. Literature highlights the difficulty in establishing strong brand associations with intangible products and services (Kapferer, 2012), which is why the experience of CCCs might create stronger associations. During CCCs, participants have the chance to feel how a company works and what kind of discussions and challenges they face. Thus, providing an opportunity to meet the brand, interact with it, and experience it which reduces the overall risk of intangibility.

Our analysis shows that case competitions can be seen as a branding tool to build brands and reputation. The tool consists of the ability to use internal and external brand building objectives. Where one organisation's rationale is to use corporate engagement, another could be motivated by corporate branding to establish a close connection to the specific population of academics and students, who are often described as millennials by the organisations. The above analysis does not enable us to determine if the perceived benefits that organisations see

in case competitions show measurable results. In contrast to how the cases initially were selected, there is no real difference between the different types of involvement groups: sponsor, (co-)organiser, or case provider. The sponsors in this research did not limit themselves to corporate sponsorship, in other words financial sponsorship. Identifying the managerial rationales is an extension of current strategic brand management theory where close links with external and internal engagement have been found. Thus, case competitions could be a way to make intangible elements of the corporate brand tangible through a meaningful real-life interaction with its stakeholders.

5.3   The Corporate Case Competition Matrix

The Corporate Case Competition Matrix (CCCM) (see Figure 12) is a synthesis that visualises the organisational motives of being engaged in CCCs. In the matrix, we differentiate between four strategies: patron, communicator, absorber, and participator. Hence, by introducing the CCCM, we will provide an answer to research question two about how corporations can leverage CCCs.
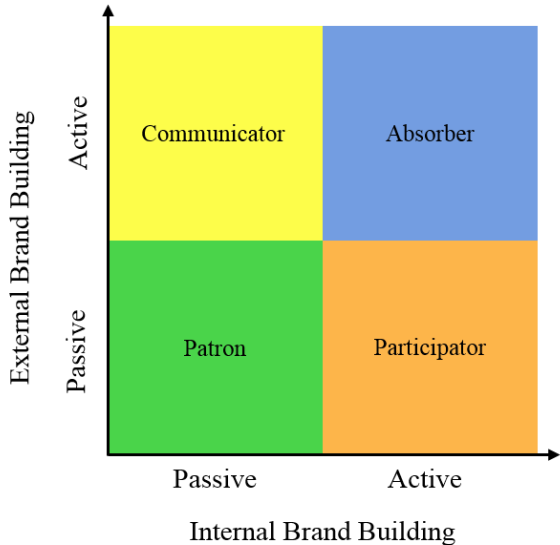
The purpose of the CCCM is two-fold. First, to map the internal and external strategies that organisations undertake when being involved in case competitions. Secondly, to assist organisations in their orientation of the use of CCCs within their branding strategy. Additionally, experienced organisations can use the tool to decide upon a more active or passive brand building process to optimise their CCCs engagement in relation to their strategic objectives.

Figure 12 The Corporate Case Competition Matrix

The Matrix Dimensions

The matrix syntheses the strategic focus that organisations have when using CCCs. Due to the apparent split between internal and external branding motives that became clear, the CCCM makes use of a similar structure. Hence, the internal and external brand building are differentiated within the matrix. On the one hand, internal brand building activities about CCCs are aimed at internal stakeholders. The internal stakeholders are mainly employees in this context as no organisation has mentioned the involvement of investors, board members,

or owners as a part of their CCC involvement. On the other hand, external brand building activities are those that focus on external stakeholders such as customers, future employees, and community groups. Within the matrix, organisations are classified as active or passive regarding their level of involvement with CCCs as a part of their brand building strategy (see Figure 12). With passive brand building, we mean that organisations do not intend to use CCCs explicitly for brand building purposes within their brand strategy, either internally or externally. A passive brand building strategy with the help of CCCs is expected to yield indirect results towards a company's brand building strategy. Whereas, an active brand building process with the use of CCCs might yield more direct results due to a mindful resource investment with specific brand building objectives in mind.

The matrix presents four key strategies that relate to the organisational engagement in CCCs and corporate branding strategies. More specifically, the organisational strategies are classified as *patron, communicator, absorber,* or a *participator*.

Patron

First, a *patron* is an organisation that gives (financial) support to CCCs. The strategy is characterised for having a passive internal and external brand building process through their involvement in CCCs. When looking at the external motivations, one can say that a *patron* involvement with CCC is about engaging a relationship with business schools and using the competition as a brand platform to show their brand and build awareness about the brand values. A *patron* strategy can be motivated internally to use case competitions to stimulate discussions or improve within team communication.

Communicator

Secondly, a *communicator* is an organisation that actively focuses on leveraging external brand building through communicating their brand messages to affect the brand image and reputation. In other words, a *communicator* extends the *patron* strategy for external brand building purposes. This strategy prioritises the external brand image instead of the internal motives. From our perspective, the strategy can be identified when companies share their professional and industry knowledge during the competition, provide a plurality of views, and interact with participants to support the development of talent. One can relate these activities as a way to personalise the brand and give participants the opportunity to personally interact with the brand culture and values.

Participator

Thirdly, a *participator* is an organisation that actively participates in CCCs with an internal focus and a passive external involvement. The strategy is an extension of the *patron* strategy for internal brand building purposes. Thus, it is located at the opposite extreme of the

communicator strategy that exceeds the *patron* driven from external brand building motives. From our perspective, organisations that undertake a *participator* strategy are involved with CCCs to support the internal development of employees and the overall organisation. We recognise this strategy when organisations consider the students' solutions to validate ideas or crowd source smart ideas. Or when organisations listen to the participants in order to better understand millennials perspectives. A *participator* is characterised by being actively engaged in an event without focusing on communicating this to the outside world beyond the *patron* motivations.

Absorber

Finally, an *absorber* is an organisation that actively seeks to use internal and external brand building motives when being involved in CCCs. Thus, enabling an active internal and external brand building process. Companies that employ the *absorber* strategy extends the *patron* strategy by adding the *communicator* drivers as well as the *participator.*

CCC Strategies

When looking at the different strategies that the companies can undertake, we aim to highlight the differences that exist between the motivations that drive a company to be involved with a corporate case competition. In other words, we recognise that not all corporations share the same rationales. The CCCM is our outcome when synthesizing the corporations' main drivers. Broadly we have established a difference between the internal and external motivations. We narrow these motivations contrasting the level of intensity as passive or active. Consequently, the CCCM can be seen as a tool to classify companies involvement in CCC depending on the corporation's strategy. Thus, the framework enables better comprehension of corporations' main motivations and also recognise how organisations achieve their strategic objectives through the use of case competitions.

5.4   Chapter Summary

The major findings that derive from the analysis are the introduction of the concept Corporate Case Competitions where the educational meaning of case competitions is refined for brand building purposes. Additionally, we have seen a division in internal and external brand building motives that can strategically guide a company's decisions. The Corporate Case Competition Matrix introduces four strategies that can empower organisations in their CCC use to build brands and reputation. We will elaborately discuss these three findings in the following chapter.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, we examine our research findings separately and in detail to uncover how corporations use case competitions. First, we look back on the findings of the study and compare it with the literature presented in chapter 2. Simultaneously, we reflect upon our findings by discussing our previous expectations. Finally, we relate our research findings to the field of strategic brand management.

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Defining a Case Competition from a Corporate Perspective

Our research enabled us to develop the concept of CCC and define it. We define Corporate Case Competitions as an activity where organisations engage in case competitions with the desire to create a strong brand and reputation by offering stakeholders the opportunity to experience their core values. The definition itself extends literature by uncovering corporate motives of being involved in case competitions. Sachau and Naas (2010), Borden and Utter (2017), and Gamble and Jelley (2014) mention several organisational motives from an educational perspective. Our research adds to these definitions by adding the strategic brand management component in case competition. From this new perspective, the phenomenon could be compared with sponsorship. Sponsorship can be seen as a marketing tool in strategic brand management literature to create awareness (Kapferer, 2012). Therefore, we expected that organisations might also share similar motives to engage in case competitions. For example, EY explained that *"one of the reasons why we take such a large role at the John Molson MBA International Case Competition is that we have a deliberate approach towards visibility on campuses"* (EY, Senior Vice President Transaction Advisory Services). Our interpretation of this example relates to branding due to the desire to create visibility (awareness) which is an aspect of strategic brand management. This shows that the involvement goes beyond the educational rationale.

The results of our research suggest that the differentiating factor of CCCs is the organisational perspective. The CCCs concept embraces the original concept of case competitions and adds to it with the strategic rationales. We maintained the educational component within CCCs' meaning because all the corporations studied in this research highlight the relationship between case competitions and the educational sector. For example, Nespresso reveals that

"*the main aim of Nespresso being involved with case competitions derives from its ambition to get more involved in the academic sector*" (Key Account Senior Managers of CIMS). Therefore, we introduce a paradigm shift from seeing case competitions as an educational tool to being a strategic tool to build brands and reputation.

6.1.2 Organisational Rationales to Engage in Case Competitions

Interestingly, when interpreting the collected empirical material, we have realised that organisational rationales relate to internal and external brand building purposes. We have named internal brand building motives mentioned by organisations as internal branding, employee engagement, and internal communication since those activities were targeted at internal stakeholders. In line with existing strategic brand management literature a value alignment between the brand identity and the perceived brand image is important to create a strong brand internally (Garas, Mahran, & Mohammed, 2018). Surprisingly, none of the companies in our research sample mention employee turnover as a possible motive to participate in CCCs. Conference Board (2001) and Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) mention that a realistic view of real-life experiences in the organisation might lead to less turnover in newly hired staff. When it comes to the external brand building motives we define them as corporate engagement, recruitment, market research, and corporate branding due to the external stakeholders as target group. Keller (2006), for instance, explains that brand awareness is enhanced when companies cause specific brand associations and brands are built. Due to the close relationship between CCCs and the similarities to existing brand building activities, there are few unexpected findings.

Two findings in particular intrigued us. First, most organisations were unable to express if their motivations for using CCCs contributed to reaching their objectives. This could mean that organisations use their instinct to decide upon their involvement level in contrast to metrics and analytical proof. Secondly, the majority of the organisational rationales were directed to long-term strategies in contrast to creating short-term brand awareness. This observation might mean that a long-term orientation could be a distinct characteristic of CCCs compared to other marketing tools to build brands and reputation.

Taking on a broader scope of management research, an alternative explanation for the findings could be related to different concepts. From our strategic brand management perspective, we connect findings that are understandable from that view. However, one could interpret the results from networking theories. From this perspective they could potentially see the motivations of organisations as a strategy to build relationships with, for instance, non-governmental organisations.

6.1.3 Mapping the Organisational Uses of Case Competitions

In order to conceptualise case competitions from a strategic brand management perspective, we introduced the CCCM. When presenting the framework, we aimed to simplify these internal and external brand building motives. The split between internal and external brand building motives stems from our grounded analysis. We interpreted the statements and explanations of organisations. In contrast, other interviewees used their own words to indicate their rationales but did not make use of branding terms which was interesting to notice. We classified these types of motivations as a passive involvement towards reaching brand building goals. For example, we interpreted the statement by Export Development Canada below as a potential passive involvement. They do not speak about building an internal brand but rather talk about allowing employees to experience their brand values indirectly:

> "*They act as the judges and interact with students and universities or colleges in Canada; it gives them a sense of satisfaction for you know, giving back, and sharing that time outside of their normal kind of work portfolio*". (Senior Advisor Community Investment and Corporate Communications of EDC)

Surprisingly, some organisations were well aware of their branding efforts and, for instance, called them "*internal branding*" when discussing their motives, which we understood as active brand building. Organisations mentioned branding terminology, and thus seemed to actively aspire to reach brand building objectives. For example, EY shared that:

> "*We want to ensure through our messaging, and branding and communication that no matter how much time [future employees] spend with us, when [they] leave, [they] will have grown as a person and professionally*". (EY, Senior Vice President Transaction Advisory Services)

Hence, the different levels of awareness we interpreted within the empirical material about the corporate motives motivated us to incorporate passive and active brand building strategies within the CCCM.

6.2 Positioning the Findings in the Field of Strategic Brand Management

The results of this study showed that a fundamental motive when firms use CCCs is to reinforce the brand by enabling employees to experience the corporate values (Balmer, 2003). This participation allows employees to reinforce the corporate values which is similar to brand building activities mentioned in strategic brand management literature. When

employees show behaviour in line with the corporate values it will strengthen the credibility of the corporate brand (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005; Kaplan, 2017).

The findings of our research suggest that organisations seek to influence how the students perceive the organisation to be like as an employer. Firms desire to attract potential employees who share similar values. For example, some companies mention that they want to be associated with characteristics of being a great place to work, empowering personal and professional growth, and being a purpose-driven organisation. Hence, similar to the corporate engagement, employer engagement requires a value alignment between the brand and the activity of CCCs. Real business examples give students a full impression of what it is like to work in the corporation, which confirms Kunselman and Johnson's findings (2004). Sharing these real-life business challenges through live cases is why the empirical material is broadly consistent with the findings in the literature. As mentioned in the literature, employer branding is a part of the corporate branding which aims to influence the corporate perception of prospective employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Berthon, Ewing, & Lian Hah, 2005; Foster, Punjaisri, & Cheng, 2010). These rationales and motives confirm the existing theories on employer branding that state the importance of this particular value alignment (Conference Board, 2001; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

We believe that a particular characteristic of CCCs is the prioritisation of brand experience. Students interact with representatives from the brand and thus get to experience the brand values first-hand. The significance of brand experience might relate to fulfilling the need to build a strong corporate brand in a fast-paced society where people are dealing with information overload (Reimann, Schilke, & Thomas, 2010; Roper & Fill, 2012).

Organisations express the desire to offer a valuable experience for participants. Similarly, managers indicate that the educational value is important to establish a connection with organisational stakeholders. A possible explanation is the historical relationship of case competitions with the educational sector because case competitions aim to enhance learning experiences (Hammond, 2002; Mesny, 2013). This value proposition did not come as a surprise but has received little attention from a strategic brand management perspective. Therefore, we kept the educational component when conceptualising CCCs.

After analysing the results, it could be perceived that organisations seek to influence the perception of their stakeholders through CCCs. From our perspective, corporations often associated CCCs with values such as collaboration, leadership, and innovation. We selected these values as we understood that the organisations' motives to engage with case competitions are related to the enhancement of those value associations. Influencing value associations is similar to the view of van Riel and Fombrun (2007) who state that a strong corporate reputation can be described as the collection of stakeholder perceptions of how well an organisation can fulfil their expectations.

6.3   Chapter Summary

All in all, most findings are congruent with strategic brand management literature which leads to few unexpected findings. Organisational motives relate to communicating brand values and influencing reputation which is why we argue that our findings suggest that CCCs can be used to build brands and reputation. Most frequently organisations reveal that their main motive was to increase brand visibility through the participation in CCCs. Furthermore, motives relate to getting to know students and academics better. Moreover, the CCCs are seen as a great opportunity for employees to live the corporate values. Surprisingly, none of the firms mentioned employee turnover as a rationale or any short-term branding purpose. Also, it was interesting to notice that organisations used their own words to indicate their rationales but did not make use of branding terms. In the concluding chapter we present three major findings of the research and evaluate their implications.

7   Conclusions

The present study's aim was to broaden the view and understanding of what a case competition is, and how it can be used beyond an educational method of teaching and learning. More specifically, this study was designed to explore the phenomenon of case competitions as a branding tool from a strategic brand management perspective. Within the following paragraphs, we will look back at our research questions and our pre-assumptions that have been presented in the introduction. Moreover, we present the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, research limitations, and suggest future research.

7.1   Research Aims and Objectives

RQ1 - Defining a Case Competition from a Corporate Perspective
Our thesis presents the concept of Corporate Case Competitions (CCC) to answer research question one. The concept extends the meaning of case competitions by including corporate motives. The main characteristic of CCCs is the corporate perspective that one takes when looking at a case competition. **We define Corporate Case Competitions as an activity where organisations engage in case competitions with the desire to create a strong brand and reputation by offering stakeholders the opportunity to experience their core values.** Corporate case competitions allow for a close connection to the specific population of academics and students. Our results present various managerial rationales that are highly related to building brands and reputations through the involvement in case competitions.

RQ2 - Organisational Rationales to Engage in Case Competitions
We have recognised that corporations engage in case competitions because of internal and external brand building purposes. For internal brand building purposes, we have classified organisational rationales into three main categories: internal branding, employee engagement, and internal communication. For external brand building purposes, we have defined organisational motives in four main categories: corporate engagement, recruitment, market research, and corporate branding. The analysis of the managerial motives suggests that case competitions can be seen as a tool to build brands and reputation.

We have created the Corporate Case Competition Matrix (CCCM) to synthesise the organisational motives to be engaged in case competitions. The CCCM identifies four strategies *patron*, *communicator*, *absorber*, and *participator*. Therefore, we identify the different organisational rationales and define the different strategies. The CCCM can be seen as a tool that enables managers to use internal and external brand building objectives. Where one organisation's rationale is to use corporate engagement, another could choose to be motivated by corporate branding.

7.2   Theoretical Contributions

We have striven to make several theoretical contributions as a result of our research. First, we have attempted to contribute to strategic brand management literature by conceptualising CCCs. Secondly, we have intended to map the field of CCCs by unravelling the managerial motives of being involved in case competitions. Thirdly, we have sought to categorise potential strategic uses for CCCs. Within the following paragraphs, we highlight our research findings that relate to creating these contributions.

Conceptualisation of Corporate Case Competitions

Our first theoretical contribution is to conceptualise the phenomenon of corporate involvement in case competitions as Corporate Case Competitions. We add an extra layer on top of the meaning of case competitions, which is described as "a simulation in which teams of students analyze a business problem and recommend solutions to a panel of judges […] in a short amount of time" (Sachau & Naas, 2010, p.606). Hence, we refine the meaning of case competitions by introducing Corporate Case Competitions that centre around a strategic brand management perspective. Besides the educational meaning of case competitions, CCCs have their own traits and characteristics that are highly related to organisational rationales. Providing a specific, new concept reduces complexity as we categorise an abstract phenomenon. Moreover, the definition of CCCs serves as a foundation to analyse, discuss, and extend their meaning, which can inspire a whole area of research. We have categorised the phenomenon as a brand building tool, and therefore we position the phenomenon in the field of strategic brand management. This theoretical contribution might be relevant for any academics who have a particular interest in branding and are interested in uncovering and refining new concepts to build brands and reputation.

Mapping the Organisational Rationales of Being Involved in CCC

Our second theoretical contribution is mapping and categorising organisational motives. Existing educational literature has shown that organisations might find it enjoyable to see students working on a challenging problem (Sachau & Naas, 2010), and it has also described that universities that organise case competitions might benefit from positive influences regarding accreditation (Borden & Utter, 2017). The cautious coding and thematisation of the interviews have allowed for a better comprehension of organisational behaviour. Additionally, looking at strategic brand management literature discussed in chapter 2, we have uncovered that most research does not seem to shed light on case competitions as a tool to build brands.

CCC introduces a connection between various theoretical fields such as strategic brand management, human resource management, and, educational theories. We deepen the understanding of CCCs by connecting the concept with strategic brand management literature. We connected the empirical material with branding literature when we used branding terms to label the different reasonings that the interviewees gave. As literature indicated, employer branding relates to establishing a strong reputation of an organisation since employer branding is "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.187). Therefore, the connection between human resource management and branding already has been made. Within CCCs, human resource theory relates to the importance of employer branding that organisations direct towards engaging in CCCs. Due to the relevance of the educational meaning of case competitions, organisations intend to build upon this characteristic in CCCs.

Categorising Strategic Uses for Case Competitions

Our third and final contribution is the introduction of the Corporate Case Competition Matrix (CCCM). We designed this model to consolidate the findings by simplifying the main organisational motives regarding brand building. We add to existing literature by identifying that CCCs can be passively and actively used to build a corporate brand - internally as well as externally. Thus, the CCCM builds upon Gromark and Melin's view that brand building encompasses "a process based on the interplay between internal and external stakeholders, a process characterised by reciprocal influence and interdependence" (2011, p.397). The matrix visualises four distinct strategies that organisations could be classified as depending on their level of involvement in CCCs: *patron, communicator, participator,* and *absorber*. Whichever matrix quadrant the organisation could be placed in is independent of the specific objective the organisation intends to fulfil such as corporate engagement, employer branding, and to establish a strong corporate reputation. When naming each strategy and defining its main traits, we contribute to a faster identification of organisational behaviour. Thus, having a better comprehension of the organisational motives that share the same strategy.

7.3   Managerial Implications

We present the Corporate Case Competition Matrix as a tool that is particularly well suited for organisations to build brands and reputation. Our research creates new opportunities to strengthen the corporate brand. The involvement in CCC makes the brand more tangible as it enables stakeholders to interact with a brand through its representatives, business cases, and physical experiences. Hence, with CCCs organisations are able to expose their brand to all the parties involved in the competition in terms of culture, mission, vision, competences, and personality. Moreover, CCCs allow to connect brand associations with the corporate brand in relation to collaboration, leadership, and innovation. The research results might be of direct practical relevance because they seek to empower managers.

The following managerial implications might be of special interest for brand managers and for other managers who work with brand building and activation. Based on our study and managerial feedback received after presenting the CCCM, we present five main managerial implications.

Getting an Overview of CCCs

First, our research allows organisations to get an overview of how they can use CCCs within their branding strategy. During our research, multiple executives and managers expressed their interest in uncovering the experiences of other organisations and how they utilise case competitions. Therefore, an overview of the main organisational motives has been created. In practice this helps managers to become aware of the CCC's full potential.

Understanding CCCs to Empower Organisations

Secondly, the conceptualisation of the case competition characteristics might empower organisations who have not yet been involved in case competitions to ensure alignment between corporate objectives and how organisations deploy their efforts. Knowing that a CCC is associated with the educational sector, innovation, learning, and collaboration could be a distinct addition to direct that decision-making process.

Actively Considering Internal and External Brand Building

Thirdly, the CCCM indicates two distinct groups of motives in CCCs: internal and external brand building. The matrix allows managers to actively consider their motivation for participation and to identify key decisions regarding resource investments. For instance, when an organisation can commit to a small resource investment towards achieving its objectives, a passive *patron* role might be a fitting strategy. Being aware of these possibilities might enable organisations to develop new brand building strategies which include CCCs.

Identifying Strategic Uses of Case Competitions

Fourthly, since the CCCM is a dynamic framework, it might empower managers to identify their current strategic use of case competitions to develop a corporate branding strategy. It is important to mention that we do not indicate that one strategy is superior to the other within the CCCM. The four focus strategies are based on various motives. The CCCM can be used for organisations who aim to influence their brand image positively by investing in community engagement. Similarly, it can be used by organisations who would like to influence other (employer) corporate branding objectives. It is important to note that when an organisation works with separated business units they might have different CCCM applications that are aligned with their local strategies.

Aligning the Corporate Brand with Case Competitions

Finally, when there is a possibility to align the corporate brand with case competitions strategically, the CCCM could enable the analysis and strategic use of case competitions in corporate brand management. The CCCM could be used by corporations who already are engaged in case competitions and seek to assess their involvement. With the CCCM they can measure the outcome that their involvement has produced and compare it to the initial goals.

7.3.1 Research Limitations

Due to the availability of access to the corporations included in this research, only organisations from North-American and European countries have been included, which might lead to a predominantly westernised view of the phenomenon. Secondly, our research does not take internal case competitions into account that have been organised by organisations with employees as participants. If we had included this group of case competitions into our research, we might have found more internal brand building insights beyond the ones presented. Thirdly, we have not identified personal motives to take part in case competitions which is an individual resource investment as well. Therefore, we are not yet aware of how organisations can stimulate individual employees to take part in building brand and reputation through CCCs. Finally, the outcome of this research is a consequence of our interpretative skills, which might imply that other researchers could extract different results when working with the same empirical material.

7.4 Future Research

Our exploratory research presents the concept of CCCs for the first time, and therefore it has the potential to inspire a field of study where researchers can attempt to uncover CCCs beyond the scope of managerial rationales. Several questions remain unanswered surrounding the phenomenon. Hence, we give several suggestions for future research,

First, since case competitions are characterised by their competitive aspect, it might be interesting to take a broader approach by including case events or case teaching in the scope of research. A broader approach would still have the organisational aspect as its focal point but then would aim to uncover the motives and managerial rationales of getting involved in case events. Case events might be shorter activities in which students solve business cases from organisations. Due to the setup, the involved organisations might be more likely to be case providers and case event organisers. Motives for recruitment might still be an opportunity at case events. On the other hand, in-class case studies might be more related to giving back to the community or to conducting market research since they might be less focused on creating external brand awareness due to lower reach. It would be interesting to see if organisations have a similar drive in their involvement that relates to brand building since the interaction time periods of organisations and students might be shorter than at CCCs.

Secondly, it might be interesting to research the possible differences between motives when it comes to the type of organisation or industry. Similar research can be done with non-western companies to compare the differences and similarities with the current study. Since our research has not focused on universities. Some research has revealed the advantages that universities gain from case competition involvement, but little research has looked at this stakeholder group from a strategic brand management perspective. Looking at university involvement in case competitions from a strategic brand management angle opens up the door for researchers who would like to stay closer to the origin of case competitions - the academic world. Another interesting sector could be the nonprofit organisations that have not been highlighted in this research. It would be interesting to see if the CCCM would also be applicable to nonprofit organisations.

Thirdly, to deepen the understanding of the corporate involvement in case competitions, one could take a single-case study approach. The study might follow an ethnographic method to identify how one organisation engages explicitly with the organisation throughout the whole process. By being present at the preparation meetings, or by even participating in the competition, the researcher might uncover a deeper understanding of the value of CCCs. A study of this type could exemplify how organisations use CCCs over an extended period. By taking on these future research suggestions, doors will open up to explore case competitions as a tool to build brands and reputation in various industries and organisations.

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Appendix A

Interview Topic Guide

Opening questions

- How did you become involved in case competitions?

Questions about a number of key topics

- Motives of the company to be involved [sponsoring/live case facilitator/(co-)organiser] in case competitions.
    - Internal motives
    - External motives

Probing questions to invite the interviewee to explain more:

- Why do think case competitions are …?
- Can you give an example of?
- What does … mean for you?
- Why is … important to you?
- Could you elaborate on … ?
- Can you tell me about similar …. of …?

Closing Questions

- Finally, is there anything you would like to share with us that has not been discussed yet?
- Could you give us access to interesting documentation such as cases the company provided or potential internal research that has been done to evaluate the involvement of case competitions?
- Would it be possible to connect us to [name/function of interesting person] to be able to get another perspective to make our research better?

Appendix B

Consent Form

LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Case Competitions as a Tool to Build Brands (working title)
Judith Armenteras and Iris Politiek

Interview Consent Form.

I have been given information about *Case Competitions as a Tool to Build Brands (working title) a*nd discussed the research project with *Judith Armenteras, and Iris Politiek* who are conducting this research as a part of a Master's in *International Marketing and Brand Management* supervised by Mats Urde (Associate Professor, PhD Brand Strategy).

I understand that, if I consent to participate in this project I will be asked to give the researcher a duration of approximately an hour of my time to participate in the process.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time.

By signing below I am indicating my consent to participate in the research as it has been described to me. The data collected will be anonymous as it will only state the job function and company, not the name of the interviewee. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for thesis and journal publications, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Name: …………………………………………………..

Email: …………………………………………………

Telephone: ………………………………………….

Signed: ……………………………………………

Appendix C

Table 3 Insights in Collection of Empirical Material

Case nr.	Company	Collection Method	Subject of the Study	Length	Location	Date	Type
1	Nespresso	Interview	Key Account Senior Manager - CIMS - Sustainable Markets Intelligence Center	1,5 hours	Costa Rica	2 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
		Observation	Sustainability MBA Challenge Live Case Webinar - Nestlé Nespresso	1 hour	Switzerland	15 May 2018	Synchronous mediated
2	EY	Interview	Senior Vice President Transaction Advisory Services	1 hour	Montréal	6 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
		Observation	EY	6 days	Montréal	2-7 Jan 2018	Presential
3	Pfizer	Interview	Vaccines Canada Lead/General Manager	1 hour	Montréal	8 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
4	Export Development Canada	Interview	Senior Advisor | Community Investment and Corporate Communications	1 hour	Ontario	16 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
		Observation	EDC	6 days	Montréal	2-7 Jan 2018	Presential
5	Elisa	Interview	Director Head of e-reading services at Elisa	1,5 hours	Finland	23 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
6	KPMG	Interview	Consultant, manager KPMG	1 hour	Sweden	25 Apr 2018	Synchronous mediated
		Observation	KPMG	3 hours	Sweden	30 Nov 2017	Presential
		Observation	KPMG	3 hours	Sweden	1 Dec 2017	Presential
7	Deloitte	Interview	Senior Manager | Head of Attraction & Talent Sourcing	1 hour	Denmark	7 May 2018	Synchronous mediated

Appendix D

"Branding and visibility are the main one. And the branding and visibility exists in the recruitment. So the recruitment is sort of the end benefit of it and is the overall visibility and awareness of the firm."

Figure 13 Example of a Within-Case Analysis