DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONAL BRAND CONSTRUCTION OF A GROUP OF FINNISH MANAGERS ON TWITTER

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In this study, the objective was to understand how Finnish managers build their personal brand on Twitter. More specifically, the goal was to find out what kind of managerial identities can be discerned based on the discourses, linguistic means, and rhetoric through which Finnish managers brand themselves on Twitter. The study was conducted as qualitative research, using discourse analysis as the analysis method. The research data for this study were collected from the publicly available Twitter profiles of 12 Finnish managers who actively use the platform. Previous literature and theories regarding the concepts of personal branding and identity work, as well as Watson's identity construction model, were used as a theoretical basis. Consequently, five identity images were found that represent the personal brands of Finnish managers. These images were the Patriot, Philanthropist, Fan, "Me Behind the Scenes," and Winner.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The United States Presidential election and Donald Trump's victory are an excellent example of what a major impact a human's brand can have on masses of peoples and their behavior. Today, personal branding is no longer an arena only for politicians, business leaders, and public figures. Basically, personal branding is for everyone. Social media play a major role as a playground for personal branding and allow a huge number of ways to brand oneself. The rate of change has been astonishing, as new ways are constantly emerging to develop one's brand on social media.

Personal branding has been identified as a research topic that requires examination in various countries and cultures to track possible country- and culture-specific variations (Vallas & Cummins 2015, 23). This study corresponds to these further research needs by focusing on the concept of personal branding in Finnish society. Vallas and Cummins (2015) explored the "enterprise culture" based on interviews with employees and job seekers and by analyzing business literature from 1980 to 2010. In their study, they describe the evolution of personal branding discourse.

The roots of personal branding date back to the 1990s, when personal branding was seen mainly from a labor market perspective. The focus was on how personal branding can help individuals to get employed and ensure their attractiveness in the labor market. Since then, the concept has evolved towards the "enterprising self," which emphasizes the strong link between a company and its employee. The "enterprising self" contains the idea that an employee and its brand should be harnessed for the needs of the company. (Vallas & Cummins 2015, 3.) The social media revolution gave a whole new meaning to the personal brand concept, as control and power shifted from professionals to individuals (Smith 2009, 560).

In this study, the personal branding phenomenon is approached from the perspective of business managers and their identity work. Previous literature and theories concerning the concepts of personal branding and identity work—especially Watson's (2008, 128) three-step model of discourses, social identities, and self-identity—are used as a theoretical basis. The main objective of this study was to discover what kind of managerial identities can be found based on

the discourses, linguistic means, and rhetoric through which Finnish managers brand themselves on Twitter.

My special interest was to examine the personal branding discourse in the social media context. According to Smith (2009, 559–560), social and user-driven technologies have changed societies' relationship to content and information and simultaneously given birth to a new kind of listening economy and opportunities for research purposes. The rise of social media has made its impact on the scientific community and has made "popular content," such as the vernacular and spoken language, available for use in research purposes (Breur 2011, 103–104). In the big picture, this research focuses on what identity actually means in a modern society, where the social construction of identity takes place in social media under the influence of millions of other people. The change has been enormous, for example, compared to the 1980s, when the social self was built mainly by the impact of smaller social groups and institutions, such as family, school, and citizenship. The concept and perspective of *authenticity* helps me as a researcher to understand what the authenticity and transparency of identity means in the context of social media and to reflect on whether the authenticity of identity in social media even exists.

Twitter was selected as a source of research data because it has become a popular social media channel among business professionals and managers. It is a channel where managers bring out their expertise and professionalism but also private life, hobbies, and areas of interests. As can be noted from the conclusions of this study, the personal brand of a Finnish manager is built from several different identities, not just from a work identity or managerial identity, and it mixes the presentations of both private and public life.

The study was conducted as qualitative research using discourse analysis as the data analysis method. Discourse analysis was selected as the method of analysis because it is based on a functional language concept, according to which one of the three functions of language is to create identities—in other words, to communicate who we are. According to the functional language concept, parlance is seen as goal-oriented action. (Pynnönen 2013, 5.)

In this study, the interest is in what kind of discourses Finnish managers use when they seek to build the desirable and goal-oriented image of themselves. Managers' intentionality and goal-oriented action in building their personal brands also were reflected occasionally in the exercising of power and power relations. Those situations are described more in detail when they appear in the research data. Managers' identities and their identity work as well as personal branding are all seen in this study as interleaved and inseparable phenomena.

In this study, I am working in the world of social constructivism, which suggests that scientific facts are constructed and invented rather than discovered (Kukla 2000, 3). Social constructivism manifests itself in two ways in this study. First, identity construction, which is of special interest in this study, is always socially constructed. Second, while writing this thesis, I was constantly making choices about the literature, the interpretation of the data, my findings, and the conclusions. As mentioned in Kukla's (2000, 3) work, a "scientist could

have made other choices." Social constructivism is, therefore, also present in the research process itself.

In the second chapter, I will start by summarizing the recent Finnish literature regarding personal branding to show the somewhat limited research that has been done about the topic in Finland and in order to demonstrate the gap this study aims to fill. Next, I will introduce the international literature of personal branding and the related concepts of self-commodification and self-packaging, as well as micro-celebrity. These concepts are explained parallel to the development of personal branding discourse in recent decades. In the second half of the chapter, I will start by explaining the relationship between personal branding and the authenticity of identity, and I will continue by representing theories of identity formation and self-categorization as well as the concepts of the social self, identity work, and identity control. After that, Watson's identity construction model will be explained in more detail. At the end of the chapter, I will discuss the relationship between symbolic interactionism and the intentionality of identity.

The third chapter includes argumentation about the selection of Twitter as research data, a description of the data collection and iteration, as well as the research task. At the end of the chapter, I will present discourse analysis and its main theories as well as a few rhetorical and linguistic means that are relevant for this study and support my discourse analysis.

In the fourth chapter, my findings—the five identity images of Finnish managers—are explained in detail and linked to the theories and literature presented in this study when convergence is found. The last chapter concludes my findings and points out further research needs.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Recent studies about personal branding

In Finland, studies regarding the brand identities and brand images of companies have been relatively widespread and popular. However, personal branding has been studied relatively infrequently in recent years, and most of the research consists of master's theses. Overall, six master's theses were found regarding personal branding. Three of the master's theses (see Kujala 2016, Tikkanen 2015, and Joensivu 2015) investigated how personal branding can be exploited or how it manifests itself in career development and student life. Two of these were conducted as interviews and one as a web poll. In three of the six master's theses (see Salaterä 2017, Gratschew 2016, and Nummi 2016), social media were used as the source of research data. However, Nummi (2016) was the only one to use Twitter as research data.

Studies about Finnish managers' personal branding in social media were not found, which is the gap in the literature that this master's thesis is aiming to fill. Another noteworthy discovery is that most of the studies were conducted in the disciplines of communications and marketing. Thus, examining the personal brands and identity construction of managers from the scientific premises and perspectives of management and leadership can be seen as another contribution of this study. Iso-Berg's (2015) book about entrepreneurs' identity in personal branding can be said to be the only domestic academic study that gave a good starting point for my study.

When poring over the literature, I found, internationally, a multitude of self-help literature regarding the personal branding and Twitter usage of business managers. In the introduction of her thesis, Girginova (2013, iii) summarizes this as follows:

> While there does exist ample literature containing prescriptive practices about how CEOs ought to tweet, there is a scarcity of descriptive research detailing how they actually tweet.

Shepherd (2005, 589) supports this by arguing that little of the literature regarding self-marketing and personal branding has been published as formal research, textbooks, or as part of an academic curriculum or discipline. After assessing the scholarly articles published internationally regarding personal branding as well as after reading through the abovementioned master´s theses, the articles of Vallas and Cummins (2015), Shepherd (2005), Papacharissi (2012), Lair, Sullivan, and Cheney (2005), and Rampersad (2011), as well as Iso-Berg's (2015) study were selected to form the basis of personal branding theory in this study.

2.1.1 The concepts of branding and personal branding

According to Iso-Berg (2015), modern branding began in the 19th century, when industrial products were marketed with individual brand names emphasizing differentiation. Kotler, Armstrong, Wong, and Saunders (2008, 511) formulate the definition of a *brand* as follows:

> A name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

This definition can be said to be quite limited and outdated in the sense that it takes into account only products and services and the perspective of competitive positioning. On the other hand, giving a comprehensive definition of a brand is a complex task because the meaning of a *brand* and *branding* varies substantially depending on the context. Chernatony and Riley (1998) conducted a literature review of the concept of branding and found twelve categorizations of a *brand*, four of which were definitions that arise from descriptions of a human being and take into account the relations between people or things: *value systems*, *identity system*, *personality*, and *relationship*. These categorizations of branding take us closer to that which is of interest in this study, *personal* branding. According to Iso-Berg (2015), in the 1990s branding began to assume the attributes of emotionality and personification. Through personification, brands were given human attributes such as *identity*, and brands also started to have emotional aspects (Iso-Berg 2015).

The early roots of personal branding date back to the beginning of the 1980s, when it was used as a concept and a practice mainly for marketing professionals. However, in most of the literature, Tom Peters is appointed the founder of the personal branding concept with his article "The Brand Called You" published in 1997. In that article, Peters launched the concept of "Me Inc." to promulgate the idea that individuals, just like companies, can and should take advantage of personal branding logic and apply it through marketing strategies. Peters also stressed—unlike the previous advocates of personal branding—that personal branding is for every individual and does not depend on one's job title, age, or current employer. Peters argued that every person is a brand that should be promoted. (Vallas & Cummins 2015, 11.)

Peters' idea of personal branding is in many ways aligned with the definitions of *brand* and *branding* in the traditional marketing discipline. Just like Ko-

tler et al. (2008) emphasize differentiation from competitors, Peters (see Shepherd 2005, 590) talks about the "sign of distinction," which every individual has. In personal branding, the impact of human relations and the occurrence of power play a significant role. The necessity of personal branding can be justified by arguing that, if you ignore the importance of personal branding, others will take your power and manage it on your behalf. (Shepherd 2005, 590.)

The concept of *self-marketing* occurs in the literature as a synonym for *personal branding*, and it has its roots in the marketing literature. According to Shepherd (2005, 590), self-marketing has been a tool mainly for achieving employment, but it is also a tool for celebrities, business leaders, and politicians. Shepherd (2005, 590) defines *self-marketing* as those activities that individuals undertake to make themselves known in the marketplace.

Shepherd (2005, 593) also raises up the challenges and conflicts that occur when transferring principles from the marketing discipline to individuals. First, *meeting consumer needs* in its original format would mean that an individual should submit oneself to other people's expectations and requirements. Instead, personal branding emphasizes individuals' strengths and distinctive features. (Shepherd 2005, 593.) Second, by *brand conflict*, Shepherd (2005, 594) means the conflict of interest that arises from the intertwined nature of representing a company and representing oneself. In the marketplace, an employee is always, at least to some extent, a representation of the company. Emphasizing a personal brand in a work-related context might cause conflict if the personal brand represents a company's different values. (Shepherd 2005, 594.) The third challenge is that the "multiplicity of brands" causes a conflict too, as one of the generally accepted principles of marketing is that the brand should be simple, clear, and consistent, whereas nowadays having multiple personal brands is one way to survive in a turbulent market. When dealing with human branding, it is natural for an individual to have different roles and identities in one's work life, in one's family, and through hobbies, for example. A coherent personal brand is not necessarily the contemporary ideal. (Shepherd 2005, 595–596.)

2.1.2 The concepts of self-packaging and self-commodification

During the entrepreneurial trend of the 1990s, the discourse of personal branding was much affected by the self-help literature, where individuals were given advice about how to become successful in business life and the labor markets. The self-help movement had its focus on developing one's skills and becoming a better person, whereas the personal branding movement stressed the importance of self-packaging and self-commodification. In the personal branding movement, the ways in which a person's skills were crystallized, communicated, and promoted became equally important to the development of skills themselves. (Lair et al. 2005, 308–309, Shepherd 2005, 589.)

Vallas and Cummins (2015, 3) see this shift as part of an entrepreneurial turn that appeared in the business and scientific literature in the 1980s and 1990s, as it started to speak to individuals and employees rather than to organizations. By *entrepreneurial turn*, they mean the change of mindset of employees and how they perceive the meaning of work. Employees should not only fulfill

the needs of consumers, but also actively shape those needs. Each individual can and should create his or her own brand and services, as well as manage and affect customers' needs for their services. Hence, personal branding was an extreme manifestation of an individual assimilated to a corporation. (Vallas & Cummins 2015, 3.)

Lair et al. (2005, 310–311) also discuss personal branding from the labor market perspective and suggest that a chaotic communication climate and insecure employment climate created the necessity for personal branding for employees and job seekers. Personal branding was a helpful tool for entering the labor market, advancing in one´s career, and moving from one job to another. Lair et al. (2005, 309) define *branding* as follows:

> …a programmatic approach to the selling of a product, service, organization, cause, or person that is fashioned as a proactive response to the emerging desires of a target audience or market…

Product development and *product promotion* were the means to succeed in the labor market (Lair et al. 2005, 309). Lair et al. (2005, 309) also manage to raise one vital point that distinguishes personal branding from being just a simple marketing tactic: Personal branding comes very close to the person's sense of self, meaning that personal branding tactics always influence a person's identity, and vice versa.

2.1.3 The concept of micro-celebrity and performativity of self

In a hyper-individualistic environment, personal branding was a natural next step after branding products and services. Celebrities were the first ones to apply the tactics of personal branding: "In a world of change and opportunity, you can create and recreate yourself so as to be the master of your own destiny." (Lair et al. 2005, 313-314.) The emergence of social media and the enormous popularity it gained among ordinary people gave birth to the phenomenon of micro-celebrity, the personal branding concept of the 21st century. Nowadays, virtually anyone having access to social media can have an audience and a strategy according to which individuals can maintain and influence that audience. (Marwick & Boyd 2010, 121.)

Papacharissi (2012, 1990) studied the performances of self on Twitter and found that personal branding and identity building on Twitter have several performative and theatrical characteristics. Descriptive as presentations of self on Twitter were, individuals need to adjust their performance to multiple audiences, and both the public and private spheres of life are presented. The fact is that personal branding on Twitter nowadays contains presentations from one's private life as well as the trend of shareability, where networked structures encourage sharing rather than withholding information. This factor has created demands for authentic presentations of oneself. (Papacharissi 2012, 1991–1992.) According to Papacharissi (2012, 1992), to combine multiple potential performances into a coherent narrative of the self without compromising authenticity, individuals have become increasingly self-reflective and self-aware, which at times might appear outwardly selfish and narcissistic.

Two development paths can be seen in the personal branding discourse in the 21st century. First, the concepts of self-branding and micro-celebrity have displaced the employee and labor market perspectives. Personal branding can no more be seen merely as a tool for surviving the turbulent economy. Instead, in the world of social media, self-branding and micro-celebrity have principally become tools for achieving personal fame, status, power, and influence both in the online and offline worlds (Page 2008, 182, Iso-Berg 2015). This development is also supported by Vallas and Cummins (2015, 22), as they conclude their study by saying that the articulation of personal brands with corporate brands is no longer clear. Personal brands no more necessarily represent a person's relation to a company; instead, personal brands can exist on their own (Vallas & Cummins 2015, 22).

Another clearly visible development path of the personal branding discourse in the 21st century is that interest has shifted from people themselves to the language people use and produce. Language has become a consumable product, and when it is used wisely, it can be turned into economic gain (Page 2008, 182–183). As Page (2008, 182) describes: "self-branding is more generally embedded in wider trends where discourse itself has become a valuable commodity as a form of searchable talk."

In summary, the discourse of personal branding has developed from a corporate marketing tactic into a communicative approach responsive to an insecure economic and labor environment, and even further towards what is called *self-branding* and *micro-celebrity* in social media. Nowadays, personal branding is more of a social reality, where private and professional areas of life intermingle and where the traditional branding tactics of celebrities have become useful instruments for every individual.

2.2 Authentic identity and personal branding

According to Iso-Berg (2015), *authenticity* can be described by adjectives such as *honest*, *transparent*, and *real*. In personal branding, authenticity is associated with what is true, original, and trustworthy in a person. An *authentic identity* can be described as a person's sense of a core being, which is based on a person's values, beliefs, feelings, identities, and self-meaning. From the perspective of authenticity, a person's behavior and appearance should reflect and represent his or her values. When talking about authenticity, the focus is on the practices that represent and reflect authenticity. (Iso-Berg 2015.) Iso-Berg (2015, 133) summarizes this as follows: "authenticity is the practice of openness that is needed in branding."

Authentic social identity describes the socially constructed image that other people have of a person's real "me." *Interpersonal authenticity* refers to a collective sense of self, where an object or experience acts as a glue between individuals. An example of this is the relationship between a mother and a child, which is said to be one of the most authentic ones. Intrapersonal authenticity can be

explained from an individual point of view as an atmosphere where actors experience their true selves when in the company of others. (Iso-Berg 2015.)

Self-authenticity then again means the individual's own experience of his or her core being (Iso-Berg 2015). According to Iso-Berg (2015), people have an inherent need to look for their identity and seek what is real, true, and original in their personality. Authenticity is not about judging what is real or fake; instead, it is about a person's core beliefs, values, and identity, which create a reason for acting authentically. The authenticity of a person is often linked to the intuition, vision, or passion of creative people. (Iso-Berg 2015.)

Above, I have explained the relations between identity and authenticity, but how are branding and authenticity related? *Authenticity* can be said to be the quality of branding. Authenticity is a feature people evaluate when buying a product and service, or even when they evaluate the brand of a person. Accordingly, authenticity builds trust. (Iso-Berg 2015.)

Rampersad (2011, 414) studied personal branding from the leadership point of view and uses the term *authentic personal-leadership brand*, which means a trusted image of oneself that is visible in everything one does, including one's values, beliefs, and dreams. An important element of authentic personal-leadership branding is also one's ability to build a stable basis for trust, credibility, and charisma in an organization (Rampersad 2011, 414). Rampersad (2011, 414-415) defines in his article the following criteria of authentic personal-leadership branding: *authenticity*, which means being your own brand; *integrity*, meaning that you obey and follow the morals and behaviors that support your vision; *consistency*, being consistent with your behavior; and *distinctiveness*, which means distinguishing yourself from other managers with your brand. In his article, Rampersad (2011, 415) describes personal branding solely from the leadership and working life perspective and emphasizes the alignment of a manager's personal brand with the corporate brand, which refers to "entrepreneurial turn"—a somewhat old-fashioned concept in which an "individual should be harnessed to the needs of the company" (see Vallas and Cummins 2015, 3), as explained previously in this chapter. However, Rampersad (2011, 415) defines *alignment* as a positive phenomenon, where an employee's wellbeing and comfort are seen as priorities. When the employee or manager enjoys his or her work and simultaneously his or her values align with the company's values, they become very dedicated to the achievement of the targets set by the company (Rampersad 2011, 415).

Moreover, Manurung, Damaris, and Wimbaningrum (2017, 134) found in their study that the effects of authentic personal branding are positive. They discovered that authentic personal branding works as a mediator to influence heroic leadership, which resulted in a better-quality work life. Manurung et al. (2017, 135) define an *authentic personal brand* as a person's identity that stimulates precise and meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that a person represents. With *heroic leadership*, Manurung et al. (2017, 136) refer to a person's ability, through hard work and moral courage, to encourage oneself and others with heroic ambitions, the ability to wholeheartedly and enthusiastically help followers to achieve peak performances, and the ability to build team spirit.

2.2.1 Identity formation

The concept of *identity formation* can be seen as one of the cornerstones in identity research. Identity formation is based on Erik Erikson's study about a person's psychosocial development throughout a person's lifespan. According to Erikson and Kakar (1979), the formation of individual identity is much affected by the group's identity; *group* is in this context understood as social groups throughout a person's lifespan, such as family, class, or nationality. Erikson and Kakar (1979) speak about a "collective sense of identity," which means, for example, the collective sense of the Finnish people about being Finns. A collective sense of identity has a strong influence on the personal sense of one's own identity and is present in every individual's life from birth (Erikson & Kakar 1979). According to Erikson and Kakar (1979), identity crises are natural events along a person's lifespan, and they are, in fact, essential for personal development. Personal and collective spheres are inseparable, and so are personal and collective crises. This means that crises in a group's history inevitably also affect a person's identity. (Erikson & Kakar 1979.)

Marcia (see Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky 1993) developed the concepts of conferred identity and constructed identity based on Erikson's identity formation theory. *Conferred identity* is an identity that has been affected by different kind of events, institutions, and social groups during a person's lifespan. These are kind of "given" factors that have formulated a person's identity and of which the person becomes progressively aware. Conferred identity hence represents the socially constructed and inevitable part of one's identity. *Constructed identity* instead describes the intentionality in identity construction. (Marcia 1993.) Marcia et al. (1993, 7) describe *constructed identity* as a self-initiated and self-directed process whereby:

> …an individual begins to make decisions about who to be, with which group to affiliate, what beliefs to adopt, what interpersonal values to espouse, and what occupational direction to pursue.

Erikson and Kakar (1979) and Marcia et al. (1993) were also the first ones to discuss how identity is manifested in behavior, how the existence of identity can be proven, and how identity becomes visible. At that time, their perspective was quite limited, as they stated that identity can be manifested mainly through occupations and ideologies (Marcia et al. 1993).

2.2.2 Self-categorization theory and the concept of the social self

Self-categorization theory and the *social self-concept* approach identity from the perspective of groups. Self-categorization theory takes a look at how group membership affects a person's identity and vice versa and how people categorize themselves based on those findings. (Turner 1987.) According to Turner (1987), Tajfel and Turner define *social identity* as those areas of person's self-concept that are based on their membership in a social group or category. Their definition holds the idea that people distinctively pursue a positive social identity. If a person experiences his or her identity as positive in a certain group, he

or she experiences the whole group positively. A negative identity experience of the current group or person's assessment of another group's superiority can lead to the leaving of the group or replacing it with a better one. (Turner 1987.) *Social self-concept* should not be seen as a synonym, but as a related concept for social identity. In social self-concept, the comparison to other people is emphasized, which means that individuals make sense of their selves mainly by comparing themselves to other people in their own reference groups or to the other groups and individuals who are part of those groups. (Turner 1987.)

2.2.3 Identity work and identity control

Whereas Turner's self-categorization theory is interested in how individuals categorize themselves and their identities into certain reference groups, identity work has its interest in *how* different kinds of presentations become part of a person's identity.

Identity work can be described as people's active participation in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising their own identities. In practice, identity work can occur in various forms such as in a person's outfit or office decoration, in cognitive strategies or personal goals, in balancing multiple identities simultaneously, in making social comparisons, or through rhetorical tactics such as narratives or justifications. (Ibarra & Barbulescu 2010, 137.)

The idea behind the concept of identity work is that a manager's identity is not a fixed phenomenon, but rather a continuum built through discourses, which are bound to time and space and might also require contradictions and competing discourses (Watson 2008, 124). Moreover, Svenigsson (2006, 207–206) describes the identities of today as temporary and processual constructions, which can also have characteristics of fantasy.

Alvesson and Willmott (2002, 619) explored how, in an organization, individuals use their identity as a tool for achieving their work-related and role-related objects. They named this process *identity control.* Identity control holds the idea that a person's identity can be affected and directed so that it is in line with and advances towards the goals set for the person. Discourses are seen as ways to affect a person's identity (Alvesson & Willmott 2002, 619). Alvesson and Willmot (2002, 619–620) claim that especially individuals' hopes, fears, aspirations—and even their behavior—can be affected and directed through discourses. Alvesson and Willmot (2002, 620) remind us that identity control in organizations requires active identity work. An example of identity work in practice is to use the discursive practices of teamwork and partnership. The discourse of teamwork should then affect an individual's identity in an organization, so that the person's professional identity emphasizes more mutual goals and a "winning together" attitude than individualistic and selfish premises. (Alvesson & Willmot 2002, 620.) Alvesson and Willmot (2002, 621–622) claim that identity work can be both a medium and an outcome of organizational control and that the occurrence of identity work can be found when keeping an eye on the practices of control such as rewards, leadership, and hierarchies.

2.2.4 Watson's identity construction model

On a very simple level, a person's identity is about who he or she is. However, when put in the corporate environment, particularly people in managerial roles need to assume different roles and personas, which means that managers need to deal with multiple social identities simultaneously (Watson 2008, 121). In his article, Watson (2008) defines *identity* from the perspective of work organizations and their managers. Through his identity construction model presented below, he tries to make sense of the multiple identities.

Watson's identity construction model is a kind of a process diagram where multiple socially available discourses work as building material for social identities. This is where the identity work steps in. The "outward identity work" addresses how managers themselves actively create discourses that build their identity, how managers themselves strive to influence the various social identities they have been given, and how people actively work on their identities. (Watson 2008, 125, 129.) People negotiate multiple identities simultaneously, and these identities are often external identities—images of us in other peoples' eyes, which we intentionally try to construct and reconstruct (Watson 2008, 127). Watson (2008, 124) suggests that "managerial identity" should not be perceived as a given thing and separate entity, but instead constructed from the various managerial elements of individuals' self-identities. "Inward identity work" describes how elements of external and social identities can be incorporated into self-identity (Watson 2008, 129).

A multiplicity of socially available DISCOURSES including various *managerial discourses* → A multiplicity of socially available SOCIAL-IDENTITES including various notions of *the manager*   *Identity work* → ←   SELF-IDENTITY (varying from manager to manager in the extent to which this incorporates elements of managerial social-identites)
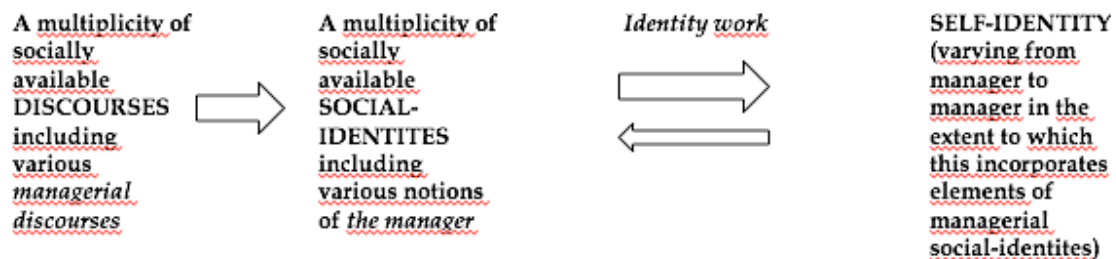
FIGURE 1 Watson's three-step view of the relationship between managerial and other discourses and self-identities (Watson 2008, 128).

As can be noted from the figure above, a manager's self-identity and, in the context of this study, a manager's personal brand consists of social identities that can be managerial, but present also in other spheres of life. It is important to note also that Watson (2008, 130, 131) separates the concepts of self-identity and social identities in his model mainly to better explain the logic of how identity work occurs. Nevertheless, even self-identity is always a social phenomenon that is socially constructed and based on social constructivism. (Watson 2008, 130, 131.)

2.2.5 Symbolic interactionalism and the intentionality of identity

According to Lair at al. (2005, 324), Montoya describes the relationship between personal branding, identity, and the intentionality of building a pursued picture of the self as follows:

> A Personal Brand is not you; it's the public projection of your personality and abilities. That doesn't mean you are losing 'you the person'; it does mean you are shaping the perception people have of 'you the person'.

This sentence conveys the idea of social constructivism and emphasizes the role and significance of social identities in identity construction, in that shaping one's identity towards the desired state (intentionality) is always based on previous and current public projections of that person that other people have given. Shaping one's identity intentionally towards a new direction would not be possible without the social identities other people have given to the person.

Alvesson (2010, 193, 209) provides in his study seven images of identities that can be found in organizations. Simultaneously, he provides one example for further research of how to conceptualize self-identity constructions. Alvesson (2010, 193, 209) analyzed the identity images on two dimensions (or extremes). The first dimension estimates the extent to which the individual or the context affects identity construction. The second dimension estimates whether the identity image reflects insecurity, ambiguity, and fluidity or coherence, robustness, and direction. (2010, 193, 209.)

Alvesson's strategist image is here of particular interest, as it describes the interest-driven and intentional parts of identity. According to Alvesson (2010, 193, 209), the individual as a strategist makes conscious decisions to construct a desirable image of oneself in other people's eyes. Strategy image emphasizes the control, instrumentality, and performativity that relates to identity construction and to individuals in making strategies of their identities (Alvesson 2010, 205–206).

The idea of intentionality in identity building is supported also in the traditional theory of symbolic interactionism. People build their identities towards what is expected from them or towards something they believe will receive respect from other people. A preferred identity is always constructed socially, and the strategies that individuals use when building the preferred identity are used in collaboration with other people. A practical example of this is maintaining one's face in an embarrassing situation. (Marwick 2010, 123.)

The concept of symbolic interactionism derives from the work of George Herbert Mead, who represented the school of social behavioralism. Mead's interest was to show that the mind and the self are social emergents that emerge through language. Mead was the first scientist to suggest that the human mind and self are generated in a social process (Mead 1934). Mead (1934, xvi) emphasized the role of language and social constructivism even when talking about the individual and self:

> For Mead, language is an objective phenomenon of interaction within a social group … even when internalized to constitute the inner forum of the individual's mind, it

> remains social—a way of arousing in the individual by his own gestures the attitudes and roles of others implicated in a common social activity.

According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is comprised of three premises. The first one suggests that people act towards things (e.g., human beings, physical objects, groups of people, institutions, actions, ideals, etc.) based on the meanings those things have for them. Symbolic interaction emphasizes the role of meanings. The meanings that things, such as institutions or ideals, have for people are seen as a central force producing intentional action. (Blumer 1969.) This said, identity building also can be seen as intentional actions based on meanings given to a certain kind of identity, for example, meanings given to being a Finn or meanings given to being a manager. For example, being a manager and the identity of a manager often bear meanings such as charisma, accountability, confidence, authority, and safety. If the person considers these meanings good, the person most likely will try to achieve the identity of a manager through intentional actions.

The second premise of symbolic interactionism suggests that meanings of things are based on social interactions between people. Here, the interest is in the source and origin of meanings. Meanings are not inherent or given, but rather social products that are formed in peoples' action. (Blumer 1969.) As Blumer (1969) describes it, meanings are "…creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact."

The third premise suggests that meanings are shaped in an interpretative process when the person is dealing with things. When the person selects the thing towards which he or she is acting, the person starts to interact and communicate with himself or herself about the meaning the thing has. The person makes interpretations by selecting, regrouping, and transforming the meaning, and the interpretations are affected by and bind to the situation at hand. (Blumer 1969.)

3   DATA AND RESEARCH METHOD

3.1   Twitter and tweets as research data

In this study, my aim was to create as diverse and representative picture of Finnish managers' personal brands as possible. For this reason, I did not want to limit the interpretation of identity only to the business context, but to examine also how, for example, managers' interests, hobbies, family lives, beliefs, and even their roots and personal life history construct their personal brand. Social media turned out to be a good alternative for data collection, as today it is the forum where people speak out publicly about multiple spheres of their lives.

From all the social media channels, Twitter was selected as the source of data collection because on Twitter the different life areas of managers and various elements of their identities are manifested most extensively. A comparison can be made, for example, to Instagram, where some of the managers in this study do not even have a personal profile. Then again, LinkedIn focuses mainly on branding in the labor market from the professional networking perspective.

Twitter was founded in 2006, and as it became successful, it also became a popular subject of scientific studies and source of research material (Giglietto, Rossi & Bennato 2012, 148). Giglietto (2012, 148) explains the growth of scientific studies using Twitter as research material with two factors. First, the availability of data through free API (Open Application Programming Interface) enables basically anyone to gather data from Twitter for research purposes. Second, the relatively simple structure of the data makes it easy to analyze: The material is mainly textual—though nowadays, sharing and publishing photos, links, and videos is also possible—and can be categorized to relate either to the tweets (e.g., textual content, timing, location) or the user (e.g., username, user location, personal description, followers). (Giglietto 2012, 148.)

Giglietto (2010, 149–150) investigated how Twitter data have been utilized in scientific research during its presence and distinguished three main methodologies: ethnographic, statistical, and computational approaches. For this study, the ethnographic approach gave valuable guidelines, as the aim of the ethno-

graphic approach is to analyze the social meanings the data mediate. In this study, the social meanings equate to identities and personal brands.

According to Giglietto (2010, 147, 149–150), common factors for ethnographic research based on Twitter data were that the analyzable group of units was often small, the depth of analysis was high, and more than one qualitative data analysis method was used. All of these conditions are met also in this study. The examples of Twitter data studies that Giglietto (2012, 150) brings out show that even an ethnographic approach can include very diverse data collection and analysis methods, for example, from analyzing posted links to retweeting strategies and even to analyzing the imagined audiences of Twitter users.

3.2   The data collection and research task

The data for this study were collected from the publicly available Twitter profiles of 12 Finnish managers who actively use the platform. The following Finnish managers and their Twitter profiles were analyzed:

TABLE 1. Managers, their positions, and Twitter accounts

Name	Position	Twitter account
Tommi Tervanen	CEO of Kotipizza Oyj	twitter.com/tommitervanen
Seppo Kuula	CEO of Siili Solutions Oyj	twitter.com/skuula
Pekka Ojanpää	CEO of Lassila & Tikanoja Oyj	twitter.com/ojanppe
Annikka Hurme	CEO of Valio Oyj	twitter.com/annikkahurme
Ilkka Paananen	CEO of Supercell Oy	twitter.com/ipaananen/media
Ari Lehtoranta	CEO of Nokian Renkaat Oyj	twitter.com/AriLehtoranta
Nina Ignatius	CEO of Beibamboo Oy	twitter.com/NinaIgnatius
Kari Väisänen	CEO of TAT – Taloudellinen Tiedostustoimisto ry	twitter.com/Karivaisanen
Roope Rämänen	CEO of Finnchat Oy	twitter.com/RoopeRamanen
Kirsi Piha	Chairman of the Board, Ellun Kanat Oy	twitter.com/kirsipiha
Leena Mörttinen	CEO of Perheyritysten liitto ry	twitter.com/LMorttinen
Pekka Sauri	Deputy Mayor, City of Helsinki	twitter.com/pekkasauri

I browsed through the tweets and public conversations of the above listed Twitter accounts from the beginning of June 2016 until the end of August 2016. The reason for this particular time period is that I started working with my master´s thesis in June 2016 and wanted the data to be as timely as possible. First, I collected the research data for only June 2016, but I found there were not enough tweets for the analysis. Three months, therefore, iterated to be a time period from which I was able to distinguish the emerging themes. As a researcher, I know this is my subjective view, and another researcher might have opted for a longer or shorter time span. Exceptions were made with two managers (Nina

Ignatius and Ari Lehtoranta), who tweeted less often compared to others, so included were also a couple of tweets before the mentioned time frame. The earliest tweet analyzed in this study dates back to October 2015.

The collected and analyzed data consist of a total of 70 tweets that include text, photos, and videos. Tweets comprise managers' own tweets but also tweets of other people that the managers have retweeted. I made the decision to include retweets in the data analyzed, because retweets seemed to strongly reflect managers' own thoughts. Retweets were often demonstrations of support, and through them, managers wanted to publicly take on the role of an advocate in such topics that they experienced as personally important. Retweets accounted for a relatively significant share of all the tweets. For this reason, I consider that it is justifiable and necessary also to incorporate the retweets into the research data. Other features and parameters, such as likes, quantity of likes, or comments about the tweets were not analyzed in this study.

Some of the tweets have been captured as screenshots in Chapter Four to illustrate the interpretations made during the analysis of data. Many referencing guides advice to reference at the original Twitter source by direct quotes. In this study, instead of direct quotes, screenshots are used to bring out the meanings and discourses the tweeted photos themselves mediate.

The Finnish corporate managers and their Twitter profiles were selected for the data as a purposive sample. According to Devers and Franckel (2000, 264), purposive sampling begins with further specifying the study design. This means developing a sample frame and criterion for selecting data and research subjects that will be examined. Purposive sampling should be based on selecting research data that can answer the research question. In qualitative research, the aim of purposive sampling is to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of interest by selecting information-rich individuals, groups, or behaviors that represent the phenomenon of interest. Information-rich purposive samples consist of typical and "normal" cases, deviant cases that represent extreme manifestations of the phenomenon, and "negative" or disconfirming cases. (Devers & Franckel 2000, 264–265.)

Two selection criteria were used in this study; the selected directors had to be relatively active on Twitter. There was some variation in tweeting activity, as for example Pekka Sauri, the Deputy Mayor of the City of Helsinki, has tweeted 28,400 times since the creation of his Twitter profile. The equivalent count for Nina Ignatius, the CEO of Beibamboo Oy, was 55, and for Ari Lehtoranta, the CEO of Nokian Renkaat Oyj, it was 159. The second selection criterion was diversity. The aim of the diversity criterion was to select a number of managers from various industries, as well as representatives of both sexes, to have varied perspectives on personal branding discourses among Finnish managers. The specific research question this study seeks to answer is:

What kind of managerial identities can be found based on discourses, rhetoric, and other linguistic means through which Finnish managers brand themselves on Twitter?

During the first round of reading through the Twitter profiles, some unifying themes and rhetorical means were found. During the second round of reading, even more themes were found. I took screenshots of those tweets on a separate document and started grouping them based on unifying factors. However, I constantly kept in mind that those factors identified should in some way reflect managers' identities or ways of branding themselves. By combining different themes as well as cutting off irrelevant subjects and subjects found only occasionally, five main identities began to take shape. *Iteration* describes well the way the data were analyzed. Headings for the identity images, which are presented in the fourth chapter of this study, were given only in the final stage of data analysis.

3.3   Method — discourse analysis

This study has been carried out using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research represents an interpretive point of view, where the subject of research is viewed in its natural setting, bound to the situation, time, and place. Qualitative research is about sense making. Interpretations of phenomena are based on the meanings people give to them. (Denzin & Lincoln 2000.) Qualitative research methods are based on constructivist thinking, which has as a term been used in social science from the beginning of the 1960s. In constructionism, the interest is in social reality. Instead of seeing reality as a given, constructivist thinking defines the world as actively constructed by its participants. The interest is in the processes where the social reality is built. Answers are sought for the question *how* social reality is built. Moreover, the question *what* is important, because it helps the researcher to analyze hidden realities: what is left unsaid? (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008.)

The data analysis method used in this study was discourse analysis. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008), the focus is on how meanings of reality are produced in social practices, such as speech or text. Discourse analysis represents social constructivism, which suggests that reality is always socially constructed. The situation and context affect peoples' behavior and speech. Simultaneously, what people say or how they behave also affect the current situation and reality. This means that speech can never be extracted from the situation. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008.)

Social constructivism suggests that scientific facts are invented, not discovered. This means that scientific fact — as well as in a broader context the whole reality — is always dependent of the researcher's choices. These choices could also have been made otherwise. The research results and the research process are always bound to the situation and context. Simply put, in another context, the research results and reality might be very different. Reality is also affected by human action. For example, the definition of *woman* is built based on the action and speech that both women themselves and other people produce. (Kukla 2000, 3-4.)

In discourse analysis, the justification of the interpretations made by the researcher has been identified as a challenge, as the interpretations can be justified only through the material to which often only the researcher has sufficient access. The interest is not in the phenomenon behind texts or speech, but rather in the text itself: in its structure, usage, and functions. For example, what does certain speech seek to achieve? (Eskola & Suoranta 2008.) The functionality of discourse has three forms. The first one is representation, which describes how things are. The second one is identity, which describes who we are. The third one concerns how linguistic and other resources have been organized. (Pynnönen 2013, 5.)

In the field of leadership and organizational research, discourses are often understood as established speech practices that help to build the phenomenon in question—in this case, the personal brand. The focus is on how things are said into which this linguistic action forms things. Language produces action, and for this reason, it is not irrelevant how things are discussed. (Pynnönen 2013, 8.) These speech practices that build business managers' personal brands are the object of interest and examination in this study.

In discourse analysis, the narrowness of the material does not pose a problem, but limiting material may even be sensible to provide reliable research results. Discourse analysis prefers a ready research data collection, so that the researcher's impact can be eliminated. (Eskola & Suoranta 2008.) This is true in the sense that the Twitter data used in this study are produced by people other than me and the research data existed before this research started. However, my own choices when limiting the research data have inevitably affected the research process as well as the final results.

In this study, analyses of the following rhetorical and linguistic means were also used to detect and understand the discourses that build managers' personal brand: numerical and rational persuasion and justification (see Battersby 2003), performativity and play (see Papachrassi 2012), authority and dogmatism (see Ristikangas 2015, Pynnönen 2013), and identification and symbolism (see Parmentier 2015).

According to Battersby (2003, 1), numerical information is a traditional tactic for persuasion. Persuading numerically is often held as a good and rational reason for beliefs and judgements, but it is rarely doubted as misleading or intimidating. In the worst-case scenario, numbers can create illusory confidence if they are not carefully presented and explained or if they fail to be adequately understood and appreciated by the audience. (Battersby 2003, 1.)

Papacharissi (2012, 1996–1997) studied the performances of self on Twitter through discourse and content analysis and found that building a personal brand and a picture of one's self on Twitter in many ways is reminiscent of performativity, theatre, and play. Instead of creating hierarchies between the actor and the audience, play was a dominant performative strategy that included tactics such as improvisation, the innovative reordering of grammar, symbolism, innovative spelling, humor, and irony combined with provocation. Playfulness was about rearranging the norms for expression and going against what might be expected in conventional conversational settings, for example, by making affective statements with hashtags. The practice of playfulness was also associ-

ated with the reordering of syntactical and grammatical conventions. (Papacharissi 2012, 1996–2001.)

Ristikangas (2015, 31) explains how authority can be used as a rhetorical means by referring to a higher authority to justify one's own argument or increase the effectiveness of one's message. Here, the higher authority can mean another person, organization, institution, political, or religious communities, as well as the public's own experiences or general opinion. Referring to one´s own authority, then again, is about gaining authority based on one´s own know how and experience. (Ristikangas 2015, 31.) Dogmatism is about seeing knowledge or moral vision as a given. Information and "truths" are taken for granted, and those are not questioned or criticized. Dogmatism is, therefore, a means for strengthening a position of authority. (Pynnönen 2013, 32, 21–22.)

According to Parmentier (2015, 6), a symbol exists when a community of speakers agrees on the range of its semantic meaning as a symbol. This describes how symbolic codes are socially shared and constructed as well as historically transmitted (Parmentier 2015, 4). *Identification* again is the process by which the meanings of symbols are transmitted from one person to another. In concrete terms, identification is about a person identifying himself or herself with the characteristic of another person. (Hytönen 2016, abstract.) In the context of discourse analysis and rhetoric, the interest is not in the identification alone, but also in the motives and aspirations that drive people to influence and persuade each other through identification (Hytönen 2016, 48).

4 RESULTS

## 4.1 Identity images of a group of Finnish managers

Because of the analysis, all in all, five identity images were found that represent the personal brands of Finnish managers. These images were Patriot, Philanthropist, Fan, "Me Behind the Scenes," and Winner. It is important to note that this study aimed to find the discourses and themes that most significantly characterize personal brands of Finnish managers. The five identity images appeared in the data to varying degrees, depending on which manager was in question. Some managers were missing a particular identity image, whereas another identity image was very distinctive for all the managers. Often the identity images were overlapping, and a clear distinction between two images was difficult to draw.

I made a conscious decision to use the term *identity image* instead of *identity* when talking about the results of this study. This decision is based on the social constructivist idea of the qualitative research method, which argues that the results of a study are always dependent on the data in question and the decisions made by the researcher during the research process. It would be misleading to claim that, based on the rather narrow data analyzed in this study, the five outcomes represent the identities of all Finnish managers. Instead, below are presented the images of identities that were descriptive to this particular group of Finnish managers. The results of this study should be understood just like Alvesson (2010, 210) describes the purpose of the results in his study: to better understand how to *conceptualize* individuals as constructors of identity. In the following chapter, each of the identity images are explained in more depth.

4.1.1 Patriot

Concepts such as traditions, history, and appreciation of one's roots, as well as being Finnish describe this identity image. Taking advantage of the "Finnish brand" and national identity was a theme that emerged from the text most clearly. It was also a theme that rose from the data very often. The rhetoric

mostly used was identification. Identification is, according to Parmentier (2015, 4–6), the process of identifying with other people based on symbols that have a shared and historically transmitted meaning among a particular group of people. However, just like Hytönen (2016, 48) suggests, in the context of discourse analysis and rhetoric, the interest is not in the identification alone, but also in the motives and aspirations that drive people to influence and persuade each other through identification. In this study, managers tried to bring up their own opinions as well as have an impact on their audience—in this case, their Twitter followers—with the help of contexts, which represent to almost every Finn something valuable. The aim was to combine the pleasant mental image of a memory or of a Finnish tradition with the manager's personal brand, possibly also with the company brand they represent.
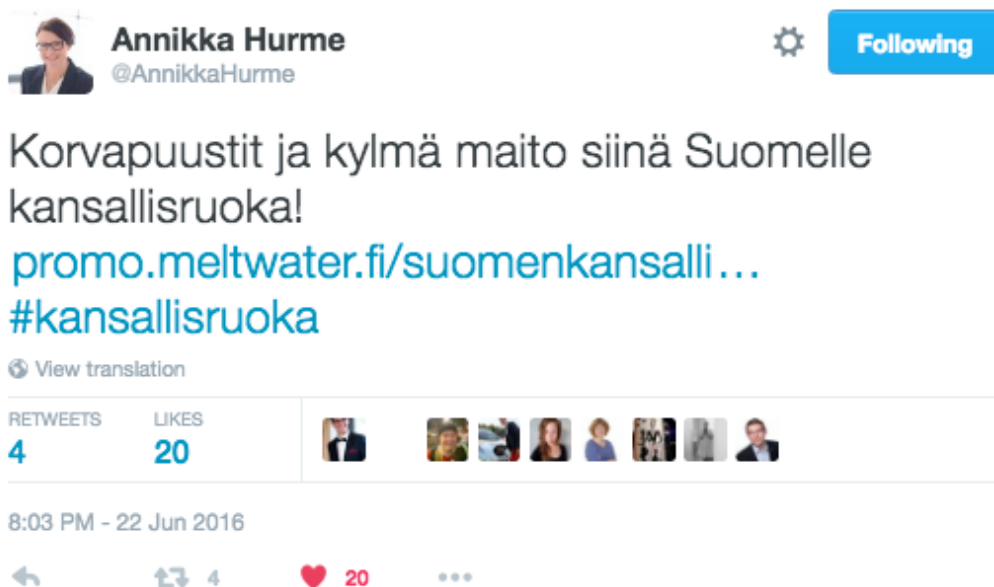

SCREENSHOT 1. @Annikkahurme 22.6.2016

In the screenshot above, Annikka Hurme, the CEO of Valio Oyj, expresses her own opinion about which dish should be chosen as the Finnish national dish. Her suggestion—a cinnamon roll and a glass of cold milk—evokes good memories in almost every Finn and is very easy to identify with.

Other national topics were also represented in the data. For example, Finland's good reputation as a pioneer in education and national traumas, such as the Second World War, were aimed to attract the public's attention, either by improving and propping up or on the other hand destabilizing the reader's national self-esteem. Extreme expressions and contrasts were often used as a rhetorical means. Erikson's (see Erikson & Kakar 1979) idea of a "collective sense of identity" is very prominent here, as many of the managers used the collective identity of the Finnish people and collective crises from the past as a source for building their own brand. Annika Hurme's tweet is also a manifestation of conferred identity (see Marcia et al. 1993), an identity that can be seen as "given" and inevitable, because the identity has been affected during a person's lifespan,

for example, by institutions and social groups. Being a Finn is an institution that affects a person's identity, whether he or she wants it or not.

In the following screenshot, Kirsi Piha from Ellunkanat Oy uses intertextuality and assimilation in an insightful way. She is commenting on the then-current media crisis of a Finnish zoo, which was accused of mistreating dolphins and trying to conceal what really happened.
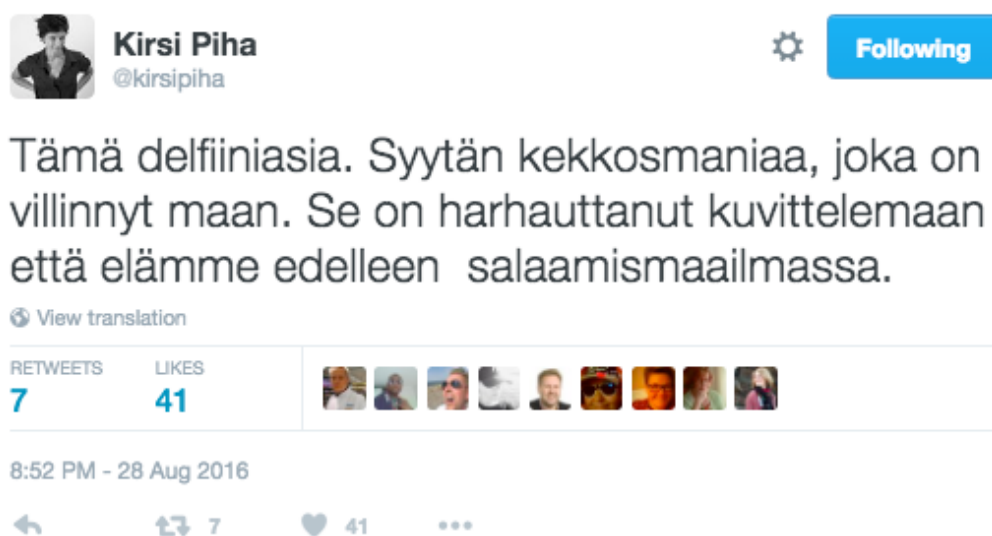

SCREENSHOT 2. @kirsipiha 28.8.2016

Piha's tweet includes a new word, *kekkosmania*. This is a clear allusion to the former President of Finland Urho Kekkonen and his manner of doing things in his own way, often not in very transparent manner. By producing identifiable content on Twitter—in this case, referring with humor to a well-known Finnish president—managers aim to get closer to their target audience. Managers are traditionally associated with the stereotype of being higher up in a hierarchy compared to the common people and, therefore, in the era of social media, the hierarchy or a prestigious status is not necessarily beneficial. On the contrary, it might even be harmful. According to Papacharissi (2012, 1990), in the world of social media, instead of creating a position of authority, the power lies in how one manages to perform on multiple stages for different kinds of audiences and creating a face for a variety of situational contexts, simultaneously holding on to the authentic image of oneself. From the perspective of performative strategies on Twitter (see Papacharissi 2012, 1996–1997), improvisation, the innovative reordering of grammar, novel spellings, humor, and irony are all present in Piha's tweet as a means for building a personal brand.

Through hashtags, Twitter has made it very easy for anyone to assign tags and signs to certain topics. Thus, Twitter as a platform encourages the use of identification, categorization, and classification as tools for personal branding. One of the most common used means in personal brand building was that managers addressed their message to a certain reference group. The managers in this study portrayed their identity by using the language and set of charac-

ters commonly used in the certain reference group, which again created a sense of belonging. Through the use of hashtags, Twitter has made it very easy for individuals to categorize themselves socially and, just like Turner explains (1979), find a group where they can create a positive social identity. In addition, Turner's (1979) idea of social self-concept applies here, as the hashtags managers use help them make sense of their identities by comparing themselves to other people in their own reference groups or to the other groups and individuals who are part of those groups.

The screenshot below of a retweet is a very good example of how just by adding hashtags that are understandable to the reference group and by tagging Twitter users who represent the reference group, dominance and brand are strengthened at least in the group from which acceptance and understanding are sought.
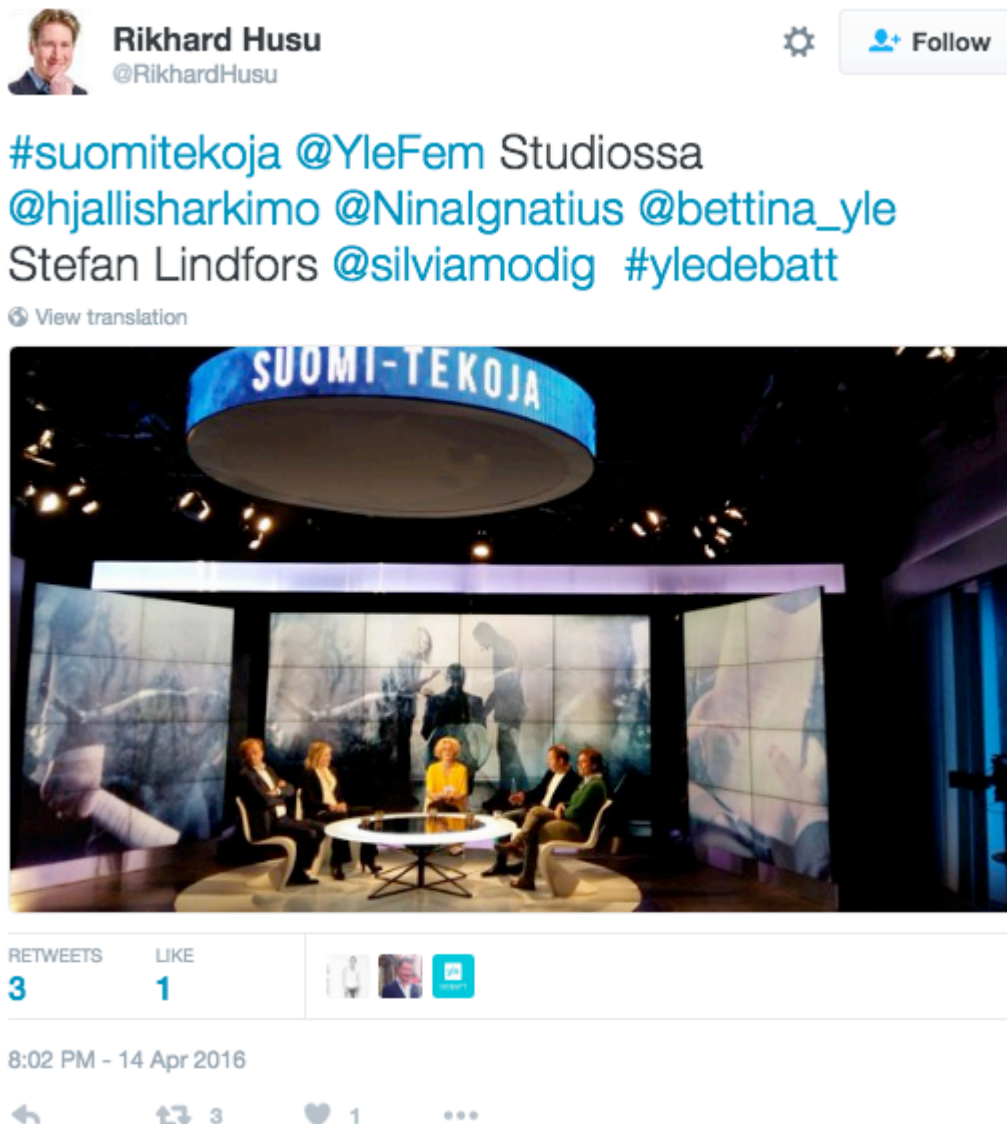
SCREENSHOT 3. @NinaIgnatius 14.4.2016

In the screenshot above, the person who originally posted the tweet—Richard Husu, a Swedish-speaking Finn journalist—wants to emphasize the social group he is part of, the minority of Swedish-speaking Finns. Nina Ignatius who retweeted Husu's tweet is the CEO of Beibamboo and is a Swedish-speaking Finn too, just like all the other people tagged in the tweet. The picture is of a TV show where the idea is to collect ideas to make Finland a better country. Ignatius clearly wants to highlight the role of her own minority when discussing the future of Finland. In this example, the effectiveness—in a way, also the credibility—of the tweet increases even more, as it originally was tweeted by a Swedish-speaking Finn, a well-known influencer and opinion leader from the same reference group. Power and strength for one's own messages and one's brand can be obtained, for example, from other people, friends, and professionals one has networked with.

Ignatius´ retweet is good example of what Papacharissi (2012, 1989) calls "networked performances of self." Tweets can be seen as presentations, to which a person can tag other people from his or her reference group and this way perform an identity for multiple audiences with polysemic content (Papacharissi 2012, 1989). In this example, Ignatius actually performs herself for audiences including those she and other people tagged in the tweet have. By "polysemy," I mean that the image that people create of Ignatius based on this tweet has multiple meanings depending on the audience. In this case, the interpretation of the tweet certainly differs regarding whether it is seen by a Finn or a Swedish-speaking Finn. This retweet is also a good example of a tweet as a condensed performance of self (see Papacharissi 2012, 1990), which with a quick glance does not form a clear sentence, but which through hashtags and the picture mediates a statement of being a member of a minority.

4.1.2 Philanthropist

Discourses of caring, helping, empathy, and responsibility describe this identity image. Managers' identity building was associated with major societal themes such as responsibility for the environment, the wellbeing of young people, and the economic situation in Finland. On the micro level, empathy and care were expressed to the partners—for example, sponsored athletes—and employees in the daily interaction. The concept of social self (see Turner 1979), can be seen as a basis for a philanthropist identity image, as people distinctively pursue a positive social identity. For example, Ilkka Paananen, the CEO of Supercell, can be seen as a member of a group where the common factor is that people are interested in the wellbeing of young people.

Another very obvious observation that could be made on the basis of the data was that the managers' communication was unilateral and could in many cases be described as dogmatic speech. Often the leaders were content in expressing their own opinion or factual information and rarely tried to actively attract their audience to discuss the topic. Tweets from the managers were seldom commented on by the members of the audience. This is consistent with the results of Papacharissi's (2012, 1997) study, where most of the analyzed tweets

contained no mentions or replies, and they were self-focused or informative instead of creating a conversational tone. In addition to the leaders' own activity, the behaviors of the public can, of course, affect the lack of commenting and discussion.

However, some remnants of traditional authoritarian approaches and hierarchical leadership culture, where it was typical that the rules and opinions came from the top of the hierarchy and were not supposed to questioned, could be detected. Represented below is a good example of this, a tweet originally posted by Jukka Manninen, which Kirsi Piha has retweeted. In the tweet, Jukka Manninen expresses in a commanding tone what the responsibility of companies should be today and shares a link to a blog post about the topic, which is written by Kirsi Piha´s PR agency.

SCREENSHOT 4. @kirsipiha 13.6.2016

Through this tweet, Manninen and Piha both strive to create a position where they are regarded as pioneers and influencers in matters of corporate responsibility and in this way seek legitimacy to define and declare what responsibility should and must be in the 2010s. Declaring that the responsibility model they have defined is the latest and most trendy version of corporate responsibility, they simultaneously claim that previous practices of accountability are old and useless. Dogmatism is manifested in word choices, such as *must* and *should*, which create a tone that is absolute and commanding. Dogmatism and their role as opinion leaders are even more emphasized with the use of a hashtag in connection with the word *näkemys*, meaning *statement*. Dogmaticism is also

manifested in what is not visible, namely in that Manninen only states and expresses his own views, though he could also have tried to trigger a debate or an open atmosphere for discussion, for example, by asking his audience questions.

In the screenshot below, Ilkka Paananen, the CEO of the Finnish game company Supercell, tweeted a research result that argued that even in light of the cold economic analysis, the prevention of social exclusion is very profitable.

Ilkka Paananen
@ipaananen

⚙ Following

Jopa pelkän kylmän taloudellisen analyysin valossa syrjäytymisen ehkäisy erittäin kannattava investointi.

ARVO @Arvoliitto
Nuoren syrjäytyminen maksaa jopa 3,5 milj. euroa. Hatunnosto @HDLsaatio'n työlle arvoliitto.fi/gallery/helsin… #arvoyritys

🌐 View translation

RETWEETS	LIKES
32	**57**

9:14 PM - 18 Aug 2016

↩   ⟲ 32   ❤ 57   •••

SCREENSHOT 5. @ipaananen 18.8.2016

Philanthropy reflects also the concerns, fears, and distress of leaders, for example, when they feel responsible for advancing societal issues and making concrete contributions to them. Being a philanthropist requires taking responsibility. Ilkka Paananen is a good example of a manager who builds his personal brand by managing multiple identities simultaneously. By combining in a single tweet both the exclusion of young people and economic wellbeing as mutually supportive factors, Paananen is actually actively using "outward identity work," creating the discourse of himself as a leader. According to Watson (2008, 125, 129), this discourse will further be combined with various other notions of Ilkka Paananen as a manager also building his social identity.

The Finnish leaders often strived to testify and seek legitimacy for soft values with numbers, results, and rational reasons. This was especially the case with great societal challenges such as sustainability, social exclusion, and the wellbeing of young people, which the managers tried to solve and advocate for.

By appealing to an even greater authority—in this case, statistics and numbers—the managers made arguments based on facts or generally accepted truths the opponent was unarmed to answer. This finding refers to numerical information as a traditional tactic of persuading, just like Battersby (2003, 11) states: "Numbers often speak louder than words." Persuading numerically is often held as good and rational reasons for beliefs and judgements, but rarely doubted as misleading or intimidating (Battersby 2003, 1). Twitter actually creates a fruitful platform for justification with numbers, as managers have only a small number of characters within which their views should be justified.

In the example below, Pekka Sauri, the Deputy Mayor at the City of Helsinki, reproaches youngsters for leaving rubbish in a public park after the start of the school year celebrations and exhorts them to clean up after themselves.

Pekka Sauri @pekkasauri

Arvoisat nasuttajat. Voisitteko ystävällisesti käydä siivoamassa sotkunne? Kuvassa Tähtitorninmäki. #Helsinki

View translation

RETWEETS	LIKES
125	299

10:39 PM - 26 Aug 2016

125   299

SCREENSHOT 6. @pekkasauri 26.8.2016

Sauri's tweet is a great example of how reminding the audience of the hierarchical and authoritarian communication culture familiar from the past decades can actually work as an efficient rhetorical means. By stepping to a role of a parent or a teacher, Sauri inevitably creates a confrontation between his own age group and the young generation. This reflects the generational gap that has traditionally been studied in the school environment as a distant social relation-

ship between the teacher and the student, in which the teacher maintains a strong authority and power position (see Raittila 2013, 18, Purhonen 2007, 16, 64). Similarly, in the 2000s the interest has been on the digital gap, which describes how the ability to utilize the Internet and digital channels varies between different age groups (see Heinonen 2013, johdanto). Probably Sauri made a conscious decision to create confrontation and wanted to provoke even irritation among some of his followers to get as much attention and support as possible for a matter that he felt responsible for.

Sauri's tweet reflected the responsibility he bears for the comfort of Helsinki and the environmental issues affecting the city. In his tweet, Sauri actually takes a stand on behalf of all the citizens of Helsinki, which he emphasizes by using the hashtag #helsinki. Sauri's tweet is an excellent manifestation of the "outward identity work," which describes how managers themselves actively create discourses that build their identity, how managers themselves strive to influence to the various social identities they have been given, and addresses how people actively work on their identities (Watson 2008, 125, 129). In his tweet, Sauri had to manage at least two different roles and identities, one of which is how he communicates with the younger generation. Another one is the role where he bears responsibility for environmental issues in Helsinki on behalf of the residents.

Pekka Sauri is very active on social media. Measured, for example, by his number of tweets, he is definitely the most active of the managers in this research. Through breaking the stereotypes of the middle-aged public servant and leading by example, Sauri proves that the active exploitation of social media is no longer a playground only for the youth.

4.1.3 Fan

This identity image expresses managers' passions and enthusiasm as well as the role their hobbies and subjects of interest have in constructing their personal brand. This identity image comes close to the concept of authentic identity. Fanaticism, passion, and hobbies reflect situations in which individuals feel that they are genuinely themselves (authentic selves) or in a group where they share a sense of common identity (intra-personal authenticity)—just like Iso-Berg (2015, 134) describes "experiencing true selves in the presence of relevant others." Authenticity is often linked to the intuition, vision, or passion of creative people (Iso-Berg 2015).

In the screenshot below, Ari Lehtoranta, the CEO of Nokian Renkaat Oyj, uses symbolism and intertextuality as a rhetorical tool.

SCREENSHOT 7. @AriLehtoranta 7.7.2016

Football fans immediately will recognize that the tweet is about the comparison of two professional football players with the well-known characters Asterix and Obelix. The meaning of the tweet, however, is not necessarily understandable for the general public, which is Lehtoranta's deliberate choice to create another role and another identity alongside his work-related role and identity.

Managers in this study were passionate, for example, about football, love, and nature. Managers wanted to bring out to their audience their deeper essence and thinking, but they also wanted to stand out from the crowd and from the other managers. Often the tweets that related to subjects of interest and hobbies were expressed in the format that only like-minded people were able to understand. The leaders therefore had a clear need to belong to a particular group and to strengthen cohesion in that group by excluding some of their audience. Perhaps managers wanted also to create a kind of protective wall and signal that they wanted to keep certain aspects of their lives practically encrypted. Papacharissi (2012, 1991–1992) explains this division of outward and inward as a strategy for managing multiple, disparate, and even competing personal brands. According to Papacharissi (2012, 1992), networked technologies such as Twitter require speaking to multiple audiences, as well as multiple voices or aspects of one's own personality.

The identity image of Fan is about consciously or unconsciously creating other titles alongside the title of CEO—that is, creating multiple identities. Ari Lehtoranta is not just any CEO; he is also a football fan, the CEO who knows the latest twists and turns of the Premier League. These notions support the thoughts of Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010, 137). According to them, identity work can in practice occur in various forms, for example, in balancing different roles simultaneously, in making social comparisons, or in rhetorical tactics.

4.1.4 "Me Behind the Scenes"

This identity image describes how managers unveil what can be found behind the curtain of privacy and behind the "Twitter reality." In their tweets, in addition to work-related content, managers also bring out their family, relaxation,

and free time. The extent to which managers scratched the surface differed, but when they did it, it was their deliberate decision to "reveal" something surprising or special either about their life or their personality. The identity image of "Me Behind the Scenes" reflects how managers try to manage the images of themselves in other people's eyes. Watson (2008, 127) calls those images "external identities" that managers try to construct and reconstruct. Managing external identities is a continuous work where managers are trying to interpret and understand the picture their audience has of them (Watson 2008, 127).

In the tweet below, Annikka Hurme from Valio Oyj posted a picture from a gig of Finnish popstar Antti Tuisku and cites the lyrics from one of his songs: "*Peto on irti*," or "The beast is loose."

SCREENSHOT 8. @Annikkahurme 24.4.2016

The tweet is somewhat surprising, considering its source, a female manager in a Finnish-listed company. At least, it differs from what Finns have been used to hear from women managers in business. Hurme's tweet breaks prejudices and builds the discourse of Finnish female leaders in the 2010s. The tweet acts as an efficient communicative tool and distractor, but is also a very good example of how social media today enable the expression of an authentic identity as well as bring out multiple identities alongside the identity of a manager.

At the other extreme were very mundane tweets, which probably did not inspire great passions, but which were intentionally picked to show a plain and bumpy everyday life. Managers wanted to break their glossy image in social media, where often only the successes and celebrations are emphasized.

SCREENSHOT 9. @NinaIgnatius 8.10.2015

In the tweet above, Nina Ignatius from Beibamboo Oy describes her workday as a startup entrepreneur.

From the perspective of using power, by varying these two tactics or extremes, the leaders actually managed to create an effective strategy to keep their audience happy. Here, the language-power relationship, meaning that language and social practices that people use can create power relations (Weiss & Wodak 2003), is very evident. Tweets that tell something about managers' everyday life and their challenges cause identification, understanding, empathy, and acceptance in the audience, which leads to a reduction of the hierarchy and the leader's dominance. On the other hand, tweets that "make revelations" such as posting a tweet from a company's summer party or tweets that highlight belonging to the higher class, for example, posting a photo from a New York upper-class bar, represent hierarchy, leadership, "leading by example," and charisma. In this way, managers are trying to build their brand as something special and extraordinary in the eyes of the audience. Here, the concept of micro-

celebrity (Lair et al. 2005, 313–314, Marwick & Boyd 2010) and performativity to multiple audiences (Papacharissi 2012, 1990, 1993) are very evident, as managers strategically and intentionally maintain and influence their audience by varying the two extremes of identities.

4.1.5 Winner

The identity image of Winner reflects the role of such things in managers' lives as goal orientation, performance, personal development and progress, losing, awards, and prices. Three main discourses were found that build the identities of Finnish managers as winners. The first one describes how Finnish leaders appreciate sharing rewards, recognitions, and titles. Second, a pure desire and joy to win but on the other hand also the pain of losing to a competitor were clearly reflected in managers' tweets. Different kinds of rankings and proofs of results were popular too, as those give managers tools to evaluate their success. The third discourse that was manifested in the tweets was about the values that lie behind winning, losing, and cheating, and what can be learned about those.

There were many occasions where managers announced best performers among the employees, received awards, or congratulated their colleagues for a new title or nomination.


SCREENSHOT 10. @ojanppe 25.11.2015

In the screenshot above, Pekka Ojanpää, the CEO of Lassila & Tikanoja Oyj, tweets a picture of a winner's certificate the company received in a responsibility reporting competition and gives humble thanks to the jury.

Based on my findings, I argue that Finnish managers want to win to achieve status, which reflects a quite outdated understanding of winning, personal development, and rewarding. According to Alvesson and Willmot (2012, 621-622), rewards, leadership itself, and hierarchies are practices of control where identity work occurs. Sharing various titles and recognitions reinforce the role of status, power, and hierarchy in society, though managers could just as well respect softer values, reward failures, and congratulate only after something concrete has been achieved.

In the discourse of winning, the competitive instinct and competitors were highlighted.
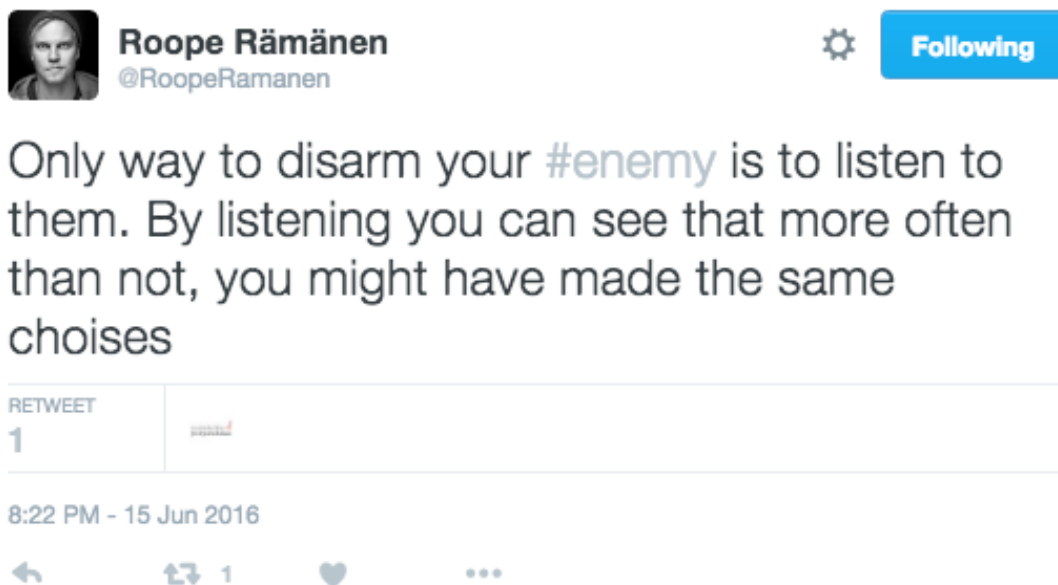
SCREENSHOT 11. @RoopeRamanen 15.6.2016

In the screenshot above, Roope Rämänen, the CEO of Finnchat Oy, tweets about success and competition in the business life by using vocabulary that has its origin in the discourse of war and battles. Roope Rämänen's tweet is a manifestation of social self-concept (see Turner 1987), where a comparison to other people is stressed and the way individuals make sense of their selves is by comparing themselves to other people in their own reference groups or to the other groups and individuals who are part of those groups.

In the next screenshot, Ari Lehtoranta's (the CEO of Nokian Renkaat Oyj) response on Twitter to the company's scandal regarding cheating on tire tests showed that personal branding in social media is not just a polished image, but at times forces managers to engage in very honest and genuine speech.

Ari Lehtoranta
@AriLehtoranta

My worst day ever yesterday. Still I am proud we came out. Complete picture will start forming & am sure we come out as a finer company.

RETWEETS 17   LIKES 32

1:36 PM - 27 Feb 2016

17   32

SCREENSHOT 12. @AriLehtoranta 27.2.2016

In the middle of a media crisis, social media make it possible for management to comment on the issue very directly and honestly, which might bring the debate to a direction that is a bit more tolerant, acceptable, and human. The presence of a leader on social media gives a face to the crisis. On the other hand, when a scandal is personified by a certain person, in this case the CEO, he has no possibility of escaping from the situation. Ari Lehtoranta was forced to admit the mistakes he and the company he represents had committed. Ari Lehtoranta is actually a great example of the "enterprising self," which Vallas and Cummins (2015, 3) described as an employee and its brand harnessed to the needs of the company. CEOs today eventually will need to accept the fact that their personal brand can never be independent of the company they are working for.

Lehtoranta seems to be very honest and his "authentic self" when he admits the cheating. Lehtoranta acknowledges that admitting his own mistakes and being able to learn from them convinces the Finnish people better than just apologizing. Here, Iso-Berg's (2015) thoughts of authentic social identity and self-authenticity can be detected. In his tweet, Ari Lehtoranta is meeting the social expectations of his audience—the authentic social identity—by being honest about having the worst day in his life so far. Moreover, elements of authentic personal-leadership branding (see Rampersad 2011, 414) can be found, as Lehtoranta is after the crisis aiming to rebuild a basis for trust and credibility. Another interesting observation is how Lehtoranta is able to take a role of a "heroic leader" (see Manurung et al. 2017, 136) by having the moral courage to admit the mistake and the ability to build team spirit by showing the direction for the future. He basically ignores the whole crisis before it even properly started and instead of being silent in shame mentions positive meanings and connotations such as "being proud," "learning from mistakes," and "towards a brighter future."

5   CONCLUSIONS

I will start the conclusion of my study by assessing its reliability. One factor that undermines the reliability of the research results is that the analysis and findings in this study were presented in English, but the language used in the data consisted mostly of tweets in Finnish. In this case, there is a risk that the meanings of the original research data are not authentically transmitted to the reader of this research, but are dependent on how I, as a researcher, have succeeded in describing the content of the tweets. However, reliability was improved by a very detailed description of the content of the tweets written in the Finnish-language. It is also important to take into account the challenge of interpretation, which qualitative research places on this research. Another researcher might have come to other conclusions.

Regarding the results of my study and their relation to previous literature, the managers' identity images presented in the last chapter make a contribution and at least to some extent fulfill the gap where Finnish managers' personal branding in the social media context have not been studied before. Though the analysis has been made of a relatively narrow group of 12 Finnish managers, conclusions of this study can be extended to more broadly engage with Finnish managers — who are active on Twitter and other social media channels — in their efforts to build a public identity and a personal brand as capable, active, knowledgeable, and responsible managers.

Previous international literature about personal branding has focused mainly either on defining the concept of personal branding on a theoretical level, its related concepts, and the development of the personal branding discourse in recent decades (see Lair et al. 2005, Rapersad 2011, Shepherd 2005, Vallas & Cummins 2015) or explaining and building theoretical frameworks of personal branding (see Iso-Berg 2015, Watson 2008). Only Papacharissi (2012) and Page (2012) provided in their studies some descriptive analysis about managers' personal branding and self-presentations on Twitter by using content and discourse analysis. Page (2012, 181) studied the linguistics of self-branding on Twitter and found that those social hierarchies that exist in offline are reinforced on Twitter. My findings support this, for example, when managers confronted themselves from younger generations by taking a top-down authority

approach, by using unilateral communication, by gaining status and power through expressing success and victories, as well as justifying statements with facts and figures. My findings were similar to Papacharissi (2012, 181) and Page's (2012, 181), in that tweets of the managers were seldom commented on, which is contrary to the claims and general perception that hashtags and Twitter are conversational and support a participatory culture.

However, in the big picture, there has been a lack of descriptive research about how managers actually brand themselves on Twitter (see Girginova 2013). In this study, I have made a contribution to this by analyzing how a group of Finnish managers in practice build their identity and personal brand on Twitter. I claim that, since most of the previous studies have lacked the comprehensive descriptive analysis and consideration about what a manager's personal brands stand for and how they are concretely constructed, the results of those studies have ended up describing a manager´s personal brand solely from the perspectives of work and career. This said, the main finding of my study is that personal brands of managers on Twitter are based on multiple spheres of their lives, which represent both the public and private. The identity images of Patriot, Philanthropist, Fan, Me Behind the Scenes, and Winner show that managers' personal brands and identities are built around ordinary subjects such as work, leisure, hobbies, and family, that they are affected by traditions, history, and appreciation of one's roots, as well as that they express managers' passions and enthusiasm.

In addition to the five identity images, this study contributed mainly to two major topics. The first one is the so-called continuation of the personal branding discourse, the development path of which has been seen since the 1980s (see Lair et al. 2005, Page 2012, Shepherd 2005, Vallas & Cummins 2015). My research gives one description of what personal branding is in the 2010s—though a quite limited one, regarding the contexts of Finnish managers and Twitter as research data. Today, personal branding takes place through social interaction. This was manifested in managers' need to belong and to be categorized to a particular group. Belonging to a group might be important to the individual, but to build a distinguishable personal brand in the eyes of the audience, being part of a group of likeminded people must be expressed and presented. This reflects how, in the era of social media, the usage of different kind of stamps and labels, such as hashtags, categorizes people and through those categorizations further builds their personal brand. The brands of Finnish managers were also strongly culturally colored. Managers strived to strengthen their own positions by receiving approval and understanding from the group to which they belong and towards which they have a positive attitude. In this study, the most evident group and context was being a Finn.

Chronologically, the personal branding discourse has evolved from the labor market perspective towards the "enterprising self" and further to micro-celebrity in the 2000s. It is good to note that, based on my findings in this study, none of the abovementioned developments has completely disappeared from today's personal branding. Similar motives behind personal branding were found that have been featured during the past 30 years. Ari Lehtoranta was a great example of an "enterprising self," where the manager was harnessed as

the company's figurehead. The labor perspective again was reflected in tweets where the managers consciously raised their skills and professionalism with future career development in mind. Even micro-celebrity was manifested, as the leaders clearly enjoyed the attention, fame, and popularity they received from their audience. The fact that social media have in practice enabled celebrity for anyone suits well the "winner's identity" of Finnish managers, where honoring, power, popularity, and fame are sought after and held as intrinsic values.

As an extension to the personal branding discourse, I suggest that in the 2010s, personal brands take shape almost completely in social media and personal brands are always the result of intentional identity work and identity control. Social media can be said to be its own reality. For this reason, my suggestion of the definition of personal branding in the 2010s is that, from the perspective of audience, without having a personal brand and identity in social media, the person does not exist to his audience. The necessity of personal branding is supported also by Shepherd (2005, 590); he claims that, if one ignores the importance of personal branding, others will take that power and manage it on one's behalf.

The second contribution of my study is related to identity work in a world where social media has a huge impact on people's lives (see Breur 2011, Marwick 2010, Papacharissi 2012, Smith 2009). What is the role of identities in a modern society in which the social construction of identity virtually takes place under the impact of millions of other people? The "self of today" is no longer constructed only by the traditional reference groups such as family, school, and citizenship. Even at an earlier stage, the individual becomes aloof to the attention of the rest of the world. My object is to raise attention to what actually constitutes a social media identity today. Does it even need to present an authentic identity or a person's identity in real life? How far has a social media identity drifted from a person's real identity? From the standpoint of authentic identity, one could claim that an individual's own experience of his or her authenticity does not have that much value. What matters and where the power lies today is in the authentic social identity, which means the trusted image that a public has of a person in social media. An authentic identity is always a socially constructed identity. Power is not in the hands of the managers who best know their authentic identity, but in those who succeed in creating an open, authentic, trustworthy, and transparent picture of the self in the eyes of others.

The intentionality in identity building was apparent in almost all the identity images found in this study. Based on this, I can conclude that a personal brand in the 2010s consists of multiple identities of a person, and these identities are intentionally presented in a way that benefits the person in question. When authenticity is discussed from the point of view of intentional identity work, it can be argued that when managers realize that they have the potential to significantly influence the image they create of themselves, authenticity is no more secure, which means that leaders can create an image that also includes falsehoods and a modified image. This is, of course, impossible to prove to be true based on the research data in this study. However, no matter what kind of motives the managers might have behind their tweets, in this study I was able to point out in the case of Ari Lehtoranta and the crisis of Nokian Renkaat Oyj

that transparency, truthfulness, trust, and authenticity of identity are still valued and important from the perspective of Twitter audiences.

As a conclusion, it can be stated that identity work and intentional identity building were in many aspects linked to personal branding in my study. Regarding the multiplicity of audiences, intentional identity building can be seen as a means to cope with the challenge that performing for multiple audiences in social media entails. A manager who is aware of how different audiences perceive him or her has the opportunity to make deliberate and strategic decisions regarding how to present himself to different audiences. Moreover, the performativity and play through which managers build their personal brand are linked to intentionality. Papacharissi (2012, 1992) describes how information communication technologies and social media have generated multiple, disparate, and competing identities for being. Performativity is about trying to understand and bring together these identities as a coherent narrative, which is then represented to the audience. Constant self-reflection and self-monitoring have become the preferred strategies in building a personal brand (Papacharissi 2012, 1992).

In the big picture, one of my main findings was the collectivity of identity on Twitter, to which intentionality was also strongly linked. Features of one´s identity are not represented randomly, but represented are those that are meaningful for a specific reference group. Twitter enables the emphasizing of collectivity by using hashtags, by tagging to the tweet people from the same reference group, or by using language only the target audience understands.

To sum up the description of my study about the personal branding of a group of Finnish managers, I can claim, based on social constructivism and the thoughts of Tom Peters, that every Finnish manager has a socially constructed personal brand. However, I suggest that Finnish managers have unused resources, and there is, so to speak, "land to be taken" in personal branding. Today, personal brands of Finnish managers still are strongly defined by what managers tell and reveal about their work, family, and free time. However, well planned and strategic personal branding through more active identity work could bring their brands to a whole new level. Just like Rampersad (2011, 418) concludes his article, "Everyone has a personal brand, but most people are not aware of this and do not manage it strategically, consistently, and effectively."

The personal branding of Finnish managers in social media is a little-studied topic, but results of this study provide a good basis and a managerial perspective to the subject for further research. As this study took a stand only on how managers' brands are constructed on Twitter, for further research I see the need for wider examination and an overall assessment of which situations, events, and channels the managerial brand is being built in nowadays. For managers, painting an overall picture of where and how their personal brand can be constructed would give a good starting point and concrete tools for strategic personal branding. Additionally, a qualitative interview study with Finnish managers about how intentionally, strategically, and planned they build their personal brand in social media today would bring valuable insights.

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