#JOHTAJUUS – Cultural representation of leadership on Finnish Instagram accounts

Master’s thesis, Innovation management
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May 2020
Abstract

The thesis combines the notions of Finnish leadership and visuality, and explores how the representation of leadership unfolds through Finnish accounts on the social media platform Instagram. The aim of the thesis is to describe how leadership is represented on Finnish Instagram accounts and to try to find the possible meanings behind these visual representations.

The thesis can be categorized as a qualitative research with a cultural studies perspective. The research was conducted by using a qualitative content analysis method and the data consisted of 70 posts derived from Finnish Instagram accounts using hashtags #johtajuus (leadership) and #johtaminen (management). The framework for the analysis was formed from the attributes on the basis of GLOBE study that has comprehensively covered the national leadership characteristics. Earlier research on Finnish leadership supports these characteristics. This framework was the basis for the qualitative content analysis, however taking into account any foreshadowing attributes emerging during the process.

According to the study many of the characteristics that were associated with Finnish leadership in earlier research were also present on the studied Finnish Instagram accounts, but also new themes emerged from the data. On the basis of this thesis it can be concluded that visual social media should be seen as a huge possibility to share new light on the much-researched topic of leadership. Understanding the latent meanings and cultural representations of leadership that are formed through social media, leadership research can learn something new and something that earlier research might have missed.

Key words
Cultural representation, Instagram, leadership, social media, visuality
# Tiivistelmä

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**Tiivistelmä**

Pro gradu -tutkielman tavoitteena on yhdistää suomalaisen johtamisen sekä visuaalisuuden näkökulmat tutkimalla johtamisen representaatioita sosiaalisen median kontekstissa. Tarkoituksen on tutkia, miten johtamista kuvataan suomalaisilla Instagram tileillä, ja pyrkiä löytämään mahdollisia merkityksiä näiden visuaalisten representaatioiden taustalla.

Tutkielma edustaa laadullista kulttuurintutkimusta, ja se on toteutettu käyttämällä laadullista sisällönanalyysia. Tutkielman aineisto koostui 70 Instagram-julkaisusta, jotka on kerätty suomalaisilta Instagram-käyttäjiltä käyttämällä hakutuloksia aihehallinnointia #johtajuus ja #johtaminen. Analyysin viitekehyksenä toimii kansainvälinen GLOBE-tutkimuksen kuvaukset ominaisuuksista, jotka liitetään johtajuuteen eri maissa. Aiempi tutkimus suomalaisesta johtajuudesta tuki näitä ominaispiirteitä. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli myös löytää aineistoista mahdollisesti esille nousevia piileviä johtamisen teemoja.

Tutkimuksen perusteella vaikuttaa siltä, että monet aiemman tutkimuksen osoittamat suomalaisen johtajuuden ominaispiirteet ovat myös löydettävissä tutkituilta suomalaisilta Instagram-tileiltä niiden kuvatessa johtajuutta. Samaan aikaan uusia ominaispiirteitä, jotka liitetään hyvään johtajuuteen, nousi esille tutkimuksen perusteella. Tutkimus toi uutta näkökulmaa johtamisen tutkimukseen, ja voidaankin sanoa, että sosiaalisen median visuaalinen aineisto ja siinä piilevät merkitykset tulisi nähdä mahdollisuutena löytää jotain uutta johtamisen tutkimukseen.

**Avainsanat**

Instagram, johtajuus, kulttuurinen representaatio, sosiaalinen media, visualisuus
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1 INTRODUCTION

The world has become smaller due to the globalization, and knowledge can be easily shared and accessed with the digital tools that we have today (Friedman 2006). People move abroad to work and, as a consequence, also Finnish organizations are getting more culturally mixed. Managers and subordinates need to adapt into new organization cultures and leadership styles while working in multi-cultural working environments (Mäkilouko 2004). The importance of knowing the national leadership characteristics and what is valued in a good leader has become vital. One way to interpret our perceptions of Finnish leadership and what is valued in a good leader is through visuality.

“One picture is worth a thousand words” is the old English phrase that comes from the idea that sometimes a picture can indicate its meaning better than a description would, and that some complicated ideas are better mediated with images (Knowles 1997). In recent years organization and management research has started to realize the possibilities that the visuality has to offer for the research of these disciplines. One way to interpret our perceptions of leadership and what is valued in a good leader is indeed through visuality. Scholars have taken interest on portrait paintings of CEOs where the leadership features have been visualized (Jackson & Guthey 2005; Davison 2010) as looking at portrait paintings can tell a lot about the personality and leadership style of that leader (Martikainen & Hujala 2017). Whereas portrait paintings may seem like a thing of the past, nowadays millions of pictures and related content are shared every day on social media platforms such as Instagram. Visual content has become an integral part of our daily lives, and the ways we communicate visually have come a long way from the newspaper era at the beginning of 20th century where the old English phrase dates back on.

This shift towards the visual mode has been accelerated by the growing interest on the meaning and culture. Although visuality is not new for the scholars of cultural and social sciences, it has been lacking research in the field of organization and management. This has since changed as information and communication technologies have evolved, and many disciplines have acknowledged the quality and also the quantity of visual data that these new platforms can offer.
Visual artifacts have gained new recognition as a mode for meaning construction and expression and are not seen just as add-ons to the verbal text. Furthermore, due to the latent dimension of visual artifacts (the use of color, perspective, and typography for instance), visuality serves as a ground for identity expression and mediator of values. (Meyer et al. 2013.)

It is evident that social media has changed the way we communicate, consume, and collaborate, be it either in our personal or in our professional lives. Sharing information, connecting people, and sharing knowledge has evolved, and different social media platforms play their own role in this change. Social media platforms have become more of a marketing tool for companies to engage their customers and gain knowledge on their buying behavior through data. Earlier research has acknowledged this but as technology and innovation are moving forward, social media proves to be a source of many different social phenomena that academia is also keen to understand. Researchers have now become interested in the social and physiological patterns that can be observed from different social media platforms. (Wu et al. 2013.)

To really know what visual social media platforms like Instagram can offer for the research in organization and management in this sense, one needs to know what to look for. In my study I take reference on what we already know from Finnish leadership and its characteristics according to earlier research and test if they unfold similarly in the social media context, more specifically on Instagram. At the same time analyzing the visuality this way we can learn something new and discover aspects that traditional research methods have not uncovered.

1.1 Topic of the research

A recent report (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2018) concentrates on Finnish leadership where some of the characteristics of Finnish leadership were addressed. According to the report, it seems that we Finns still have the love of processes, and while we have a good shared value basis, that is not necessary a weakness, but it makes our companies less creative and less innovative. Consideration of Finnish leadership and its characteristics are usually made from experts’ point of view (Suutari & Riusala 2002; Mäkilouko 2004; Huhtala et al. 2013), or they represent a situation in one community, organization or in a case company (Lämsä 2010;
Collin et al. 2015) for instance. Moreover, prior research on leadership has usually drawn a picture from leaders’ (Takala & Kemppainen 2007; Martikainen & Hujala 2017) and from companies’ (Savolainen 2000; Brandt et al. 2016) perspective. Leadership is discussed mostly in conceptual and in theoretical terms and managers’ personal views of their leadership behavior have been studied (Huhtala et al. 2013). What has been researched less are the visual aspects, although there are some academic studies considering visual material. One research studied personnel magazines from Finnish manufacturing industries, and the study acknowledged that the personnel magazines are indeed a rich and interesting source of data that could well be utilized in research more often (Kuokkanen et al. 2010).

Moreover, in leadership research the focus of the studies has traditionally been in individual leaders and their traits, actions and capabilities (Wood 2005). A recent research paper goes beyond this individualistic ‘great leader’ notion and suggests new perspective that will enable further research to gain new comprehension of how leadership activities occur in social interaction. (Crevani et al. 2010.) My study aims at giving different perspective to Finnish leadership through images in social context, more specifically in social media platform Instagram. With this study, I aim at describing how leadership is represented on Finnish Instagram accounts and try to find the possible meanings behind these visual representations. Barker (2001) defines leadership as a social process that is not a special function where a person is in charge but rather a function of individual wills and needs. Images and related textual content on Instagram can give valuable insight on these wills and needs of organizational actors and their audience of stakeholders. Wood (2005) calls for researchers to raise the status of leadership and bring to knowledge new and imaginative ways of thinking about leadership (Wood 2005). This study essentially tries to respond to this need with its novel approach to studying leadership and to fill in earlier presented research gaps.

As Instagram is relatively new social media application there is not a lot of research on it. Moreover, Instagram’s photo content itself has been studied even less. But as other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, Instagram has already had a huge impact on how we communicate with each other and how we see ourselves. Instagram has established itself as a leading photo sharing application, and that is why it is an interesting research topic especially
in the field of innovation management. According to Rose (2016) our social life is going towards visual culture where the visuality is an essential part of our human relations. Compared to text-based communications, images offer more direct way of understanding events and situations (Rose 2016). As visual reflection might lead to question one’s own perceptions, visual methods seem to be well suited for a research that seeks to find critical point of view and promote alternative ways of thinking. (Martikainen & Hujala 2017.)

The purpose of my study is to examine how photographs tagged with hashtag #johtajuus and #johtaminen describe leadership according to Finnish Instagram users, and to explore how this content compares to the characteristics of Finnish leadership. The study can give a new perspective for research in leadership and to Finnish leadership and its characteristics. With its sociological approach it might also benefit the research in cultural studies.

1.2 Research objective and research questions

The aim of my study is to combine the notions of Finnish leadership and visuality, and to explore how this representation unfolds through the social media platform Instagram. Based on the aim of the study the first research question of my thesis is the following:

*RQ1: “How Finnish leadership and its characteristics are represented on Finnish Instagram accounts?”*

Because the study has the visual perspective to leadership, just answering the first research question is not enough. It is on the other hand interesting to see what kind of significance the findings have on the study of Finnish leadership and its characteristics. As the needed characteristics of a good leader have changed due to the organizational needs of the 21st century, it is vital to understand what characteristics of the Finnish leadership support this demand. If Finnish companies want to keep their competitive edge, keep innovating, and stay among the industry leaders, it is not indifferent to understand what features in Finnish leadership support this. Just
by studying these features from a leader’s or from a manager’s perspective in a company does not give a full and objective picture of the situation.

Leadership is essentially a form of interaction and it requires skills to inspire and motivate. It calls for a social and emotional understanding and ability to considerate and care about the needs and expectations of others. At the same time our social interaction is going digital with a pace that is sometimes hard to keep up with. Leadership is not immune to this change and interaction between leaders and their followers is going digital, too. Understanding the digital space and social media platforms through the concept of leadership might give us a new and valuable insight that earlier research might have missed. Or it might reinforce our perceptions of the characteristics that we associate with the Finnish leadership and what is valued when considering a good leader.

The theoretical foundation of the study is on the notion of Finnish leadership and its characteristics but also on the visuality. As our lives are occupied with visual images companies are also starting to understand the value that visuality can offer in organizational research. As Davison et al. (2015) predict, while technology continues to shape organizational life through visual means, studying the visuality will also eventually become mundane in the research of organization and management. That being said, introducing visuality to leadership studies is still in a minority compared to wider spectrum of qualitative research that has established itself as a norm in the field of management and organizational studies. Therefore my next research question seeks to answers the following:

*RQ2: “How the meanings behind the visual representations of leadership can be interpreted?”*

It cannot be said that visuality is somehow a new invention. On the contrary, people have been visual for as long as we know. Take for example the cave paintings or the ancient Egyptian stone carvings that date back thousands of years. People have always expressed themselves visually. (Cohn 2013.) That is why it is hard to understand why visuality has been less used in research. One reason can be that visual artifacts can be harder to interpret than text-based data
for example. The challenge is worth taking as visual data can give us information that would otherwise leave unnoticed.

As Kunter & Bell (2006) point out, for organizational and management studies, the visuality can let us understand the latent meanings that the visual artifacts such as images possess and communicate messages that are not easily conveyed through language for instance. When we know what these latent meanings are and know how to interpret them, we can learn something new about the expectations and needs of organizations towards leadership. The main contribution of my study comes from these questions and seeks to uncover how leadership is understood in Finnish context in social media and ultimately give new insight for leaders and management to work with.

My study can be categorized as a qualitative research with a cultural studies’ perspective. The study is conducted by using a qualitative content analysis method. I decided to conduct the study in the context of social media, more specifically in a social media platform Instagram. The data is derived from Finnish Instagram accounts, and by using hashtags that refer to leadership and management in a Finnish context. The hashtags that are used (#johtajuus and #johtaminen) are in Finnish language and therefore targeted to Finnish audience. Even though visual data forms the most essential part of my research it does not rely purely on data. The study has its theoretical groundings on leadership research through visuality and representation. In my study, I will also discuss some of the methodological challenges when studying visual data and its meanings.

1.3 Key concepts and structure of the study

“Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns 1978). Leadership as a cultural phenomenon has been strongly influence by North American values as pointed out by Hartog (2004) and others. These values on the other hand are not necessarily shared by others, and as Dickson (2012) and others argue the meaning of leadership varies systematically between different cultures. Definition of leadership itself as a cultural
phenomenon is not easy, as it does not have similar kind of classifications as classical music for example that can be defined as different genres like baroque or romantic (Barker 2001).

What almost all definitions of leadership share are that they define leadership as process of influencing others (Vroom & Jago 2007). Most of us can name a leader and maybe a few distinguishing features of that leader. This demonstrates that leadership has also the aspect of personality (Krapfl & Kruja 2015). These personality traits that characterize a leader are what we see of the leader even though leadership itself is not an inherent attribute or trait of a person (Vroom & Jago 2007). As Krapfl & Kruja (2015) point out, when defining leadership it is always bound to the context in which it is observed, and that it requires the presence of followers. With this unfolding nature that leadership has it can be defined as a social process (Barker 2001). Therefore when asking a person to articulate what is leadership, the answer may vary if we are in Finland or if we are in North America for instance.

One of the main scholars to promote the idea of cultural representation is Stuart Hall whose work in the field of cultural studies has had a major impact across different disciplines. According to Hall (1997) cultural representations are the embodying of concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form that can be further interpreted meaningfully. Hall (1997) also ties representations to language in a sense that representations connect meaning and language to culture, and further in a form that through language can be represented to others. The notion of leadership as a form of language is discussed by Pondy (1989) who argues that to be able to convey these meanings to understandable form of representation, leadership must be something that can be observed. The natural way to observe our surroundings is of course through visuality. How do we then know what images for example carry the meaning of leadership for instance? As Hall (1997) argues, images are signs that carry the meaning and thus have to be interpreted. And in order to interpret them we need to understand the two systems of representation.

The first system of representation enables us to give meaning to the world through a process where all kinds of objects, people and events are correlated with the concepts or mental representations in our mind. This system enables us to interpret world meaningfully. (Hall 1997.) In my study, leadership represents this abstract concept or a mental representation that is under
investigation. One might argue that we all might have different kind of mental representation in our minds when considering leadership. According to Hall (1997) we all share broadly the same conceptual map, in other words we “belong to the same culture”, that allows us to interpret world, communicate, and share our thoughts with others. Second system of representation according to Hall (1997) depends on constructing a set of correspondences between the conceptual map and a set of signs (i.e. images) and then arranged further to visual “language” that represents the concepts.

Even in a globalized world where ideas, information and values even can be easily shared across the globe, national identities still persist (Edensor 2002). National culture and its characteristics have been famously studied by Hofstede (1980) who’s cultural dimensions theory relies on the idea that an individual is influenced by the environment and surroundings, and these differences are shown in the different dimensions (originally four and later six dimensions) of culture across nations (Hofstede 1980; 1991; 2001; 2010). From this respect, Finnish leadership and its characteristics are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. In the same chapter, I will also present the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research project and visual categories that will also form the framework for my analysis. I will also discuss how visuality has been introduced to organization and management research and explain in more detail what is meant when we talk about culture and representation in the context of visuality.

In chapter three I will go through the research design and the methodological approach. Center of the study is the social context, more specifically the social media platform Instagram which I will discuss also in this same chapter. I will also introduce the chosen method of analysis – qualitative content analysis. I will go through the approach and discuss why this approach is suitable for studying visual materials. I will also explain the different phases of the research process and how the analysis was conducted.

In chapter four, I will present the results of the analysis. After this I will end my thesis in chapter five to discussions and conclusions.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of the study is on the notion of leadership representation and its Finnish characteristics but also on the visuality. It could be said the study is multidisciplinary as the theoretical framework combines elements from leadership studies, visual and cultural studies, social media research and organizational research literature. For the study of visual images in social media platform this kind of mixture of different disciplines suites particularly well, as the academic literature on the subject is fragmented to different fields of research.

One such example of the multidisciplinary nature of research literature is the study made by Aaltonen (1998) on cultural representation of Finnish leaders in literature of folklore and mythology. The study answers to the need for different view on leadership discussion and examines leadership as a part of national culture from emotional perspective. Closer investigations on Finnish literature myths revealed similarities among different leadership representations. (Aaltonen 1998.)

Leadership representation on business context is studied by Davison (2010) who examined visual portraits of business leaders and identified four sets of rhetorical codes from portraiture: physical, dress, spatial and interpersonal. Jackson & Guthey (2005) also studied the visual representation of business leaders through commissioned portraits that highlight what they call the authenticity paradox. They argue that while portraits may function as a way to communicate strong authentic corporate image, they may also reveal the corporation's lack of authenticity. These latent meanings that visual images possess are what interest researchers in organizational and management studies, as they can give new insight on the already much-researched topic.

But whereas leadership representation has been studied in organizational level there is also a need for a national culture level perspective. Suutari and others (1998; 2002) interviewed Finnish expatriates and their foreign subordinates to find out if the expatriate managers change their leadership style because of the cross-cultural differences, and how this would be perceived by the local subordinates. Their study shows that while individual differences occur when making
changes to leadership style while leading foreign subordinates the change is notable, and managers actively change their leadership behavior. (Suutari 1998; Suutari et al. 2002.)

Finland is part of the global markets and knowing the leadership style and cultural features that it possesses are crucial for Finnish organizations operating in multicultural environments (Mäkilouko 2004). The discussion about Finnish leadership is still relevant as internationalization has opened up possibilities for Finnish companies to expand their operations globally (Luostarinen & Gabrielsson 2004). There are for instance notable differences between cultures when considering values, attitudes and behavior of individuals that ultimately affect the leadership style in organizations (Jogulu 2010).

Nevertheless, the research on Finnish leadership is limited, or it is connected to the wider discussion of Nordic leadership and management. The research on Nordic leadership is of course relevant and can give insight on the Finnish circumstances, as Nordic countries share lot of the same cultural values. Lindell & Arvonen (1996) studied the differences between management practices in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, and examined if Nordic leadership style differs from Eastern- and Latin-European management styles. Even though there are differences among Nordic countries and leadership style is not homogeneous between them, there are also lots of similarities. Based on their findings, “the Nordic management style can be characterized as planning and order, delegation of responsibility, friendship with subordinates, and orientation toward innovation”. (Lindell & Arvonen 1996, 85.) Smith and others (2003) took some of the earlier research on Nordic leadership under investigation and compared it with their own data provided by managers from 42 other nations. They found out that Nordic managers relayed more on their subordinates and peers, rather than formal rules and superiors like their other European counterparts. (Smith et al. 2003.) Closer comparison has also been made with Finland’s neighboring country Sweden and as Lämsä (2010) point out, substantial differences in management cultures and leadership styles occur. Therefore, direct conclusions about the Finnish leadership style cannot be drawn on the basis of Nordic management types and closer look on the Finnish leadership style is needed.
2.1 Finnish leadership

But is there even such a thing as Finnish leadership? We have been thought to think about leadership as a universal concept and something that is more bound to the organizational culture (Schein 2017) rather than in the national culture. Leadership cannot be however isolated from other parts of society. Leaders and managers are part of national societies and to understand leadership we need to understand the societies that they belong to. (Hofstede 2010.) According to Lindell & Sigfrids (2007), consideration of Finnish leadership often leads to discussion of Finland’s prior presidents. Images of Garl Gustav Mannerheim, Juho Kusti Paasikivi, and Urho Kaleva Kekkonen are embodiments of “outstanding Finnish leaders”. Although different in their own way, all the former presidents have one thing in common - they all were strong leaders at a difficult time in the Finnish history. (Lindell & Sigfrids 2007.) The time clearly demanded a strong leader and it can be argued that the president institution in Finland has since changed. President Tarja Halonen was known for her support for the minorities but also her down-to-earth manner which made her exceptionally popular (Thomson 2015). Her successor president Sauli Niinistö continued the down-to-earth attitude, when right after as he was elected in 2012 pictures of President Niinistö ploughing snow in front of his home spread around the world. In a way Finnish leadership is a mixture of these mental images both of the heroic leader and the hero of everyday life (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2018).

But besides strong personality traits that these leaders possess, in innovation and in leadership in general, many situational factors (working environment, organizational structure, and co-workers for instance) as well as personal and cultural values play an important role. Byrne & Bradley (2007) argue that the cultural level values have greater influence in the mediation process of leadership style, and that among successful Finnish firms, leadership style is very high on conservation. Mäkilouko (2004) found three leadership styles of which the ethnocentric leadership style was the most common among project leaders. For us Finns that is not all great news as “the ethnocentric leaders indicate cultural blindness, ethnocentric or even parochial attitudes, and task orientated leadership dimensions”. (Mäkilouko 2004, 391.)

According to Byrne & Bradley (2007) leadership styles differ nationally and what works for one company, may not work for another. What is considered functional leadership style for one
country may be an unfunctional for another. For example, for a successful Irish manager high on conversation style would mean performing worse than a Finnish colleague with the same high on conversation leadership style. This shows that direct conclusions should not be drawn just according to different categories, and that differences in national cultures should also be considered when assessing good leadership.

Furthermore, rather than specifying all of the leadership styles to their own specifying category, in leadership theories the division is usually made between transactional and transformational leadership. According to Takala & Kemppainen (2007), the leaders that are considered transactional guide and motive their followers towards set goals by making clear what are the specific roles and task requirements that should be followed, whereas transformational leaders inspire their followers towards common good. The latter tend to have profound and extraordinary effect to their followers. (Takala & Kemppainen 2007.)

2.2 Characteristics of Finnish leadership

When looking at the specific characteristics of Finnish leadership it is again meaningful to look at what we know from Nordic leadership style in general. There has been earlier research on the subject that has indicated that Nordic leaders are found to be individualistic but also feminine and employee-oriented compared to southern-European leaders. (Hofstede 1980; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars 1993; Lindell & Arvonen 1996; Zander 1997; see Smith 2003.)

Shared cultural background that the Nordic countries have, seems to have an effect on leadership characteristics.

Culture itself is formed from shared beliefs, values, norms, and basic assumptions and defines what kind of leadership is valued and tolerated. Therefore culture essentially defines the desired characteristics of leadership. Organizational culture is not isolated from other cultures (Schein 2017) such as national culture. According to Lindell & Sigfrids (2007) the systematic studies where the characteristics of Finnish leadership were researched did not really start until after 1990s. They highlight few studies worth mentioning that include the study made by Airola et al. (1991) that ranked the most important features of effective leader. The features are as follow:
goal-orientation, mastering of a complex entity, motivating, visionary, charismatic, diligent, experienced, able to make decisions, capacity to cooperate, capacity to communicate, controlling, and delegating. Moreover, study made by Airola et al. (1991) reveals that the most important factor that a Finnish leader needs to learn is how to motivate and manage people. This is supported by the findings of Lewis (1993) which show that Finns lead by motivating and with an example rather than giving orders. (Lindell & Sigfrids 2007.)

When it comes to taking part in decision making and delegating tasks, earlier academic literature shows that there is less hierarchy between subordinates and their managers in Finland compared to other Western European countries. This makes Finnish managers more participative in decision making and willing to delegate more often. Finnish managers are also more likely to possess certain feminine values such as interpersonal relations, and that employee orientation is higher among Finns than their Central Eastern European (CEE) counterparts. (Suutari & Riusala 2001.)

Suutari & Riusala (2001) further argue that compared to their CEE counterparts, Finnish managers are more likely to appear active in planning, co-ordination, goal setting, and put more emphasis on production and work facilitation. Finnish active behavior seems to be bound to positive behavior, as Finns are on the other hand expected to be less active in giving criticism on poor performance and role clarification. According to Suutari & Riusala (2001) Finnish managers are also expected to be more active in transformational leadership aspects such as providing vision, initiation, individualism, and giving inspiration. These characterizations are a subject to comparison between Finland and Central European countries, and for that reason cannot be taken as such. Still one could expect to find at least some of these characteristics present in Finnish leadership and management.

When considering the leadership characteristics from value perspective, values both in personal and in cultural level seem to be essential to knowledge creation and knowledge sharing that eventually lead to innovation. Trust is one of the values that lets an individual freely collaborate in the process of innovation (Miles 2007). As Lämsä (2010) argues, some of the special characteristics in Finnish business is honesty and Finns are proud of themselves to be reliable. Study
from Finland has shown that even in companies that are not equal in size, trust for example has reinforced collaborative relationship between the companies (Blomqvist 2002), that eventually lead to more collaborative knowledge-sharing relationships where innovation can prosper (Miles 2007). Trust also work as a tool for charismatic leaders to influence their followers. Follower trust is reinforced via three qualities of a leader: “(1) identifying and articulating a vision; (2) setting an example for followers that is consistent with the values of the leader espouses; and (3) promoting group cooperation and the acceptance of group goals”. (Takala & Kemppainen 2007.)

One research that has drawn together the relationship between leadership and national culture is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project. According to House and others (2004) The GLOBE Culturally Endorsed Implicit Theory of Leadership (CLT) draws upon the idea that individuals have implicit beliefs, convictions, and assumptions concerning attributes and behaviors that make a great leader. Researchers made a survey to 17000 managers in 61 countries and identified 21 first-order dimensions of outstanding leadership with their first round of analysis (see table 1). These 21 first-order primary CLT subscales measured specific leader attributes and behaviors. The questionnaire contained 112 leadership items that reflected different traits, skills, behaviors, and abilities. When analyzed, the second-order factor analysis produced six global culturally endorsed leadership dimensions (global CLT’s) that represent what can be referred as leadership styles. (House et al. 2004.)

1. **Charismatic/Value-Based Leadership**: This dimension represents the leader’s ability to inspire and motivate others to great results based on the core values. There are six primary leadership dimensions that are included to this dimension: visionary, inspirational, self-sacrifice, integrity, decisive, and performance oriented.

2. **Team-Oriented Leadership**: It highlights the importance of team building. There is a sense of shared goal that all team members are striving for. There are five primary leadership dimensions that are included to this dimension: collaborative team orientation, team integrator, diplomatic, malevolent, and administratively competent.
3. **Participative Leadership**: Leadership style enables others to take part in decision making. There are two primary leadership dimensions that are included to this dimension: nonparticipative and autocratic.

4. **Humane-Oriented Leadership**: There is an aspect in leadership that is supportive and considerate towards others. There are two primary leadership dimensions that are included to this dimension: modesty and humane orientation.

5. **Autonomous Leadership**: The attributes in this dimension refer to independent and individualistic leadership. There is only one primary leadership dimension included to this dimension: autonomous.

6. **Self-Protective Leadership**: The aim is to secure groups and also individual’s safety through status enhancement and saving one’s face. There are five primary leadership dimensions that are included to this dimension: self-centered, status conscious, conflict inducer, face saver, and procedural. (House et al. 2004.)

The GLOBE project studied culture and leadership in 61 countries including Finland. The quantitative and qualitative findings that the analysis produced are integrated by the researcher and scholars of the representative countries. The Globe questionnaire that was distributed to middle managers in the financial services, food productions and telecommunications companies in Finland measured social and organizational culture norms and leadership concepts based on the Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions. Being one of the most comprehensive of the recent research, The GLOBE study in Finland gives good insight to current situation of Finnish leadership and its characteristics. The questionnaire conducted by the GLOBE study in Finland measured social and organizational cultural norms and leadership concepts to find out middle managers’ views on outstanding leadership behavior and its features. Notable result from the study is that Finland scored highly on four leadership dimensions. The score in Integrity, Inspirational, Collaborative Team Oriented and Visionary were high both in absolute and relative terms (in comparison with the other GLOBE countries). (Lindell & Sigfrids 2007.) The results
of the GLOBE study listing Finland’s scores for each dimension from highest to the lowest are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: GLOBE Leadership Scales, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>21 First-Order GLOBE Leadership Dimensions</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Team Oriented</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Orientation</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Integrator</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Competency</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Sacrificial</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humane</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status-Conscious</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Inducer</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonparticipative</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face Saver</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Cantered</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malevolent</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Country scores are listed from highest (*contributes outstanding leadership greatly = 7, somewhat = 6, slightly = 5, via no impact = 4*) to lowest (*inhibits outstanding leadership slightly = 3, somewhat = 2, greatly = 1*).

Source: Lindell & Sigfrids 2007, 94
2.3 Visual categories of leadership

When searching for prior research on the characteristics of Finnish leadership through visuality there are less studies conducted. Takala & Kemppainen (2007) studied the notion of “Great Finns" through themes on charisma, greatness and leadership. The data was derived from a Finnish Broadcasting Company’s television programme “Great Finns”, a BBC original format adapted to Finnish television. They found out that greatness derives mainly from achievements and historical deeds made in the past, as charisma is born out from everyday heroism and leading by example. Furthermore, they argue that leadership is a combination of multi-talent and greatness. (Takala & Kemppainen 2007.)

Martikainen & Hujala (2017) formed visual categories of leadership through portrait paintings by studying the visual factors related to leadership such as expressions, gestures, way of dressing, use of color and space, and the meanings that they built. The study was conducted by showing portrait paintings to research participants and by discussing with them about the portraits. The data showed that research participants made far-reaching interpretations of leadership style and personality of the leader from the visual material. This indicates that visual matters play an important role when categorizing our environment and that visual categorization is often unconscious.

Furthermore, with their membership categorization analysis Martikainen & Hujala (2017) studied what kind of categories participant group produced from the visual data and identified categories that were in line with the stereotypical leadership image as well as those that deviated from it. The participants interpreted that the visual features reflected the manager’s performance as a leader as well as the motives, knowledge and the skills that the leader possessed. The seven categories were divided in two groups: the leadership stereotypes and the leadership fractures. These categories are not dealt in detail here, as these categories as such are not relevant to this study. They on the other hand give guidance to the categorization made in this study, and in fact show how small details and visual clues can form far-reaching conclusions from the managers leadership style and characteristics.
2.4 Visuality in organization and management research

I have been discussing leadership, its characteristics and visuality in national context, but as mentioned earlier, when considering leadership national and organizational cultures are not isolated from each other (Schein 2017). According to Davison et al. (2015) companies are now realizing that to compete with other businesses it is not all about just making huge profits anymore. Instead there is a shift towards competing in another, more immaterial basis where companies are valued by their corporate culture, brand, and relationships. The performance of a company on these intangible aspect in organizational life is not easily measured with traditional quantitative research methods that have been dominant in majority of organization and management research. Therefore studying the visual aspects opens up new opportunities to better understand the emotional and aesthetic aspects in organizational life.

Bell & Davison (2013) argue that even though linguistic methods have been the most prominent in recent years, there has been significant growth over the past decade on the number of works conducted with visual methods in the field of management research. While some forms of visuality such as photographs and visual branding have been fast developing, other forms including visual manifestations such as web pages have been lacking research. The issues that scholars have been tackling in the field of management research vary from corporate identity and brand management to visual representation of corporate leadership. The methods used are two folded: (1) there is the empirically driven (data-driven) methods such as visual content analysis where sample of data from visual media is counted, coded and analyzed, and (2) there is the theory based methods that uses theory from other disciplines such as aesthetics, semiotics, and ethical philosophy, and apply it to the organizational context. (Bell & Davison 2013.)

Organization and management research have clearly acknowledged the possibilities that visuality has to offer and there has been a clear aesthetic turn in organization studies recently that utilizes all of the senses. Griffey & Jackson (2010) list few works that have dealt with the aesthetics including the visuality (Gagliardi, 1996; Linstead & Hopfl, 1999; Strati, 1992; Strati & De Monteux, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Leadership studies have also taken interest into visuality as pointed out by Griffey & Jackson (2010) and considered the social aspects of leadership. Griffey & Jackson (2010) themselves studied the commissioned portraits
of leaders. Besides that these portraits re-present the appearance of a leader and the establishment that this leader once led, they argue that these portraits also work as a virtual leader. This function is performed through the latent and enduring influence that these portraits have on the followers. (Griffey & Jackson 2010.)

Jackson & Guthey (2005) also studied the social construction of leadership through images, more specifically the visual representations of business leaders. They argued that the visual construction of leadership offered new insight to the research in social construction of leadership in general. In their opinion, analyzing visual images of CEOs and top executives can give important insight into how corporate image is constructed in the media. Meindl and others (2007) have presented that while leadership images reflect the views of business community and organizational and commercial necessities, they also represent the collective conceptions of organization and leadership in the culture at large. (Meindl et al. 2007.)

Visual representation of a CEO or a top executive can give us insight on what is valued when considering a good leader and representation can work as a virtual leader even. But the visual representation of a leader should be seen as a way to gain broader and deeper understanding on leadership in general. The purpose of using visual images such as representation of business leaders in organizational research is to better understand the latent meanings that these images possess. Kunter & Bell (2006) argue that visual data compared to textual data can give more insight to the subtle features of organizational culture and the relationships of the social setting that is researched. It can be also be argued that visual data enable organization members to communicate a more emotional message than could be conveyed via language. This can give new insight compared to the dominant organizational culture that is represented through written or spoken language alone. (Kunter & Bell 2006.)

2.5 Visual culture

When discussing visuality in leadership and in organization and management research it is also important to understand the groundworks for visuality in academic research. The term “visual culture” is owed to researchers of art history, Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandall, who
introduced the term in the 1980’s. According to Alpers (1996), visual culture represents the cultural resources related to painting for instance. In her study it was not about researching history of Dutch painting, but rather the Dutch visual culture where painting was just one part of it. Her focus was on the notations about vision, the visual skills, and on image making devices as a whole. Moreover, the images related to the Dutch visual culture represented the view of the world, and where images were central to knowledge creation in the context of that time. (Alpers 1996.)

But as Seppänen (2005) points out, social sciences quickly took the research of visual culture as its own. Few important academic works are brought out by Seppänen (2005) who mentions Visual Culture (1995) by Chris Jenks where he rounds up articles from writers in the field of cultural studies, sociology and visual arts alike. Another work from the mid 90’s that according to Seppänen (2005) is worth of mentioning is the questionnaire made by academic art journal October. In the questionnaire, range of art and architecture historians, film theorists, literary critics, and artists were asked questions on visual culture in 1996. According to Seppänen (2005), two of those answers deserve closer look. In the questionnaire, Buck-Morss (1996) raises the question: what is visual culture’s place in academic field, as the notion on visual culture seems to be so multidisciplinary? Visual culture seems to work its way around in different faculties even though it does not have a designated place of its own. In the same questionnaire, Jay (1996) does not call for a designated place to visual culture, as according to him other disciplines like art history, film studies, architectural history, the history of photography, and now highly current theme of virtual reality, all fall “under the umbrella rubric of visual culture”.

As mentioned earlier, Rose (2016) argues that our social life is going towards visual culture. This is supported by the number of works published under the notion of “visual culture” after the earlier mentioned Visual Culture by Jenks (1995) and the questionnaire from October. These include for example (Elkins 2003; Mirzoeff 1999; Sturken & Cartwright 2001; Walker & Chaplin 1997; Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001; Rose 2001.) Even though academic works are published, and visual culture has established itself as a part of cultural and media studies, it is unlikely that it will form a science branch of its own. (Seppänen 2005.)
Cultural studies is a phenomenon that cannot be derived from one origin, but few groundbreak-
ing works can be specified. These are for example Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Raymond Williams’s *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1958) and the *Long Revolution* (1961), and E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). (Seppänen 2005.) Cultural studies itself has been positioned in the crossroads for exchanging ideas from many different directions, rethinking truths and old conventions, and aiming to build new con-
sciousness in the versatile ground of debate and disagreement. From the very beginning, cul-
tural studies have been interested in the “plenitude of the possible” (Foucault 1984) where cul-
ture, knowledge, theory, and ideas are appreciated as plentiful and represent the “whole way of life”. (Hartley 2003.) Considering leadership outside the great leader notion and instead looking at it from wider cultural perspective, a theory of visual culture in that sense seems to give good representation of the “big picture”.

2.6 Representation theory

There is always more than one way of representing meanings about a topic in any culture. Cul-
ture itself is all about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas. We express ourselves unconsciously, and even an expression on one’s face can tell something about that person’s identity, emotions, and attachments to social groups. The culture and its partici-
pants give these meanings to people, objects and events, and culture studies underline the im-
portant role of this symbolic domain in our social life. With representation systems that work through language we produce and circulate the meanings. Language does not have to be the spoken or written language in itself. Instead, photography can be representational system that communicates meanings about the object through images, be it an event, a scene or a person for instance. Thus representation is essentially “production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language”. (Hall 1997, 2–17.)

Cultural representations can be found from imaginary created in different kind of context. Be-
fore digital era stamps “served as iconographic statements about Finnish society, its tensions, perceived friends and foes, economic fortunes, and ideals” (Raento & Brunn 2008, 71). Fur-
thermore, images also created illustrated stories as was the case in tourism images from Finland in the 1950’s and 1960’s (Jokela 2011). These well thought images had a clear purpose to affect
people but also to tell stories. Businesses are no strangers on utilizing imaginary. We can easily recognize popular brands and companies just by looking at their logos. Visual representation and consumers response to a logo for example are affected with different factors (Zhu et al. 2017).

In digital era, social media also serves as a platform for an individual to construct one’s own identity. When it comes to a profile picture in Facebook for instance, it seems that users are well aware of this identity construction. Profile images in Facebook are usually inactive, posed, appropriate, and contain only the subject itself (Hum et al. 2011). Photos shared on Instagram are also well thought and when sharing photos on Instagram, users usually assign hastags to accompany their photos to convey their message even clearer. With these images and related hastags users can share their emotions and opinions and create implicit meanings to the shared conversation. (Abbott et al. 2013.) These conversations are led by the opinion leaders whose willingness to openly share their lives spur the conversation in social media (Song et al. 2017). The identities and meanings that hastags produce in social media has gotten the attention of scholars. For instance, Zappavigna et al. (2016) studied the interpersonal meaning in social media photographs by using Instagram images related to motherhood and its representation. Representation of gender identities have been explored by Baker & Walsh (2018) on their visual content analysis of Instagram posts and Emmons & Mocarski (2014) on Facebook profile pictures.

According to Hocks & Kendrick (2003) the emergence of interactive digital media – the “new media” that Instagram is also part of has gotten the attention of scholars. Whereas stamps and tourism images are embodiments of the “print culture”, Instagram epitomizes the “visual culture” of today. But there is no need for such an exact separation between the printed and digital media, as there is no need for making clear separation between visual and verbal text. Instagram post for example is a mixture of both of the visual and textual expression. That being said, the dynamic interplay between visual and verbal text has always existed, and new media theories and practices can give new insight to the study of the visuality (Hocks & Kendrick 2003).
In my study, I am interested in the cultural representation of leadership in the context of social media, more specifically in a social media platform Instagram. As I have presented in this chapter, leadership research has taken interest on the visuality. Through visuality researchers have the potential to better understand emotional and aesthetic aspects in organizational life for example. I have also discussed the connection between leadership and national culture and presented some of the characteristics of Finnish leadership style. The earlier research literature has clearly shown that national culture has implications to leadership style and that national characteristics related to Finnish leadership style can be identified. From now on, I will not concentrate on assessing whether or not features of Finnish leadership exist but rather concentrate on identifying them in the social media context. This will hopefully help companies to adapt leadership styles to the needs of economic globalization as we are moving towards more visual and social organizational life.
3 RESEARCH METHOD AND ANALYSIS

My study can be categorized as a qualitative research with a cultural studies perspective. The study is conducted by using a qualitative content analysis method. I decided to use this method as it is well suited for the study of qualitative data such as social media posts with images (Parker et al. 2011). I decided to conduct the study in the context of social media, more specifically in a social media platform Instagram. The data is derived from Finnish Instagram accounts by using hashtags (#johtajuus and #johtaminen) that refer to leadership and management in Finnish context. These posts are then further coded and analyzed by using qualitative content analysis method. The content in the Instagram posts is partly descriptive (captions, number of likes, associated hastags) and partly latent and interpretative (images). This arrangement enables comprehensive and versatile analysis of the data.

In this chapter, I will introduce my research framework and the methodological approach that I have chosen and discuss why this approach is suitable for studying visual materials. After that I will introduce the context of my study: social media platform Instagram. I will then explain how the data was collected, coded, and how it was analyzed.

3.1 Methodological approach

The study is conducted by using a qualitative content analysis method. Visual representations do not limit the use of research methods and thus any of the normal methods can be used (Seppänen 2005). I chose content analysis as it is essentially a flexible research method. It gives room for researcher to use either qualitative data or quantitative data or even both in the chosen research framework. (White & Marsh 2006.)

Krippendorff (2004, 18) defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” In the context of visual content analysis, Bell (2001) defines the content analysis as “an empirical
(observational) and objective procedure for quantifying recorded ‘audio-visual’ (including verbal) representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories (‘values’ on independent ‘variables’).” While Bell’s (2001) approach to content analysis makes use of quantitative techniques through coding and analysis to reveal latent features of visual material, other approaches such as Iadema’s (2001) rely solely on qualitative techniques. Considered to be somewhat laborious technique, Iadema’s approach to creating patterns from documentary films revealed semiotically one particular interpretation of the studied phenomenon. (Banks & Zietlyn 2015.) My objective is to utilize both techniques to gain comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena.

According to Krippendorff (2012) the term content analysis itself was included in the English dictionary in 1961 where it was defined as “analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material through classification tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect.” Even though the term is about 60 years old, the roots of it can be traced back to the early days of human history when the conscious use of symbols and voice started. The interest behind symbols, latent meanings, and messages has not diminished during the course of human history, and today symbolic phenomena has taken shape in art, literature, education, as well as in the mass media, including the internet and the different social media platforms like Instagram. Whereas the symbolic life has shifted its way to digital era, content analysis has also transformed itself during the years. (Krippendorff 2012, 1.) It seems that content analysis has survived the test of time and thus can be seen as a feasible research method when studying current visual content like social media posts on Instagram.

According to Graneheim et al. (2017) qualitative content analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data such as images. Qualitative content analysis focuses on subject and context, emphasizing the variation. It is not limited to analyzing descriptive content only, but it can also be used to analyze latent and interpretative content. For social media content like Instagram posts this kind of a flexible approach to the data is important, as the content can be both descriptive and latent at the same time.
The approach can be inductive, deductive, and abductive. According to Graneheim et al. (2017) inductive approach is characterized by a search for patterns and it is also sometimes called data-driven or text-driven. The use of categories and/or themes are often used in data description. In the actual analysis researcher looks for similarities and differences in the data and balances in between data and theoretical understanding, and concrete and abstract at the same time. (Graneheim et al. 2017.) In my research, I will utilize both the descriptive content that the Instagram post contains (captions, number of likes, associated hashtags) and latent and interpretative content that include images. Thus, the approach to data is both inductive and deductive in nature.

Furthermore, the approach to the data is important in my study for other reasons as well. Kunter & Bell (2006) present four categories of visual organizational research based on the source of the data the way it is used. The first category refers to cases where the researcher takes photographs and uses them as a primary source of data. In short, the researcher then interprets these images to generate text. The second category includes research where the photographs are taken by the informant and the researcher then interprets this data that the photographs form. The third category and the category in which my study also falls into involves the researcher taking a visual artefact (photograph, artwork or artefact containing these) generated by organizations members for instance and further interpreting it in words. When it comes to the images in Instagram posts it is vital to understand the relationship between the images and written text. According to Mitchell (1994) written text and images should be treated equally and as inseparable to form a co-produced message (see Kunter & Bell 2006). The fourth and the less used category refers to cases where the researcher takes a photograph in the fieldwork setting and presents it as an analysis itself. Being used more in documentary photography rather than in social sciences makes this kind of approach less used in organizational research. These categories are not strictly limited and can also be used as a combination of different categories. (Kunter & Bell 2006.)

When further interpreting the visual data and the representations there are formal ways in which meanings behind them can be unfolded. Again, the use of both quantitative and qualitative forms of content analysis can be used. Banks & Zietlyn (2015) give an example of a study conducted by (Robinson 1976) where he studied the facial hair trends from 1842 to 1972 by counting how many men had beards in photographs published in the Illustrated London news.
As they further point out, many studies have looked at the gender roles presented in advertising imaginary for instance and content analysis thus adds substance to the claims of bias. But just counting the obvious items such as beards does not tell us a lot about the meanings behind the images. (Banks & Zietlyn 2015.) Altheide (1987) claims that to gain deeper understanding on these meanings would require complex and reflexive interaction process that is usually found from research methods such as ethnography. He suggests that ethnographic content analysis would resolve this, as it combines both the elements from ethnographic research and content analysis. Besides documenting and understanding meanings, ethnographic content analysis can also be used to verify theoretical relationships. Inductive in its nature, other characteristics of ethnographic content analysis are the reflexive and highly interactive and central nature of the researcher, concepts, data collection and analysis. (Althaide 1987.) In my study, I am essentially concentrating on finding the latent meanings behind the leadership representations in Instagram, and thus relying on qualitative content analysis method is justified.

3.2 Context of the study

The context of my study is social media, specifically the social media platform Instagram. Instagram is a part of the social networking phenomenon that began in online space and quickly spread to mobile platforms. Instagram is purely mobile social network that has been built from the start around the mobile functionality although it has the web app to support it. The success of mobile social media does not seem to decline as current trend is supporting instant communication, location-based services, and augmented reality, all of which require mobile device and technology. (Wu et al., 2013.) The popularity of Instagram can be seen in Finland, where in 2019 the use of Instagram rose in all age groups. When comparing female and male users, 62 % of females and 47 % of males between ages 13 to 64 were using Instagram. The most active users are the users between ages 15 to 29. (Pönkä 2019.)

When it comes to academia, recent research has found photo–sharing applications like Instagram a source of data. The importance of call–to–action for public relations professionals is highlighted in a recent study of fast food industry (Guidry et al. 2014). Another study concentrating on marketing studied the value of Instagram in building brand communities and co–creating value for company brands (Roncha et al. 2016). These studies show the importance of
two-way interaction between companies and their stakeholders in photo-sharing platforms like Instagram. For leadership studies the research has mainly focused on studying the social media as a concept where entrepreneurs can benefit from the possibilities that social media offers. From marketing purposes to business networking and from information search to crowdfunding, effective use of social media has given entrepreneurs tools to leverage their businesses (Olanrewaju et al. 2020).

Even though the accuracy of internet-mediated research can be argued among researchers, there are many advantages of using online research. As the internet has no geographical limitation researchers can easily conduct an international research for example. This also applies to the studied groups that are usually harder to reach such as physically restricted, socially isolated or more specific online communities. For a researcher this also means less expenses compared to more traditional methods of research. (Madge 2007.) For a researcher, there is plenty of data available online in different formats. Depending on access rights these include transaction logs, software use, purchasing behavior, file upload and downloads. Plenty of data is publicly available in textual and visual format such as photos, video and audio. (Padayachee 2016.) Quinton (2013) points out that besides being a mere tool or a source of data for traditional research, social media can also serve as a site for the research itself. The research can be conducted by observing or interviewing virtual communities, collecting data from tweets or social media posts, blogs and images in social media platform for instance. The latent meanings behind the data posted on social media are worthwhile to study. According to Quinton (2013) there are three kinds of digital data to be utilized in research: first (1) the data that already exists in social media or on the internet such as content in discussion forums, tweets, posts, or images; second (2) the data gathered through digital platform to answer specific research questions; and third (3) the data from its author such as blogs, vlogs, or digital diaries. (Quinton 2013.) For a researcher, these endless possibilities that social media platforms and the internet provide and the extensive data it contains, can be a blessing and a curse at the same time.

Photo-sharing social media platforms like Instagram have created endless possibilities for companies to influence purchase decisions of consumers. As pointed out by Olanrewaju et al. (2020,
over 50 million businesses use Facebook business pages including 2 million who use it for direct advertising. A similar trend can be observed in other dominant social media platforms like Instagram, where half of users follow a business page. Images are a powerful tool for marketers and findings of a recent study illustrate that image–based features of Instagram’s visual content affect the consumers perception of that content and ultimately the level of engagement with the image (Valentini et al. 2018). For a wide Instagram community, it seems that the images that stimulate the most engagement are the ones that conform to the general rules of photography such as the rule of thirds, using leading lines and creativity. Also simple images that viewer can relate to and images of recognizable people that can be easily shared with others stimulate engagement. (Abbott et al. 2013.)

As said, Instagram is ultimately created for mobile use, and thus it can be seen as one of the mobile–first social networks. With other platforms such as Snapchat, Pinterest and Tumblr, Instagram also uses images and videos as its primary content (Anderson 2016). Huge shift from the printing press towards digitalization is taking place and photographs are playing an important role in this disruption. Knowledge of the visuality needs more attention and research can benefit from photos as a linked knowledge element that could be associated with other knowledge elements to provide a more holistic view on studied phenomenon (Jain 2015). Murthy & Gross (2017) argue that while image data from Instagram has potential value in helping us to understand social experiences such as disasters for example, studying these types of visual data presents theoretical and methodological challenges especially in quantitative research.

3.3 Computer-assisted content analysis

According to White & Marsh (2006), depending on the data size from digital source like Instagram, conducting a content analysis on it can be challenging. Researcher can benefit from using computers to assist in a variety of tasks throughout the research process. Generally software can serve as a research assistant that makes researcher’s life easier by marking the data and dividing it for further analysis, for making notes and grouping the data, and for making it easier to edit and code the data. As White & Marsh (2006) further argue, software can also be a manipulator and extractor of data. This means matching the text against specialized dictionaries
for coding. Software also makes it much more efficient for researcher to collect the data in a way that it is preserved for further use and trace back all of the steps in analysis if necessary. (White & Marsh 2006.)

Banks & Zietlyn (2015) point out that while software and computers can make it easier for the researcher to collect and store visual material such as digital images and movies, software cannot interpret them. The same problem is also in text–based data, software does not understand the text either. The difference between visual and textual data is that software can be utilized to recognize and process text to exhibit regularities and patterns that exist in text. With images this problem can be solved in two ways. The simple, yet laborious solution is to add textual meta–data in each image manually such as labels, captions and keywords. This approach requires a lot of forethought from the researcher on how the meta–data is constructed. The second solution for processing a large sample of images is to create algorithms that analyze the properties of digital images such as color, shape, texture, line and brightness. When these properties have been assigned to a specific numerical value for instance, computer software can then easily sort them to predefined categories. While face recognition and other computer vision software have become mundane in our smart phones for example, this kind of software might be out of reach for a thesis worker. (Banks & Zietlyn 2015.)

That being said, there are software available that are used in qualitative research that can help researcher to perform data interpretation and set different relations among categories. One of which is ATLAS.ti that has been around since the late 80’s. As Nicácio & Barbosa (2017) point out, ATLAS.ti does not perform qualitative analysis itself, but it can help researcher to systematize and handle a large amount of information, thus speeding up the data analysis. For data analysis, there are two levels of analysis. In the textual analysis, the software creates quotations and notes to the text file. In the conceptual analysis it handles the data by setting relations among codes, categories, quotations and notes that researcher can then interpret. (Nicácio & Barbosa 2017.)
More specifically, ATLAS.ti is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) that facilitates the analysis of unstructured and non-numerical data. It is suited particularly well for the study of visual data as it can be used to identify of themes, patterns and meanings. It helps the researcher to keep analysis process organized, transparent and integrated. It also combines qualitative and quantitative analysis tools and supports data analysis of different formats including text, PDF, graphic, audio, video and geo data. It even has an integration tool to import data from social media platform Twitter. Instagram is not supported but copying URL address from web browser and importing the data to ATLAS.ti is fairly easy and straightforward. Besides its main function of coding, ATLAS.ti also functions as a tool for keeping track of research project with tools such as memos that can help during the analysis for instance. (Radivojevic 2019.) For my study, the ATLAS.ti (version 8.4.24 with a student license) is used to help code and analyze the data.

3.4 Data collection

Images from a web site “can be subjected to content analysis either by themselves or by looking at the relationships between images and their texts” (White & Marsh 2006, 27). For the visual representations, any of the normal methods can be used, but with content analysis it is possible to capture the wide spectrum of arrangements and give answers to what kind of and how many actors there are in the visual content (Seppänen 2005). Similarly as in a quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis can also start with a hypothesis where one or more hypothesis are formulated to create relevant variables (Bell 2001). When studying posts in social media for example, quantitative variables could for example be type of post (advertisement, informative post, statement), composition of the photo (selfie, snapshot, portrait), pose of the represented individual or group (standing, seated, walk, running, etc.) and the context where the post was made (home, office, outdoors). One hypothesis could then be: younger people are represented more in selfies than older users in all kinds of posts. Qualitative content analysis on the other hand is inductive in a sense that it follows a more humanistic tradition. For a qualitative content analysis, the formulation of hypothesis is not as relevant as the research questions are. That being said, the formulated research questions may alter during the research process of going through the data, as some patterns and concepts may emerge during the process that need to be taken into consideration. (White & Marsh 2006.)
To understand how leadership is presented on Finnish Instagram accounts, I examined posts with hashtags related to leadership in Finnish context. This means using hashtags that in Finnish language represent leadership (johtajuus) and management (johtaminen) as a search criteria. Initial search in September 2019 from Instagram showed that there are enough leadership related posts in Finnish context. Two of the most popular hashtags related to leadership in Finnish language were #johtajuus (leadership) with approximately 2600 posts, and #johtaminen (management) with around 6300 posts. The share number of post (approx. 9000 posts) is large, but the need for a close and reiterate analysis limits the size of the sample (White & Marsh 2006). From this data, I narrowed it down to a primary sample of 70 posts for further analysis. The sample is equal in size so that #johtajuus has 35 posts and #johtaminen 35 posts each.

As mentioned, share number of items in visual data such as photographs from a social media source might be large, and eventually the need for a close and reiterate analysis limits the size of the sample (White & Marsh 2006). For a research it would be ideal to do the sampling randomly, so that the probability of any unit within a specific population being selected would be the same. But “since the object of qualitative research is not so much in generalizability but rather in transferability, sampling does not need to ensure that all analyzed objects have an equal or predictable probability of being included in the sample”. (White & Marsh 2006, 36.)

I used the posts that were made between May 2019 and December 2019, starting from the post tagged #johtajuus made in 2/5/2019 and proceeded from there in ascending order. At first stage of data collection, I identified the posts that were relevant for the study. I excluded the posts that were purely advertisements or that were promoting a seminar or an event. I also excluded posts that were irrelevant in leadership context (i.e. pictures of food and animals for instance). I used the posts that contained image or multiple images but excluded the ones with videos. Some of the posts contained both the hashtags and duplicates were removed from the sample. Also only one post from each Instagram account was included in the sample, so that the same themes would not be repeated that might have affected the quality of the sample.
I gathered the set in March 2020. I went back to the sample in April 2020 to see if some of the posts were missing from Instagram. In a case like this I would have removed these samples from the data to protect privacy, as there might have been some reason for the post the be deleted from Instagram. This was not needed as all the post were still there publicly available.

There are challenges like this when considering the ethical questions related to studies conducted in digital space and as Kantanen & Manninen (2016) point out, ethical questions are even more complex in the virtual environment than in the “real world”. In the virtual communities, for which social networking sites like Instagram can also be counted for, ethical questions are related to the concepts of private and public, confidentiality, the integrity of data, and intellectual property related issues for instance. (Kantanen & Manninen, 2016, 87.) Madge (2007) identifies five fundamental issues related to online research ethics which include: informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, debriefing and netiquette. (Madge 2007, 654). While these general ethical guidelines can be made, Kantanen & Manninen (2016) further argue that ethical considerations should be more based on the different cases, rather than trying to tackle all the ethical issues with one specific solution. This makes sense as internet and social media platforms are constantly evolving and the pace of change in the digital world is faster than ever before.

In my study, I did not use any posts made from private accounts and all of the gathered data is publicly available for anyone that has access to the Internet. I have asked for a permission to use the images that are presented here in the thesis to illustrate my findings in Chapter 4. I sent the request to use the particular post with image in the thesis to 20 profile owners of which 13 replied and gave their informed consent to use the post. To add more privacy, I took out the account names from the example posts that are shown it the study.

As the posts are from public profiles, I traced them back to the original posters’ account and checked whether the post was made by 1) an individual, 2) a business or 3) a community and also checked whether the account belong to a female or a male user when it was evident from the Instagram profile. I also marked down the number of followers that each account had. Sample items and their qualification criteria are presented in the following Table 2:
Table 2: Sample Items and qualification criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of hashtag</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Post date</th>
<th>Type of account</th>
<th>Post included</th>
<th>Reason included in the sample</th>
<th>Reason excluded from the sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># johtajuus</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2/5/2019-4/12/2019</td>
<td>Personal (male or female)</td>
<td>Image, caption, related hashtags, number of likes</td>
<td>Posts describing a scene, a situation or a statement related to leadership</td>
<td>Posts containing video or audio, posts that are advertisement, company announcements, posts promoting a seminar or event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># johtaminen</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8/5/2019-24/12/2019</td>
<td>Company Community</td>
<td>Posts containing video or audio, posts that are advertisement, company announcements, posts promoting a seminar or event</td>
<td>Posts describing a scene, a situation or a statement related to leadership</td>
<td>Posts containing video or audio, posts that are advertisement, company announcements, posts promoting a seminar or event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instagram is essentially created for mobile use as people use their smart phones to upload pictures to Instagram and apply filters on the pictures for instance. For this reason, the user interface is created upon the mobile phone. For a researcher this creates some disadvantages because the pictures would need to be transferred from the mobile phone for further analysis. Instagram can be used from a web browser and it even has a Windows app that one can download from Windows store.

For this study, the use of mobile app and web app does not work as I would need to login to my personal account to browse the images. This would affect the credibility of the research as Instagram uses its own algorithm to show post and images on the users feed based on the prior usage of Instagram. Instagram’s detailed algorithm is its own intellectual property that is not public. Due to the strained privacy policies in recent years, Instagram has been forced to reveal some of the main elements that it uses to organize content in Instagram user’s feed to improve its transparency. Instagram’s social media platform uses for example image recognition technology from which the algorithm calculates the most preferred post according to the posts that have gained user’s attention earlier. For instance, if user would have been interested on cooking, the algorithm would organize user’s feed so that the user would more likely see cooking related post on his or her feed. Instagram also times the posts to better fit the user’s preferences, usage, and following preferences. It also shows the posts that user’s contacts (for instance friends, family members, and followers) have been engaging with. (Hutchinson 2018.) This would obviously create a highly subjective view on the representation of leadership according to researchers own preferences.
Therefore the post including images and related textual data were derived from the Instagram web app using a browser. This allowed me to browse through images without logging in and avoiding the data to be corrupted by the Instagram’s algorithm. In the anonymous view Instagram first shows the nine most popular post under the specific hashtag used. After the nine most popular posts, Instagram sorts the post in the descending order starting from the most recent ones. I went back in the Instagram timeline to May 2019 and started going through the posts first using the hastag #johtajuus as a search criteria. Because the caption text and related hastags in the posts were also part of the sample item I wanted them to be also included in the data. This was possible when using URL address (web address) and moving that to ATLAS.ti to form a single document. This allowed all the text and images to be migrated to ATLAS.ti which helped me later in the coding and analysis phases.

3.5 Coding

According to White & Marsh (2006), even though the questions guide the initial approach to the data, the process of coding in qualitative content analysis can be inductive, deductive and abductive. The analysis is subjective and can include use of memos to document perceptions and formulations; techniques for increasing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of findings. The analysis itself is integrated in coding when it comes to qualitative content analysis. The focus is always on answering the research questions but also on considering any foreshadowing questions that may have undergone in the process of coding, as well as themes and new questions that may have emerged during the coding. (White & Marsh 2006.)

My approach contained elements from both inductive as well as deductive approaches to qualitative content analysis. It followed the basic structure of the phases introduced by Elo & Kynnäis (2008). I would for example use the deductive approach in formulating the analysis matrix according to earlier GLOBE study, and at the same time also allow any of the emerging themes to come out from the data by using open coding according to inductive approach. The different phases that I applied to the analysis process are show in the following Figure 1:
Figure 1: Preparation, organizing and resulting phases in the content analysis process

Inductive approach

Preparation phase

Selecting the unit of analysis

Making sense of the data and whole

Organizing phase

Open coding

Coding sheets

Grouping

Categorization

Abstraction

Developing analysis matrix

Data gathering by content

Developing structured analysis matrix

Data coding according the categories

Hypothesis testing, correspondence comparison to earlier studies etc.

Reporting the analyzing process and the results

Model, conceptual system, conceptual map or categories

Deductive approach

Source: Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 110
The first of the main phases: *preparation* was discussed in the previous chapter 3.4 where the unit selection and type of units were discussed. The data was then collected, and I went through the data several times to get a comprehensive picture of what the collected data can tell when considering my research questions.

In the *organizing* phase, I started with a first round of coding which consisted of listing all the GLOBE CLT subscales that represented leader characteristics. This approach followed the deductive approach where the aim is to retest existing data in a new context. The idea is to develop a categorization matrix and code the data according to the categories. (Elo & Kyngäs 2008.) I therefore made a code list in ATLAS.ti to form code group *CLT subscales* that included all the 21 subscales of leadership characteristics presented in the GLOBE study.

To help identifying each code I used the example item key words in the coding process. As mentioned, this part followed the deductive approach where I searched for keywords and expressions from the captions and related hashtags, as well as visual glues that would convey the meaning that represented each of the code dimensions. When considering for example Charismatic and Value-based leadership dimension, *Inspirational* was described with hashtags like #motivated, #motivation, #inspiration or with expressions in the caption text that would say something like “to inspire people to” or “encourage people to”. I interpreted images that would convey enthusiastic and positive message of leader or situation to represent *Inspirational* leadership for instance. The coding framework based on the GLOBE dimensions in shown in the Table 3.
Table 3: GLOBE dimensions. Leadership Second-Order Factors, Their Component Subscales and Example Item Key Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global CLT</th>
<th>CLT subscales</th>
<th>Example Item Key Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charismatic/Value-Based</strong></td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Future-oriented, Anticipatory, Inspirational, Visionary, and Intellectually stimulating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Enthusiastic, Positive, Encouraging, Motivational, and Morale booster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-sacrificial</td>
<td>Risk-taker, Self-sacrificial, and Convincing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Honest, Sincere, Just, and Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Wilful, Decisive, and Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>Improvement, Excellence, and Performance-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Collaborative team orientation</td>
<td>Group-oriented, Collaborative, Loyal, Consultative, Mediator, and Fraternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Integrator</td>
<td>Communicative, Team builder, integrator, and Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>Diplomatic, Win/Win problem solver, and Effective bargainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malevolent</td>
<td>Hostile, Vindictive, Cynical, Noncooperative, and Egotistical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administratively competency</td>
<td>Orderly, Administratively skilled, Organized, and Good administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Protective</strong></td>
<td>Self-centered</td>
<td>Self-interested, Nonparticipative, Loner, and Asocial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status-conscious</td>
<td>Status-conscious, and Class-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict inducer</td>
<td>Normative, Secretive, and an Intragroup competitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face saver</td>
<td>Indirect, Avoiding negatives, and Evasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Ritualistic, Formal, Habitual, Cautious, and Procedural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participative</strong></td>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>Autocratic, Dictatorial, Elitist, Ruler, and Domineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonparticipative</td>
<td>Nondelegater, Micromanager, Nonegalitarian, and Individually oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humane-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>Modest, Self-effacing, Calm, and Patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humane</td>
<td>Generous, and Compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomous</strong></td>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>Individualistic, Independent, Autonomous, and Unique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table adapted from Chhokar et al. 2007
To answer the research questions, I wanted to include all the relevant information related to leadership in social media context. This also required inductive approach to the qualitative content analysis. In the second round of coding this meant coding all the other hashtags and keywords used in captions in Instagram post that would help in answering the research questions. I also coded the visual aspects of images such as where the picture was taken, what is the layout in the image and searched for visual clues that would be related to some of the CLT subscales or form a code of their own.

At times it was hard to place some of the expressions or related hastags to any of the attributes on CLT subscales, so I made a new code out of those if it was in my opinion related to leadership. However, in the final stage before starting to analyze the data I noticed that some of the codes were expressing one of the CLT attributes after all, and I emerged these codes in ATLAS.ti under the CLT subscale code. One example of this kind of situation was that in the first round of coding I made additional code Communication. I later noticed that Team-Integrator also had the communicative aspect, so I merged it into Team-Integrator. Similarly, first in the open coding phase I formed a code Empathy as that appeared frequently in the items but later when grouping and categorizing the data, I merged that to CLT subscale Humane.

In the inductive approach when coding the data outside the predetermined CLT subscales, I was using the Open coding and the In Vivo coding functions in ATLAS.ti. The open coding function allowed me to select any part of the text from captions, hastags, or image in the post that seemed to represent leadership to create open codes that were emerging from the data. For words or hastags that were defining leadership characteristics in their own, I was able to use the In Vivo coding function that allowed me to highlight text from the document to form codes. I named this group of codes Emerging attributes. The complete coding framework that formed during the process is shown in the Table 4.
Table 4: Code groups and related codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code group</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLT subscales</strong></td>
<td>Visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBEs 21 first-order</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dimensions of</td>
<td>Self-sacrificial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outstanding leadership</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that measured specific</td>
<td>Decisive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leader attributes and</td>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviours</td>
<td>Collaborative team orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Integrator</td>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malevolent</td>
<td>Administratively competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-centered</td>
<td>Status-conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict inducer</td>
<td>Face saver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Autocratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>Nonparticipative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonparticipative</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>Humane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging attributes</strong></td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership attributes</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that emerged from the</td>
<td>Leading change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>date</td>
<td>Self-leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study required effective use of memos where the process was documented and as mentioned earlier, purely qualitative content analysis can be a laborious task and there is a call for computer assisted tools to facilitate the process. ATLAS.ti helped in the process as I was able to form memos for each step of the way. I had separate memos for data collection and sampling, coding, and analysis phases. While the advantages of using quantitative and qualitative software to facilitate the data exploration are evident, they also qualify the analysis process. Moreover, the use of software in qualitative research aims to improve the inference and analysis process in general. (Gomes et al. 2017.) I had the whole project documented to ATLAS.ti so the material was not scattered to different places. For instance, I used timestamps to mark the date to keep track when something emerged from the data.
3.6 Analysis

After collecting, coding, and grouping the data I moved to the last of the three main phases of qualitative content analysis introduced by Elo & Kyngäs (2008): reporting. The process of analyzing the data is reported here and the results of the analysis are presented in the following chapter 4.

First I analyzed the basic numeric data that I was able to find out from the posts. I would for example calculate the *engagement rate* of each post which meant dividing the number of likes by the number of followers that the account had. This way I was able to see which of the post gained most traction and interest in the social media community.

I started the analysis by exporting a report of the code groups in ATLAS.ti. This way I was able to see all the information and the quotations that I had under each code with one look. I also exported an excel file of the basic information that I had also coded (type of account, male or female user, number of likes, where the picture was taken, what is in the picture/what or who is the picture portraying). Because the gender of the account owner was visible on the personal accounts, I was also interested to see if gender would play any role in leadership representations. I used this information to analyze the relationship between male and female users to see if there is a difference on what leadership attributes are valued in male accounts and what in the female accounts for example. I made some queries to see if for example leadership attribute *Humane* occurs more on posts from female accounts than male accounts, as this is something that could well be expected.

To get a better understanding and to draw a connection between each of the CLT subscales to their associated GLOBE dimensions, I created a network of codes. I formed a hierarchical pattern on the basis of the groundedness (i.e. how many quotations has been associated to each code) of the data. This helped me to visually analyze which of the CLT subscales (leadership characteristics) and their associated GLOBE dimensions (leadership styles) emerged from the data.
I also made Co-Occurrence and Code-Document tables to see whether some of the codes would co-occur in the same post. I would analyze for example if codes Wellbeing and Self-leadership co-occur in the same items and whether for example selfies occur more in the post that are related to self-centered for instance.
4 FINDINGS

My research questions seek to answers how Finnish leadership and its characteristics are represented on Finnish Instagram accounts, and also how can I interpret the meanings behind the visual representations of leadership? Previous studies and research literature have shown that the connection between leadership style and its characteristics with national culture persist. Some of the characteristics of Finnish leadership are discussed earlier on the theoretical framework to form a basis for the empirical part of the thesis. GLOBE study of cultural dimensions seems to be the most comprehensive of the studies conducted on this field. Therefore, the code framework was derived from the GLOBE dimensions and its leadership attributes. Some of the emerging codes are also presented to form a complete picture of the studied phenomena.

In qualitative content analysis the results of the study are often presented as categories and/or themes (Graneheim et al. 2017). Moreover, when presenting the results the researcher may use numbers and/or percentages, either in simple tabulations or in cross-tabulations to show relationships, but the representation of results may also rely simply on the gradual accretion of details within textual presentation without resort to numbers (White & Marsh 2006). Even though the analysis process relied on the qualitative method of analyzing text and images, I will use tables and graphs to illustrate my study’s findings. Some examples of Instagram posts are also presented to visualize the results. First, I will give a brief overlook on the studied Instagram accounts (Table 5) and the key figures (Table 6).

Table 5: Type of Instagram accounts describing leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of items</th>
<th>Female accounts</th>
<th>Male accounts</th>
<th>Company accounts</th>
<th>Community accounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td>(22,86%)</td>
<td>(15,71%)</td>
<td>(11,43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The division between female and male accounts in the sample is supported by the latest figures of Instagram usage (Pönkä 2019) where the typical user is female. Most of the accounts are personal accounts but it can be seen that companies and communities have also found Instagram as a way to communicate their message to their followers. When making this kind of comparison, I normalized the accounts and looked at the relative frequencies to make accurate comparison between female and male users for instance.

There is also a lot of numeric information available from the posts and also from the accounts of the particular Instagram user. In the post there is the number of likes that the post has gained from other Instagram users. This tells how much attention and interest the post and the picture has gained in the Instagram community. Some of the key numbers are presented in the following table 6:

Table 6: Key figures from the posts and their associated accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of items</th>
<th>Average number of account followers</th>
<th>Average number of likes</th>
<th>Average engagement rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The average engagement rate=amount of likes in the post divided by the number of followers.

When analyzing the posts that had the highest engagement rate there was no clear resemblance on the visual aspects in the images. In some of the images the picture composition was clearly been thought beforehand and some filters had been used. On the other hand, some of the most liked pictures had been taken in a hurry from a situation and the image quality was not the best. The subject of the image on the other hand seemed to have an effect on the engagement rate. The posts that included young and attractive looking people gained more interest and thus generated a better engagement rate. Also the images that had a well know leader for instance gained more interest. This affirms the argument according to Abbott et al. (2013) that the most popular
images in social media are the simple images that viewer can relate to and images of recognizable people that can be easily shared with others.

The most notable similarity between the posts that got the highest engagement rate was that there was multiple hastags used. Also the longer text in caption affected the engagement rate. It seemed that when there was an understandable and meaningful message that the account user had written it got more likes.

The post that got the least attraction on the other hand had little or no descriptive text in the caption and there was only one or two other hastags used. Picture of artifacts and pictures taken in mundane office setting also seemed to lower the engagement rate in the post.

What was common to all of the images and posts was that they conveyed positive or at least neutral message. This was expected as people and companies alike tend to give a positive picture of themselves in social media. Instagram functions as a place to construct one’s own identity in positive manner and the reasoning behind the posts is to gain attention from the group of followers. Compared to Twitter for example where debate and discussion is typical, Instagram seems to be a place for positive and uplifting messages that does not spur a lot of discussion. Comments in posts are mostly encouraging and positive in content. The purpose of the post is not so much in attracting discussion than it is in making a statement.

4.1 Finnish leadership on Instagram

Next, I will go through the results of the analysis where Instagram account users were defining themselves as a leader or in the context of leadership. First, I will discuss on the Finnish leadership characteristics and their manifestation in the studied Instagram posts.

From the beginning of the analysis it was clear that the attribute Inspirational would emerge from the data more often than the others. Also it showed that some of the attributes that in the
GLOBE study scored high would score low in the posts or were not visible at all. The complete table where the occurrences of different CLT subscales in the 70 different Instagram post are presented is in the following Table 7:

Table 7: Occurrence of CLT subscales in 70 Finnish Instagram posts describing leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLT subscales</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humane</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative team orientation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Integrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status-conscious</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sacrificial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administratively competency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malevolent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-centered</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict inducer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face saver</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonparticipative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three CLT attributes that stood out from the sample were *Inspirational*, *Humane*, and *Collaborative team orientation*. The least occurred attributes in the sample were *Diplomatic* and *Malevolent*. The attributes characterizing leadership that did not get any correspondence from the data were *Self-centered, Conflict inducer, Face sever, Procedural, Nonparticipative* and *Modesty*.

When considering leadership styles the data revealed that *Charismatic/Value-Based* was the most visible one. Many of the attributes describing this leadership dimension occurred in the posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global CLT</th>
<th>CLT subscales</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic/Value-Based</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14,95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9,35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance orientation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6,54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4,67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-sacrificial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the following examples show, Instagram users describe leadership in an inspirational way, motivating and encouraging others. There is a sense of risk-taking ability and decisiveness that a leader must have to succeed. People in the images are enthusiastic and there is a positive message conveying from the image. Some of the posts were future-oriented and emphasized improvement and excellence as key features of a leader.
Figure 2: Post from a personal account on Instagram

Figure 3: Post from a personal account on Instagram
Notable feature from the images representing charismatic leadership was that they were picturing the leaders in a situation that was extraordinary and in a situation that stands outside from the normal routines. According to Takala & Kemppainen (2007) this is typical for charismatic leadership as the intention is to lead away from the mundane and reject routines.

As mentioned, another attribute that emerged from the data was Collaborative team orientation that describes Team-Oriented leadership style. All features describing characteristics linked to this second order leadership dimension are listed below:

Table 9: Occurrence of Team-Oriented leadership in 70 Finnish Instagram posts describing leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global CLT</th>
<th>CLT subscales</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team-Oriented</td>
<td>Collaborative team orientation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10,28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Integrator</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9,35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administratively competency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malevolent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics that appeared the most from the sample that described Team-Oriented leadership style were Collaborative team orientation and Team Integrator. Instagram users were for example highlighting the importance of team and collaboration. Among the posts that got the highest engagement rate Collaborative Team Orientation also scored the highest. Followers were expecting the leader to be team oriented and consultative and work as a mediator. Picture of a famous Finnish coach would underline the message in one of these posts.
One attribute outside of these two dimensions of leadership style that appeared in many of the posts describing leadership was *Humane*. It was the second highest from the CLT subscales to appear in the data. The posts were conveying a message of a leader who is able to show humane side in the workplace and is not afraid of showing emotions. The images are personal and open a view on the everyday leadership situations.
Many of the posts emphasized the importance of empathy in leadership. The leaders in pictures were portrayed easily approachable and kind. In the sample there were posts that included pictures of CEOs. Compared to the traditional portrait pictures of CEOs and top executives where leaders are pictured as having high authority here the pictures showed CEOs in a down to earth manner.
**Humane** attribute appeared in many of the posts and more in the posts from female accounts. When analyzing the co-occurrence between female and male accounts and **Humane** there was a clear correspondence between female accounts and Humane. None of the male accounts had the Humane attribute mentioned nor did any of the images convey a message that could have been interpreted to represent **Humane**. It seems that humanity in leadership is appreciated generally among female.

When looking at the other relationships between gender and CLT subscales there were more depictions relating to **Performance orientation** in posts that were made from male accounts than the ones that were made from female accounts. From this perspective it seems that males are more prone to performance-oriented behavior than the females are.
4.2 Emerging themes

From the beginning of the analysis process it was clear that other attributes outside of the CLT subscales will emerge from the data. These themes that were mentioned in the posts or the images represented one of these themes were:

Table 10: Occurrence of emerging themes in 70 Finnish Instagram posts describing leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging themes</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31,37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23,53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-leadership</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17,65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading change</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When going through the data it was clear that few themes were emerging from the data. *Well-being* was one of the themes that was represented in many of the posts. In fact, it scored same amount of mentions as Inspirational. Another theme that relates to the same category of taking care of one’s own wellbeing was *Self-leadership* that also had relatively high frequency. It also co-occurred with wellbeing in many of the posts. It seems that these themes have come to discussion in leadership context as our lives are occupied with information and the pace in organizations can be quite hectic at times. Leaders and organizational actors brought up the importance of taking time to relax and remembering the importance of work-life balance.

Even though the themes of Wellbeing and Self-leadership were important to all type of accounts from which the posts were made, company accounts scored high on wellbeing. After companies, wellbeing was also represented high in female accounts, communities and male accounts having similar frequency in representations. It seems that wellbeing of leader is not just valued by individuals, but companies have also realized the importance of coping at work.

Figure 8: Post from a personal account on Instagram
Entrepreneurship was also represented in many of the posts. Many of the images were selfies of entrepreneurs talking about their successes and achievements. The image’s role was to enhance the expertise of the account owner and say that “Look at me, I made it”. Social media’s role in identity construction and positive self-presentation is shown in the posts. Instagram also works as a marketing tool for many of the entrepreneurs to educate their followers on their offering.

Figure 9: Post from a personal account on Instagram
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter I will present the summary of my research. I will also introduce the key contributions of my study and its significance in relation to the earlier research. Finally, I will evaluate my research and present views on future study and managerial implications.

5.1 Summary of the research

The aim of my study was to combine the notions of Finnish leadership and visuality, and to explore how the representation of leadership unfolds through Finnish accounts on the social media platform Instagram. On the idea of bringing together social media, visuality and Finnish leadership discussion, I laid the structure of my thesis. I started with the review on what we already know about Finnish leadership and its characteristics. I then focused on the visual side of leadership and its cultural representation. Therefore, the purpose of my study was to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1: “How Finnish leadership and its characteristics are represented on Finnish Instagram accounts?”*

*RQ2: “How the meanings behind the visual representations of leadership can be interpreted?”*

In the first chapter, I described the current situation and the background for my research. I explained that while globalization has made sharing knowledge and ideas easier and world has become smaller in that sense, leadership is still always bound to the national culture. I also pointed out that the emergence of social media has been fast, and our lives are now occupied with different platforms to communicate, share our thoughts and opinions and express our creativity.
I explained in the first chapter that there has been another major shift in our social life happening at the same time. There is a clear movement towards visual mode that is the result of our growing interest in meaning and culture. Organizational research has also taken interest on this aesthetic turn and visuality has raised its status in the academia. But as social media and its visual platforms like Instagram are still fairly new, it is understandable that we do not know much of the possibilities that these visual social media platforms can offer. There are still some doubts and uncertainty relating to social media as a research platform. In addition to the research questions, I also presented the research objective of the study in the first chapter. I aimed at describing how Finnish leadership is represented on Finnish Instagram accounts and tried to find the possible meanings behind these visual representations. At the end of the first chapter, I presented the key concepts of my study and described them in detail. The key concepts of the study are leadership as a cultural phenomenon, visuality and cultural representation, and Finnish leadership.

In the second chapter, I presented earlier research on Finnish leadership and its characteristics. The earlier Finnish leadership research has mainly been focusing on the individual leader’s perspective or studying the phenomena through a case company for instance. In the same chapter, I discussed the connection between leadership and national culture and presented some of the characteristics of Finnish leadership style. I formed the framework around the characteristics presented in GLOBE study and used that as a lens through which I approach the data at the later stage. I also presented how visuality had been researched in the field of organization and management studies and provided background for visual research in cultural studies and covered the matters related to interpreting visual representations. I pointed out, that compared to traditional methods in leadership research, visual methods have the potential to better understand the latent meanings behind the visual content, and therefore uncover something that earlier research might have missed.

In the third chapter I introduced my research framework and the methodological approach that I had chosen and explained why this approach was suitable for studying visual materials. My study can be categorized as a qualitative research with a cultural studies perspective. The study was conducted by using a qualitative content analysis method and the data consisted of 70 posts.
derived from Finnish Instagram accounts using hastags #johtajuus (leadership) and #johtaminen (management). I formed a framework of attributes on the basis of GLOBE study that had comprehensively covered the national leadership characteristics. These characteristics were supported by the earlier research on the same subject. The categorizations matrix was formed according to GLOBE studies 21 first order leadership attributes and their 6 second order leadership dimensions. This framework was the basis for the qualitative content analysis, but I also kept an open mind for any foreshadowing attributes that may emerge during the process. At the end of the chapter three, I explained in detail how the data was collected, coded, and how it was analyzed.

In chapter four I presented the findings of my analysis. I started with the analysis based on the characteristics identified in the GLOBE study to see what characteristics of Finnish leadership are represented on Finnish Instagram accounts. Both the consistencies and differences between the GLOBE study and my research results are presented in the findings. After that I presented some of the additional emerging themes that I had discovered during the analysis. To better illustrate the study’s findings I used tables but also some examples of Instagram posts to visualize the results.

5.2 The key contributions of this study

On the basis of this thesis it can be concluded that visual social media should be seen as a huge possibility to share new light on the much-researched topic of leadership. Knowing the latent meanings and cultural representations of leadership that forms through social media, leadership research can learn something new and something that earlier research might have missed.

When drawing together a picture of Finnish leadership in social media context I came to a conclusion that many of the characteristics that were associated with Finnish leadership according to earlier research were also present on Finnish Instagram accounts. Charismatic and value-based leadership style is valued among Finns and leadership characteristics like inspirational and visionary are indeed something that are regarded as features of a great leader. GLOBEs study on leadership gave Finland a high score on Integrity, Inspirational, Collaborative Team
Oriented and Visionary. Besides Integrity, all the other attributes scored high when analyzing the Instagram posts. Earlier research has also indicated that Finnish leaders are more likely to possess certain feminine leadership values such as interpersonal relations that call for empathy. The results of the analysis supported this argument as Humane leadership dimension was visible in the leadership representations.

It seems that the perceptions of Finnish business leaders and the expectations of the audience of stakeholders are in line with the posts made on Instagram, as they describe the qualities of a good leader in a consistent manner compared to earlier research. In Finnish leadership it is valued from a leader to be able to inspire and motivate others towards better results but also to be able to foster a sense of shared goal that the whole team is striving for. All this is done in a way that is supportive and considerate towards others.

The most significant finding of my study was that leaders are not expected to do all the above mentioned at the cost of their own wellbeing. On a contrary, leaders themselves brought up the importance of work-life balance. The importance of taking care of one’s own mental and physical health were highlighted in the posts. It seems that Finns have no appreciation for a leader that works the longest hours and at a cost of his or her own wellbeing. Images of Urho Kaleva Kekkonen working until his death are clearly a thing in a past and more of a curiosity that modern leadership does not value when considering outstanding Finnish leader of today.

Even though the themes of Wellbeing and Self-leadership were important to all types of accounts from which the posts were made, company accounts scored highest on wellbeing. After companies, wellbeing was represented also high in female accounts, communities and male accounts having similar frequency in posts. It seems that wellbeing of a leader is not just valued by individuals, but companies have also realized the importance of coping at work. It is not in anyone’s interest to have a leader that is not performing at his or her best due to stress or burnout from work. It can be concluded that a great leader is able not only to take care of leader’s subordinates’ needs and wills, but also to take care of his/her own wellbeing.
As my thesis also has the aspect of visuality, only answering to the first research question is not enough to meet the research objective. I was interested in seeing how the meanings and visual clues behind the representations associated to leadership can be interpreted.

My conclusion was that leaders in images were not intimidating, but on the contrary, they were represented in a way that reflects low hierarchy that is characteristic to Finnish leadership style. Leaders in images were presented in down to earth manner and many of the leaders opened up their everyday life in the studied posts. Charismatic leadership style was valued according to analysis and this meant in social media context a form of heroism that stems from everyday actions and leading by example. Images conveyed a message of a leader who is ideally motivating and inspirational, rather than someone who is giving orders to others. The aspects of transformational leadership style were represented more often as the posts emphasized individualism and giving inspiration to followers.

5.3 Evaluation of the study

In the center of this thesis were the studied Instagram posts. The nature of the visual data created some limitations that I had already considered before starting my research. The final research questions formed during the process when investigating the posts and what they can tell about leadership. The posts were each unique in their own way and had to be analyzed thoroughly to get a picture of what the image and related text might be conveying to someone who is looking at it. Thorough analysis of visual representation of data like Instagram posts is time consuming and requires skills to interpret images’ latent meanings. I familiarized myself with representation theory and studied the visuality as is reported here in the thesis. Experienced researcher with the specific knowledge on representation and visuality might have gotten more out of the data than I have been able to.

Another limitation was related to the size of the sample. The complexity of the data limited the sample size. Still, the data sample turned out to be comprehensive even though the size of the sample (70 Instagram posts) is limited. The strengths of this kind data on the other hand was
that it was created without researcher interfering in the process and the data was easily accessible and publicly available all the time.

Qualitative content analysis was well suited for the research of visual data. Besides images, the studied Instagram posts also included other valuable information in a form of text which helped me to better understand the studied phenomena. On the other hand, this created some challenges when considering the amount of work that had to be put on the analysis of the data. Internet has made large quantities of data easily accessible for research. This sets limitations to research as the share number of visual data gathered from social networking sites like Instagram can be large. As mentioned, this sets some limits to the size of a sample, but computer software can give some assistance in exploration. I could not have managed without the help of a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. ATLAS.ti worked as a platform to keep the thesis process organized and helped during the data collection, coding and eventually when analyzing the data. This also validated the research process, improved the analysis process in general and added reliability in the research. The whole process is documented in ATLAS.ti and can be reiterated by anyone, if necessary.

Still, computer software does not take out the limitations that this kind of visual and cultural research that I have conducted possesses when considering the agency of a researcher. The embeddedness of the researcher on the whole process is evident and it must have some effect on the quality of the research. I tried to be as objective as possible when analyzing the data, but of course the interpretation of the leadership representations might have been influenced by my own pre-assumptions. Though the nature of qualitative research is always highly subjective. For a researcher it is vital to overcome these challenges by taking time to really internalize the method and try to be as objective and open minded as one can be. Using the right tools to assist during the process can help, but the researcher itself is ultimately responsible of the credibility and reliability of the research results – be it then traditional research or one that is conducted utilizing internet or social media platforms.
5.4 Managerial implications and future study

To companies and leaders my study has few practical implications. First of all, companies should recognize the importance of visuality that has occupied the digital space. Companies are no strangers to conveying their message to their followers and audience of stakeholders in social media. But the shift to visual mode in social media has been fast and that is something that companies and their leaders should recognize to keep their competitive edge in the global markets. Secondly, globalization has made our world smaller in a sense that national boundaries are becoming obsolete when considering business and leadership in global companies. My study shows that the earlier recognized leadership styles and characteristics persist, and companies should take this into account in their operations. My study gives important information to foreign leaders working in Finnish organizations on how to adjust or consider their leadership style accordingly.

Content in social media is always bound to the context that is created and when it is created. Signs to this were seen in my study also when current theme like self-leadership was visible in the data. What was also interesting to notice were the themes that were not visible in the data. For example leadership during climate change was still quite unnoticeable in the data. The effects of this kind of crisis situations to leadership representation would be something to consider in future research.

In future research it would also be interesting to see how Instagram posts are actually formed in a context of leadership. This could be done by involving the research participant to the research project instead of just observing the posts. Finnish leadership has been studied in this thesis only on visual social media platform Instagram. The phenomenon could also be studied on other visual platforms, or on other social media platforms to get a better understanding of it. Future research would also be needed to understand how companies and organizations can benefit of the leadership representation that is available on social media. It remains to be seen how companies can make use of the visuality in terms of leadership.
6 REFERENCES


