TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Business Administration

Henri Huittinen

PEOPLE AS BRANDS AND PERSONAL BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Bachelor's thesis

Programme International Business Administration, specialisation Marketing

Supervisor: Kristel Kaljund

Tallinn 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This research seeks to know how many people perceive themselves as brands in 2019 and if people believe that personal branding in social media has effects on other's opinions about someone as well as to work application processes. With the help of uses and gratifications theory, this research attempts also to find out what are the main priorities of survey participants in various labor positions for using social media. Futhermore, this research addresses the research problem which was to find out how significantly current labor position affects participant's perceptions towards personal branding in social media and its effects for work application process.

This study relies on a quantitative research method, and the needed information is attained from a survey which had 109 participants. The results of this study show that the most of the participants do not consider themselves as brands. Main priorities for social media usage among respondents are communication as well as fun and entertainment. Personal branding in social media affects other's perceptions about someone and it has effects on work application process. However, the effect of participant's current labor position regarding this matter is minimal. Therefore, the results cannot be explained with various labor positions of the respondents. This study confirms the fact that there are many people in all labor positions who do not utilize the opportunities of personal branding in social media. It is suggested that the knowledge about this matter should be shared throughout the organisations from high position leaders to employees and unemployed.

Keywords: Social media, Branding, Personal Branding, Employment

INTRODUCTION

Whether we like it or not, we are brands. We are brands of ourselves. Everything we do affects our future and the life we are going to live. The utilization of social media has changed over the past years and today the usage of social media is different than what it was before. This can be seen for example as a rise of influencers in different social media platforms such as Instagram.

Currently there are many people who do not realize the threats and opportunities of social media. People may think that social media is a platform for entertainment and for fun. Social media is also a tool of personal branding – for telling others what kind of person you are. Though, there are people who do not see or use the benefits of personal branding in social media. Some might be aware of the effects of social media behaviour for their lives but do not let those determine their actions in social media (Statista 2019). Even though people would not brand themselves adversely, they are not branding themselves effectively in a good way either. Successful and effective personal branding is defined as creating value primarily for others and raising positive reactions (Strömsholm 2017, 1). At the same time, there are people who struggle on the current labor market to get a job. This especially applies true to young job applicants. Ambitious and skillful young talents are turned down by hiring professionals because the young people are not giving admirable impression of themselves to recruiters through social media (Statista 2019). Also, they are incapable of showing their potential employers what value they could offer them. Too many skilled employees are hidden in a pile of papers so that the ones who would need these people most cannot see them. As a 23 year old young actor of labor markets, the author of this thesis is determined to know how he could avoid facing these same difficulties in his future career.

The channel which can be found from nearly everyone's pocket is a great tool for building a personal brand and getting the attention needed to climb upwards in working career. By marketing and branding ourselves in social media, we can make ourselves attractive on the labor market. By doing this, we increase our possibilities to climb up the career ladder and reach our full potential in desirable job positions.

Even though there are many studies about both social media and personal branding from various viewpoints, it can be seen that since people have different perceptions about social media and personal branding online not all of them understand the effects of social media and personal branding for themselves and their future nor their businesses. In addition, none of the previous studies provide information about how people perceive the concept of personal branding in social media and whether the different perceptions could be explained with various labor positions of these people. This study approaches this field and addresses the problem by investigating how people perceive the concept of personal branding in social media and its effects for their working career in 2019 and how significant effect various labor positions have on this matter. By solving this research problem we get to know if the various labor positions are the reason for people's different viewpoints about personal branding in social media and for whom the knowledge about this matter should be shared more widely.

The aim of this thesis is to detect if people identify themselves as brands in 2019 and understand the effects of personal branding for their career as well as their job application processes. Uses and gratifications theory (U&G) examines the effects of various media channels for people and it presents that people fulfill their information acquisition needs by using different media channels. Furthermore, with the help of U&G this research seeks to find the number one priority of people in different labor market positions for using social media and uncover possible misalignment from these people's behaviour. In addition, the results of this study aim to see whether the various labor positions are the reason for different perceptions of these people about this matter. This study also attempts to underline the significance of personal branding in social media and clarify its effects on people's lives.

The following research questions were formed to attain the needed information for this research.

- Do people consider themselves to be brands?
- Which are the main priorities of people in various labor positions for using social media?
- Do people relate personal branding in social media to their work application process?

The first research question is set to identify whether participants perceive themselves as brands. The second research question is formulated to get understanding about the main priorities for social usage among various members of labor markets. The last research question attempts to find out whether people think that their social media appearance and the way they brand themselves there

could affect the recruiter's decision of whether to hire them or not. In addition, the last two questions attempt to find out whether there is a disharmony between the answers to these questions and therefore a conflict in people's behaviour.

To find answers to the research questions presented above, a survey was conducted in Google Forms and shared through various social media channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp. In Facebook, the survey was also shared to Finnish entrepreneurship groups Yrittäjälinja and Kuopion Yrittäjät ry.

This thesis is divided into three major parts. The first part is a theoretical part that includes a literature review which introduces and discusses the main theories such as uses and gratifications theory, and other definitions related to the topic of this thesis. The second part of this thesis presents chosen research method. In this part the, sample method and sampling design are also presented and justified as well as some of the limitations of the study. The third part of the thesis is an empirical part where the survey and its results are presented. Furthermore, in this part the main findings are disclosed as well as compared to theoretical information presented in the first chapter. The end of this part presents also some suggestions for future research. At the end of this paper, a conclusion is formed.

1. THEORETICAL PART

This part starts by introducing some of the previously conducted studies in this field. After this the main theories related to the field of this study are presented and discussed in more detail. In focus are the information about personal branding, effects of personal branding for employees and employers, social media, uses and gratifications theory as well as various social media channels.

In 1997 the concept of personal branding was mentioned first time when Peters argued that every person is a brand. In addition, there is a lot of research done about social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have studied different challenges and opportunities of social media. The usage of social media among consumers has been studied for example by Shao (2009). Mangold and Faulds (2009); Sago (2010) and Evans (2012) have researched the utilization of social media in business operations. Also wide amount of studies about personal branding can be found. For example, Karaduman (2013), Vosloban (2013), Miles and Mangold (2005) and Martin (2009) have studied the pros and cons of personal branding for companies and its employees.

1.1 Personal branding

This chapter starts by introducing the basic definition of brand. After this the difference between brand and branding is explained. However, the main focus of this chapter is on personal branding. In addition, at the end of this chapter the personal branding in working environment is discussed.

According to Kotler (AMA 1994 via Kotler 2000, 188), brand is a "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." Koçiaj et al. (2016, 74) argue that the purpose of a brand is to establish an image which can be connected to a product. With the help of words, signs and symbols this image should be distinguished from competitors (Ibid.). As it was presented above, in the popular understanding a brand is usually related to famous companies or products. However, when talking about personal branding, also a person can be a brand. People like Michael Jackson also known as a king of pop or the famous fashion designer Coco Chanel are great examples of personal brands and how a personal brand can evolve to different product segments.

According to Hobkirk (2012), it is important to make a distinction between a brand and branding. Hobkirk views brand as a marketing tool, a thing, and branding as an action. She says that branding is the action which is involved in the process of creating a brand. It includes the actions such as positioning your product or a company, creating a brand strategy, creating your name, designing a brand identity, writing a brand messaging and setting the brand standards. Thus, a brand is an outcome of branding actions mentioned above. The main components of the personal brand are the tone of actions, verbal dialog and visual identity; and the personal brand is attached to all the marketing communication actions. It tells others what the person does as well as which kind of person he/she is. (Ibid.)

Personal brands were mentioned for first time in literature when Peters (1997) presented in his thesis that all of us are brands. While walking into a café wearing certain type of jeans and holding a certain company's cup of coffee we are telling something to others about ourselves (Ibid.) Therefore, we could say that personal brand is a topic related to everyone. According to Shepherd (2005, 1), especially in the USA after late 1990's the popularity of self-marketing and personal branding have increased in the field of web sites, consultancy services and self-improvement books. Koçiaj et al. (2016, 74) state that personal branding means collecting an individual's best and unique qualities and promoting them to a target audience. According to Khedher (2014, 29), similarily, personal branding is a planned process where a person markets him/herself. Gujarathi and Kulkarni (2018, 1) come up with more: they view personal branding as a conscious and planned process with the goal to help a person to attach an image of entrepreneurial habits, employment or celebrity-like visibility for themselves. Karaduman (2013, 466) adds that although we all have a personal brand, it is not enough: in order to take advantage of it, the brand should be marketed in a way that others know about it. Kang (2013, 28) argues that personal branding is the act of developing the strategy and actions to guide your brand.

William Arruda argues that personal branding starts by giving yourself the permission to be your best self. He also presents that a one who is building a personal brand should know what is authentic to him/her and what characteristics are the ones which differentiate he/she from others. After founding the unique characteristics, those can be used to reach one's goals by adding value for employer. This will not only boost the employer's but also personal success. In addition, Arruda states that personal branding is a critical skill which is needed to survive in today's marketplace. (Martin 2009, 417)

Therefore, based on the definitions presented above, we could say that personal branding is something unique which ties strengths and the best qualities of someone into a visible and recognizable form which is then presented to a target audience and which eventually boosts the persons success in working career as well as in life.

1.2 Effects of personal branding for employees and employers

After defining a brand and discussing the personal branding, it would be appropriate to clarify, why is personal branding so important? Often personal branding is justified with benefits which are result of building an effective personal brand. Usually many of these benefits are related to working environment and person's career opportunities. However, the benefits of personal branding are not reflected only to person's own life. As presented later, the results of effective personal brand provide value also for employers and therefore not only the employee's career opportunities increase but also the opportunities from employer's perspective are affected too.

Before discussing the effects of personal branding for working environment, the various labor positions – employers, employees and unemployed – should be defined. According to Heathfield (2019), employer is someone who provides work for employees who are paid to do a job. Employer is a person who employs a staff member called employee. Employer can be defined also as an institution, entity of a government, agency company or professional service. In this research employer is defined also as an entrepreneur. Employee on the other hand is an individual who has been hired to do a certain job for a company or institution. Before becoming an employee, a person is selected for a job with the help of application process and job interview(s). After the selection, the job applicant becomes an employee. In this research unemployed is defined as a person who is neither an employer nor an employee. (Heathfield 2019)

Lair et al. (2005, 309) present that personal branding unites the concepts of product development and promotion and then markets the combination of these to market place in order for person to entry or transit in labor markets. Koçiaj et al. (2016, 75) say that uniqueness and authenticity are the main components of personal branding and the combination of these construct basis for everyone's personal brand, and the end goal of personal branding is to be successful person and the journey of personal branding starts by knowing ourselves. According to Shepherd (2005, 1), personal branding is often related to self-marketing, including multiple activities which are

established to make an individual known in the marketplace with the end goal is to gain employment: these activities have been carried out over decades by movie sport and pop stars as well as businessmen and politicians. Manai and Holmlund (2015, 750) argue that branding helps people respond to a crowded communication environment in the job application process. In the business context, branding is a good way to elimate competitors – it is more enduring tactic than marketing or sales (Rampersad 2008, 34). Arruda emphasizes that personal branding has a great impact on international manager's career path since it creates clarity and increases efficiency in everything that he/she does – when person knows his/her strengths, he/she can use these to increase value for their teams as well as companies (Martin 2009, 418). This will eventually make them an employee which cannot be replaced (Ibid., 419). Vosloban (2013, 148) represents the same point of view by saying that an employee who has a strong personal brand will not only perform better but also be competitive: he/she will offer more value through subtantial contribution towards company's image and performance.

Trout (Trout 2003 via Vosloban 2013, 148) mentions that since the markets are developing rapidly and customer expectations are increasing continuously, companies need to create more competitive advantage in order to succeed and outperform its competitors. Therefore, an employee with a strong personal brand could offer the valuable competitiveness needed since this kind of employees will be competitive, and their professional efforts will create additional value for the company and its image (Ibid.).

Thus, when a person is valuable for the company, he/she will become an employee the company wants to keep. Eventually, this will be concretised for the employee for example as an increase in salary. According to Schweitzer and Lyons (2008, 563), high value relationships are the source for the beneficial employment for parties in labor market since such a enables sustainable growth for both employers as well as employees.

Sometimes, if the personal branding is not in line with the company's brand, it can be harmful for the company. An independent writer of Human Resource Management International Digest (2017, 35) presents that by sharing incorrect or harmful information, employee's use of social media can harm both employee and business.

1.3 Utilization of social media for personal branding

In this chapter the definition of social media is introduced. In addition, some statistics of social media usage are presented and discussed. Then, the uses and gratifications theory is presented and compared to previous literature. After that, some of the main and most used social media channels are presented. The channels have been chosen according to their popularity and the ability of using them in personal branding.

Social media can be seen as various applications whose users can create and exchange user generated content in the internet (Kaplan, Haenlein 2010, 61). Rouse (2019) adds that social media consists of collaboration and interaction as well as content sharing operations which are carried through in online communication channels. Social media can be seen as a unique source of information which can offer possibilities for finding opportunities from the perspective of society as well as economic principles (Zeng et al. 2011, 14). It is also a form of communication where user-generated content is handled interactively and which utilizes networks and information technology for creating and maintaining relationships between people – in practice, this means that all the computer assisted services where people are communicating together or create content are a part of social media in a way or another (Haasio 2013, 9). As we can see, the user generated content is a common red thread which is related to definition of social media as well as activities there.

The usage of social media has been rising since 2010. Currently, the estimations show that in 2021, there should be approximately 3,02 billion social media users around the world. Social networking is one of the most popular online activities and many social networks are also available through mobile apps which has created more mobile possibilities. To sustain visuality, some blogs are designed to be browsed in internet to maintain easy access via tablet. (Statista 2019)

Uses and gratifications theory (U&G) examines the effects of various media channels for people. U&G presents that people have their needs for information acquisition and they use different media to fulfill these needs to receive the gratification. (Lariscy et al. 2011, 750-751). According to Whiting and Williams (2013, 364), who have studied the importance of U&G for social media, there are seven themes and gratifications for using social media: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility and convenience utility. This thesis combines these seven topics in three groups: fun and entertainment (entertainment, pass

time, relaxation), communication (social interaction, communicatory utility, convenience utility) and information search (information seeking). This thesis would also like to add one theme for this list: business, especially employment. The questions included in the survey are derived from these topics.

Strömsholm (2017) has made a study which views personal branding in social media from a standpoint of added value. When asked about the effectivity of personal branding in social media, participants of the study agree that it is a known and visible authority and the prerequisite of effective branding is skillful communication, i.e. the person building a brand has to know how to justify, compress and convince his/her points of view (Strömsholm 2017, 54).

Due to establishment of social media and online personal web sites the tools for creating user generated content have improved and therefore the processes for developing personal brand online have become more simplified. There is no coding skills needed since there are multiple social media channels where an user can upload pictures, text as well as videos instantly from his computer or mobile phone. (Labrecque et al. 2010, 38)

The best self-promotion channels are social networks. These channels make it possible a person to present him or herself in a way they want to be perceived. (Summers 2015). In 2019, there are multiple social media channels and even though many of them have similar features all of them differ from each other in a way or another. The channels presented below have been chosen according to their popularity and usability for personal branding.

Facebook is a social networking platform founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. The main purpose of this platform is to connect with people all around the world; this can be done by sharing posts, photos as well as videos (Brenner 2018). According to Summers (2015), Facebook is the best platform for personal branding since there the wanted photos, thoughts and interactions can be shared effortlessly and it connects this information with all other platforms such as Twitter and Instagram seamlessly. Thanks to highly developed marketing system, Facebook is also a great marketing channel for companies – with the help of Facebook's marketing tools, a person or a company can market themselves or their products and services through targeted marketing strategies (Brenner 2018). The vision of Facebook is to connect people around the world by giving them the opportunity to share the most remarkable events and things with other people; in 2019,

Facebook is the most popular social media service and in December 2018 it had 1,52 billion daily active users (Facebook 2019).

Instagram on the other hand was founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. The growth of Instagram has been rapid. In first two months Instagram had over 1 million users and the growth has been continuing. Instagram is a free mobile phone application which is designed for sharing photos and videos. In this app people can also make collections of the photos which they like. In Instagram people can produce content by liking and commenting other people's statuses. Obviously, they can also share photos and videos by themselves. (Brenner 2018) When posting a photo or a video, also a short description could be attached to the update as well as preferred hashtags. Hashtags allow the user to find photos or videos related to similar field or interests. (Heikkurinen 2016, 1). Instagram has also a live stream possibility and by using this people can share live stream all around the world. In addition, Instagram has a direct messaging section where people can talk with each other and in groups privately. By following other people users can dictate what kind of content they will see in their Instagram. (Brenner 2018). The users of Instagram have uncovered the potential of Instagram to use it for personal branding and business. The goal of being present and active in Instagram is to get more traffic to one's website. Through high following rates, people can get monetary compensation for their branding efforts in the form of money, sponsorship deals or products. Thus, Instagram do not act only as a more visual platform for personal branding, it also plays out as a platform for influence and side businesses. (Kirilova 2017, 28-29)

LinkedIn was founded in 2002, and in 2003 it was launched by Reid Hoffman, Konstantin Guericke, Jean-Luc Valliant, Allen Blue and Eric Ly. LinkedIn is a social media platform which is designed specifically for business needs and forming online connections. There people can make their own profiles and share their thoughts in a form of statuses, photos and/or videos. However, the main purpose of LinkedIn is to make professional connections which could be beneficial in people's careers. That is why LinkedIn is also used for searching valid candidates for open job positions and is said to be a modern resume. (Brenner 2018). LinkedIn is widely accepted as career management tool and it is also a useful platform for doing business by promoting products and services. By keeping oneself in the minds of stakeholders such as employers, customers and suppliers, a person is proactively promoting his/her personal brand and expertise. (Guiseppi) When LinkedIn profile is updated regularly, the probabilities for others seeing the people who they are searching for are increased. Therefore, the process of finding the best people to hire or to do

business with is eased. Well maintained and comprehensive LinkedIn profile is said to be obligatory concern to succeed in the job application process which also helps the recruiter in his/her decision making process. With the help of information from persons educational background as well as from previous employments, the probabilities for choosing a right person to suitable job are increased. In addition, LinkedIn is a platform for decreasing the doubtfullness and unreliability in work application process. (Harris, Rae 2011, 19).

Twitter is a social networking platform founded in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams. In Twitter, users can interact with others by sharing short (max. 280 characters) statuses named as Tweets. The length restriction is said to be one of the reasons which made Twitter so popular. (Gil 2019) By the end of 2018, Twitter had 321 million active users monthly on average (Statista 2019). The tweets can include for example videos, photos or hyperlinks and the tweet shared will be shown in the people's feed who follow the person who sends the tweet; and, since people use Twitter actively, it has become a source of news (Brenner 2018). Besides, Twitter plays a remarkable role in personal branding among journalists since it has become the source of news and opinions – by sharing the timely information journalists are increasing their market value (Brems et al. 2016, 445). Even though Twitter belongs to social media, some say it is more like instant messaging – at the same time, sometimes the usage of Twitter is called microblogging (Gil 2019).

Djuraskovic (2019) views blogs, also known as weblogs, as online journals which consist of information about some particular subject written by the author or group of authors of the blog; reversed chronological order where the latest posts are appearing first is common for these type of journals. Blogs differ from the websites since they have to be updated frequently, and there is the possibility for readers to comment and since the site is not static, it is changing continually after new posts and contents uploaded (Ibid.) Because of the reader engagement, blogs are included in social media (Duermyer 2019). Blog is a great channel for building personal brand since they offer an opportunity to share professional knowledge and original stories with innovative way; writers of blogs usually form a network where they can share others blog posts and support each other with similar reflections, and this network also gains more visibility in major search engines such as Google (Harris, Rae 2011, 18).

Youtube is a social media platform used mainly for video sharing. The users of Youtube can either upload videos or watch them or do both. Youtube was founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve

Chen and Jawed Karim, three former employees of Paypal. Activities in Youtube include also rating sharing and commenting the videos. In addition, Youtube is a widely known platform among video bloggers. Therefore, the content in Youtube include video blogs (vlogs), educational videos as well as short films. Also, music videos can be found from Youtube. In 2018 Youtube launched a Youtube TV which is a live TV for Youtube users. (Brenner 2018)

All plaforms presented above can be called modern tools for personal branding and telling others what kind of person someone is. Every photo, video, blog post, like or comment which a person shares in social media could be reflected to this person and his/her thoughts, habits and values. Therefore, if someone wants to know what kind of person or employee someone is, social media is a great channel for doing that. Harris and Rae (2011, 21) also argue that sometimes personal branding in social media can be too powerful when the organisations can perceive a person as a threat for the company and its values. In addition, they say that too strong personal brand in social media can be seen as unreal (Ibid.).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

There are two main research methods which could be used in research process. These methods are qualitative research method and quantitative research method. However, sometimes the mixture of these could be used. (Johnson, Christensen 2014, 81)

The main purpose of quantitative research is to test hypotheses, look at cause and effect as well as make predictions. This research method uses quantitative data to identify statistical relationships and it attempts to generalize findings that can be applied to other populations. Typical data collection methods in quantitative research are for example surveys, structured interviews, experimental studies. (Heikkilä 2014)

Quantitative research studies specific variables and often the data in this research method consists of numbers and statistics. The objectivity in quantitative research is critical and its focus is narrow. Oftentimes, the final report includes statistical report with correlations and statistical significance of findings. (Lichtman 2006 and Johnson, Christensen 2008 in Xavier University Library) The **approach** of this research aims to describe a phenomenon based on numerical information which is lead from the questions about people's perceptions about personal branding in social media and its effects on work application process. Furthermore, this research attempts to find out the current situation of participants opinions if they perceive themselves as brands. This research attempts also to highlight the first priorities of people in various labor positions for using social media. The end goal of this research is to see how significantly the labor positions of the respondents affect their perceptions about personal branding in social media. In addition, this research attempts to reveal a possible disharmony in respondents actions and perceptions about personal branding in social media. However, this research is not trying to seek deeper meaning or reasons behind these matters. The expected amount of participants was more than 100 without a pre-selection or personal interviews. The plan was to analyze the collected data in percentages. For the reasons mentioned above, a quantitative research method was chosen for this study.

This research utilized a non-probability **sampling method** and a convenience **sampling design**. The strenghts of non-probability sampling method are convenience and cost (Stat Trek 2019). Acquiring the entire population for this research was impossible, therefore a convenience sampling design was chosen for this research. Convenience sampling design enables to get access to

respondents in a convenient way and it offers a suitable way to analyze smaller groups of people. (Bhat)

An online survey was conducted in Google Forms and it was shared through various social media channels such as Facebook and WhatsApp messenger. To get more answers from people who are employers or entrepreneurs, the survey was shared to Finnish Facebook groups Yrittäjälinja and Kuopion Yrittäjät ry. Yrittäjälinja is a Facebook group which is run by entrepreneurs and the content of these communities consists mainly on news and articles related to working and entrepreneurship; many of the members are entrepreneurs and they share their own thoughts and experiences from their work life to this channel (Yrittäjälinja 2019). Kuopion Yrittäjät ry is an entrepreneurial organization located in Eastern Finland, Kuopio, with the mission to create opportunities for entrepreneurs in Kuopio; by organizing various events related to networking, prosperity and knowledge, they are building future not only for entrepreneurs but also for Finnish society (Kuopion Yrittäjät 2019).

The survey included fourteen questions and all of them were published in English. The survey included questions related to background information such as gender, age and current status of labor market. However, the main focus was on the questions which were related to usage of social media and personal branding. Since none of the questions were open-ended and the answers were analyzed collectively, the analyzing process was straight forward. The results were analyzed using Microsoft Excel program.

Sample refers to a set of people drawn from a population (Stat Trek 2019). The sample of this research consisted of a total of 109 persons which took part in the survey. 54% of them were females and 46% males. The age of the respondents was categorized in line with definitions of generations Z, millennials, X and Boomers (Dimock 2019). 25% respondents out of 109 were younger than 23, 48% were aged from 23 to 38, 21% 39 to 54, 65% 55 to 73. The third question asked about respondent's current status in labor market. This question was asked to compare overall answers of personal branding in social media along with the employees, employers/entrepreneurs and unemployed people. 66% of the participants were employees, 20% were employers or entrepreneurs and 14% were unemployed.

Questions four and five were additional questions which were formed to know, whether the respondent is an employee but he/she is in managing position and/or recruits or has recruited

people in his/her current job. The goal of the questions three, four and five was to know if the perceptions about personal branding in social media would differ between people who are in higher positions in current labor market and people who are employees or unemployed. When analyzing the results, the participants who were employees but had recruited or were recruiting people in their current job were handled as employers since these people are making the decision to hire someone and therefore are highly related to entrepreneurs and employers in this matter.

Results indicate that 54% of the respondents were not in a managing position, 33% were in managing position and 13% unemployed. When comparing the results between questions three and four, it can be seen that one of the respondents has made a mistake. In question three, the amount of unemployed people was 14%, however the answers in question four indicate that only 13% of the participants were unemployed. When asked if a respondent has ever recruited someone or he/she is recruiting people in their current job, 36% answered "Yes" and 64% "No".

The limitations of this study are the convenience sampling design as well as small sample size. Due to convenience sampling design, the results cannot be reflected or generalized to whole population. In addition, the sample size of 109 participants does not offer waterpoof results of this matter.

3. EMPIRICAL PART

3.1 Results

In this part the results of the survey are presented and explained. The results are divided in line with themes of the survey questions which were; *background*, *personal branding and social media usage among participants* and *effects of social media on personal branding and working career*. Since the background information of the respondents were presented in sample description in previous chapter, this part starts by analyzing the results from part *personal branding and social media usage among participants.* At the end of this part, an analysis of the main findings is formed and discussed in more detail.

3.1.1 Personal branding and social media usage among participants

As early as 1997, Peters mentioned the concept of personal branding first time in literature. Still, in 2019, most of the people who participated in this questionnaire do not see themselves as brands. Question six asked if the participant sees him-/herself as a brand, and only 34% of respondents answered "Yes", while 66% of them answered "No". Therefore, even though personal branding has been in the limelight many years, there are still a lot of people who do not understand it. From this we can say that the concept of personal branding has a long way to go and the struggles of personal branding most likely will not diminish if the person itself do not consider him/herself as a brand.

The seventh question asked whether a person uses social media or not. 92% of the respondents answered "Yes" and 8% of them answered "No". Therefore, almost everyone who participated in this survey uses social media. However, there are still people who are not using social media in 2019.

The participants who use social media were taken to question eight where they could choose all social media channels which they use. Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular social media channels (Figure 1). Instagram is the third most popular channel. Since Instagram's user base is younger, these results could be explained with the age distribution of the survey. Yet one fourth of the respondents were under 23 years old and 73% of the respondents were under 38 years old. In

addition, Youtube, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Twitter have positions 4, 5, 6 and 7. Pinterest and blogs are the least used channels among the respondents of this survey.
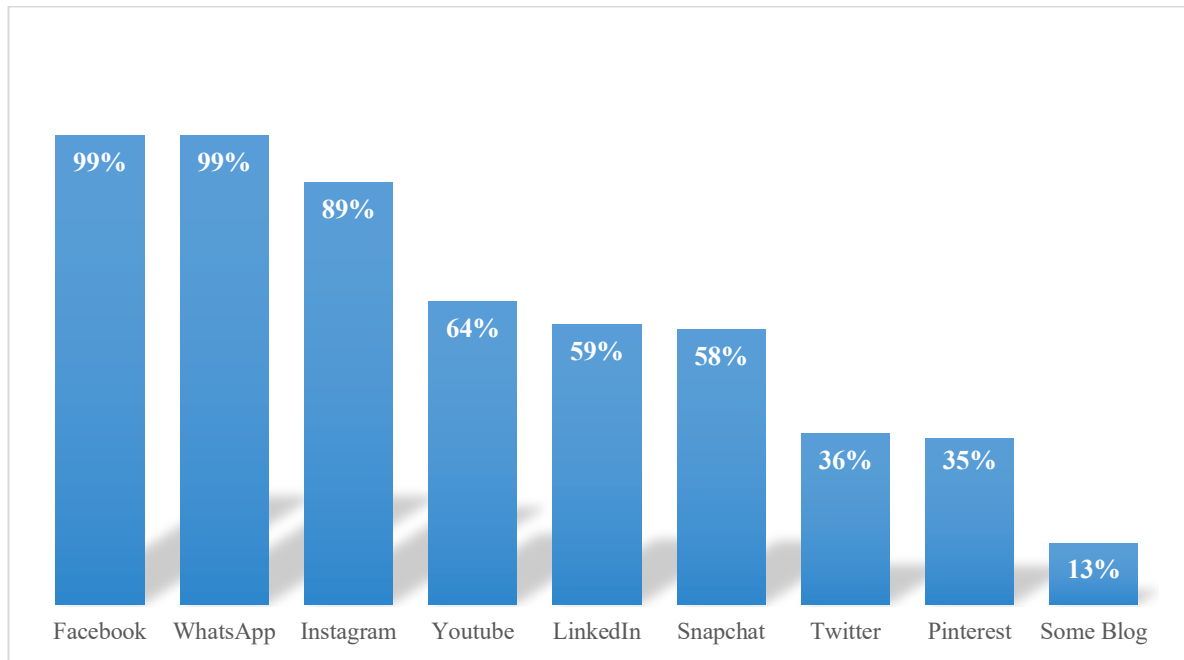

Figure 1. User amounts in percentages of various social media channels among participants. Source: author's calculations based on the survey results.

Question nine asked about how many hours the respondent uses social media per day. Most of them (67%) use social media approximately 1-3 hours daily. 24% of the respondents use social media 0-1 hours per day. 6% answered that they spend approximately 3-5 hours per day using social media and even 3% stated that they use social media 5 hours or more per day. When looking at these numbers, we can say that people spend relatively high amount of their time using social media. In the next chapter, the main priorities of participants for using social media are presented.

Table 1. Participants' priorities for social media usage in percentages

Priorities for SM usage	1st priority	2nd priority	3rd priority	4th priority
Fun and entertainment	35 %	29 %	22 %	14 %
Communication	48 %	29 %	11 %	12 %
Business	12 %	28 %	34 %	26 %
Information search	24 %	27 %	34 %	15 %

Source: author's calculations based on the survey results.

Main priorities for using social media was asked in question ten. 35% of the respondents marked fun and entertainment as a first priority when using social media. For 29% it is their second priority, for 22% third and for 14% the last reason to use social media. 48% – therefore almost half of the respondents – see communication to be their first priority for using social media. 29% of the respondents consider communication as their second priority, 11% as third and 12% as fourth when using social media. The third reason for using social media is information search. This option had more evenly divided answers. When asked which priority has information search, almost one fourth – 24% of the participants – marked information search as their first priority for using social media, while for 27% of the respondents it is their second priority. For 34% of the participants, information is the third priority for using social media and for 15% it is the least important reason to use social media. For the purpose of study the most significant part of these questions related to priorities was business. It totaled the following results: 12% of the participants marked business as their first priority for using social media and for 28% it is their second priority. Business is the third priority for 34% and on fourth position for 26% of the participants. Therefore, for 60%, business is either on third or fourth position among the reasons of using social media.

3.1.2 Effects of social media on personal branding and working career

Question eleven was formed to seek participant's opinion about how much he/she thinks that someone's social media appearance could affect other's perception of this person (figure 2). The chart included a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 stated that the person's social media appearance do not affect at all someone's perception of this person. As opposed to 1, 5 stated that person's social media appearance affects a lot for someone's perception of this person. Most of the participants, 87%, think that social media's appearance most likely affects or affects a lot for people's perception about someone. 11% of the participants chose 3 on the Likert scale which can indicate that they do not know how the social media affects other's perception about someone. Only 3% of participants think that someone's social media appearance will most likely not affect how the person is perceived. None of the participants thought that the appearance would not affect the way the person is perceived.
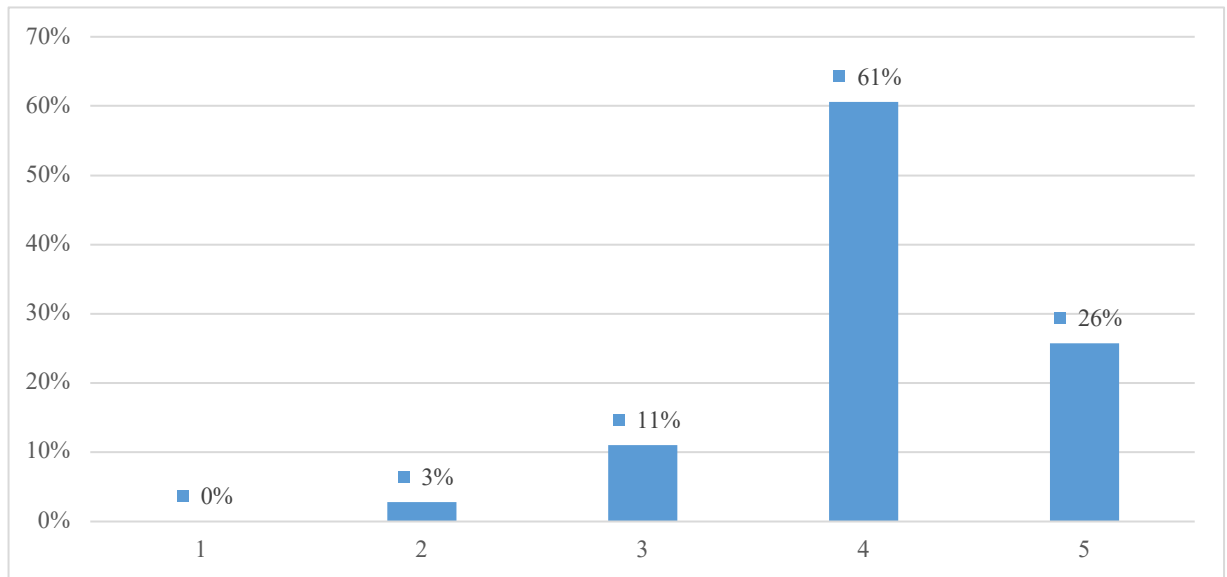
Figure 2. Participants' answers about how much social media's affects people's perceptions about someone. 1=Do not affect, 2=Most likely do not affect, 3=Do not know, 4=Most likely affects, 5=Affects a lot
Source: author's calculations based on the survey results.

Last three questions (twelve, thirteen and fourteen) were asked to find out whether a participant believes that social media appearance and personal branding in social media affects the job application process. In addition, these questions were asked to see if there is a misalignment in people's behaviour when comparing their first priority for using social media and the perception how social media would affect job application process. Question twelve was asked to find out whether a participant thinks that the recruiter would look at his/her social media profile if he/she is be applying a job. Most of the participants (78%) think that if they applied for a job, the recruiter would take a look at their social media profiles. 15% of the participants were not sure whether the recruiter will look at their social media profiles. Only 7% of the participants thought that the recruiter will not look at their profiles.

The question thirteen was formed to address previous question in more detail and it was aimed to find out whether the participant thinks that his/her social media appearance affects the recruiter's decision to hire them. 60% of the participants thought that his/her social media appearance affects the recruiter's decision to hire them. 27% of the participants are not sure whether their profiles affect the recruiter's decision making process. Only 13% of the participants think that their social media appearance does not affect the recruiter's decision to hire them.

The aim of the last question was to switch the participant's perspective from others to themselves. As the previous questions asked whether they think that the recruiter would look at their social media profiles and whether their appearance affects recruiter's hiring decisions, this question asked if the participant was in the same position, what would they do? Since the contemplation of other's behaviour is more difficult, this question was added to make participants think about their own behaviour. Therefore, this question attempted to get more realistic comprehension of the situation regarding decision making of employment based on applicant's social media appearance. 65% of the participants stated that they would look at job applicant's social media profiles if they were hiring some one. 26% of the participants would maybe look the job applicant's social media profiles and 9% would not look the profiles.

3.2 Main findings and suggestions for future research

When considering the results of this survey it can be seen that even though personal branding was mentioned first time in literature as early as 1997 by Peters, not even half of the respondents of this questionnaire considered themselves as brands in 2019. *The answer for research question one is thus that most people do not see themselves as a brand.* If a person does not perceive him-/herself as a brand, building personal brand and leading it effectively is difficult. This can be considered alarming taking into account that there has been significant amount of literature and information about personal branding and its benefits. Furthermore, personal branding can be seen daily when exploring modern social media channels presented in the theoretical part such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. In addition, considering that we are living in the 21ˢᵗ century where employment is becoming increasingly difficult due to crowded communication (Manai and Holmlund 2015, 750), it is worrying that people are not taking action towards building an effective personal brand even though it has been stated to be an indispensable skill in order to survive (Martin 2009, 417).

In the tenth question of the survey the seven topics and gratifications which Whiting and Williams (2013, 364) presented were combined to *fun and entertainment, communication and information search*. This research added one more topic, namely *business*. As the Table 1 presents, when looking at the first priority for using social media, business got the lowest amount of answers. People tend to use social media mainly for entertainment and communication. For some people

information search is an important priority when chosing the reasons for social media usage. Nevertheless, only 12% of the respondents see business as their first priority for social media usage.

As table 2 presents business was the least represented first priority among all participants regardless if they were employers/entrepreneurs, employees or unemployed. In this table, employees who have recruited or are recruiting people in their current job are handled as employers.

Table 2. Summary of the first priorities for using social media among employers/entrepreneurs, employees and unemployed.

1st priority	Employer / Entrepreneur	Employee	Unemployed
Fun and entertainment	34 %	38 %	29 %
Communication	49 %	46 %	57 %
Business	14 %	10 %	14 %
Information search	29 %	21 %	29 %

Source: author's calculations based on the survey results.

Based on the information above, *answer for research question two is that as opposed to business, the main priorities for people in various labor positions while using social media are communication, and fun and entertainment. Besides, the main priorities cannot be linked to different labor positions.*

As the answers to question eleven present, most of the participants agree that social media affects remarkably other's perception about someone. To analyze how different labor positions affect the answer to this question, a correlation analysis was conducted. Correlation analysis measures the association between two variables (Asuero et al. 2006, 41).

The correlation analysis leads to a correlation coefficient which determines how strong the relationship between two variables is. The value of correlation coefficient vary between -1 and +1. If the value of correlation coefficient is higher than +1 or lower than -1, it means that there is an error in the calculations. Correlation coefficient +1 states that there is perfect positive correlation between the variables and coefficient -1 states that there is perfect negative correlation between the variables. Correlation coefficient 0 states that there is no correlation between the variables and therefore they are not affected by each other. (Ganti 2019)

24

The correlation coefficient was calculated with Microsoft Excel program and the formula used was Pearson correlation coefficient which is presented below,

$$r = \frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

where x in this case presents the group number of participant, and y presents the participant's answer from 1 to 5 how much he/she thinks that social media affects other's perception about someone. In addition, the $\bar{x}$ presents the average of x values and $\bar{y}$ average of y values. (Data Science Made Simple)

The correlation analysis was made to see whether a higher position in labor market would lead to higher numbers which state that the participant believes that social media highly affects the way we are perceived. When conducting the correlation analysis, the participants were divided in groups according to their labor position. Then, the numbers from one to three were addressed to these groups. The groups were unemployed (1), employees (2) and employers/entrepreneurs (3). After this, the answers (numbers from one to five) for every participant were compared to his/her group number. Since the correlation coefficient between these two data tables is -0,154, the answer states that there is little or almost no correlation between the labor position and the answer for question eleven. Therefore, the labor position of a participant does not affect how much a participant thinks that social media affects the perception of a person.

The biggest group of participants thought that recruiters will look their social media profiles and it affects the recruiters' decision making process to hire someone. In addition, clearly over half (66%) of the respondents stated that if they were a recruiter, they would look at job applicant's social media profiles when hiring an employee. Therefore, *the answer for research question three is yes, most of the people believe that social media appearance and personal branding in social media affects their work application process*. This is true independent of the labor position, as the table 3 in the following page presents.

Table 3. Participants' opinions about social media appearance and its effects for recruiter's decision making process.

		Yes	No	I don't know/Maybe
If you would apply a job, do you think that the recruiter would look into your social media profile if you had one?	Employer / Entrepreneur	86 %	6 %	9 %
	Employee	71 %	8 %	21 %
	Unemployed	79 %	14 %	7 %
	SUM	77 %	8 %	14 %
Do you think that your social media appearance would affect the recruiter's decision to hire you?	Employer / Entrepreneur	71 %	9 %	20 %
	Employee	58 %	15 %	27 %
	Unemployed	43 %	21 %	36 %
	SUM	61 %	13 %	26 %
If you would be hiring someone to your firm, would you take a look into the job applicant's social media profiles?	Employer / Entrepreneur	71 %	14 %	14 %
	Employee	58 %	6 %	35 %
	Unemployed	79 %	7 %	14 %
	SUM	66 %	9 %	25 %

Source: author's calculations based on the survey results.

This raises the following question: If people think that their social media appearance affects the recruiters decision to hire them, why they are not treating themselves as brands and why they use social media mainly for entertainment and communication rather than business purposes such as personal branding? Obviously, there is some misalignment in people's behaviour.

The research problem presented in the beginning of this thesis was to see how significantly participant's labor position affects their perceptions about personal branding in social media and its effects on work application process. This research has solved this issue by finding out that participant's labor position has minimal effect on their perceptions about personal branding in social media and its effects on work application process. As the results present, there are many people in all labor positions who are not using the social media for business purposes such as personal branding. This creates opportunities and competitive edge for people who decide to do so.

As this research does not reveal deeper justifications nor the reasons why people are not perceiving themselves as brands and why they are not branding themselves in social media despite the fact that they know it would be beneficial for them, it would be valuable to know what are the reasons for this behaviour. This raises a questions if there is a fear or lazyness behind this matter?

Therefore, a qualitative research about the people's perception of personal branding in social media would justify why people are behaving like this.

SUMMARY

This study aims to solve a research problem which is to identify how significantly current labor position of study participants affects their perceptions towards personal branding in social media. By addressing this problem and finding an answer for it, a more comprehensive understanding of personal branding in social media among people in various labor positions can be attained.

The research questions which were formed in the beginning of this research were as follow:

- Do people consider themselves to be brands?
- Which are the main priorities of people in various labor positions for using social media?
- Do people relate personal branding in social media to their work application process?

In introduction the research problem, research aim and research questions were presented. After this research gap was ackowledged. Then an overall literature review based on previous researches and literature was conducted. The literature review included the definitions of brand, personal branding and social media. In addition, theories related to this field such as uses and gratification theory were introduced and discussed shortly. A brand is something which can be intended to goods or services (AMA 1994 via Kotler 2000, 188). In addition, brand can be related to persons. This leads us to personal branding which is something unique that ties strengths and the best qualities of someone into a visible and recognizable form which is then presented to a target audience. This can be done in social media. Social media means various applications whose users generate content in internet as well as exchange it with each other in multiple platforms such as Facebook. The second part of this research introduced the chosen research method. After this, the approach for this research, sample method and sample design were justified and discussed. Third part of this research was an empirical part which presented the results of the conducted quantitative survey which was shared through various social media channels. An overall 109 responses were acquired. After presenting the results of the survey, the main findings of the research were disclosed as well as compared with the previous theory of this field. At the end of third part some suggestions for future research were presented.

Results indicate that even though personal branding is not a new concept, there are still many people who do not see themselves as brands and instead of business purposes people tend to use

social media mainly for entertainment and communication. At the same time the priorities cannot be explained with various labor positions of these people. This research proved that various labor positions has a minimal effect on participants perceptions towards personal branding in social media. People agree that the social media appearance and personal branding in social media have effects on the way they are perceived and thus on the success of their job applications. Neither this opinion correlates with people's different labor positions. Nevertheless, this misalignment in people's behaviour creates a competitive edge for people who take personal branding seriously. The people who are taking the necessary steps in social media to build an effective personal brand are responding to crowded communication and therefore creating more opportunities for both themselves and employers in current labor markets.

This research has contributed to the research area of personal branding by giving an update about people's perceptions about personal branding in social media as well as its effects to people's work application process. Furthermore, the research has solved the research problem which was to find out whether the different perceptions of this matter could be explained with various labor positions. The results of this research show that there are people in all labor positions who do not understand the concept of personal branding in social media and therefore the knowledge about this matter should be shared not only with employees from top to bottom but also for unemployed people.

To get better understanding of the people's behaviour regarding personal branding in social media, it would be appropriate to conduct a qualitative research about this matter. This would provide more information and knowledge about people's thoughts behind their actions regarding personal branding in social media.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Asuero, A.G., Gonzalez, G., Sayago, A., (2006). The Correlation Coefficient: An Overview. – *Critical Reviews in Analytical Chemistry.* Vol. 36, No. 1, 41-59.

Bhat, A. (Not available). Convenience Sampling: Definition, Method and Examples.
Accessible: https://www.questionpro.com/blog/convenience-sampling/, 4 October 2019.

Brems, C., Broersma, M. Graham, T., Temmermann, M. (2016). Personal Branding on Twitter: How Employed and Freelance Journalists Stage Themselves on Social Media. – *Digital Journalists.* Vol. 5, No. 4, 443-459.

Brenner, C. (2018). 15 Most Popular Social Media Networks and Sites [+160 data points]. Accessible: https://learn.g2crowd.com/social-media, 4 October 2019.

Data Science Made Simple.
Accessible: http://www.datasciencemadesimple.com/pearson-function-in-excel/, 6 November 2019.

Dimock, M. (2019). Defining generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins.
Accessible: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/, 4 October 2019.

Divergent attitudes to social media governance: Should managers prevent or promote employees' use? (2017). – *Human Resource Management International Digest*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 35-37.

Djuraskovic, O. (2019). What is Blog? – The Definition of Blog, Blogging, and Blogger.
Accessible: https://firstsiteguide.com/what-is-blog/, 4 October 2019.

Duermyer, R. (2019). What is Blogging and How Can It Help My Home Business?
Accessible: https://www.thebalancesmb.com/blogging-what-is-it-1794405, 4 October 2019.

Evans, D. (2012). *Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day*, 2nd ed. John Wiley and Sons, New York, NY.

Facebook (2019). –*Facebook Newsroom*. Accessible: https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/, 4 October 2019.

Ganti, A. (2019). Correlation Coefficient. –*Investopedia.*
Accessible: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/correlationcoefficient.asp, 4 October 2019.

Gil, P. (2019). What is Twitter & How Does It Work?
Accessible: https://www.lifewire.com/what-exactly-is-twitter-2483331, 4 October 2019.

Guiseppi, M. (Not available). Guide to Personal Branding with LinkedIn.
Accessible: https://www.job-hunt.org/personal-branding/linkedin-personal-branding.shtml, 4 October 2019.

Gujarathi, R., Kulkarni, H. (2018). Personal Branding An Answer to Employability – A Conceptual Needbase Analysis. –*Review of Research*, Vol 7, No. 10.

Haasio, A. (2013). Sosiaalinen media ja kirjastot. Helsinki: BTJ Finland Oy.

Harris, L., Rae, A. (2011). Building a Personal Brand Through Social Networking. –*Journal of Business Strategy,* Vol. 32, No. 5, 14-21.

Heathfield, S. M. (2019). What, Exactly, Is an Employee?
Accessible: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-an-employee-1918111, 28 December 2019.

Heathfield, S. M. (2019). What is the Definition of an Employer?
Accessible: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-an-employer-1918113, 28 December 2019.

Heikkilä, T. (2014). *Kvantitatiivinen Tutkimus.*
Accessible:
http://www.tilastollinentutkimus.fi/1.TUTKIMUSTUKI/KvantitatiivinenTutkimus.pdf, 4 October 2019.

Heikkurinen, A. (2016). Personal Branding Practises of Adolescents on Instagram. – *LUT School of Business and Management*.

Hobkirk, K. (2012). The important differences between brands and branding
Accessible: https://trainofthought.net/branding/the-differences-between-brands-and-branding-355/, 17 October 2019.

Johnson, R.B., Christensen, L. (2014). – *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches.* 5th Edition. SAGE Publications.

Kang, K. (2013). Branding Pays. – *Branding Pays Media.*

Kaplan, A.M., Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. – *Business Horizons,* Vol. 53, No. 1, 59-68.

Karaduman, I. (2013). The Effect of Social Media on Personal Branding Efforts of Top Level Executives. – *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 99, 465-473.

Khedher, M. (2014). Personal Branding Phenomenon – *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 29-40.

Kirilova, S. (2017). Key Components for Successful Personal Branding on Social Media. Arcada.
Accessible: https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/139895/Stefani%20Kirilova%20-%20final%20copy%20of%20thesis.pdf?sequence=1, 4 October 2019.

Koçiaj, J., Nunaj, T., Hysi, V., Kutrolli, M., (2016). Personal Branding Perception by Albanian students. – *International Journal of Global Business*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 74-92.

Kotler, P. (2000). Marketing Management, Millennium Edition. – *Prentice-Hall, Inc.*.

Kuopion Yrittäjät (2019). - *Yrittäjät*
Accessible: https://www.yrittajat.fi/savon-yrittajat/kuopion-yrittajat/a/kuopion-yrittajat-pitaa-
　　　yritysten-puolta-ja-yrittajista-huolta-325612#, 6 November 2019.

Labrecque, L.I., Markos, E., Milne, G.R. (2010). Online Personal Branding: Processes,
　　　Challenges, and Implications. –*Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 37-50.

Lair, D.J., Sullivan, K., Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and The Recasting of The Professional
　　　Self: The Rhetoric and Ethics of Personal Branding. –*Management Communication
　　　Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 307-343.

Lariscy, R.W., Tinkham, S.F., Sweetser, K.D. (2011). Kids These Days: Examining Differences
　　　in Political Uses and Gratifications, Internet Political Participation, Political Information
　　　Efficacy, and Cynicism on the Basis of Age. – *American Behavioral Scientist,* Vol. 55,
　　　No. 6, 749-764.

Manai, A., Holmlund, M. (2015). Self-Marketing Brand Skills for Business Students. –
　　　Marketing Intelligence and Planning, Vol. 33, No. 5, 749-762.

Mangold, W.G., Faulds, D.J. (2009). Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of The
　　　Promotional Mix. – *Business Horizons,* Vol. 52, No. 4, 357-363.

Martin, B. (2009). An Interview With William Arruda: Communicating Your Personal Brand. –
　　　Thunderbird International Business Review, Vol. 51, No. 5, 417-419.

Miles, S.J., Mangold, W.G. (2005). Positioning Southwest Airlines through employee branding.
　　　– *Business Horizons*, Vol. 48, No. 6, 535-545.

Peters, T. (1997). The Brand Called You. – *Article of Fast Company Magazine*
Accessible: https://www.fastcompany.com/28905/brand-called-you

Rampersad, H.K., (2008). A New Blueprint for Powerful and Authentic Personal Branding. –
　　　Performance Improvement, Vol. 47, No. 6, 34-37.

Rouse, M. (2019). Social Media.
Accessible: https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-media, 4 October 2019.

Sago, B. (2010). The Influence of Social Media Message Sources on Millennial Generation
　　　Consumers. – *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communication,* Vol. 2,
　　　No. 2, 7-18.

Schweitzer, L., Lyons, S. (2008). The market within: A marketing approach to creating and
　　　developing high-value employment relationships. – *Business Horizons*, Vol. 51, No. 6,
　　　555-565.

Shao, G. (2009). Understanding the Appeal of User-Generated Media: A Uses and Gratification
　　　Perspective. – *Internet Research,* Vol. 19, No. 1, 7-25.

Shepherd, I.D.H., (2005), From Cattle and Coke to Charlie: Meeting the Challenge of Self Marketing and Personal Branding. – *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 21, No. 5-6, 589-606.

Stat Trek (2019). Statistics dictionary.
Accessible: https://stattrek.com/statistics/dictionary.aspx?definition=non-probability%20sampling, 4 October 2019.

Statista (2019). Number of Monthly Active Twitter Users Worldwide from 1st Quarter 2010 to 4th Quarter 2018 (in millions)
Accessible: https://www.statista.com/statistics/282087/number-of-monthly-active-twitter-users/, 4 October 2019.

Statista (2019). Number of Social Media Users Worldwide from 2010 to 2021 (in billions)
Accessible: https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/, 4 October 2019.

Statista (2019). Online and Social Media Recruiting – Statistics and Facts
Accessible: https://www.statista.com/topics/2727/online-recruiting/ , 28 December 2019.

Strömsholm, J. (2017). Stakeholder Perspective to Personal Brand Value in Social Media. – *Aalto University School of Business, Master thesis.*

Summers (2015). 13 Ways to Use Facebook for Personal Branding.
Accessible: https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/2015-04-08/13-ways-use-facebook-personal-branding, 4 October 2019.

Vosloban, R.I., (2013). Employee's personal branding as a competitive advantage: A managerial approach. – *The International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology (IJMSIT),* Vol. 2, No. 10, 147-159

Whiting, A., Williams, D. (2013) Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. – *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 362-369.

Xavier University Library. –*Qualitative versus Quantitative Research.*
Accessible: https://www.xavier.edu/library/students/documents/qualitative_quantitative.pdf, 6 November 2019

Yrittäjälinja (2019).
Accessible: https://www.facebook.com/pg/yrittajalinja/about/?ref=page_internal, 4 October 2019.

Zeng, D., Chen, H., Lusch, R., Li, S. H. (2010). Social Media Analytics and Intelligence. – *IEEE Intelligent Systems,* Vol. 25, No. 6, 13-16.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey results

1. What is your gender?

   (Female (59), Male (50), Other (0))

2. What is your age in terms of years?

   (Under 23 (27), 23-38 (52), 39-54 (23), 55-73 (7))

3. What is your current status in labor market?

   (Employee (72), Employer / Entrepreneur (22), Unemployed (15))

4. Are you in managing position in your workplace?

   (Yes (36), No (59), I am currently unemployed (14))

5. Have you ever recruited someone or are you recruiting people in your current job?

   (Yes (39), No (70))

6. Do you consider yourself as a brand?

   (Yes (37), No (72))

7. Do you use social media?

   (Yes (100), No (9))

8. Do you use or are you registered to some of these social media platforms?

   (Facebook (99), Instagram (89), LinkedIn (59), Twitter (36), Youtube (64), Snapchat (58), Whatsapp (99), Pinterest (35), Some blog (13))

9. How many hours approximately do you use social media per day?

   (0-1 (24), 1-3 (67), 3-5 (6), 5+ (3))

10. What are your primary purposes for using social media? (1 stands for first priority, 4 stands for last priority)

	1	2	3	4
For fun and entertainment	35	29	22	14
Communication	48	29	11	12
Business	12	28	34	26
Information search	24	27	34	15

11. How much do you think that social media affects to people's perceptions about someone?

Not at all   1 (0)   2 (3)   3 (12)   4 (66)   5 (28)   Affects a lot

12. If you would apply a job, do you think that the recruiter would look into your social media profile if you had one?

(Yes (85), No (8), I do not know (16))

13. Do you think that your social media appearance would affect the recruiter's decision to hire you?

(Yes (66), No (14), Maybe (29))

14. If you would be hiring someone to your firm, would you take a look into the job applicant's social media profiles?

(Yes (71), No (10), Maybe (28))