PERCEIVED AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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We would like to start by declaring that without all the external support, inspiration and patience from people in our surroundings we would not have come as far as we have today.

First and foremost, we would like to thank all participants in our in-depth interviews, without their time, knowledge and recommendations we would not have been able to accomplish this investigation and we owe them much gratitude. Secondly, we would like to thank Marcela Ramirez-Pasillas for her time as our supervisor as well as her continuous support and feedback during the entire writing process. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the authors of previous theoretical research for being a grand foundation of stimulation to our conducted work.

For us is this work a success story; a story that would have been unfinished without all support we have received. As Bill Richardson once stated “we cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together”.

Sandra Johansson
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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a powerful tool and the authors have been able to identify a sample of core dimensions that an authentic leader need to possess in order to be able to facilitate the increasing phenomenon and usage of social media in an effective way, i.e. transparency, flexibility, adaptability and trustworthiness.

With this investigation the authors aim to create an understanding of how authentic leaders deal with the on-going changes and rise of social media usage in their applied leadership approach and the investigation have reached a clarification of how authentic leaders adapt their leadership approach when utilising social media. The authors have selected an abductive research strategy and conducted twelve in-depth interviews to be able to analyse perceived authentic leadership in relation to the usage of social media, within diverse corporations in Sweden.

The vital connection between the usage of social media and authentic leadership has been proven through a combination of previous research and the author’s findings. By being authentic a leader possess the ability to optimistically welcome the challenge of social media usage for their corporation, and through that they can benefit from the positive consequences that social media usage actually brings. This investigation contributes to both leadership and social media literature by providing a new angle of the two phenomena’s in collaboration, which has not been investigated in previous research.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 5  
   1.1 BACKGROUND .................................................................................................................. 5  
      1.1.1 Social media .............................................................................................................. 5  
      1.1.2 Leadership in social media ...................................................................................... 6  
   1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .................................................................................................... 6  
   1.3 PURPOSE ........................................................................................................................ 7  
   1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ................................................................................................... 7  
   1.5 LIMITATIONS .................................................................................................................. 7  
   1.6 DELIMITATIONS ............................................................................................................ 7  
   1.7 DISPOSITIONS ................................................................................................................. 8  

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ............................................................................................. 9  
   2.1 AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP ............................................................................................... 9  
      2.1.1 Transparency ........................................................................................................... 10  
      2.1.2 Flexibility ............................................................................................................... 11  
      2.1.3 Adaptability ............................................................................................................ 12  
      2.1.4 Trustworthiness ...................................................................................................... 12  

3. METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................ 14  
   3.1 ABDUCTIVE RESEARCH APPROACH ........................................................................... 14  
   3.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AS A METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION ..................................... 15  
      3.2.1 Primary data ............................................................................................................ 16  
      3.2.2 Secondary data ........................................................................................................ 18  
   3.3 DATA ANALYSIS ............................................................................................................ 18  
   3.4 QUALITY INDICATORS .................................................................................................. 18  

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ........................................................................................................ 20  
   4.1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP ............................................................ 20  
      4.1.1 Transparency ........................................................................................................... 23  
      4.1.2 Flexibility and adaptability .................................................................................... 24  
      4.1.3 Trustworthiness ...................................................................................................... 24  

5. ANALYSIS .......................................................................................................................... 27  
   5.1 SOCIAL MEDIA AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP .......................................................... 27  
      5.1.1 Transparency ........................................................................................................... 29  
      5.1.2 Flexibility and adaptability .................................................................................... 30  
      5.1.3 Trustworthiness ...................................................................................................... 31  

6. CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................... 33  
   6.1 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .................................................................... 34  

LIST OF REFERENCES .......................................................................................................... 35  

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEWS .................................................................................................. 41  

APPENDIX 2 – FIGURE 2 ....................................................................................................... 42
TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 – RESEARCH STRUCTURE...............................................................8

FIGURE 2 – PERCEIVED AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL MEDIA...........................42
I. INTRODUCTION
This section has the purpose to give the reader a primary insight in the subject and comprehend the diverse issues that are indispensable. The section follows a tunnel approach, i.e. start with the background, eventually lead to a problem statement and a narrow purpose and ends with two specific research questions that basically will be the base of the investigation.

As we all know is the world frequently changing, growing and developing, as Kiefer (2010) put it: “change is continuous” (p. 43). The pace and the magnitude of the changes are significantly greater then ever before and one basic cause for that is the accelerated development of new technologies (Kuratko, Morris & Covin, 2011). In fact, technology can facilitate people’s work and the way they interact with each other (Pearlson & Saunders, 2009) if leaders know how to apply it appropriately in practice. As Kuratko et al. (2011) declare do external changes force internal changes, in other words, if the environment changes so will corporations and their leaders. According to Kotter (2001), to simply manage change is not enough, since the true transformation only occurs through leading change. That led us to the fact that leaders must know how to utilise technology and people to create effective work settings (Pearlson & Saunders, 2009). One way for leaders to accomplish that is to recognise the increasing importance of the phenomenon social media, since there has been an increasing social media development in the recent years, where new forms of social media reach the online market on a daily basis (Pearlson & Saunders, 2009). Consequently, this investigation will examine authentic leadership within the increasing and on-going development of social media.

1.1 Background
When starting this investigation the authors recognised that in order to appropriately understand authentic leadership from a social media perspective, the authors first and foremost need to realise where the significant rise of social media in the world today comes from, and why it is important for leaders. Therefore, the authors begin by encapsulating the importance of social media in the business world before they narrow it down to specific leaders and their connection to social media. In addition to that Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p. xvii) argue that the “web has changed everything”. In other words, we live in a world of constant change (Kiefer, 2010), a world where new technologies are escalating each day (Kuratko, Morris & Covin, 2011). To manage this we need leaders who can deal with the appearance of the phenomenon social media.

1.1.1 Social media
Social media is a powerful tool and can be defined as “anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversations” (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009, p. xvii). There are billions of people participating in the social media and the culture of the World Wide Web is much more extensive than just information transfer. The Web has turned out to be both an increasingly social and communicational tool (Preece & Shneiderman, 2009). In fact, social media has currently become the number one activity on the web (Socialnomics, 2013), which can be considered as a huge change that affects both people and businesses. Therefore, it is important to understand that social media has created powerful behaviours of how people communicate and share information.

Social media is also defined as “the various electronic tools available to help accelerate and improve our ability to connect, communicate, and collaborate” (Morecroft, Marr & Kassorakis, 2009, p.44) and this phenomenon has emerged the use of the Internet to enhance creativity, information sharing and collaboration among users (Pearlson & Saunders, 2009, p. 4). Erik Qualman (Socialnomics, 2013) once expressed that we no longer have a choice on whether we do social media or not; the
question is how well we do it, and the authors believe that it is time for everyone to understand the significance in that statement. Statistics actually shows that 71% of all companies use Facebook as a social network tool and that companies that use blogs for marketing has increased from 16% to 43% in the last five years (Search Engine Journal, 2013). Social media is not even close a fad and the authors agree with Eric Qualman when he claims that the phenomenon is “a fundamental shift in the way we communicate” (Socialnomics, 2013). The fact is that the society no longer search for the news, they find them, and social media is a phenomenon that constantly increases and changes.

1.1.2 Leadership in social media
Leadership is about developing a relationship with your followers, sharing power, giving up control and engaging people in trustful relationships where they are able to command better and faster (Veron, 2011). Leadership have been difficult in challenging times (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), nonetheless, leadership is a well-used expression and there exists several definitions. Most definitions agree on that leaders need followers, since no one can lead without them (Grint, 2010). As Fetzer (2005, p. 1311) state “definition of a leader often depends on the situation and context”, in line with that statement Grint (2010) argue that leadership definitions circles around four different areas; person, position, result or process and in this investigation the authors will focus on the first of those areas, i.e. who the leader is in relation to social media. Küng (2006) explain the reason for the many definitions of leadership in a clear way: “Few people believe there is one best way to lead all organizations or situations. Instead, numerous situational variables affect the leadership process including technology, environments, size, purposes and goals, and value systems”. However, when working with this investigation the authors agree with Ganz (2010, p. 527) when he wrote that leadership is “accepting responsibility to create conditions that enable others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty”, due to the fact that the authors believe that statement consists of an overall view on the diverse definitions of leadership. Nonetheless, a study made by DiStaso, McCorkindale and Wright (2011) show that the majority of business leaders felt that social media were important and Charles (2012) claims that social media has forever changed the conditions in which leaders operate.

1.2 Problem statement
Social media breaks the barrier between leaders and their followers by empowering individuals and groups to actually communicate freely and as known (Friedman, 2013) and Social Media “is perhaps one of the fastest growing areas of the Internet” (Emarketer, 2009). Rapid and on-going technological developments affect leaders, since they have to realise the increasing power of social media (Charles, 2012). Corporate leaders are intrigued and excited about the opportunities that social media brings, however, they are terrified for its power (Li, 2010). It is therefore essential for both present and future leaders to comprehend how they should adapt to the increased usage of social media in order to entirely be able to explore the potential benefits of the phenomenon.

Nonetheless, the authors believe that for a leader to be able to adapt to the increasing usage of social media can authentic leadership be applied, since some people have the perception that all kinds of leadership both starts and ends with authenticity (Gallos, 2008). However, even if the rise of social media can enable leaders success of work (Müller & Turner, 2010), did the authors decide to investigate the authentic leadership approach further to accomplish a deeper understanding of how authentic leaders are interacting with social media.

Social media has been studied heavily throughout the last couple of years, although there seems to be a gap in the research area of authentic leadership from a social media perspective. The authors have discovered that there is no significant previous research on the very relationship...
between social media and authentic leadership or even the connection between social media and leadership theories in general. Therefore, the authors have acknowledged the need to investigate this area further.

1.3 Purpose
With this investigation the authors want to understand how leaders define authentic leadership as a response to the increased use of social media in corporations. Therefore, with this purpose the authors aim to create understanding of how authentic leaders deal with the on-going incremental changes and rise of social media usage in their applied leadership approach. Moreover, the authors intend to reach a clarification of how leaders adapt their leadership approach when increasing the usage of the involving phenomenon social media. The authors have conducted twelve in-depth interviews to be able to analyse the perceived authentic leadership in relation to the usage of social media within diverse corporations in Sweden. In line with the purpose have the authors designed two specific research questions.

1.4 Research questions

R1: What are individual’s perceptions of authentic leadership as a response to the rising and on-going development of social media?

R2: What are individual’s perceptions of how perceived authentic leaders should consider the on-going development and increasing usage of social media, by baring in mind their leadership approach?

1.5 Limitations
Due to five main issues have the extent of this investigation been limited and the research only covers a certain amount of previous research. The first reason is the lack of time. The time limitation lead to the fact that the authors only had the opportunity to conduct a qualitative research that included twelve in-depth interviews, which did not allow the authors to generalise their results. Second, the time limitation also results in a mainly Swedish perspective on the perception of authentic leadership in social media. Thirdly, social media is a relative new phenomenon in today’s society, which means that there are few previous researches and theories about the issue. The fourth limitation is that the authors only were able to interview people in different industries and that even though all participants had deep knowledge about the issue they did not all possess a specific leadership position. The final reason to that the investigation covered the perception of perceived authentic leadership depends on the fact that not all participants had leadership positions.

1.6 Delimitations
The delimitations in this investigation are decisions the authors have made in the investigation design and can be combined in to four main issues. First, the interviews where predominantly done in Swedish, which means that the authors had to transcribe the interviews to English, which in turn can results in some personal interpretations. Second, time limitation resulted in a set of twelve in-depth interviews, which is a number that could have been both expanded and more analysed if the authors would have had more time. Third, the decision to conduct a broad perspective of the investigation as well as the decision to interview people in diverse corporations results in the perception of perceived authentic leadership, instead of solitary authentic leadership. Finally, due to the fact that the phenomena’s previously have not been incorporated and analysed together, the authors chose to develop a relatively general model.
1.7 Dispositions
The authors have made a choice to construct this investigation as followed:

Figure 1 – Research Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>Section 2</th>
<th>Section 3</th>
<th>Section 4</th>
<th>Section 5</th>
<th>Section 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Theoretical framework</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Empirical findings</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 1:** This section has the purpose to give the reader a primary insight in the subject and comprehend the diverse issues that are indispensable. The section follows a tunnel approach, i.e. start with the background, eventually lead to problem statement and a narrow purpose and ends with two specific research questions that basically will be the base of the investigation.

**Section 2:** This section is dedicated to illustrate and explain the relevant data that will be used when analysing the diverse findings. The section begins with a theoretical framework on diverse leadership dimensions and then incrementally perceives more depth through authentic leadership in social media.

**Section 3:** This section will justify and explain the diverse choices of methodology that is used in the investigation; in addition to that, the basic ideas and problems as well as quality of the investigation are presented.

**Section 4:** This section includes a review of all the conducted in-depth interviews and will follow the structure of the theoretical framework in order to assist the reader.

**Section 5:** This section will analyse the chosen theoretical framework in combination with the empirical data that has been collected throughout the entire investigation.

**Section 6:** This section consists of a conclusion of the investigation that will be composed of a discussion based on the results where the authors own thoughts form the basis of the reasoning. There will, in addition, be suggestions for further research about the subject.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section is dedicated to illustrate and explain the relevant data that will be used when analysing the diverse findings. The section begins with a theoretical framework on diverse leadership dimensions and then incrementally perceives more depth through authentic leadership in social media.

To be a leader has never and will never be an easy task to deal with and the degree of difficulty is actually escalating each day due to the constantly changing business environment, the growing globalisation and the increasing technology (Goldsmith, Baldoni, McArthur, 2010; Kuratko, et al., 2011). The fact is that to contact anyone, whenever or wherever, has never been as easy as it is today and the phenomenon of social media has moved from a “buzz word” status to a strategic tool used in all kinds of businesses (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008). Brighamn and Conner (2010) argue that social media has changed the workplace and will continue doing so, since all the emerging technologies actually enable a new kind of knowledge-building network at the workplace. Brighamn and Conner (2010, p. xviii) state “Social media has the potential to transform the workplace into an environment where learning is as natural as it is powerful”, i.e. social media will lead to a further transformation of the workplace. The fact is that the social web has been developing for approximately a little more then a decade now and it is built up on interactions and dialogs within blogs where anyone is pretty much able to comment, discuss and share information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition to that Kotter (2001) state that what leaders really do, what their real task is, is to prepare their corporation and lead it though change, which now seems to be through the change of social media. Additionally, according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) were social media used by 75 % of all Internet surfers during late 2008. Even so, Jane Hart, the Founder of the Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies, is quoted in an article by Bradley (2009) where she states that “the point of social media is to turn learning into a more participatory activity”, i.e. to actually utilise it even more.

Indeed, there is insignificant work in leadership literatures that actually has paid any attention to the role of social media interactions with leaders and the increased usage of social media per se, although, there is a significant literature on related constructs, i.e. leadership theories. It is increasingly transparent that diverse individuals occupies different leadership roles (Manning & Robertson, 2002) and, as written before, there are various and diverse definitions of what leadership is as well as whom leaders are due to all the numerous definitions that actually exists (Hays, 2012). However, a definition the authors agree upon is the overall definition made by Ganz (2010, p. 527) when he states that leadership is “accepting responsibility to create conditions that enable others to achieve a shared purpose in the face of uncertainty”. Nonetheless, leadership can be referred to the actual use of power (Raven, 1993) and nowadays is social media a power that leaders need to handle (Pierro, Raven, Amato, & Bélanger, 2013). The fact is that social media has a strong influence on almost every workplace and the relationship between leadership competences and their usage of social media is in great need of attention (Pierro et al., 2013).

2.1 Authentic leadership

Authenticity is about being yourself, i.e. the person you where created to be (Gallos, 2008). Authentic leaders lead with a genuine desire to serve and empower others, which goes hand in hand with social media (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). Wienberg and Pehlivan (2011) declare that whether leaders make their corporation use social media to communicate directly with consumers, or to influence others to carry a message related to the brand, effective use of social media can benefit greatly from a personal touch that is relationship oriented. In addition to that Wienberg and Pehlivan (2011) state that this is comprised of several important qualities from the leader, where the most important one is authenticity. Authentic leadership has been defined in many ways (Avolio, Luthans & Walumbwa, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Northouse, 2010).
However, the authors have been able to identify a sample of core and overall dimensions from previous researches, which a leader need to possess to be able to adopt to the increasing phenomenon and usage of social media in an effective way. The four samples of dimensions are: transparency, flexibility, adaptability and trustworthiness.

Transparency, or synonyms to the word, is connected to many of the definitions of authentic leadership, since “an authentic leader is someone who is very self-aware, has a clear moral centre, is transparent, and is a fair or balanced decision maker” (Avolio, 2010, p. 744). Moreover, authentic leaders are open and willing to share themselves fully with others and also show a genuine interest in others. If a leader lacks self-discipline and the ability to convert values into consistent actions, they won’t gain the respect of followers. Mistakes have to be admitted and the competitiveness of a leader should be channelled through self-discipline and the clear purpose (Gallos, 2008). The authors identified the second and third dimension, flexibility and adaptability, due to the fact that authentic leaders have to be effective in the fast moving and highly competitive environment of today. Authentic leaders have to adapt leadership competences that fit the urgent situations. There are times to be inspiring and motivating, and times to be tough about personal decisions and financial decisions. There are times to communicate public messages and times to have private conversations (Gallos, 2008). Dynamics and flexibility in leadership varies a lot (Müller & Turner, 2010) and authentic leaders cannot lead if they disregard that; they ought to be willing to work on different combinations to meet the requirements of the situation (Northouse, 2010). Additionally, trust is the fourth dimension that the authors have identified within authentic leadership. Authentic leadership is genuine and real, and since people demand trustworthy leadership the study of authentic leadership becomes accurate (Northouse, 2010) and that they are true to themselves (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leadership is like an interpersonal process, which emphasises that authentic leadership is relational and created by leaders and followers together. It emerges from the interactions between leaders and followers; an authentic leader manages to accomplish followers to go along by having a well-understood and motivated purpose and core values based on integrity, meaning that the whole truth is being communicated even though it might be painful (Northouse, 2010). Moreover, authentic leaders require moral reasoning in order to successfully make ethical decisions about, right and wrong (Northouse, 2010) and authenticity requires leaders to do what is good for their followers and society, by working together to create a better common good (Northhouse, 2010).

The four dimensions that the authors have identified within authentic leadership goes hand in hand with the ever changing environment and the incremental rise of social media and according to Gallos (2008) are good leaders able to nuance and mix diverse leadership approaches to what the situation demands.

2.1.1 Transparency
A transparent leader can be defined as "a person who is open, frank, and candid, and leads in a consistent and predictable manner” (Dyke, 2010). This, of course, is a challenge that requires transparency from leaders, since transparency “or being completely open and honest in business—is a competitive tool” (Baum, 2005). According to Karnick (2012, p. 325) does the word transparency imply clarity and “a true sharing of information between concerned persons”, e.g. including clarity during the usage of social media. Karnicks (2012) perception goes hand in hand with Vogelgesang and Lester (2009) definition of the word transparency, and in addition to that Vogelgesang and Lester (2009) argue that transparent leadership actually will lead to competitive advantage. However, transparent leadership might no longer be seen as an option for corporations due to the increased usage of social media, and a great way to tackle the rise of social media is through a transparent leadership (Stark, 2011). In addition to that DiStaso and Bortree (2012) argues that social media is used by business leaders to enhance transparency of their corporations. Nonetheless, in a report from
Arthur W. Page Society and the business roundtable Institute (2009) it is stated that transparency is becoming increasingly vital to corporations and Gallos (2008) claim that leadership has reached a new level of transparency today, due to the very fact that “hundreds of millions are using the Internet and it is an effective tool for getting access to and sharing information” (p. 474-475).

Moreover, as a leader it is truly important to create meaning for their followers by sharing the very mission and purpose of the corporation (Podolny, Khurana & Besharov 2010), being open, and a transparent competence allows that to happen. Transparency occurs when individuals share their core feelings, motives and inclinations with others in an appropriate manner. It is about being open and honest (Northouse, 2010). In other words, the drastically increased usage of social media has lead to a new era of openness and to overcome this increasing growth is the concept of ‘Open Leadership’ founded, which can be defined as leadership that “have the confidence and humility to give up the need to be in control while inspiring commitment from people to accomplish goals” (Li, 2010, p. 14). The highlight for leaders in the notion of ‘open leadership’ is to control transparency and Li (2010) argue that leaders can transform their corporations and make them more efficient, more decisive, and eventually more profitable by embracing social media and ”open and social business are not leaderless — quite the contrary, they are lead in a manner that leverages new behaviours” (Yehuda, 2011). In other words, both Li (2010) and Yehuda (2011) claims that open leadership is not even close to an resignation of leadership, it is a concept of leadership that is about carefully letting go of control in areas where it will be beneficial for the corporation, e.g. control transparency in social media, and that is open leadership skills. Put differently, transparency is a necessary part of basic leadership skills in the today’s technological environment.

2.1.2 Flexibility
Turbulent business environments require increasing flexibility (Santos-Vijande, López-Sánchez & Trespalacios, 2012) and corporations today need to move quicker and be more flexible than ever before. According to Gallos (2008, p. 203-204) require this kinds of environment leaders that “do multiple jobs, constantly learn new skills and willingly shift to different locations and assignments”, i.e. leader should embrace flexibility as a competence. That there has been a change in the usage of social media is not an extraneous fact and possess flexibility will enhance this particular change for the leader (Norton, 2010). Bass (2008) state that leaders should be flexible in the very face of shifts in both diverse opportunities and conditions due to the turbulent environment, and that they need to remain dynamic as well as being ready to actually adapt new technologies and various requirements.

Flexibility is a narrower synonym to dynamism and Yukl and Mashsud (2010, p. 81) define flexible leadership as followed; “Flexible leadership involves changing behaviour in appropriate ways as the situation changes”. In other words, a flexible leader is ”not locked into a singular approach to a problem, maintaining an openness and willingness to change” (Northouse, 2010, p. 46), which means that when the very environment of a situation change, the leader also change to meet the new conditions. Nonetheless, flexibility is a direct synonym to dynamism and Norton (2010) state that flexibility is a clear asset and leaders that are more flexible are viewed as more effective by their followers (Chatman & Kennedy, 2010). The fact is that leaders increase their effectiveness if they are able to actually bend their leadership style to deal with the situations that is in front of them (Norton, 2010). However, the phenomenon of flexibility is described by Northouse (2010, p. 94-95) as “effective leaders are those who can change their own style based on the task requirements and the subordinates needs, even in the middle of a project”.
2.1.3 Adaptability

Warren Bennis, one of the world's leading experts on leadership, talk about the very importance of adaptability and state that the “individual adaptability is absolutely critical...it requires a deliberate awareness of the many inflection points that are pressing you at any moment. It takes a hardiness in attitude that allows you to face challenges and adapt all of it in a way that results in alignment” (Nelson, 1997, p. 37). Continuously, adaptability is a leadership imperative (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006), since the world is constantly changing in all sort of ways. Due to the ever-changing environment as well as the increased usage of social media, it is becoming comprehensible that it is critical for people to be not only be a strong performer, but also a fast, adaptive learner (Karaevli & Hall, 2006). In other words, as we all are acquainted with is the usage of social media increasing, and a leader need adaptability to manage this change (Zaccaro, Banks & Edwards, 2004). Nonetheless, all kind of workers needs to be increasingly adaptable, and tolerant of uncertainty to actually be able to operate effectively in these changing and varied environments they are facing today (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan & Plamondon, 2000).

Adaptability actually gives the impression to go in the opposite way of a human's natural instinct and preference and according to Calarco and Gurvis (2006) are adaptable people enjoying challenges of working on unfamiliar territory. They also state that adaptable people accept change, deal with the unknown and shift their behaviour accordingly to the current situation they are facing. In other words, when it comes to adaptability, as a leadership competence, it indicates that “responding effectively to changing events in the organizational environment” (Calarco & Gurvis, 2006, p. 8).

Additionally, Karaevli and Hall (2006) declare that the process of adapting to changing demands is harder in higher-level jobs, i.e. leadership roles, which make the individuals adaptability skills more critical for leaders than it might be for professionals and other occupational groups. Zaccaro et al. (2004) additionally argue that adaptability can be trained and if leaders possess adaptability skills they will become more effective in their leadership. By training adaptability skills leaders will activate the kinds of learning processes that will also foster effectiveness in both novel and dynamic performance environments, e.g. environments that calls for adaptability, such as the environment of increased social media usage (Zaccaro et al., 2004).

2.1.4 Trustworthiness

The turbulence in the society and the environment have thrilled an incredible and increasing demand for authentic leadership, and in line with the rising usage of social media people demands trustworthy leadership (Northouse, 2010). In diverse leadership articles, books and courses is trust often a very discussed as well pointed out as a main contribution to good leadership (Hackman, 2010), and authentic leaders are true to themselves and to others; they do what they say they will do (Bass, 2008). Gladis and Goldsmith (2010, p. xi) state that trust is the critical key to leadership and leaders must understand “how trust works, what its components are, how to build trust, and how you can lose trust”. Gallos (2008, p. 474-475) state that "the importance of leading with trust is integral to success" and claim that integrity is a huge part of transparency capabilities within leadership. Another clear definition of trust is made by Garbarino and Johnson (1999, p. 70), where they state that: “trust is the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence and commitment is an enduring desire to maintain the valued relationship”.

Furthermore, Baum (2005) also argue that when leaders approach the authentic leadership style there will be a great freedom for them, as well as a higher level of credibility involved when people grasp that they actually managing the business both openly and honestly. In other words, trust, as a leadership competence must therefore be showed in all their actions and decisions, which also cover social media usage, and to make the expression integrity more tangible.
Authentic leadership fulfils the need for trustworthiness in society, it fills avoid and provides the answers to people searching for sound leadership in an uncertain world (Northouse, 2010).

Moreover, Conger (2007, p. 233) defined three following concept of leadership behaviours when it comes to integrity: “1) being open and sharing critical information with followers, 2) keeping ones word and 3) serving the interest of ones followers rather than ones own”. Nonetheless, it has been stated that trust in the leader is likely to be correlated with the leaders self-esteem. According to Bass (2008), leaders accuracy and consistency in communications that explain decisions in simple, easily understood language when using social media is truly important, or as Gallos (2008, p. 10) put it “it is more of a communications challenge then anything else”.

Furthermore, a very important aspect when it comes to trustworthiness is credibility and when it comes to leadership is credibility crucial (Auerbach & Greenbaum, 2000) and a true leadership aspiration (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Credibility is a title that leaders need to earn everyday, due to the fact that people actually decide by themselves if they want to trust them or not, i.e. “leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 21).

According to Auerbach & Greenbaum (2000) leaders need to be able to feel the importance to earn credibility to be able to maintain standing in the ever-changing society we live in today. In other words, leaders need to constantly both earn and sustain credibility, not least in the social media, to maintain followers trust. To be able to be consistent when it comes to credibility have Kouzes and Posner (2011, p. 35) develop six steps leaders should choose to follow: “1) Discover yourself, 2) Appreciate constituents, 3) Affirm shared values, 4) develop capacity, 5) serve a purpose and 6) sustain hope.”
3. METHODOLOGY

This section will justify and explain the diverse choices of methodology that is used in the investigation; in addition to that, the basic ideas and problems as well as quality of the investigation are presented.

In this methodology section the authors will describe and justify the choices of methodology that have been used in the scientific research. In addition, the authors will present the basic ideas and problems of scientific research work and the integrity of the thesis. As investigators the authors intend for the study to cover many quality indicators, meaning that the investigation accomplishes its purpose while simultaneously being dependable, trustworthy and consistent (Worthen et al., 1993). The investigation aims to be of significance for individual leaders whose operations on a daily basis are influenced by the increasing usage of Social Media in general. Undeniably, not all social medias are the same (Bernoff & Li, 2008), and from a technology perspective, can all the diverse platforms vary and as well as the rules of both utilization and functionality. By focusing on social media in general the authors refer to diverse social media platforms such as blogs, micro-blogs, communities and social networks, which gives a broader perspective on the study.

3.1 Abductive research approach

When selecting a suitable methodology, it has to be determined which strategy that is best suited to get a hold on the reality (Jacobsen, 2011). In this study it is important to keep in mind that the aim of the investigation was to create understanding of how authentic leaders deal with the ongoing incremental changes and rise of social media usage in their applied leadership approach.

An abductive research strategy is particularly appropriate for present purposes (Chamberlain, 2006). Therefore, the authors have selected an abductive research strategy, which focuses attention on producing systematic and inclusive re-descriptions and understandings of the motives and accounts of the actors directly and intimately involved in particular social situations, the complex ways in which these inter-subjectively meaningful motives and accounts inform social interaction (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). An abductive research strategy is broader then both inductive and deductive research strategy (Haig, 2008) and in addition to that Chamberlain (2006, p. 295) argue that; “the unconfirmed revelation obtained by abduction was to be followed by deductive and inductive stages”. That means, rather than relying on induction or deduction, the abductive logic stresses the importance of going back and forth between the theoretical framework, data sources and analysis, in other words matching these three elements. Hence, the aim of the abductive strategy is the construction of theories that are grounded in everyday activities, in the language and meanings of social actors. This means that abductivists as social researchers use a logic to construct the ideal types that is in line with the logic people use to create typifications in everyday life (Ong, 2012). Furthermore, due to the lack of previous research in this particular subject is an abductive research strategy of major significance, since it is argued that abductive research place great magnitude on the task of actually detecting empirical phenomena’s, as well as “views the completion of this task as a prerequisite for subsequent theory construction” (Haig, 2008, p. 1020).

These notions stress emergence in case studies; it is important to let empirical reality interact with conceptual ideas in the analysis, to be open to new issues and to let the case process develop. However, an abductive approach poses a challenge on the authors, since it should be allowed to evolve in a way that is not prescribed or controlled. Neither a loose nor a tight framework is appropriate, since some control and coordination is required to ensure feasible cooperation. Moreover, it does not necessarily bring results to a common table, the authors should be prepared for discussions while remaining sensitive to emerging issues and readily adapt to changes in the process (Piekkari & Welch, 2011).
In the given investigation the authors have chosen to utilise between leaders and the increased usage of social media. At first the authors of the study had to ensure that the leader had knowledge about social media platforms. Secondly, that the leader had work in corporations that utilise social media platforms to a wider extent in order for the interpretation on leadership and social media to be well justified. It should also be taken into account the type of corporation that is being studied; it is a balancing act between advantages and disadvantages (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). Since the investigated phenomena is unique and represents an area of leadership that has previously not been widely investigated, a qualitative study becomes ideal. Although, by only focused on fewer leaders, the results might be subjective and difficult to apply to the general population (Klenke, 2008). When researching a relatively uncharted territory, qualitative methods provides a road map and offers effective means to investigate dimensions, which are especially critical in leadership research (Klenke, 2008). Qualitative research involves and interprets a naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Meaning that the authors study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms if the meaning that people bring to them (Klenke, 2008). A qualitative study is flexible and can adapt the collected information to the reality. Moreover, it is also more open for new information and gives an inclusive description of the situation (Jacobsen, 2011). The extensive descriptions of the leadership issue or problem under investigation helps us capture multiple voices and perspectives, based in the lived experiences and of the research participants (Klenke, 2008). Human beings realities need to be understood in contexts and the social world cannot be described without investigating how people use language, symbols and meaning to construct social practice. Therefore, interpretive research seeks to understand a moving target to show how the current situation under investigation shapes the research process (Klenke, 2008).

3.2 In-depth interviews as a method of data collection

In-depth interviews can be described as a type of conversation, where there exists a specific purpose. The main differences between a conversation and an in-depth interview are the objectives and the relation between the researcher and the participant (Legard, Keegan & Ward et al, 2003). Moreover, an in-depth interview combines structure with flexibility and it is naturally interactive, meaning that the initial questions encourage the respondent to talk freely while answering the question. It is then followed by follow up questions in order to obtain a deeper and fuller understanding, which often leads to that new knowledge or thoughts are created. The exchange relationship is seen as open-ended, designed to collect information on the meanings and qualities of the interviewee’s experiences (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). Conducting in-depth interviews has added some extra demands on the authors. The first necessary characteristic of the interviewer is to be able to listen in order to hear, digest and comprehend the answers. Furthermore, the interviewers need to have a clear logical mind so that they can think quickly and distil essential points and formulate appropriate follow up questions (Legard et al., 2003). The authors had to be able to quickly develop a good working relationship with people from all walks of life with power and influence (Legard et al., 2003). It also imposes demands on the actual questions, as they have to be relevant in order for the authors to prove the credibility of their investigation. That was achieved from careful preparation and the awareness of the need of being efficient while interviewing. The interviews where conducted in the following manners. First the authors introduced themselves and their purpose in order to create an initial relationship. Thereafter were the investigation topic described and opening questions posted. The initial questions included background and contextual information so that the authors would know how to continue with their question. In order to achieve the level of depth and level of detail sought, the authors had a number of main questions, probing questions and follow up questions (Klenke, 2008). Furthermore, the main questions started the discussion, the probing questions gave examples and additional information and the follow up questions clarified statements further. Yin
(2003) also emphasized the need to be a good listener when collecting data for an investigation, which means being adaptive and flexible, since new upcoming contents can be noticed as well. For successfully conducting the interviews, an interview guide was used, including a list of general questions and areas that had to be covered when interviewing the respondent. In addition to that is should be stated that the participants did most of the talking and the authors merely filled in a few times to make the conversation flow. Nonetheless, the participants where guided through the themes, both through the anticipated ones and through the new ones that were created during the actual interview. Before ending the interview the participants where asked to consider whether they believed that something important had been left out, that they wanted to contribute with (Legard et al., 2003).

After the interviews, notes and recordings have been gone over several times in order to fully grasp and understand what the participants have actually contributed with. The participants have also gone through the final document in order to insure that what has been used is correct. This is an important obligation of the authors.

The questions asked ranged from narrow to widely framed questions. To begin with the questions where widely framed in order to encourage the interviewee to raise issues that are relevant to them. Then questions that made them focus a bit more narrowly on the specific topic and concepts. These questions where followed up with perspective–widening questions where they could uncover more layers of meaning and greater richness. Here the authors had to make sure that the answers were comprehensive enough, explored, explained and well clarified. Prompts where raised from the authors to achieve a reflection on a specific matter and probes where used to find out more about what had already been raised (Legard et al., 2003). Since the specific investigation purpose requires both breadth and depth a combination of these questions were necessary. Finally, in order to create a conversation, the authors were taking a reciprocal role, meaning that they shared their own views, experiences and reflections (Legard et al., 2003).

3.2.1 Primary data

Considering that this investigation deals predominantly with the connection between leadership and the increased usage of social media, the authors have chosen to interview diverse leaders from different industries in Sweden to be able to reach as much knowledge as possible about the selected subject.

The authors are conscious of the very fact that focusing their primary data on several more leaders would have created a better as well as deeper contribution of information. However, the authors had to pay attention to the time and resource limitations set for this investigation, which is an understanding that arranged the foundation for the decision to use solely a narrow set of leaders to create a more in-depth analysis. The fact is, that by using information from more leaders would have limited the author’s ability to go into details of the analysis of the chosen subject. Nonetheless, considering that the very aim of the investigation is to increase the understanding of how authentic leadership competences are influenced by the increased use of social media in corporations, a more in-depth qualitative analysis becomes much more relevant than a broad quantitative one. Moreover, the author’s previous knowledge about the broad and global usage of social media prompted them to limit this investigation to the Swedish perspective. This is a limitation to the investigation in the sense that the authors choose to overlook the knowledge and information of the diverse leaders in the other countries. However, the chosen leaders come from a broad variety of corporations that are operating globally and as interesting as it would have been, the limited time and resources associated with the investigation force the authors to limit their investigation to Sweden to be able to develop an in-depth qualitative study.
Furthermore, during the collection of primary data the authors had the privilege to meet several leaders and employees in both well-known and global corporations that possess a great variety of information and knowledge about the selected subject; leaders interaction with social media. The interviews are collected from twelve individuals and ten diverse corporations. The authors have been obliged to decide from which corporations individuals should be interviewed and also whom from those specific corporations to interview (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). A fewer number of interviews should be conducted so that the authors have a chance to fully understand and grasp the given information (Jacobsen, 2011). Moreover, Jacobsen (2001) states that a maximum limit of 20 interviews are appropriate, since qualitative interviews, containing a lot of details and enlightenments, requires a lot of time. Gubrum and Holstein (2002) have reached the conclusion that there exists no specific, set answer and they do not recommend a specific number, however eight in-depth interviews are usually enough. The authors have chosen to conduct twelve in-depth interviews in order to discover something unique and special in each and every interview.

More specifically, the people who were willing to share their knowledge about the chosen subject were the following people mentioned by date order (See Appendix 1): Aric Dromi, digital philosopher within the Car industry. He has worked with social media for more then 10 years and has a deep knowledge within the area. Karolina Bjurehed, IT Application Manager Social Media within the Car industry. She has developed the work of social media interactions in her present corporation and has always worked close to social media, both as web editor and IT manager. Aric and Karolina are from different departments within the same corporation, however, the corporation wanted remain anonymous. The next interview was made with Maria Nordström, Marketing communicator at Jönköping University. She is managing part of the social media activity at the university, as well as university service, marketing support and press contacts. A famous business founder, manager and leader, mostly within the e-commerce industry describes the fourth interviewee who due to being in the middle of a new start up process also wanted to remain anonymous. Thereafter we interviewed the head coach of the Swedish national judo team, Robert Eriksson, who especially contributed with experiences from a leadership perspective when working together with younger generations. To continue we interviewed David Johansson, who is working as a sales manager at GoteDavid and Carl Lumpsden, who is the logistics manager at Mediamarkt. Then we met with Hanna Moisander, working as chief operating officer, consultant and runs her own business. The head of the marketing department at Jönköping University, Ulf Linnman was the author’s next interviewee, closely followed by Sara Andersson, web and marketing coordinator at Theofilis Beslag. To continue we interviewed an anonymous HR officer, working at a large size corporation, which also wanted to remain anonymous. The twelfth and final interview made with an anonymous Business founder and owner within the real estate industry.

Nonetheless, when collecting primary data, the authors had to be aware of the different existing opportunities to conduct this process. It is possible to use documentation, archival records, and interviews or direct observations as well as participant observations (Yin, 2003).

The author’s primary source is interview based since the investigation seeks to interpret how leadership is influenced by the increasing use of social media. In an interview study, data and findings are based on researcher to respondent conversations (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). Through interviews a deeper rapport with informants is possible, which is necessary to gain honest and accurate responses and deeper insights (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). In-depth interviewing goes beyond mere fact gathering and attempts to construct meaning and interpretation in the context of conversation (Klenke, 2008).
3.2.2 Secondary data
Secondary data collection was necessary to create the theoretical framework. In doing so, databases have been used in order to find previous research in the area of interest to determine a research field, relevant to deeper analysis. This includes journal articles and academic literature. Moreover, it was crucial to be selective while gathering the secondary data, mostly because there did not exist a lot of material on the actual investigation topic. Secondary data is often tailored for a specific purpose of a researcher; therefore there exists a limit of what the authors actually can retrieve from secondary data (Jacobsen, 2011). Therefore have studies been compared and discussed, as it was crucial to be open minded and not having any leading preconceptions regarding the outcomes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The authors have only conducted secondary sources in relation to the theoretical framework.

3.3 Data Analysis
A reader of an interview research has to depend a lot on the researchers selection and contextualisation of the interview statements. The authors have tried to achieve a certain level of control by having both authors controlling and interpreting the findings. By also presenting the materials used for the interpretations, namely both a theoretical framework and empirical material, the readers are given the opportunity to follow what lies behind the author’s interpretations (Kvale, 1996). Moreover, the authors here explicitly outline the different steps of the analysis process and they have chosen to apply the fort five steps of the ‘six steps of an analysis’ (Kvale, 1996), to clearly describe the process of their analysis. In the first step of the interview when the interviewee described his or her experiences and how they felt in relation to the specific research topic, the authors did very little interpretation of their sayings. The main focus was on listening in order to grasp an understanding of what they where saying. Secondly, the interviewees tended to find new relationships and new meanings of their experiences, including spontaneous descriptions where the authors freely could make interpretations. At the third level, the authors condensed and interpreted the meaning of what was described and communicated their understanding back for an approval from the interviewee. He or she were then able to give an on the spot confirmation or disconfirmation, whether the authors had understood them correctly. Fourth, when the authors sat down to further interpret the results, the first mission was to structure and clarify the material (Kvale, 1996). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed as a basis for deeper investigation of the data and repetitions were eliminated so that they would not cause confusion. The theoretical framework acted as the basis for the analysis, there was already an orientation about how to deeper investigate the primary data in the context of the theoretical background. The framework was central to be able to set the attention on the important data and to ignore irrelevant information (Yin, 2003). During their interpretations, the authors have been going forth and back between the theoretical framework and the empirical findings, in order to reach the best possible analysis. Also the language that was used had to be comprehensible and understandable for the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Having analysed the findings, the authors sent the entire investigation back to the interviewees, allowing them to comment on the analysis and giving their approval to what had been stated.

3.4 Quality indicators
First and foremost, that an actual investigation should be trustworthy is a main focus as authors of an investigation. Since the investigation has been conducted in Sweden, the authors have applied culture specific communication strategies in order to meet the role expectations and other circumstances or the unique research situation. Then, making it possible for readers to evaluate the rigour of the research presented (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). It concerns how the trustworthiness is communicated, both in regard to how the findings are selected and interpreted. By a careful presentation of the data collection, thoroughly explaining the multiple site interviews
and the involvement of numerous researchers, the authors have tried to justify the investigation honestly (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). The author's intentions were to structure the interview questions and focus the main data collection on academic references in order to reach a higher integrity level (Litwin, 1995). That particular fact increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the investigation, since academic theories have been both scrutinised and revised by other authors. In addition to that, further theories and views from other relevant sources concerning the chosen subject have also been included to provide further support.

The authors have through several measures, worked to ensure the credibility of the investigation, one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. It tries to define how congruent the investigation is with the reality (Shenton, 2004). It refers to the value and believability of the investigation (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013). First the operational measures of the investigation have been carefully selected. Collaborative sessions have been used together with colleagues and a supervisor, in order to discuss alternative approaches, discover potential flaws, receive feedback and so forth. Moreover, transcripts from interviews have been kept, in order to carefully remember the dialogues. A wide range of informants has been used in order to gain greater knowledge of a wider group, meaning that multiple voices contribute with similarity, dissimilarity, redundancy and variety (Shenton, 2004). Each person who has been approached has also had the opportunity to refuse to participate, which contributes to that the actual participants have been genuinely willing to take part in the author's investigation (Shenton, 2004).

Secondly, transferability is concerned with to which extent the investigation can be applied in other situations. Even though each case may be unique it is also an example of a broader group (Shenton, 2004). The authors have tried to ensure transferability by presenting the individuals who took part in the investigation and where they are based. Restrictions on the contributors have been mentioned and so also the data collection methods. Dates, time periods, number and lengths of the collection sessions are also stated. Although the investigation has to be understood within the specific context of individuals, corporations and geographic areas, the authors believe that though cautious studies information can be valuable even in other settings (Shenton, 2004).

Thirdly, dependability is concerned with whether the investigation was repeated in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). In order to address the dependability issues, the authors have carefully described the investigation design and its implementation, addressing what was done in the field and the effectiveness of the actual process. It means that another researcher can perform the same investigation all over again.

Lastly, conformability refers to the steps taken to ensure that the findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than characteristics and preferences of the researcher. It refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data (Houghton et al., 2013).

Therefore it is necessary that the authors admit their own predispositions, and uses a suitable method to reduce the effect of potential bias, assumptions and beliefs (Shenton, 2004). The authors have therefore cautiously presented the shortcomings or limitations of the study and its potential effects. The methodology has been carefully described in order to allow the integrity of the results to be scrutinised. Moreover, and audit trail have been kept in order to be able to examine the process which has led to the end product (Houghton et al, 2013).
4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This section includes a review of all the conducted in-depth interviews and will follow the structure of the theoretical framework in order to assist the reader.

The empirical investigation has been conducted from a combination of all the primary sources. It is particularly based on information from the completed interviews about leadership, mainly authentic leadership, and the escalating phenomena of social media. First and foremost the author introduces the findings on both of the two concepts, authentic leadership and social media. However, to make the section even more feasible for the readers the authors made a decision to divide the empirical investigation similar to the design of the theoretical framework.

There were twelve interviews conducted for this empirical investigation, which was a choice that the authors clarified in the methodology section. In that section it was also written that the empirical findings where accomplished with twelve separate people, with different titles and work descriptions, various experience and from diverse corporations across Sweden. The thoughts and perceptions of the interviewed people varied a lot on some points, however, that almost everyone used social media both professional and privately was one of their many common factors. Nevertheless, the empirical investigation has mainly concerned their perception about authentic leadership in social media as well as the very connection between leadership and the increasing usage of social media.

Furthermore, that social media has affected all participants everyday operations at a professional and private level was very obvious when investigating this increasing phenomenon. The majority express that there are both positive and negative aspects of social media usage in corporations, where the negative aspects today concerns that the usage of social media might be en extra workload for the corporation.

4.1 Social media and authentic leadership

That there is a continuous increase in the usage of social media and a continuous change in the structure of how we use social media is a fact Ulf Linman (personal communication, 2013-04-19) expressed during the interview. In line with that, Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) argued that companies are waking up to a new reality right know, where customers and shareholders are communicating on a whole new level of different channels and in order for companies to actually meet their costumers on the same ground they need to utilize the same tools as they do, e.g. social media. Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06), argues that in todays modern world, it is almost required that a leader use social media in order to perform a modern leadership and a leader have to bear in mind that they constantly are associated with the organisation, even during their private time.

Nonetheless, the positive aspects where more extensive, as Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) stated: “It has specifically affected my work a lot in a very positive way, because now I have access to a great deal more information or links that can actually lead me to the right information.” Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) also argued that if people know how to utilize social media in their day-to-day work it will facilitate their work incredible and how people interact on social media will directly affect their work performance in both effectiveness and efficiency. Also, Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06) stated that if social media is used in the right way it is easier and a faster approach for a leader to make their followers consider a new development or something similar, which then generates that they come prepared to new happenings. In addition to that Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) claimed that the increasing usage of social media is only positive, that it is valuable channels for finding the right people and communicating. It is important for a corporation to be on the train, and being active
in social media. A fact Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) agreed on, since she believe that corporations can and will benefit greatly from social media usage if it is used correctly.

Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) also stated that companies that are active in social media show that they keep up with the digital revolution and that they take part in an additional channels to communicate and disseminate information, which is a sort-of sign of being concerned of their stakeholders. In addition to that, Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) stated that she is working on the issue to integrate social media usage even more in her corporation and said during the interview that she hoped it will be used more intensively and more frequently in the near future due to the many possibilities it actually can bring. However, David Johansson (personal communication, 2013-04-17) on the other hand were slightly concerned about the rapid increase of social media usage and even though he believes that social media can be great and will continue to grow, he does not think that leaders always should take an active choice to utilise social media in their corporations, since it will cause problems such as lack of personal contact with stakeholders. That was a concern that Robert Eriksson (personal communication, 2013-04-16) shared, he believed that it is a great information channel, however, it is important not to get stuck in it. Robert Eriksson (personal communication, 2013-04-16) argued that social media usage generates less personal contact, which is negative, and it also generates a to extensive news span, i.e. messages will drown in the crowd and people might instead neglect valuable information.

Furthermore, the connection between authentic leadership and social media where more apparent than expected, as Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) stated are social media technologies just the enablers and it is first when the leadership allow corporations to utilise social media, both internally and externally, the corporations can benefit from it. As Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) said it is vital that a leader act as a friend, however, at the same time control what is going on the social media. She argued that a leader need to be able to discuss the social media usage openly as well as set both clear policies and guidelines when it comes to the usage of social media. Something that Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06) agreed upon, saying that it is important that the information and policies on how to use social media comes from a management group, however then leaders can be friends or followers of their co-workers in order to remain in control of what they are communicating officially. Additionally, Robert Eriksson (personal communication, 2013-04-16) argued that the corporations management has to make sure that someone is in charge of the social media usage, and as Carl Lumpsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) said, roles in social media usage have to be defined within the corporation and also it has to be kept in mind that the usage have to be politically correct, which is a decision defined by the management. However, one perception they all had in common about the increasing phenomenon is that the environment has not really understood the true importance of social media yet and how it actually can benefit them in their work. The reason why, as Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) stated, is partly due to the management. She believed that if corporation should be able take better advantages of the social media the decision need to come from a leadership position, which unfortunately is quite rare. In addition to that Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) argued that social media usage in corporations should be seen as a leadership decision, and not solely as a marketing decision. However, Ulf Linnman (personal communication, 2013-04-19) expressed the issue of clarity in how to utilise social media, e.g. both practical and ethical advises, which also is something that should come from a leadership position.

Businesses today hardly have a choice if they want to use social media or not, however the issue is instead how well they use it, an argument that all participants agreed upon. As Anonymous C
of social media will automatically fall behind. Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) argued that it is only how corporations use it and Karolina Bjurehed (personal communication, 2013-03-28) agreed on that statement and stated that leaders, whether it is a small or a large corporation, can have a huge impact on the usage of social media simply by their behaviour. The reason to this can be, as Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) argued, due to the fact that the younger generations today expects that businesses actually are active on social media. Or the reason is as simple as it can be perceived as quite retrogressive if you do not use it in corporations today, which is an argument that Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) declared. A similar view on this standpoint was made by Ulf Linnman (personal communication, 2013-04-19), who believed that everyone knows what social media is all about and that it is more a question of taking the decision of whether to position ourselves in the front seat or in the back seat. In other words, the content is what really matters.

Nonetheless, another perception about this viewpoint was made by Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23), who did believe that an corporation or its leader can chose whether to use social media or not, and pointed out that choices also have to be made regarding how you chose to respond, which you preferably should. Which is something that Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) also agreed upon, and stated that being active on social media actually is a choice a corporation can take, since some need to exclude it, while others will use it more extensively.

That there is a visible and vital connection between authentic leaders and social media is a statement that Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) thought all leaders need to take into account. He also declared that social media is a mindset; “it is how I communicate, how I think and how I take decisions”, and stressed the fact that even if the decisions to be made is a difficult, social media leaders will be good leaders if they are authentic. That was a declaration that can be followed by Carl Lumsdens (personal communication, 2013-04-18) beliefs that it all comes down to that it has to exist a clear, straightforward and authentic leadership plan when it come to the usage of social media in any corporation. He argued that there has to be a plan, a policy and a straightforward message on how people in relation to a certain corporation should behave, however, he thought that it might be difficult for a leader to guarantee that it is actually being followed even though they are authentic.

However, Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) believed that a leader has to notice and sometimes also double-check so that the policies and core values are being followed. Additionally, Anonymous A (personal communication, 2013-04-16) explained the issue in a more consist way and stated that “authentic policies and control measures are necessary from a leader position in order to successfully deal with social media usage”. Robert Eriksson (personal communication, 2013-04-16) shared the same view on the connection of leadership and social media usage, and stated that a leader always has to lead based on the existing conditions and today everything is more open and information is more accessible. He argued that it requires that the leader have suitable characteristics such as authentic leadership characteristics. However, for that to be feasible for every leader Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) believed that to actually succeed with authentic leadership some top management might need an education in social media usage in order to gain insight into the value of it. She said that if leaders do not believe in authenticity when it comes to social media usage, they would not benefit from all the positive consequences that it actually brings.

Another of Carl Lumsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) viewpoints is that social media probably will replace internal communication systems in the future, and then a leader absolutely
needs to act truly authentic and provide clear guidelines of how to utilise it. Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) had the same beliefs, that in the future, the once without an internal social media structure will not have a place in the market. In addition to that he argued that leaders cannot meet the market demands without it and that the society probably will witness a whole new level of leadership in the nearest future, e.g. authentic leadership.

4.1.1 Transparency

That transparency was a huge part of authentic leadership as well as an important aspect to have in mind when using social media in corporations was a fact all participant agreed upon, as Aric Dromi (personal communication, 2013-03-28) said, “for a leader to take the decision that the corporations should be transparent is one of the most essential things that can show the way to success.” Another connection is mention by Ulf Linnman, who stated that the transparency of social media messages actually goes hand in hand with the transparency of the leader. As Carl Lumsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) argued, the very connection between leadership and the increased usage of social media has a lot to do with transparency, since when utilising social media people have to share. He also stated that from a leadership perspective, they have to be able to select proper information, since corporations can reach out to everyone, however, everyone cannot handle it. Transparency and openness are already two aspects that have changed, because when things becomes more open it becomes even more important to be clear about which information that it is being used for and when and where to post messages. That is something Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) agreed upon, since she thought that there has to be clear guidelines from a leadership position about transparency and openness throughout the entire corporation, e.g. what are you allowed to say externally and what you should keep internally. Moreover, Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06) argued that because everything becomes more open, you as a leader have to be even more careful about how you express yourself, since it immediately becomes public documents.

Nevertheless, David Johansson (personal communication, 2013-04-17) also mentioned a downside of the increased usage of social media among corporations; that the increasing availability sometimes make the corporation becomes completely transparent and too open, which might be uncomfortable in some situations, a fact he think that all leaders should consider. Despite this downside Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) argued that a transparent corporation has nothing to lose by being active in social media. In addition to that, when it comes to transparency and openness, it is a choice that you as a leader have to make, a belief Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) think is vital, and also stated that “if you let your co-workers in then you immediately become more transparent as a leader. Both the private and the professional aspect have to be considered. Let us take IKEA as an example, where employees have a professional facebook and a private facebook. Either way, as a leader you have to be able to separate them, then you can still keep you level of privacy. The chance that something is posted that where not meant for that audience is possible, since people express themselves quickly on social media without thinking.” It is a comprehensive concern that many of the participants deliberated on, i.e. where to essentially draw the line of how transparent a leader or a corporation should be. There is a fine line of how transparent you can be in social media, since you want to be both authentic and open but not too private, (Maria Nordström, personal communication, 2013-04-10), which is something that Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) agreed upon and absolutely thought that leaders have to find a good balance in being private and transparent. In addition to that, she thought that it is important to dare to share and to be open, however, it is equally important to be a private.

Another aspect about transparency was made by Karolina Bjurehed (personal communication, 2013-03-28), who argued that the landscape inside the corporation also had a direct impact on the usage of social media, and stated that an open landscape was to prefer, since social media
internally is as important as externally. A belief that Anonymous A (personal communication, 2013-04-16) shared, and stated that with an open business structure, the cohesion can increase and people work together towards common goals. However, it has to be done with some control mechanisms and with a focus on the right things. People have to perform their tasks, and then tricks are allowed in order to reach the common goals. A viewpoint Karolina Bjurehed (personal communication, 2013-03-28) commented on as well, and said that shareholders need to think and feel that the corporation is transparent, even though the transparency within the corporation is larger than the transparency to the external environments. A concrete example she gave was that “inside an corporation you should have totally transparent glass walls, but toward the outside they should be tinted”.

Furthermore, even though the majority of participants expressed an open and positive view of the increasing usage of social media, they all were concerned about one common thing; the line between private and professional usage of social media. However, this is an issue they all agreed upon that it is the management responsibility to give clear guidelines of how employees are supposed to deal with it. Nonetheless, Ulf Linnman (personal communication, 2013-04-19) proclaimed that even if leaders have to make a choice to be either open or not, the modern social media platforms are here to stay and will continue to develop.

4.1.2 Flexibility and adaptability
People constantly need to adjust to the new perception of reality, to this shift and increasing and rapidly rising changes of social media (Aric Dromi, personal communication, 2013-03-28), as Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) said are “flexibility and adjustment all about thinking ahead and keeps up with developments as well as the environment”. Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06), took the argument even further and expressed that if you cant adapt and be flexible, then you wont remain in a leadership position for long.

That social media is a world of constant change, and flexibility as well as adaptability are two guidewords in the usage of social media, since you need to adapt to the situation in front of you. Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) strongly points out that you need to look ahead, a fact that the majority of the participants had a similar viewpoint about. In addition to that Ulf Linnman (personal communication, 2013-04-19) stated that flexibility is a new demand on today’s leaders, he argued that they have to be open and responsive to new trends and medias. However, he believed that this is a personality question that is included in the leadership approach. Nonetheless, Anonymous A (personal communication, 2013-04-16) pointed out the same view as Ulf Linnman did, and stated that flexibility in combination with openness is necessary in order to gain trust as a leader in today’s society. Conversely, Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10) stated that many corporations today has a top-down approach in the corporation and to actually be able to make the usage of social media bloom corporations might be in need of a more decentralised decision-making approach then what actually is present today.

Nevertheless, David Johansson (personal communication, 2013-04-17) personally did not hope that everyone, especially not every leader, have to adjust to this rise of social media usage, since he believe that it is and can be overly open. However, he did believe that he might be wrong and stated that he considered himself a bit old fashion when thinking about business culture and the usage of social media.

4.1.3 Trustworthiness
The question of whether social media usage increases or decreases credibility is both large and complex (David Johansson, personal communication, 2013-04-17), either way, trustworthiness and
creditability is of total importance when using social media within corporations (Aric Dromi, personal communication, 2013-03-28).

In addition to that Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) proclaimed that creditability increases if it is used in the right manners and if leaders allow interactions with co-workers on common platforms where they exits and are active users. Moreover, Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) thought “by you are as a leader actually determines how well you use social media, since it is very positive for the creditability to be active on social media. On social media can corporations especially win young talented people that becomes new valuable employees and it actually increases your attractiveness as an employer as well.”

However, Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) stated that when using social media, it is important to touch both the hard and soft values of the corporation, since she believed that the purpose of social media is creating a kind of relationship with stakeholders, which in turn will create more trust. In addition to that, Carl Lumsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) argued that if people receive information then their patience increases and so also their understanding of the current situation. However, he thought that a leader must also filter, since not anyone can write public messages. Due to that he believed that there has to be well-defined guidelines and policies on how to behave on social media that have been conducted on a top-leader position. Anonymous C (personal communication, 2013-05-06) believed that by using social media, it is easier for a leader to anchor new ideas among the co-workers.

Moreover, Ulf Linnman (personal communication, 2013-04-19) stated that a leader has to delegate responsibility and trust and argued that social media usage is a useful way to increase the level of creditability, since it increase the availability and so also the creditability. Although, he believed that if a corporation have social media accounts and are not active or present there, it will instead decrease the creditability. An corporation and a leader has to adjust to the increasing trend of using social media, which is a statement that Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) argued for. Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) also said that a leader “has to consider how he or she will use social media and their personal strategy for doing so. If not considered carefully you might regret it later. Then it has to be discussed throughout the entire corporation, everyone has to understand and agree in the level and policies of usage. Then it also requires some amount of control, since a leader can win the trust of employees by having a well-considered social media strategy.”

Another viewpoint of trustworthiness within social media is how leaders choose to take care of bad publicity, as Carl Lumpsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) said, “Public criticism is another very important aspect of social media”. Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) stated that social media movement something positive, since even negative public messages can be positive if they are treated and handled correctly, since that then will generate more traffic to the sight and increases the creditability of messages and communication. In addition to that she stated, “When people are allowed to share their opinions and actually spend their energy doing so, it is most likely that they are not that negative. Instead the corporation can learn and develop from it.” Carl Lumpsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) shared the same beliefs and argued that if corporations handle criticism in a proper and professional way the creditability will increases. In line with that, Anonymous A (personal communication, 2013-04-16) claimed that it is an advantage for a corporation if they are allowed to receive criticism openly and stated that “Of course it depends on how it is being dealt with, but it generates the opportunity to listen to what others have to say, what the actual consumer believes. The creditability increases and customers can also argue against criticism, however, a lot of people and businesses do not dare to take the risk. Being active on social media often increases people’s confidence and trust in the leader. He or she then however has to control the free use of social media in order not to loose the corporations effectiveness.” Put differently, criticism has to be handled and the creditability increases if the strategy of the usage is clear and
being followed. If there are policies from a top-leadership position employees can refer to them in certain situations and people will better understand (Hanna Moisander, personal communication, 2013-04-18).
5. ANALYSIS

This section will analyse the chosen theoretical framework in combination with the empirical data that has been collected throughout the entire investigation.

Facing the challenge of getting a hold on reality, the analysis section establishes the link between the theoretical framework and the empirical collection. By several times going forth and back between the sections, the authors have been able to analyse the phenomena’s for a present purpose.

5.1 Social media and authentic leadership

It conveys the idea that the increasing usage of social media affects how authentic leaders shape their leadership. In this section the authors discuss the perceptions they have received from both theory and real life examples, and for the reader to properly understand the connection between the phenomena’s perceived authentic leadership and social media, the authors have developed a model. The model called ‘perceived authentic leadership in social media’ (see appendix 2), justifies how perceived authentic leadership consists of three main dimensions, i.e. transparency, flexibility and adaptability, and trustworthiness, which in turn facilitates the use of social media. This model is generally developed since the two phenomena’s previously have not been incorporated and analysed together. It is based on the structure of the theoretical framework. However, the authors have discovered through the empirical findings that business people in the present society tend to view flexibility and adaptability similarly and therefore they have chosen to incorporate them together in one main dimension of the model.

The empirical investigation shows that even though the perceptions of the people varied on some points, everyone uses social media both privately and professionally. With emergence of technologies it has been proven that workplaces have been more or less transformed and is continually changing. That is therefore a strong reason why it should be focused more attention on how it also affects leadership. When it comes to leadership, it has been argued that diverse individuals apply different leadership roles and it has never and will never be an easy task to deal with. The participants did not completely agree on how social media actually affects leadership, since some argued that it does affect it whereas other believed that it came down to how the leader originally were. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have argued, has the social web been developing for more or less a decade now, however as all the authors participants argued, has the environment not really understood the true importance of social media yet, and how it actually can benefit corporations. As argued by Maria Nordström (personal communication, 2013-04-10), it is partly due to the management, since the utilisation of social media has to be guided from a leadership position in order cooperatively be successful throughout the corporation. That is however very rare and a true call for paying a lot more attention to the relationship between leadership competences and the usage of social media. If the leadership restricts the corporations to utilise social media, both internally and externally, it does not enable the cooperative parts to take advantage from social media and achieve a shared purpose.

The authors empirical investigation has proven that it requires a form of clarity and discussion on how to use social media within corporations, and leaders have to generate and lead the change that social media is causing. Moreover, theory has argued that social media is a power that leaders need to handle (Pierro et al., 2013), and that is reflected in the empirical investigation where participants argued that corporations hardly have a choice whether to use social media or not, although the most important aspect is not whether they use it or not, but how well they use it. Meaning that the leadership competences and influences on social media pay a great importance and should therefore be considered a priority focus in the development of leaders. In accordance to what has been previously stated, the authors have understood that diverse generations perceive
the social media usage differently. Continuous development and the increasing globalisation changes our workplaces, a new era has happened and therefore leadership has to be able to utilize the same tools as others on the planet, e.g. social media. In the modern world we are using social media, facing a new reality and also communicating on a new level. Furthermore, the world contains of different generations, different individuals, different corporations and continuous development, social media is a common platform no matter who you are or where you are. Therefore, leadership should be considered from that perspective and developed to meet the current and future needs. However, as Sara Andersson (personal communication, 2013-04-22) argued leaders need to be educated in how to successfully utilise social media. Therefore it is essential that the mindset is transformed, so that learning becomes natural. A corporation will gain legitimacy if it shows that it can keep up with the digital revolution, be effective in as fast moving highly competitive environment and adapt the necessary competences. The accessibility of information to everyone is another influence on the aspect of leadership, which makes the actual decisions of whether to integrate social media or not, since it can affect both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the workplace.

Authentic leaders where argued to be moral agents, who are true to themselves, noble, fair and legitimate. An authentic leader should be genuine and real. Another argument that is mirrored in the empirical collection, where it is argued that social media is a mindset of how you as a leader do things. By being aware of how a leader think and behave the policies and core values are more easily followed. By converting values in to consistent actions and communicating them directly a leader will gain respect. Something that the empirical findings proved needs to be focused notice to and sometimes also double-checked.

Moreover, by being noble, fair and legitimate, trustworthiness can be generated and so also confidence and optimism. By being authentic a social media leader will perform well. In theory authenticity is about being you (Gallos, 2008), with a genuine desire to serve and empower others and try to motivate and inspire others. The social media platforms are excellent areas for doing so, since the channels contains loads of information and valuable people, available to everyone. In social medias it can be communicated directly, however, the investigation has proven that there is a risk that the social media usage could generate less personal contact, which is negative. The empirical investigation showed that there are contradictory arguments regarding the integration and greatness of social media, whereas others believe that leaders should make active decisions and make sure to remain the personal contacts. Authentic leaders where theoretically defined as “those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave…” (Avolio et al, 2004, p.4), and that argument was also found in the empirical investigation where it was stated that there is a need for a clear, straightforward and authentic leadership plan when it comes to the usage of social media. It means that a leader has to have considered his or her perceptions in order to create a plan; a policy and a straightforward message on how social media should be utilized. Moreover, theory argues for an authentic leader to be a balanced decision maker, an argument that is also justified by the author’s findings where it is expressed that things have to be communicated openly in order to reach a high level of clarification towards a shared purpose.

Authentic leaders have the ability to optimistically welcome a challenge, if the challenge of facing the increasing usage of social media is not welcomed they will not benefit from the positive consequences that it actually brings. Moreover, since authentic leadership requires the leaders to do what is good for their followers, social media can only be fully utilised if every involved part is active on those channels. If not, it is not suitable to only communicate through social media channels. The members of the corporations have to commonly believe in the usage of social media, there have to exist clear purposes of the usage so that even though decisions might be
difficult, sharing themselves and openly discussing successes and mistakes will generate a higher level of trust. It is also a question of public messages verses private communication. It has been argued that both are necessary and therefore a leader has to be able to nuance the leadership in order to fit the present situation.

Theory and findings have proven the vital connection between social media and authentic leadership. Authentic characteristics as being you and sharing yourself are important aspects of the usage of social media. However, as argued in the findings, there is a fine line between a professional or private person and it is commonly believed that a person have to draw a line, however, the leadership approach is based on how you are as a person.

5.1.1 Transparency
Transparency is one of the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership (see appendix 2). It has its roots in honesty and openness; two words that can be found in plenty definitions and as well as in the perceptions of the people that has been interviewed, i.e. both of the words can be considered guidelines when it comes to transparency of leadership.

Based on the interviews, as well as previous research, one can witness that the true, honest and open sharing of information between concerned people is highly recommended by every participant when it comes to the usage of social media, especially authentic leadership in social media. As Stark (2011) point out, is transparency necessary due to the rise and increased usage of social media, which goes in line with Aric Dromis (personal communication, 2013-03-28) comment that transparency is one of the most essential things that can show the way to success when utilising social media. However, transparency without clarity, consistency and clear guidelines from leadership positions seems to be something that no one could recommend, a detail that can be found in both previous research and completed interviews. In other words, even though openness and honesty guides transparency, it will only work in combination of lucidity. Clear guidelines will also result in knowledge of social media usage on where to draw the line between professionalism and privacy. As expressed by the participants, if you let co-workers in, you immediately become more transparent and therefore it is even more important to make a decision of where to position yourself. Although, it should be kept in mind that leaders are constantly associated with the organisation or mission that they work for; therefore they have to carefully consider their approach and also be cautious of how they express themselves. Since when you are active on social media what you are saying becomes public documents immediately, something that all participants agreed upon. However, they also believed that if social media is being used in the appropriate manners the empirical findings shows that then followers can easier consider new realities and developments.

Nonetheless, it seems like the perception is that leaders fear the transparency that social media brings, since a comprehensive concern that was raised during the majority of interviews was the question of how transparent a leader or a corporation actually can be in social media? Some argued that the increased demand of transparency sometimes can be seen as uncomfortable or even a drawback for corporations, while others stated if you don not have something to hide it wont be a problem at all. It was besides that argued that the level of transparency mainly depends on the situations and that corporations need to be much more transparent internally then externally. As Karolina Bjurehed (personal communication, 2013-03-28) said should corporations consist of totally transparent glass walls internally, however, towards the externals they should be tinted. An expression that is very evocative, however still incredibly rewarding as guidance to those who struggle with where to actually draw the line of transparency when it comes to social media usage. Another issue that was raised was that transparency of the messages goes hand in
hand with the transparency of the leader, which means that how the reader perceive a message easily reflects the transparency of the leader.

As written is transparency a main dimension when it comes to authentic leadership, and since social media has been pointed out to the new era of openness, it can probably be hard for a leader to give up the control that actually goes with it? However, as previous research has illustrated is it important, even vital, for the leader to have the confidence and humility to give up the need to be in control, which in turn is a way of actually controlling transparency in social media usage. It has been shown that when utilizing social media, people have to share and therefore by having a shared mission and purpose people can direct their core feelings and motives to produce the right messages. As expressed, by creating clarity on what is to be kept internally and what messages that can be spread towards an external audience, the misunderstandings can be reduced. If the leader from the beginning set up clear and open guidelines, a request from each participant, will the transparency in social media usage not result in any unhealthy usage. As argued by Li (2010) will authentic leaders make their corporations more efficient, more decisive, and eventually more profitable by embracing transparency in the usage of social media. That is something probably more corporations will be obliged to improved, since the preponderance of previous research as well as the majority of interviewees confirmed the statement that social media usage is here to stay and the that the phenomenon no longer can be seen as an option for corporations.

5.1.2 Flexibility and adaptability
Leaders will constantly need to adapt to new perceptions of reality; social media usage is one of them. That is a fact all of the participants agreed upon, even though the reactions to it where scattered. It is a known fact that social media is in constant change and without flexibility and adaptability will the usage of the phenomenon undeniable be obstruct. What has been found is that together they build up one essential dimension of authentic leadership when it comes to the usage of social media.

Flexibility and adaptability are two areas that overlap each other even though they are separated in their very definitions that can be found in previous research. However, the reason why they now is combined is due to the fact that when discussing the two areas with the interviewed participants they found it hard to actually keep those two words apart, even though they acknowledge the fact that there where differences. From what can be understood from previous research, as well as conducted interviews, has flexibility more to do with keeping up with the changes of social media usage, while adaptability has more to do with how well people familiarise themselves with the phenomenon. Nonetheless, together they help people think ahead and keep up with the developments within social media. In other words, it can be interpreted that they together help authentic leaders to be more effective in their usage of social media.

Change is the one thing we can be sure of when it comes to the connection between leadership and social media usage and leaders need to change their behaviour in appropriate ways as the situation changes; some of the participants were already within this change, other look forward to it, while someone actually hoped it would not happened. Nonetheless, it is all about managing that change. Apparently are flexibility and adaptability not even a question for leadership any more, it is a demand, and as some participants discussed are some leaders in need of considering this statement further, e.g. to foster and create a more decentralised and effective structures within corporations that actually allows people to act accordingly and use social media to their advantage. As showed in the theoretical framework, an authentic leader has to enjoy challenges, cope with shifts in opportunities and learn quickly. In the empirical findings it was argued that if you cannot be flexible and adaptable, you probably wont remain for long in your leadership
position. Even though that statement shows the very extreme, most participants agreed upon that an authentic leader has to be open and responsive to new trends. Moreover, it was argued that individual adaptability is critical in order to be able to bend the leadership dimensions to fit the task requirements.

5.1.3 Trustworthiness

There is no question that trustworthiness as well as credibility is two large parts of authentic leadership and main contributions to good leadership, a fact that both previous literature and interviewees agreed upon. Previous literature states that people nowadays demand trustworthy leadership and from what been said during the interviews one can observe that credibility and trust is totally important, especially within social media usage.

Even though trustworthiness can be seen as both large and complex, is it an area that is important to manage when being active on social media, since the usage might increase or decrease the credibility. What the authors have found is by being active on social media the leader often increases people’s confidence and trust in them and with the right guidance as well as policies from leader positions will the corporation also boost its credibility. Then it also requires some amount of control, since a leader can win the trust of the stakeholders by having a well-considered social media strategy, i.e. with the right control of social media usage will the corporation increase both their effectiveness and efficiency. As written did Anonymous B (personal communication, 2013-04-23) declare that how you are as a leader actually determines how well you use social media, e.g. if you utilise it right, the credibility will increase. However, if the kind of leader you are will determine how well you use social media, you cannot let disregard the importance of being true to yourself and then as expressed in the empirical findings; “do say what they say they will do”.

Another aspects a leader should not disregard or overlook is the important on both hard and soft values. Many of the interviewed participants pointed out that social media usage is a direct communication channel to stakeholders and if such a relationship, e.g. soft value, will be handled well they will put more trust in the corporations. In other words, to put weight on trustworthiness will facilitate much for the corporation, as Carl Lumpsden (personal communication, 2013-04-18) argued would people who receive information increase their level of trust, patience and understanding for the corporations and their current situations. Therefore also accuracy and consistency in communicating becomes vital. In line with that comes the issue of handling bad publicity and the very important aspects of public criticism. As found in previous research is integrity an important aspect of trust, and if a corporation is open, truly available and share the right information they will earn more trust. The same goes with keeping ones word and serving the interest of others. What many of the participants agreed upon was the fact that it is a direct advantage for corporations if its leader allows it to receive criticism open and honestly. As Hanna Moisander (personal communication, 2013-04-18) said would the corporations both learn and develop from it, a belief that others shared. In other words, if the leader allows the corporation to handle criticism in a proper and professional way the credibility will with no doubt increase.

Trust is a main contribution to good leadership and can be showed in both actions and decisions, e.g. decisions in social media. Credibility is discussed to be something that a leader earn and sustain. Thinking of Kouzes and Posners (2011), six steps that a leader could follow, it is anchored in the empirical findings that a leader has to consider themselves and their personal strategy, discuss it with others in order to create understanding and agreement. Then a sense of having shared values can be reached and the usage of social media can serve a shared purpose.
Furthermore, trust is something that is created between different parties, a leader has to be able to delegate responsibility and trust to be trusted self. When a corporation is active on social media, all their decisions and actions are directly visible to stakeholders, which make trustworthiness and credibility even more important. In other words, trustworthiness is what will make you standing in an ever-changing society, especially within the ever-changing phenomenon that social media actually is.
6. CONCLUSION

This section consists of a conclusion of the investigation that will be composed of a discussion based on the results where the authors own thoughts form the basis of the reasoning. There will, in addition, be suggestions for further research about the subject.

The authors have acknowledged that there is much more to both learn and understand when it comes to how leaders define authentic leadership as a response to the increased use of social media in corporations. Nevertheless, the findings have proven the importance of investigating the connection between the two phenomena’s perceived authentic leadership and social media. Individual’s perceptions of authentic leadership as a response to the rising and on-going development of social media are that authentic leadership should consist of the three main dimensions; transparency, flexibility and adaptability, and trustworthiness, which in turn will facilitate the usage of social media. Moreover, the individual’s perceptions show that leaders should consider the on-going development and increased usage of social media, by bearing in mind authenticity as their leadership approach. An approach that more leaders need to learn more about and develop in order to successfully utilise social media.

Both previous research and the author’s findings have proven the vital connection between the usage of social media and authentic leadership. By being authentic, a social media leader will perform well and have the ability to optimistically welcome the challenge of social media usage for their corporation. By doing so, they will benefit from the positive consequences that it actually brings. Nonetheless, transparency, as the first dimension of authentic leadership, is about honesty and openness. However, even though there is a significant importance of being truly transparent when using social media, authentic leaders need to make clear, both for the corporation and themselves, on how transparent they should and are allowed to be in different situations. Flexibility and adaptability together combine the second dimension of authentic leadership. The two concepts go very much hand-in-hand with each other and both concepts should be given for authentic leaders if they want to facilitate their usage of social media. In fact, leaders will constantly need to adapt to new perceptions of reality; social media usage is one of them, and without taking advantage of flexibility and adaptability it will be a less successful usage of the rising phenomenon. Trustworthiness, as the third dimension of authentic leadership is of high important, especially within social media usage. Nowadays, people demand trustworthy leadership and the dimension actually determines how well you will be able to use social media, e.g. if you utilise it right, the credibility for your leadership as well as corporation will increase. Also, social media is an on-going phenomenon where information is shared rapidly; therefore it is vital that authentic leaders use trust to increase individual’s level of patience and understanding for the corporation’s current situation.

Hence, the author's investigation contributes to both leadership and social media literature by providing a new angle of the two phenomena’s in collaboration, which has not previously been investigated in previous research. It offers a conceptual model that encompasses leadership dimensions for the analysis of the formation of perceived authentic leadership based on the on-going development and increasing usage of social media (Appendix 2). The authors have discovered a real gap in previous research, since the findings prove that there is a genuine need to investigate the phenomena’s together. Moreover the authors provide a practice-based insight of individual’s perceptions of reality within the context of the corporations.

Furthermore, this thesis also contributes as an informative tool that provides an insight to the importance of corporations and leaders to consider social media from a leadership perspective as the digital revolution is continuously enlarging its affect on both individuals and corporations. Moreover, it acts as a systematic guide to those who would like to investigate the area even
6.1 Suggestions for future research

After conducting this investigation the authors have reached four specific propositions for future research within this area, i.e. the connection between authentic leadership and the rise of social media.

The first proposition is that the conducted investigation has its focus on diverse industries and to receive a more narrow investigation, future researchers should narrow the investigation down to one industry. That decision will provide a more specific conclusion about the investigation area.

The second proposition is that to increase the quality can future researchers conduct a more extensive sample of in-depth interviews, with people on a leadership position that others perceive as authentic. That will increase the quality of the investigation, since that will give results about authentic leadership, instead of the perception of authentic leadership.

The third proposition is that the conducted investigation has its focus on Swedish corporations, however, since social media is a worldwide phenomenon future researchers should get an international perspective on the investigation area to receive a broader result on investigations.

The fourth and last proposition is that through a deeper investigation of this investigation area, i.e. the connection between authentic leadership and the rise of social media, the authors believe that researchers can reach a more extensive framework on how leaders can facilitate the usage of social media through an authentic leadership approach.
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## APPENDIX I – INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Occupation and organisation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Approx. Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Karolina Bjurehed</td>
<td>IT Application Manager Social Media; Anonymous corporation¹, Car industry</td>
<td>The 28th of March 2013</td>
<td>Göteborg</td>
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<td>Aric Dromi</td>
<td>Digital philosopher; Anonymous corporation¹, Car industry</td>
<td>The 28th of March 2013</td>
<td>Göteborg</td>
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<td>Maria Nordström</td>
<td>Marketing communicator; Jönköping University</td>
<td>The 10th of April 2013</td>
<td>Jönköping</td>
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<td>Anonymous A²</td>
<td>Business founder, manager and leader, Anonymous corporation¹, E-commerce</td>
<td>The 16th of April 2013</td>
<td>Borås</td>
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<td>Robert Eriksson</td>
<td>Head coach for the Swedish national judo team</td>
<td>The 16th of April 2013</td>
<td>Borås</td>
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<td>David Johansson</td>
<td>Sales manager, Gotedavid</td>
<td>The 17th of April 2013</td>
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<td>Carl Lumsden</td>
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<td>The 18th of April 2013</td>
<td>Borås</td>
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<td>Hanna Moisander</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer (COO), Anonymous corporation¹</td>
<td>The 18th of April 2013</td>
<td>Borås</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ulf Linnman</td>
<td>Head of Marketing department, (CMO) Jönköping University</td>
<td>The 19th of April 2013</td>
<td>Jönköping</td>
<td>1 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Andersson</td>
<td>Webb and marketing coordinator, Theofil Beslag</td>
<td>The 22nd of April 2013</td>
<td>Jönköping</td>
<td>1,5 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous B²</td>
<td>HR officer, Anonymous corporation¹</td>
<td>The 23rd of April 2013</td>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>1 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous C²</td>
<td>Business founder and owner, Anonymous corporation¹, Real Estate</td>
<td>The 6th of May 2013</td>
<td>Borås</td>
<td>1,5 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**

1. **Anonymous corporation:** the corporations wanted to be anonymous in the investigation and did not want to be involved in what has been said during the interview, i.e. the interviews were strictly personal.

2. **Anonymous person:** The person wanted his/her privacy and will remain anonymous throughout this investigation, i.e. what has been said during this interview will not be able to be connected to the actual person.
APPENDIX 2 – FIGURE 2

Figure 2: Perceived Authentic Leadership in Social Media

- Transparency
- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Trustworthiness

Lead to =
Encompass =