

**Leadership credibility - Perceptions of female leaders on
credibility in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan area**

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<p>Title of report Leadership credibility - Perceptions of female leaders on credibility in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan area</p>	<p>Number of pages and appendices 57 + 1</p>
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<p>This thesis discusses perceptions of female leaders on credibility in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan area and it is done between September 2012 - January 2013. The topic was chosen by the author, since she is personally interested in leadership studies and she also thinks that the topic is important and should be researched further. This thesis tries to find out how female leaders feel about leader's credibility, whether there are differences in leadership credibility between male and female leaders, and how the situation could be better in the future.</p> <p>The number of female leaders in top management is still quite low, even though women have higher education than men. Female leaders seem to face problems in building leadership credibility and they need to do extra work comparing to men. Will that also be the same in the future or will it change somehow?</p> <p>Interestingly, from the results one can notice that the gender was not seen as a crucial issue in building leadership credibility and it is more about the personality of a leader. It was also thought that the situation will even go to more equal between men and women in the future and the younger generation will set more challenges for leaders in the future than leadership credibility, even though it was seen as an important part of leadership.</p>	
<p>Keywords leadership credibility, female leaders, gender, tourism industry, Helsinki metropolitan area</p>	

Hotelli-, ravintola- ja matkailualan johtamisen koulutusohjelma

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<p>Tämä opinnäytetyö käsittelee naisjohtajien käsityksiä johtajan uskottavuudesta pääkaupunkiseudulla ja on tehty syyskuussa 2012 - tammikuussa 2013. Tekijä valitsi aiheen, sillä hän on henkilökohtaisesti kiinnostunut johtajuudesta. Hänen mielestä aihe on myös tärkeä ja sitä pitäisi tutkia lisää, jotta voitaisiin selvittää naisjohtajien käsityksiä johtajan uskottavuudesta ja miten nykyistä tilannetta voisi parantaa tulevaisuudessa. Tässä opinnäytetyössä yritetään selvittää, mitä naisjohtajat ajattelevat johtajan uskottavuudesta, nähdäänkö eroja naisten ja miesten välillä johtajan uskottavuudessa and millainen tilanne tulee olemaan tulevaisuudessa.</p> <p>Naisjohtajien määrä on edelleen melko vähäinen, vaikka naisilla on korkeampi koulutus kuin miehillä. Naisjohtajilla vaikuttaa olevan ongelmia johtajan uskottavuuden rakentamisessa ja heidän täytyy tehdä enemmän töitä sen eteen miehiin verrattuna. Tuleeko tilanne olemaan sama tulevaisuudessa vai tuleeko se muuttumaan jotenkin?</p> <p>Tutkimustuloksista paljastui kiinnostava tieto, että sukupuolen ei katsottu olennaisesti vaikuttavat johtajan uskottavuuden rakentamiseen ja johtajan personallisuus koettiin tärkeämmäksi asiaksi. Haastateltavat uskoivat myös, että tilanne naisten ja miesten välillä tulee olemaan jopa entistä tasaisempi tulevaisuudessa and nuorempi sukupolvi asettaa suurempia haasteita johtajille tulevaisuudessa kuin johtajan uskottavuus, vaikkakin se nähtiin myös tärkeäksi osaksi johtajuutta.</p>	
<p>Avainsanat johtajan uskottavuus, naisjohtajat, sukupuoli, matkailuala, pääkaupunkiseutu</p>	

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1 Introduction

Gender equality is an important value in Finland and there is also Gender Equality law, which aim is to reduce discrimination based on gender and to advance equality between men and women, especially in working life (Act 609/1986). Ministry of Social Affairs and Health promotes Finnish gender equality and their main themes are gender mainlining, equality in working life, training and pay issues, women and decision-making, balancing of work and family, hindering violence against women and men and equality (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2009). There are significant differences in gender equality worldwide and table 1 presents top 10 countries with the highest gender equality rate.

Table 1. Top 10 countries with the highest gender equality rate (World Economic Forum 2011, 8).

Country	2011 Score
1.Iceland	0.8530
2.Norway	0.8404
3.Finland	0.8383
4.Sweden	0.8044
5.Ireland	0.7830
6.New Zealand	0.7810
7.Denmark	0.7778
8.Philippines	0.7685
9.Lesotho	0.7666
10.Switzerland	0.7627

From table 1 above one can notify that top 4 countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden are all Nordic countries) and 7 (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark and Switzerland) of these top 10 countries are located in Europe. Finland is number 3 on this list, which is quite high and in this research the number of Finland is the most important one, since this research is done in Finland.

Even though Finland has the third highest rate in gender equality, there are issues to be improved in the future. Women are still paid less than men and there are fewer women in management, especially in top management positions, than men (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011; Lämsä 2011, 47; Statistics Finland 2011). What could be the reasons behind those issues? Could one reason be leadership credibility? Are women not perceived as credible leaders as men and do they need to extra work to be at top management positions?

1.1 Structure of this report

This first chapter of this thesis introduces the topic to a reader and tells research problem and questions, aims and objectives of this research and justifies why this research is done. Second part of this research focuses on literature review and it also represents key terms and concepts of this thesis. After literature review part, methods used in this thesis will be presented and discussed and justified, why just those methods were chosen for the research of this thesis. Next part this thesis has a focus on empirical part of this research and it shows how the data was collected, who were involved in the research and limitations for the research. Results of the interviews will be presented after the empirical part and this thesis ends in discussion section, in which conclusion are done and suggestions are given for future research and development, validity, limitations of the research and the thesis process are evaluated. In addition to these, there will be a list of references and attachments in the end of this thesis.

1.2 Research problem and questions

Research problem of this thesis is “Perceptions of female leaders on credibility in tourism industry in Helsinki Metropolitan area”. Several studies and articles about leadership was gone through and various possible research problems were thought through before ending up this particular research problem.

There are three questions chosen to solve the research problem, which are formulated with the help of the literature found about the topic. The research questions of the study of this thesis are the following:

- 1) How leadership credibility can be built and kept?
- 2) Do female leaders feel that there are differences in building leadership credibility between men and women?
- 3) How will the future of leadership credibility will look like?

1.3 Aim and objectives of the research

Aim can be referred to the end product of a research project (Brotherton 2008, 51). The aim of this research is to find out perceptions on credibility of female leaders, who work in top management positions in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan area.

Objectives can be different steps, stages or tasks, which are decided to be parts of the process in achieving the aim. Objectives should compensate the aim, meaning that if all objectives are achieved, the overall aim will be achieved as well. (Brotherton 2008, 53.) Main objective of this research is: To find out how female leaders in top management positions in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan perceive leadership credibility.

Secondary objectives are; 1) To research issues, which help a leader to build and keep leadership credibility, 2) To find out if there are differences between men and women in leadership credibility and 3) To estimate the future of leadership credibility.

1.4 Purpose of the research

The author's personal opinion is that gender equality is a very important issue and that is why this bachelor's thesis is about female leaders. Management and leadership studies have belonged to her degree programme and she is very interested in studying those topics further in the future.

7.3 million Visitors visited Finland and 5.5 million overnights were registered in Finland in 2011 (Finnish Tourist Board 2011). In 2007 130 500 people worked for tourism

industry in Finland and in Finland's tourism strategy 2020 it is expected that tourism industry can employ 171 000 people. The share of income from tourism industry of GDP, gross domestic product, is estimated to grow from year 2007 3.8% till 5.1% by 2020. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2012.) Helsinki, being as a capital of Finland, is a popular destination and in 2011 there were 3.363.900 overnights, 16.8% of total overnights in whole Finland, which is 5.5% more compared to previous year. Turnover of tourism industry in Helsinki Metropolitan area in 2009, including the cities of Espoo and Vantaa and the town of Kauniainen, was 7.2 milliard €, which is about a half of the turnover of tourism industry in whole Finland. Over 18 000 people work for tourism industry in Helsinki and over 32 700 in Helsinki Metropolitan area. (Helsinki Tourism & Convention Bureau 2011.)

From these figures one can notice that tourism industry is a growing and important industry in Finland and in Helsinki metropolitan area and that is one reason why this study is done in tourism industry. Another reason, why tourism industry is selected for this research is because it is a part of the author's degree programme.

This topic is seen relevant, since the literature review part of this thesis will show that amount of female leaders is growing, but still men and women are not equal in working life and women need to work harder than men to be credible leaders. The topic is current, since there is a lot more discussion about leadership and female leaders than use to be, as people, especially women, are higher educated than before and leadership credibility is seen as an essential part of leadership (Campbell 1993; Gradwell 2004; Harvard Business Review 2012; Kouzes and Posner 2012; Statistics Finland 2012).

2 Literature review: female leaders, gender differences in education and working life and leader's credibility

This second part of this thesis presents secondary data used in this thesis. Secondary data refers to “data that already exist”. (Brotherton 2008, 14.) Various different sources; books, articles and earlier researches are used in this literature review part in order to form a theoretical framework for this thesis. Theoretical framework can also be called conceptual framework and it means “a structure that seeks to identify and present, in a logical format, the key factors relating to the phenomena under investigation”. (Brotherton 2008, 78.) The conceptual framework is needed “to provide a logical and coherent structure for any research study”. In almost all of research work “there are two main aspects – a review of existing literature in the field and an empirical investigation” and the conceptual framework can be seen as “essential link between these two aspects”, since it helps in establishing “a logical connection between the existing body of knowledge and the new knowledge” one’s research is trying to create. That way continuity between the history and the future can be created. (Brotherton 2008, 79.)

2.1 Women as managers and leaders

This chapter focuses on women as managers and leaders in Finland, internationally, in tourism industry, and history of researching female leaders. Literature about women as managers and leaders is seen important, since it gives background information for the empirical part of this thesis, which is about female leaders’ perceptions.

2.1.1 Women in management and leaders in Finland

The amount of women in supervisory or middle management positions has increased during the recent years, but not in top management positions or in boards (Lämsä 2011, 47). In 2009 33% of employees, who worked in managerial positions were women, when in 2001 the percentage was 31%. So it can be noticed that the percentage is growing, but quite slowly. In municipality sector the percentage of women in management was the highest, 56%, in state sector second highest, 46% and

in private sector it was the lowest percentage, 28%. (Statistics Finland 2011.) The number of women in the board of Finnish listed companies has decreased during the last years. In 2011 11.7% of board members were women, when in 2004 there were only 13.8 women board members%. The number of women as managing directors has then again grown from year 2004, when the percentage was 12% and in 2011 25%. Finland is 19th on the list ranking the amount of women working in management positions. (Thorton 2011.)

Even though nowadays women also have higher education than men, but still there are more men in managerial positions. As one career barrier for women is seen a phenomena called glass ceiling. (Lämsä 2011, 47.) Term glass ceiling refers to “an invisible, generally barrier that prevents qualified individuals such as women from advancing within the organization and reaching their full potential”. (Knutson & Schmidgall 1999, 64.) Another career barrier for women is balancing work and family and it was discussed in many different articles and researchers (McTavish & Miller 2006; Lämsä 2011). Career barriers of women are discussed further in this thesis, since they are not in the remit of this research.

2.1.2 Women leaders internationally

A bit more than one third of business executives (ISCO 121 – directors and chief executives) in Europe are women. In the United States there more female business executives than in Europe. In Europe around 30% of listed companies have one or more women in board, when again in the United States 90% of listed companies have women in board. One reason to that can be that labour market is not that differentiated as in Europe. In Latvia there are most female leaders (51%) in Europe, when in Nordic countries 30-40% of leaders are women. Finland is in the middle of the list, when comparing countries in Europe. The amount of women as managing directors in Finland is very low, since Finland is third last one the list of women as CEOs in European countries. (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011.)

The amount of women in the boards of listed companies has grown during the recent years, even though the growth has been quite slow in some countries in Europe (Con-

federation of Finnish Industries 2011). Various governments have decided to increase the number of women in the executive suite, but in Finland the discussion is still going on and decisions are not made yet. Last year European parliament make a proposal for EU-wide legislation that at least 40% of places on listed companies' supervisory board should be reserved for women by 2020. (The Economist 21 Jun 2011.) One should notice that that is just a proposal and not compulsory, so it will be seen after 8 years did this work or not.

2.1.4 History of researching female leaders

Leadership has been seen as a masculine phenomena and men have mostly done researchers about leadership and organizations, mostly about men and also for men. (Calas & Smircich 1996, 221; Schein 1973.) In 1970's scientific researchers began to be interested in studying female leaders in USA and the first studies were about the possibility of women to be leaders. Next researchers were interested in reasons to low amount of women in top management positions. (Indvik 2001, 217.) After that researchers have been interested in why women are absent from working life and why they are reluctant to be top leaders of organizations (Mainiero & Sullivan 2005; Mallon & Cohen 2001).

In 1980's researchers began to be more and more interested in researching female leaders. A book called "Breaking the Glass Ceiling", which was published in the 1980's was thought to be one reason to the rising interest in researching female leaders. (Morrison, White & Van Velsor 1987.)

The rising amount of female in top management, but still a low percentage of women as top leaders compared to men and reasons behind that has interested researchers(Liff & Ward 2001;Oakley 2000). In the 2000's researchers started to talk about a labyrinth, rather than glass ceiling, since it described the situation of female leaders more accurately (Eagly & Carli 2006). Labyrinth in this context means that women are able to become top leaders, but the way towards the top management position is rambling and not easy to find (Ekonen 2007, 15).

2.2 Educational and professional differences between men and women in Finland

This chapter of this thesis discusses educational and professional difference between men and women in Finland and this information is seen crucial in order to be able to make comparisons between men and women and to see whether they are at the same level or not.

2.2.1 Education differences between men and women in Finland

In 2011 women accomplished 60% of university degrees in Finland. In universities of applied sciences the percentage was even higher, 63% of students who accomplished a bachelor's degree were women and 66% of students who got a master's degree were women (Statistics Finland 2011). Finnish women are also clearly more high-educated than women in generally in Europe. About 47% of Finnish women have a degree of high education, when the average is 30%. 35% of Finnish men have a high education degree. (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011.) From these figures one can notice that women in Finland are clearly more educated than men. Educational choices of men and women are also significantly different; men usually study in technological or transport industry, when women then again study in social and health care, tourism, hospitality, humanistic and cultural industries. In 2000's women have clearly had more versatile educational choices, but men mostly stay in masculine industries. (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011.)

2.2.2 Professional differences between men and women in Finland

In Finland labour market is clearly divided to male or female dominated industries and that is one reason to differences in salaries between men and women (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011). In service industry 60% of the workers were women and in hospitality industry, to which tourism industry belongs to, even 72.1% were women in 2010 (Statistics Finland 2012). It can be noticed from that percentage that hospitality industry is very a female dominated industry.

In 2009 women earned 82% of men's average earnings, which is a bit less than the average, 15% difference in European Union countries (Statistics Finland 2011). Figure 1 under this text shows the percentage of women's earnings of men's earnings between 1995 – 2009.



Figure 1. Percentage of women's earnings of men's earnings (Statistics Finland 2011).

Even though the structure of wage earners has changed, since the number of women in management and leading positions has grown, the differences between women's and men's earnings have not narrowed with the same speed of the structural changes, since there are differences in wages between women and men, who work in managerial or leading position. Nevertheless, there is a positive impact on differences in wages, since there are more women in managerial, leading and expert positions, but then again there is growing amount of women in low paid industries, such as in care industry. (Statistics Finland 2011.)

According to Confederation of Finnish Industries (2011), main reasons to differences in salaries between men and women are that they do different type of work and they work for different companies. Ways to decrease the salary difference are for example to reduce division of female and male dominated industries, spread knowledge about the salary difference and to make balancing of work and family life easier as before (Confederation of Finnish Industries 2011).

2.3 Leadership credibility

This chapter of the thesis handles leadership credibility, how it is defined, why it is important, which factors build leadership credibility and which do not. Background information about leadership credibility is needed to give the reader an idea, what it is about and also to be able to formulate questions of the interview.

2.3.1 What does leadership credibility mean?

Credibility can be defined as “the quality of being trusted and believed in”. (oxforddictionaries.com.) According to Lee (2012) “credibility is the currency of communication”. Credibility is very delicate issue and if trust will be broken, there can be years’ work to rebuild it. “Credibility is earned, not conferred by title or position“. (Mitchell 1998, 169.) According to Kouzes and Posner (2012) “credibility is the foundation of leadership” and it is earned by actions done on daily basis, which leaders take during their careers. Direct correlation between the job and the title cannot be seen (Kouzes & Posner 2012). Leaders at all levels (2010) define leadership and credibility as follows: Leadership is more than “a title on one’s door”. “It means having the trust and confidence of those who work for you; who work with you; and who buy from you. That trust and confidence is called credibility”. (Leaders at all levels 2010.)

“The issue of leadership must be looked at from both the superiors ‘lens as well as the subordinate’s lens”. (Gedney 1999.) Leadership credibility is usually measured by the people the leaders try to lead. For leaders credibility is more difficult and hard to describe, but we should not forget the fact that leaders have bosses as well. (Lee 2012.)

2.3.2 Why leadership credibility is important?

“Leadership credibility is important to people and to organizations in general”. (Gradwell 2004, 18.) According to Campbell (1993) credibility has been a very important ingredient of successful leadership and it makes a difference between the best and the worst leaders, which means that leaders are not thought to be good leaders, if they are not perceived credible leaders. “Organizations led by credible leaders are often successful. Followers are more likely to give their time and are willing to move in the

direction of the leaders when they perceive them as credible”. (Gradwell 2004, 21.) Frances Hesselbein, a leader of the Girl Scouts organization from 1976 to 1990, defined the importance of credible leadership by saying “Leadership is basically a matter of how to be, not how to do it. Leaders need to lead by example, with clear, consistent messages, with values that are ‘moral compasses and a sense of ethics that works full time”. (O’Toole 1995, 40.) Leaders cannot “turn on and turn off” credibility, it needs to be on all the time (Kouzes 2009). Credibility is seen as “one of the most critical traits of an effective leader”. (Harvard Business Review 2012.)

2.3.3 Essential factors of building and keeping credibility

“Each leader begins with credits in her credibility bank account”. (Leaders at all levels 2010.) That amount of credit can vary and it is based on qualifications, reputation and style. Daily, deposits, which refer to positive experiences and withdrawals, which are referred disappointments “are made into this account”. If a leader is effective, he or she makes sure that the amount of deposits is bigger than the amount of withdrawals. (Leaders at all levels 2010.)

Kouzes and Posner have done several studies about leadership and according to their research people admire a leader, who is honest, competent, forward-looking and inspiring and these attributes can be referred to credibility of a leader as well. People want to believe that they can trust their leader’s word and actions, that their leader has the knowledge and skill, what is needed to lead people, and that the leaders are enthusiastic and excited about the direction, towards which the organization is heading. (Kouzes and Posner 1990, 21-22.) Stewardship would be added to these four factors by Block (1993) meaning “the willingness to be accountable for the well being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around you”. (Block 1993.)

If “top management is perceived to have high credibility and a strong philosophy, employees are more likely to be proud to tell others they are part of the organization, talk up the organization with friends, see their own values as similar to those of the organization and feel a sense of ownership for the organization“. (O’Reilly 1984, 15.) Ac-

According to Gedney (1999) credibility consists of four different issues, which are honesty, competency, vision and inspiration. Subordinates expect honesty from their leader and it is thought to be “the most critical aspect of successful leaders. It is quite hard for subordinates to trust in their leaders, if they are not honest. A leader can show his or her honesty by saying what he or she is going to do. (Gedney 1999.) “Agreements not followed through, false promises, cover-ups, and inconsistency between word and deed are all indicators that an ostensible leader is not honest“(Mitchell 1998, 168). Competence is thought to be “the second most desired attribute of leaders” (Gedney 1999), when considering leadership credibility. Leaders can have technical and strategic competencies (Gedney 1999). Technical competence is “knowledge of, and skill in the exercise of, practices required for successful accomplishment of a business, job, or task”. (businessdictionary.com.) and strategic competence can be defined as “the ability of organizations (or more precisely their members) to acquire, store, recall, interpret and act upon information of relevance to the longer-term survival and well-being of the organization”. (Hodgkinson & Sparrow 2006, 5.) Vision and inspiration can be put together under “inspirational qualities” name and they are the last two important factors in leadership credibility. Enthusiasm and motivation are expected from a leader and followers want to be informed the way, where to organization is going and their role in the vision of the organization. (Mitchell 1998, 169.)

Smith (2007) sees that there are six C’s for leadership credibility and they are: conviction, character, care, courage, composure and competence. Conviction refers to leaders’ passion and commitment, they show toward their vision. In this context character means showing integrity, honesty, respect and trust consistently. Care then again can be referred to showing concern for others’ both personal and profession well-being. Courage is explained to mean “willingness to stand up for one’s beliefs, challenge others, admit mistakes and change one’s own behaviour when necessary”. (Smith 2007.) Composure refers to showing appropriate emotional reactions consistently, especially in tough and crisis situations. Finally competence is referred to “proficiency in hard skills (technical, functional, content expertise)” and “soft skills (interpersonal relationships, communication, teamwork, organizational skills)”. (Smith 2007.)

Transparent leadership builds credibility. “Figuring out just how open to be—just how much to hang on the line for all to see—for while there can be too little transparency, there also can be too much” can be seen as an important part of transparency”. (Pagano & Walker 2008, 2.) Leaders should know how people understand revealed information, how it can be interpreted and used, so that the situation is fair for the organization and its employees. The following nine behaviours give guidelines to leaders to be transparent and credible leaders: “Being overwhelmingly honest”, “Gathering Intelligence”, “Being Composed”, “Letting Your Card Down”, “Keeping Promises”, “Properly Handling Mistakes”, “Delivering Bad News Well”, “Avoiding Destructive Comments” and “Showing Others That You Care”. (Pagano & Walker 2008, 2-3.) Leaders can think that they are honest, but their followers can think the other way around, so it is important that leaders show respect and concern for their followers and of course other people as well. “Gathering Intelligence” refers to the fact that leaders should be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and also ask other people’s opinions in order to show that they are valued. Leaders should have “a certain level of predictability” and they should not tell their own opinions or emotions about relevant business issues, even though “transparency that builds credibility” can urge it. (Pagano & Walker 2008, 3.) Leaders, who are authentic and sincere, build significant relationships with their followers and tell things about their personal life, which add “value to the context of the work” can be seen as “important part of leadership transparency that builds credibility”. (Pagano & Walker 2008, 3.) The followers should be allowed to know their leaders. Leaders should keep their promises, but sometimes they have to break their promises and then followers will be disappointed. In that kind of situation transparency is extremely important, since when followers understand reasons, why promises are broken, they can accept the consequences more easily. Bad news should be delivered “promptly, with honesty, directness, care and concern” by the leaders in order to avoid harming relationships between the leaders and followers and to keep trust. Destructive comments should be avoided by leaders in order not to destroy trust, relationships between leaders and followers and building a credible reputation. Leaders should visibly show that they care about their followers and that they want to develop, recognize, seek to know and understand them. (Pagano & Walker 2008, 3.) “True leadership is

built on a kind of social contract that says, "Follow me, and I promise that I will help you succeed". (Pagano & Walker 2008, 3-4.)

According to Lee (2012) there are 3 most important factors, which are needed in leadership credibility. These 3 factors are: trust, respect and affinity. Telling the truth is important, so that the followers and other people can trust the leader. Respect can be gained by having authority. Affinity refers to “a common bond of interests, needs, and concerns” and a “leader must be, or must become, important and valuable to the people she would lead, and vice versa”. (Lee 2012.) Developing equitable and strong relationships with followers is important, when building leadership credibility. Integrity can be seen as a key word to leadership credibility and it is based on values. The leaders should speak and act according to the company’s values, so that the followers would do so as well. (Simmons 2012.)

Table 2 under this text summarizes all important factors affecting leadership credibility.

Table 2. The most essential factors affecting leadership credibility

honesty	forward- looking	inspiring	competent /competency	stewardship	vision	trust
respect	affinity	integrity	conviction	character	care	courage
composure	transparency					

2.3.4. Lack of leadership credibility

If leaders are not perceived credible, there can be negative effects on the organization (Gradwell 2004, 18). Employees are “less likely to be proud of the organization; see their own values as similar to the organization’s values; feel a strong sense of team spirit; feel attached to the organization; or have a sense of ownership in the organization”. (Kouzes & Posner, 1993a; 2002.) In a situation, in which “top management is perceived to have low credibility” employees rather believe that other employees of the company “produce only when watched”, primary motivation of them is money, “say good things about the organization at work, but feel differently in private” and would

consider looking for another job if the organization were experiencing tough times”. (O’Reilly 1984, 15.)

Basically ignoring essential factors of leadership credibility, which were discussed in the chapter 2.3.3., can lead to lack of leadership credibility. As it was mentioned earlier in this thesis, leadership credibility is easy to build, but when there is a lack of credibility in leader, the credibility is easy to lose.

2.4 Comparison between leadership credibility of female and male leaders

According to Lämsä and Sintonen (2011) and Cheng (1996) women are expected to behave and look feminine, but as leaders they should be masculine in a right way, which means that they should be convincing, aggressive, sporty, effective in decision making, competent, she should trust herself, be independent, strong and individual persona. That leads to a contradiction between these two roles, since if a woman as leader does not act like feminine would should, then does not fit to the woman’s role and then again if she is not a masculine leader, she does not fulfil the leader’s role. A research of Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002) shows that a credible role model for a female leader is quite masculine or it emphasizes on neutrality between genders. Womanhood is seen to be connected to caring and taking care of the others, serving other, empathy, friendliness and emotionality (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002). If a woman behaves stereotypically like women are thought to behave, she lacks credibility and she is judged to be contradictory with the leader prototype and when a woman has a match with the leader prototype, she lacks authenticity and those kinds of women are not thought to be acting like proper women are (Barsoux & Toegel 2012). That leads to “the dual standard” and “altruism at work” cannot not be seen an option for women. Male leaders then again do get more credit, when they are perceived as warm and helpful persons (Chen & Heilman 2005, 431-441).

Martelius-Louniala and Hiillos (2003) has thought if mother type of leadership could be a female leader’s role model. Key issues of mother type of leadership are seen to be good human relation skills and being able to create new and long lasting relationships. Mother type of leadership is very contradictory to the masculine leadership style, which

is usually expected from leaders, so that can be why mother type of leadership's role model might not be that credible (Aaltio & Hiillos 2003). Frankel (2007) sees that women should have more clear messages instead of using a lot of words in order to soften messages, because women are expected to consider others more than men, and that hinders the credibility of female leaders.

Gender is still seen a crucial difference in confidence of leaders, but it can be learned with the help of for example an organization, who helps women in their careers (Glaser 2003). Goman (2010) warns female leaders about inappropriate body language, generally women show that they are warm, but they lack authority. If women want to be perceived as credible leaders, they should be aware of the nonverbal signals, which they are sending. Here are a couple of nonverbal signals, which should be avoided by female leaders: acting like a girl, smiling when talking about a serious subject, flirting, handshaking too delicately and not interrupting when somebody else is talking. "For men, credibility is often derived from their gender and their status in the company", when again "for women credibility is more often derived from their individual skills". (Wilén 2012.) Usually women need to work very hard to be thought credible due to their gender. Wilén (2012) gives some hints for women how to become more credible than at the moment:

- Women should make themselves visible and participate in different meetings and events related to their work.
- Titles of women should be clearly seen on their business cards, so that people would not assume a woman to be in lower position than she actually is.
- Women should be leaders of business discussion in order to form their credibility.
- It is important that women are professional and themselves.
- Women managers or leaders should also have an idea about women's role in other countries, so that they would understand cultural differences, when doing business with people from different countries, especially with countries, in which the role of women is not that strong. (Wilén 2012.)

2.5 Summary of the literature review

Surprisingly, there are quite few female leaders and the wage gap is still quite significant between men and women, even though women have nowadays higher education than men. It could have been thought that in Finland there would be more female leaders than in many countries, but the literature showed that Finland is not on top of the list, when considering the percentage of women in leader positions.

The literature review part of this thesis focuses more on leadership credibility issues than women in management or differences in education and working life between men and women, since the research of this thesis examines perceptions on leadership credibility. There were found several definitions for leadership credibility and they all somehow refer to the fact that trust and confidence belong to leadership credibility and it can take quite a long time to build leadership credibility, when again it is very easy to lose in a few seconds and it may takes a long time to re-build it. It was also found from the literature that it is harder to women to build leadership credibility than men and they should learn different techniques to build it, when again men can just naturally be credible leaders due to their gender and history of men in leadership positions and women working in lower positions. It might be that for a woman, who mainly has male subordinates it is even harder to build leadership credibility than for a women, who mainly has female subordinators, but that is just a hypothesis. Well, in tourism industry many of the subordinates are women, so it will be interesting to hear the results of the interviews, what they think about the issue. In a conclusion, a hypothesis of this thesis is that females are not that credible leaders as men and they need to work harder in order to be credible leaders.

3 Methodology

This part of the thesis tells the research problem of this thesis and methods used in research part of this thesis. Research methods used in this thesis are qualitative research and deductive approach to research and they are discussed further in the following chapters 3.1 and 3.2. The methods are discussed here in order to explain the reader, what kind of methods they are and how the research is conducted with the help of these methods and why just these methods were seen suitable for the research of this thesis.

3.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative data is more like to be more variable than numeric, quantitative data, since it can be words, text, visual images or other observational recordings, for example maps or diagrams. More flexibility and interpretativeness are needed when analyzing qualitative data than when analyzing quantitative data. Qualitative data can have been collected inductively or deductively, without existing conceptual framework prior the research or to test a conceptual framework. (Brotherton 2008, 207-208.) Deductive approach will be discussed further in the next chapter 3.2.

There are different stages in qualitative data analysis. Stage 1 is called “unitising” (Brotherton 2008, 210) and the term means that the unit or focus should be chosen for the analysis. “Coding” is stage 2 in qualitative data analysis and it refers to “a process of ordering, reducing and summarizing the data”. (Brotherton 2008, 211.) Stage 3 after coding is to observe the coding process in order to identify if there are any emergent structure or categories, “if the data have been collected inductively” or to observe how data is related to “the conceptual framework”, which is used as a basis for the deductive research design and data collection (Brotherton 2008, 211). When the structure is established, the data can be researched more in order to “identify possible patterns, themes and relationships between the categories to either build or test theoretical propositions”. (Brotherton 2008, 211.)

3.2 Deductive approach to research

Primary starting point of a deductive approach is “the existing body of theoretical and empirical knowledge”. (Brotherton 2008, 18.) This refers to a literature review, in which already existing literature about the topic is researched and it helps to decide the theory or theories, which will be tested in the actual research. After the literature review, a theoretical framework should be developed, since it informs and helps the researcher to guide and structure the rest of the research process. The theoretical framework should show data collection method and design and implementation of analysis procedures. After that hypotheses should be written, which refer to logical consequences of the theory reviewed in the literature review. Then formulation of constructs, concepts and operational definition of the research should be done. Next step is to designing of the research, which will be followed by collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. Last step in this process is implementation or refining the theory or then developing a whole new theory. (Brotherton 2008, 18-19.) Figure 2 summarizes the deductive approach to research process.

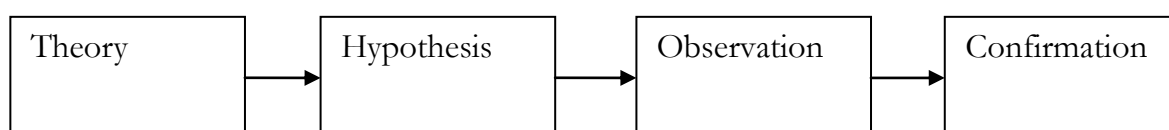


Figure 2. Deductive approach to research process (Trochim 2006).

3.3 Why these methods were chosen for this research?

Qualitative research method was chosen, since it was seen the most suitable for the research, because the focus was on a small group rather than a big amount of people and in-depth information was wanted rather than numeric information. Deductive approach was thought to be more suitable for the research than inductive approach, meaning that data collection would be needed to be done first and then the theory part (Brotherton 2008, 17), as first the problem needed to be identified, theory studied, before the research could be started.

4 Interviews with female leaders in November-December 2012

This part of the thesis has a focus on empirical part of the thesis and consists of the following subjects: data collection, analyses of the data, results and assessment of the study. Thesis process is shown here to present the time reserved for this thesis and different phases during the thesis. Table 3 under this text presents the research process of this thesis.

Table 3. Thesis process

September 2012 - Beginning of this research and thinking about possible topics
October 2012 – Deciding and approving the topic and writing literature review part of this thesis
November 2012 – Data collection and writing empirical part of this thesis
December 2012 – Data collection continues and analysing the data, writing the results and discussion
January 2013 – Thesis presentation, maturity exam done in Finnish and final changes to the thesis and thesis will be given to evaluation
February 2013 – Graduation

4.1 Data collection

Instruments and procedures, which are going to be used in data collection, should be taken into consideration before deciding to use one specific one or many different ones, which are seen the most appropriate for one's purposes. Different approaches are for example questionnaires, interviewing and observation. (Brotherton 2008, 131.) Interviewing will be discussed further in the next chapter, since it the approach chosen for the research of this thesis.

4.1.1 Interviewing

Interviewing is seen as “a useful approach where qualitative data are required and more in-depth exploration is necessary”. When comparing interviewing with other methods

of data collection, one advantage is seen to be “the degree of flexibility that exists while the process of collecting the data is taking place”. (Brotherton 2008, 152.)

On the other hand, flexibility can be thought to be a problem as well, since “it is not standardised; each interview is something of a unique event, due to the varying dynamics that are created between the interviewer and interviewees. Different personalities and behavioural characteristics” will cause “different dynamics and relationships in the interview situation” and therefore, the interviews differ from another. When the purpose of a research is not just to find data to answer questions like what, where, when or how, but also to find explanations to those questions, then interviewing is suitable method for data collection. (Brotherton 2008, 152.)

The chapters above this text, under the headline data collection, justify, why interviewing is selected to be the data collection method of the research of this thesis. Data collected in this study will be primary data, since it is brand new data (Brotherton 2008, 14).

4.1.2 Data collection process

After finishing the literature review part of this thesis and formulating the questions for the interviews 20 possible interviewees were contacted by e-mail and by telephone. Companies in tourism industry with female leaders were searched from the Internet and a couple of the possible interviewees were recommended to the author by other people. In the e-mails the possible interviewees’ interest to be a part of the research was asked and also the reason to do this research was explained. The questions of the interviews were added to the message, so that the possible interviewees could see, what it is about and in what kind of research they could possibly be involved in. Also a permission to record the interviewees was asked in the e-mails.

Finally 10 of the 20 possible interviewees agreed to be part of this research and just these interviewees were chosen, since they agreed to be part of this interview and then no other persons were contacted after that. Many of the possible interviewees said that they are very busy at the moment, so 10 interviews can be thought to be satisfactory. It

can be thought that 10 interviews is enough in order to have variable answers and find similarities and dissimilarities, since there are not hundreds of female leaders in tourism industry in Helsinki metropolitan area. The interviews were done face-to-face in November and December 2012 at the interviewees' offices in the Helsinki metropolitan area. All interviewees gave a permission to record the interviews and that way it was much easier to interview them, since with a pen and paper it would have been very slow and direct quotations could have not been done.

4.2 Interviewees' profile

Table 4 under this text presents persons, who were interviewed for this research and segments them to different categories, which are seen important in the research. After completing the categorization, different notifications can be done in discussion part of this thesis. Interviewees are coded with alphabets, so that they stay anonymous and the companies, where they work are not told in order to keep their privacy.

Table 4. Interviewees

Code	Age	Educational background	Amount of years as leader	Amount of years in tourism industry	Current position
Interviewee A	47 years	Master of Science (International politics and journalism), Economics and International Relations studies in Spain	5 years	17 years	Managing Director
Interviewee B	49 years	Master of Economics, major: Marketing	Over 20 years (almost whole career)	3 months	Managing Director
Interviewee C	49 years	Commercial College graduate, MBA degree in Tourism	8 years	25 years	Business Controller (a member of the board of the company)
Interviewee D	46 years	International Travel College (London)	15 years	23 years	Managing Director
Interviewee E	46 years	Bachelor of Business (London), 10 years after that Master of Business administration, Leadership studies	About 15 years	8-9 years	Country Manager
Interviewee F	42 years	Master of Business Administration	Around 10 years	12 years	Business Controller and Head of Finance
Interviewee G	48 years	Master of Science in Economics	About 20 years	25 years	Director of customer services
Interviewee H	49 years	University studies in France, Cabin Attendant, company's own leadership program, special professional degree for management, Applied psychology studies in University at the moment	4 years (15 years as supervisor before that)	25 years	Vice president of the in flight customer service
Interviewee I	42 years	Commercial College graduate	11 years (6 years as manager before that, almost whole career)	17 years	Business development director
Interviewee J	47 years	Master of Business Administration, major: International Marketing	Almost 20 years (first 5 years at managerial level, with a director title 15 years)	2 years	Director for research and product development functions, a member of the board of the company

Information of the table 4 above this text will be analysed later on in chapter 5.1 background, since other results of the interviews are also shown in chapter 5 of this thesis.

4.3 Formulation of the questions of the interviews

When starting to formulate the questions to be asked at the interviews, the theory part of this thesis was read through. Thinking process of possible questions to be asked at the interviews based on the theory part of this thesis, so that during the analysis process of this thesis one could go back to the theory and compare the answers of the

interviews with the theory. It was decided together with the thesis supervisor that the interview will be half-structured and theme interview. Half-structured means that there is a question, but the interviewee can answer freely without, for example any A, B or C options. Theme interview then again refers to an interview, which is divided to different themes. First, it was decided to ask 5 questions about the interviewees' background in order to make a table and be able to compare the respondents with the background information. The table is shown in thesis and it is table 4 in chapter 4.2. In addition to background questions it was determined to formulate 8 questions about 4 different themes, so there were 2 questions per theme. The themes were definition of leadership credibility, essential and unessential factors of leadership credibility, comparison between men and women and future of leadership credibility. All other themes were parts of the literature review of this thesis, except the future of leadership credibility, but still it was seen important to hear the respondents' comments about the future in order to have some kind of an idea, how the future of leadership credibility will look like. The interview form is shown in Attachment 1, so the questions will not be explained further here.

4.4 Limitations of this research

There are several limitations in this study, so that the research will be coherent and not too wide. First, the subject was limited to concern female leaders rather than leaders in general. Second, it was decided to focus on senior management, since as it was mentioned in the literature review part of this thesis, there are not so many women in senior management positions. Third, this research was decided to concentrate on tourism industry, since tourism has been part of the author's degree programme and it is personally most interesting industry of whole hospitality industry. Fourth, Helsinki metropolitan area was decided to be one limitation, since whole Finland would have been too wide area and most of tourism companies operate in Helsinki metropolitan area. Last limitation was to determine research methods used in this thesis and they are qualitative research, semi-structured interviews and deductive approach to a research. These research methods will be discussed more in part 3 Methodology in this thesis and validity of these limitations will be analysed in chapter 6 Discussion.

5 Results of the interviews

In this section of this thesis, results of the interviews are told without analysing them or comparing them with the literature review, since it will be done in the next chapter 6, which is a discussion part of this thesis.

In order to get the results all the interviews were transcribed and after that most essential sentences of each question of the interviews were highlighted and then put to excel in order to compare the answers of the interviewees, and after that they were coded with colours, for example yes answers with green, no answers with red and maybe or I do not know answers with yellow. In some questions, the interviewees were not able to answer just yes, no or maybe or I do not know and then similar kind of answers were highlighted with similar colours. After the colouring process, all the answers were gone through and the results of the interviews were found.

5.1 Results of background questions

Background information of the interviewees is shown on table 4 Interviewees' profile and the table is analysed in this chapter.

5.1.1 Age

All the interviewees are in their 40's and majority of them is between 46 and 49 years old. Three of the interviewees are 49 years old being the oldest interviewees and two youngest ones are 42 years old. Two are 47 years old, one is 48 years old and two are 46 years old. This shows that all the others, except the youngest interviewee were born in 1960's. Two youngest ones were born in the beginning of the 1970's.

5.1.2 Educational background

Variation can be noticed in educational background of the interviewees. 7 of the 10 interviewees have a Master's Degree. One of the interviewees is Masters of Sciences in International Politics and Journalism, one is Master of Business Economics in Market-

ing, one has a MBA degree in Tourism, two are Masters of Business Administration, one is a Master of Business Administration in International Marketing and one is Master of Sciences in Economics. Four of the interviewees had also studied abroad. Interviewee A had studied Economics and International Relations in Spain, interviewee D had studied in International Travel College in London, Interviewee E had done a Bachelor of Business degree in London and interviewee H had accomplished University studies in France. 3 of 10 are college graduates, two from Commercial College, of which one has MBA degree in tourism and one from Tourism College, which was located London. Interviewee H does not have a College or University degree and she has mainly been educated inside the company, even though now she is studying at University, besides her job.

5.1.3 Amount of years as leader

There is about 15 years' variation in the amount of years the interviewees have worked as leaders. Interviewee B has worked as leader for longest time, over 20 years. Interviewee G has worked as leader about 20 years. Interviewees D and J has worked as leader 15 years and interviewee had worked as manager 5 years before that. Interviewee E has worked as leader about 15 years. Interviewee J has worked as leader 11 years and in addition to that she worked 6 years as managerial level before that. Interviewee F has worked as leader for around 10 years, when again interviewee C 8 years. Interviewee A has leadership experience with 5 years and interviewee H has least leadership experience with 4 years, even though she has 15 years of experience as supervisor. Some of the interviewees did not exactly remember the exact amount of years as leaders, so that is why here is said about or around years and also some of them did not clearly say whether the years, they mentioned were years in top management position or managerial position.

5.1.4 Amount of years in tourism industry

Amount of years in tourism industry varies with about 25 years among the interviewees. Interviewees C, G and H have worked the longest time in tourism industry, for 25 years and almost their whole career. Interviewee D has worked 23 years in tourism in-

dustry, when again interviewee A 17 years. Interviewee F has worked for 12 years in tourism industry and interviewee E for 8-9 years (she did not remember exactly). Interviewee B has worked least in tourism industry, 3 months, but she had worked earlier in hotel industry for 6 years, which is quite near the tourism industry and that is why it is mentioned here, because otherwise she had been working in male dominated industries.

5.1.5 Current position of the interviewee

3 of 10 interviewees work as Managing Directors of the company, 2 of 10 work as Business Controllers, even though one of these 2 also hold a Head of Finance position and the other one was a member of the board of the company. 1 of 10 work as Country Manager, which means that she is the CEO of the company in Finland, but not the CEO of the whole company and 1 of 10 hold a position of Vice president of the in flight customer service. Interviewee C and G and B and I also work for the same company.

5.2 Results of definition of leadership credibility questions

In this part of the interview I showed one definition of leadership credibility and then asked these two questions, which are shown in chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. There are many different definitions of leadership credibility shown in this thesis, but I chose the following one: Leadership is more than “a title on one’s door”. “It means having the trust and confidence of those who work for you; who work with you; and who buy from you. That trust and confidence is called credibility”. (Leaders at all levels 2010.) This particular definition was chosen, since it is quite basic one and it assumed understandable. Also one reason was that trust and confidence were often mentioned to be very essential parts of leadership credibility in the literature review.

5.2.1 What do you think this means, when considering your own job?

Every interviewee thought that trust and confidence are really important in their jobs. Trust and confidence were seen the basic elements of leadership and main things of

leadership credibility and some of the interviewees added other issues as well and they will be discussed next.

According to interviewee C leadership credibility comes from the knowledge and expertise of the field she is working, when again interviewees F and G thought that behaviour of a leader is important part of leadership credibility. Interviewee F saw that it is the main thing that your beliefs are shown into your behaviour. According to interviewee G predictability is very important and a leader's trustworthiness will be shown by his or her actions and people learn to trust the leader if the leader does the right things. Interviewee E believes the leader should be present, she or he should talk to people and engage them and also everybody should have the same information so that things can be done together in the company. Also interviewee H sees communication as important thing as well and also according to her it is important that the leader and her subordinates share the same values and targets in their work.

5.2.2 Do you think leadership credibility is important, when considering your job?

Every interviewee shared the same opinion that leadership credibility is important. According to interviewee A leadership credibility is important at three levels; with colleagues, board and members of the association that she leads. Interviewee B thought that one cannot be a leader without credibility and it is especially important during the hard times. Interviewee C said that if a leader does not have credibility, then she or he cannot lead and the team members of the leader do things in their way, but the leader needs to manage them and that way earn credibility. Interviewee D then again thinks that she should always be the boss and also be able to solve any problems, the staff might have. According to interviewee E building trust and credibility is important both inside the operations and also towards the customers. She sees their business as a trust business, since she says that consumers do not buy and travel with them if they do not trust them. Interviewee F did not have any arguments behind her opinion that a leader needs to have credibility, when again interviewee G sees that leadership credibility is important in her own job, but also in all jobs of the leaders. Interviewee H reasons her opinion with the fact that it is important, since she works with people.

5.3 Results of essential and unessential factors building leadership credibility questions

This section is divided to subheadings 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, in which the results of the answers to the questions of the interviewee are discussed.

5.3.1 In your opinion, which issues build and keep leadership credibility?

Personality was seen as important issue in building and keeping leadership credibility by 3 of the 10 interviewees, interviewee A, D and J. Interviewee A also added that some people cannot be credible leaders, even though they would work very hard and try to learn it, but she saw that some people are just “born to be leaders” and that way credibility comes naturally. In addition to personality interviewee D believed that professionalism and being at the same level with the employees, so that the leader would be easy to reach, help in building and keeping leadership credibility. According to interviewee J, the personality that builds credibility is that “you accept your co-workers as your colleagues even though you are the leader, so that you respect their professionalism as well and don’t keep yourself all the knowledge”. She also believed in professionalism. According to interviewee G, it is important that the leader is easy to reach and “not like he old days, when the leaders were behind the closed doors”.

Open atmosphere was seen important, when building and keeping leadership credibility, by 3 of the 10 interviewees, interviewee C, E and F, and they also thought that a leader also needs to be open by her or himself. Interviewee E also said that she knows that this is not the case with many leaders and a leader should have a better knowledge of the issues in the company than other people, because she or he is in top management position and since everyone does not know the same things, a leader has to be able to judge, know how much she or he can convey and communicate, and how she or he will do it.

According to 2 of the 10 interviewees, interviewee B and G, consistency was seen as important issue in this case. Interviewee B highlighted that keeping promises is one of

the key points and interviewee G added to consistency that a leader should be predictable and act the same way every day, not doing things differently every day. In addition to consistency and keeping promises, interviewee B thought as well that a good leader “should show the success” in order to be a credible leader and that leadership credibility is not just an internal issue, but it is external as well, since the credibility of a leader should be shown in interactions with customers and partners. Interviewee B also saw that it is important for a credible leader to manage people in a same way, not favouring anyone and keeping the rules and that natural charisma of a person helps in building leadership credibility.

Having a clear vision was said to be an important thing by 2 of the interviewees, B and H. According to interviewee H there were 5 other issues, which build and keep leadership credibility and they are: experience, line responsibility, communication skills, discipline, and debating skills.

Honesty was seen an important issue by 2 of the 10 interviewees, by interviewee E and F. Interviewee E also saw that “genuine care for people” is important, “because you are actually working with people, not machines.” All in all, according to the interviewees there were many different important issues, which build and keep leadership credibility. Table 5 under this chapter summarizes important factors that the interviewees thought to build and keep leadership credibility.

Table 5. Important factors in building and keeping leadership credibility according to the interviewees

Personality	Professionalism	Being at the same level with employees	Easily reachable
Open atmosphere	Consistency	Predictability	Showing the success
Fairness	Honesty	Care	Experience
Line responsibility	Communication skills	Discipline	Having a clear vision
Debating skills	Keeping promises	Natural charisma	

5.3.2 In your opinion, which issues have effects on lack of leadership credibility?

Interviewees responded that the issues are the other way around than in the question 5.3.1. 2 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees B and F, especially highlighted that if a leader does not keep her or his promises that will cause lack of leadership credibility. Otherwise there were many different issues in addition to the counterparts of the issues mentioned in section 5.3.1.

Lacking knowledge of the issues in the field was thought to cause lack of leadership credibility by 2 interviewees, A and J. According to interviewee B if a leader does not make people to believe that the company's success is not up to one person, but the whole management team, the leader will lack credibility. Interviewee C saw that if a leader does not give feedback, negative or positive, to the people in the organization, they might not trust the leader and will cause lack of leadership credibility. Then again in interviewee D's opinion if a leader does not have guts to tackle problems and starts to fear them that might affect lack of leadership credibility. According to interviewee E, the worst things are, if a leader does not give information and thinks too highly about her or himself, since trust and credibility need to be earned and. If a leader does

“not appreciate team work and building up people’s competencies”, she or he is not “a leader in people’s eyes and hearts”. She also added that:

If you only tell people to come up with solutions, but you give them nothing to work with, you don’t give them tools or resources or money or time or help, then it’s exactly the same as just telling them that you are a race horse, you just have to race, but you give nothing, no food, no drink, no nothing.

Interviewee F’s view was that lack of leadership credibility can be cause if a leader is not present and visible in the company. When again interviewee G thought that if a leader is unpredictable and “not able to make decisions”, meaning that the leader should not make all decisions by her or himself, but together with team members, so acting like that “eats credibility”. Interviewee H saw that being “a fake person” and trying to be “Mr. or Ms. nice guy” can cause lack of leadership credibility. She added as well that if a leader does not stand behind her or his decisions, which can be hard to understand, a leader can lose her or his credibility.

Table 6 under this text summarizes issues causing lack of leadership credibility, which were said by the interviewees.

Table 6. Issues causing lack of leadership credibility told by the interviewees

Not keeping promises	Leadership position is the most important thing	Lack of knowledge of the issues in the field	Making employees to believe that the company's success is up to one person	Not giving feedback	Fearing problems
Not giving information	Thinking too highly about her or himself	Being invisible and not present	Unpredictable	Unable to make decisions	Being a fake person
Not able to stand behind her or his decisions					

5.4 Results of comparison between men and women questions

This part of the results discusses comparisons between men and women and interview questions, 4.1 and 4.2, of this theme.

5.4.1 Do you think that there are differences in building leadership credibility between men and women?

In 4 of the 10 interviewees' opinion, interviewees A, D, E and I, there are differences in building leadership credibility between men and women and interviewee H thought that there is no difference at her department, but there may be in the whole organiza-

tion. There were several comments about the differences between men and women and the main differences said are listed here:

- Women and men are not at the same level, but it might not be a bad thing. Stereotyping I done, when people say that “men are more down to subjects and women leaders are more into emotions and they are very good with human relations”. (interviewee A.)
- Women often look high upon male leaders and they see them as strong, professional and guys usually get higher positions faster than women, even though women have a higher education than men (interviewee D).
- Women care more about people by nature than men, “but they can be quite blind about it and they can decide to be blind about it and then again men have all the possibilities to be good leaders and I have met very many, so depending on individual”. (interviewee E.)
- As woman “you have to work harder, you have to do more in the beginning, but when you get the credibility, then I don’t think there are differences anymore”. (interviewee I.)

According to 6 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees B, C, F, G, H and J, there are no differences in building leadership credibility between men and women. They, except interviewee H, said that it is more about the personality and human being. Even though interviewee A said that there are differences between men and women, she also added that nowadays “gender is not an issue” that much as it used to be and interviewee B thought that maybe men build credibility more by themselves with status symbols, such as with a nice car or office.

5.4.2 Have you faced problems with building leadership credibility in your career?

According to 4 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees A,B, E and G, they had faced problems in building leadership credibility in their careers, when again 5 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees C, F, H, I and J, said that they had not have problems in building leadership credibility in their careers. Interviewee D did not directly answer if she had have problems and she gave a general answer that females need to work harder to be credible leaders than men.

Problems that the interviewees had faced were that someone else took the credit of the job, making failures, but learning from them, being insecure and not believing in herself, taking things too personally and being young and inexperienced. A couple of the interviewees, who said they have not faced problems with building leadership credibility in their career, said that they might have felt a bit insecure or had some resistance, but they did not considered them as problems.

5.5 Results of future questions

In this last section of the interview questions 5.1 and 5.2 were asked from the interviewees and results to those questions will be next analysed in chapters 5.5.1 and 5.5.2.

5.5.1 Do you think that importance of leadership credibility will change in the future?

In 2 of the 10 interviewees', interviewees B and C, opinion the importance of leadership credibility will not change in the future. Interviewee B thought that nowadays and the in the future there is more discussion about leadership credibility, even though the importance of it has already been there earlier, and without it is hard to do good business. She also added that younger generation has higher expectations about their leaders and companies, where they work or will work for. Interviewee C did not directly reason her opinion, but she thought that leadership styles in the companies are changing, it used to be more management style, when leaders and managers told the employees to do that and that, but now they are more self-acting. She also adds that

knowledge is the key word now and in the future and in this context knowledge means that employees know why they are doing their job and why there are organizational changes, for example.

According to 5 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees D, E, F, G and J, the importance of leadership credibility will change and grow in the future. Interviewee D also commented that there will be “a huge war to get” management or leadership position in the future, because of unstable economic conditions. Interviewee E added that leadership credibility “will be the main model in all leadership positions” and leadership is needed rather than managing people. She also saw that “leadership builds a lot on values” and as older and younger generation value quite different issues, changes are needed and problems might be faced. Also interviewee F saw that values become more important, since the leadership style is changing from managing people towards leading people and there is a gender gap between the values of the older and younger generation. Interviewee G agrees with interviewees E and F that values will become more important, when younger generation starts to work with older generation and leadership needs to be a bit different that it used to be. Also interviewee J thought that values become more important in leadership and she believes as well that a leader “have to have that credibility and the substance behind being a leader”, since the younger generation do not respect lousy bosses, just because they are their bosses.

Last 3 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees A, H and I, were not sure if the importance of leadership credibility will change in the future or not. Interviewee A said that “It might change somehow. I think the leadership itself might change a bit, but you always need to have the credibility of a leader any way.” Interviewee H believed that having a clear vision and guts to reach it and being “fearless and humble to learn” will be very important issues in the future. Interviewee H did not directly answer the question, but she underlined that “Everything else you can kind of learn, but the attitude for working with people and leading people is something that is more important today.”

5.5.2 Do you think that differences of leadership credibility between men and women will change in the future?

According to 3 of the 10 interviewees, A, D and E, differences of leadership credibility between men and women will change in the future. They all thought that the situation will be more equal in the future and there will not be that many differences anymore. Interviewee A commented that “it’s not so masculine and macho kind of leadership anymore. I would say it goes towards more common way of doing things“. Interviewee D hoped that “even though the ladies want to go further, but we don’t always have to fight to get our position, we just have to prove to be good leaders and professional.” Interviewee E also added that “the next generation, men or women will be much better educated towards the future demands”.

According to 4 of the 10 interviewees, interviewees B, C, F and G, thought that there will not be changes. Interviewee B thought that

I believe that more men want to be leaders than women, because many women they just want to stay at home, they want to have the position, where they have more freedom, because if you are a leader, then also I mean, you don’t, you can’t do whatever you want, because there is the responsibility and it means that it means less spare time and many women they are not, they don’t want to choose that kind of a life.

Interviewees C and F did not see any specific differences between male or female leaders in the future, when again interviewee G believed that “it’s moving more to the personalities, so I think that will, always they may be a little bit partial, apart from each other”.

Interviewees H, I and J were not sure whether there will be changes or not in the future. According to interviewee H balancing work and family life will be a bigger problem in the future rather than leadership credibility. Interviewee I thought that “I don’t know if a young woman would start today, how they would feel, but I would imagine that it’s already much better than what it was, when I started.” Interviewee J said that “This is a bit difficult question that whether it will change, I think that it will be even more challenging for any leader, for a man or a woman to be a leader, so maybe the challenges are in the end the same for both sexes.”

6 Discussion

In this discussion part conclusions are done in order to analyse interviewees' answers, compare them with the literature review part of this thesis and to make interesting notifications about them. It is also discussed, how the outcomes of this research will answer the proposed research problem and research questions of this thesis.

6.1. Conclusions of key issues

Key issues that came to the fore in the interviews and literature review are analysed in this part of the thesis. This chapter is divided to 5 chapters, of which each one represents one theme of the interview, and that way it is easy for the reader to see the key issues.

6.1.1 Background of the interviewees

It was interesting to notice that all the interviewees were in their 40's and there was just 7 years difference between the oldest and the youngest interviewees. So taking that into consideration, the age should not be an important factor, when comparing the answers of the interviews.

Educational background of the interviewees varied quite a lot and that could have had an effect on the answers of the interviewees. One could especially notify that interviewee E had accomplished leadership studies and she was very passionate about the topic, so she had longer and more comprehensive answers than the other interviewees. Interviewee H was the only one, who did not have either College or University Degree and she had mainly been educated inside the company, so that can be a reason why she might had a bit "rosy view", as she said by herself as well, to the issues of this interview.

The years as leaders varied with 16 years, which is quite much, but still direct correlation between the answers and years as leaders was not found and one cannot notice that the leaders, who had been leaders for 20 years would have had better answers than

those, who had worked as leader for 5 years or less. Of course they have had more experiences of leadership, but it may be about the personality; some people learn to be leaders quicker than the others or they are leaders by nature and nobody of the interviewee had just started as leader. It might be that somebody of the interviewee would have just started as leader, there could have been differences. One should also notice that many of the interviewees had worked as managers or supervisor before becoming leaders, so they had gained experience from having subordinates already.

There were significant differences in years, the interviewees had worked in tourism industry, since the years varies with 25 years. Those interviewees, who have worked in tourism industry for a long time, have mainly worked with females, even though their managers or leaders might have been men, but those interviewees, who had worked more in other industries than in tourism industry, might have worked more with men and have most likely had male managers and leaders.

The interviewees hold several different positions, but they all work at top management level, so one could not notice from the answers of the interview in which position they hold. Special similarities were not found with managing director or business controllers, since there were more them as just one person.

Interviewees B and I and also C and G worked in the same companies, but any significant similarities were no found in their answers. One cannot say that the company cultures or values have affected on the interviewees' opinions.

6.1.2 What is leadership credibility?

Interestingly, every interviewee agreed with the definition of leadership credibility (2.3.1), which was shown to the interviewees before asking the two questions about leadership credibility. Maybe some other definition would have been shown, the results would have been a bit different, since they would have not seen the words trust and confidence, and they might not have come up just those two words. Nevertheless, some interviewees added other issues as well and those were: knowledge and expertise, behaviour, predictability, being present and communication. Answers of the inter-

viewees matched very well with the definitions of leadership credibility mentioned in the literature review, chapter 2.3.1 and every interviewee also saw that leadership credibility is very important in their job and also in general and without it is very hard to be a leader.

6.1.3 What kind of a leader is credible?

Tables 2 and 5, which showed the most essential factors of a credible leader, were quite the same, even though there were different names for same issues. In the literature there were more abstract words used, when again interviewees explained the issues in a more practical way, for example in the literature transparent leadership was mentioned and interviewees called it open atmosphere. May be it can be due to the fact that the interviewees are not native English speakers and those kind of abstract words do not belong to their everyday vocabulary.

Even though the answers were quite similar to the issues mentioned in the literature review, inspiration was one thing, which was often mentioned in the literature, but the interviewees did not directly mention that. Of course it can be that they thought it as a part of, for example personality.

Personality and open atmosphere were seen as two most important factors of leadership credibility, since 3 of the 10 interviewees pointed out them in the interviews. As was already mentioned in the results part of this thesis that some people just are born to be leaders and the other are not. It is quite hard to change somebody's personality and one should not fake their own person, but what if a person, who is not born to be leader wants to be a leader someday? Will it be a disaster or can she or he learn to be a leader? Then again by open atmosphere the interviewees meant that a leader needs to be open, she or he should spread knowledge and not keep it by her or himself. One respondent also said that that does not always happen. Why is it so? Why a leader wants so keep all the knowledge? Does she or he not trust the employees enough and feel that she or he is irreplaceable? What if something happens to a leader and nobody knows crucial issues that she or he has been hiding from the employees? As it was mentioned in the literature review that transparent leadership is important, when build-

ing leadership credibility and there it was mentioned that the leader should not be too open, since that be harmful as well as being not open at all. Sometimes it might be quite difficult to find a golden mean somewhere between, but everyone can learn from mistakes.

When comparing issues causing lack of leadership credibility, it can be noticed that they were mostly counterparts of the issues building and keeping leadership credibility as was also in the literature. Additional issues were: trying to be something else that really is or starting to fear problems. It can be that a weak person tries to hide her or his true personality and tries to be someone else. Maybe she or does not acknowledge that by him or herself, but other people can quite easily notice what kind of a person she or he really is and that can cause conflicting situations in the company. Also if a leader starts to fear problems, how the subordinates trust her or him? Of course sometimes there can be situations, in which a leader fears, but she or he should handle them and not to show her or his weak moments.

6.1.4 Differences in leadership credibility between male and female leaders

Opinions about differences in leadership credibility between men and women varied quite a lot, since majority of the interviewees, 6 of 10 thought that there are no differences between men and women and 4 of 10 saw that there are. Interestingly, there were different reasons behind the differences, which were explained in chapter 5.4.1. When comparing the reasons with the literature review, one can notice that the reasons were quite the same, even though there were more differences mentioned in the literature, and also some hints, how female leaders could increase their leadership credibility in the future. Same differences mentioned in the interviews and literature review, were:

- Women are more emotional and caring than men.
- Women need to work harder to build their credibility than men.

- Men are in better positions quicker than women, even though women are more highly educated than men.

Some of the answers of the interviewees were a bit incoherent, since first they thought that yes, there are differences or no, there are not differences, but then they came up with reasons for the other opinion as well. It may be that those interviewees did not have a clear opinion about the issue and it was difficult to decide, whether there are differences or not. Nevertheless, it was interesting to notice that gender was not seen crucial in building leadership credibility, as it was thought to be prior the research.

In the literature two incoherent roles of female leaders were discussed, but then again the interviewees did not point that out. Could they see the leader prototype different compared to the masculine one mentioned in the literature, so that they would not acknowledge these two roles?

Maybe this research would have been done in some other industry, for example in a male-dominated industry; the answers could have been quite different. It might be that female leaders need to work harder in male-dominated industries than in female-dominated industries, since men might question female leaders more than women.

As was already shown in the results part of this thesis, in chapter 5.4.2, one can notice that half of the interviewees, 5 of 10 had not faced problems with their leadership credibility and 4 of 10 had faced. One interviewee said that in general female leaders might have more problems than men in building leadership credibility. It is hard to say whether they had had problems due to their gender or because they were young and inexperienced. Mostly the interviewees, who had faced problems, said that they had problems in the beginning of their careers and not anymore, so it seems that gender is not that much an issue, since men could face same kind of problems, when being young and inexperienced. It can be that personality affects a lot, since some people are more insecure and they fear failures more than the others, so it can be possible that as being leaders they create problems by themselves for themselves.

6.1.5 Future of leadership credibility

Opinions about whether the importance of leadership credibility will change in the future varied and the equal amount of the interviewees, said that the importance of leadership credibility will change and grow in the future (5 of 10 interviewees) or the importance of leadership credibility may change in the future somehow (3 of 10 interviewees). These two opinions were not put into the same category, because the other 3 of 10 interviewees did not clearly state their opinion and it was hard to say, whether they really believe that there will changes or not. Interestingly, all interviewees, who believed that there will be changes in the futures, said that values play an important role of future leadership and there might be problems, when the older and younger generation value different things and their expectation of their managers and leaders can vary quite a lot. It may be due to the fact that nowadays leadership is discussed more and thought as well as in the old days and also because the younger generation is more highly educated than the older generation, so that can be one reason, why they have higher expectations of their managers and leaders.

Even though 2 of 10 interviewees, who did not believe that the importance of leadership credibility will change in the future and it is needed, also said that new leadership styles are needed in the future with the younger generation. So it seems that values were the key issue of the answers to this question. A couple of questions arise from this value issue; how can the companies build an organizational culture, which is suitable for both, the older and younger generation? And how to be a leader for subordinates with high expectations?

There were several different views, whether differences of leadership credibility between men and women will change in the future. The answers were yes, no or I do not know and any opinion was not clearly the strongest one, since 3 of 10 said yes, 4 of 10 said no and 3 of 10 did not have a clear opinion. There were not really any key similarity in the answers of the interviews and many several reasons were included. It can also be noticed that several interviewees thought more about changes in leadership in general rather than changes in leadership credibility.

6.2 General conclusions

It is interesting to notice that the hypothesis set for the research was not valid, as the gender was not seen as a crucial issue in building leadership credibility. Personality of a leader was seen more important, so maybe there is stereotyping done in the literature more than there is in real life. Of course, this research was a sample of 10 female leaders' opinions, so in another context the results could be different and a gender could affect more than in this case.

The literature review consisted mostly of international sources, especially American, when again all the interviewees were Finnish and as there are differences in female's role in working life around the world, it may be that that is why there were differences in interviewees' opinions and the literature. Otherwise there were not that clear differences, when comparing the interviewees' opinions and the literature. Furthermore, if the interviews would have been done in Finnish, the respondents might have explained more and had longer answers than in English, but it was always said before starting the interview that the answers can also explained partly in Finnish if it is not possible to explain in English or some words were missing, for example.

Interestingly, there were many different viewpoints to the questions, so that they were not all the same and one could analyse the answers better. It may be that if someone of the interviewees would have been significantly younger or older than the others, the answers might have been even more different than they were. Nevertheless, even though the interviewees were about the same age, they had quite different backgrounds and experiences as leaders.

Surprisingly, it seemed that not all interviewees were familiarized with the concept of leadership credibility, even though they thought that it is very essential and important, and they sometimes talked more about leadership in general and did not directly answer the questions about leadership credibility. Of course it may be that they had not thought about it much before this research and they have just thought that it is there naturally.

One key issue in the interviewees' answers seem to be that leadership credibility is something that you need to earn, you cannot get instantly. That was also mentioned in the literature review. It may take a very long time to earn the credibility, but when it is earned, one should keep it and not to lose, since then it is very hard to earn back. Leadership credibility is something that a leader should not forget at any moment, since if a leader is not perceived credible, the business will suffer and employees are not in control and they do whatever they like.

Moreover, it was positive to hear that the interviewees said that the topic is really interesting and they would have not thought of this kind of topic by themselves and they were interested in finding out the results of the research. It may be that leadership credibility is thought to be an abstract thing and it is thought to be there naturally, but as in this thesis is earlier discussed, it might not always be there naturally.

Furthermore, one key question aroused from the answers of the interviewees. Would the answers have been different if the interviewees would have been subordinates and not leaders themselves? Of course, then the questions would have been needed to be changed a bit, but then the subordinates could have evaluated their managers or leaders. For leaders it may be a bit hard to evaluate themselves, but they have been subordinates as well and also leaders have leaders, which they can evaluate.

6.3 Evaluation of validity and limitations of the research

“Reliability is the degree to which a measure is free of measurement error. It is typically assessed by looking at the consistency of a measure.” (Altermatt 2010, 1.) When evaluating validity of a research, one should consider it from three different perspectives; internal, external and construct. Internal validity means that the author has the confidence to make “cause-and-effect conclusions” from the results of her or his study. “A study has internal validity to the degree that it is able to rule out these alternative causes and conclude that one factor alone produced an effect.” (Altermatt 2010, 1.) External validity then again refers to the confidence that the author has in “generalizing the findings” of her or his study “to people, settings and times” not included her or his study. “Concerns about external validity are generally concerns about the sample

used in a study”, for example if an author of a study generalizes that all women act in a certain way. (Altermatt 2010, 1.) Last perspective, construct validity means the confidence that an author can have “that the theoretical constructs” the author is going to represent in her or his study, for example anger or time pressure, “are accurately represented” by the author’s “realworld methods”. (Altermatt 2010, 1.)

Qualitative data is more subjective and interpretable than quantitative data, so that is why reliability or validity of qualitative data cannot be shown statistically. Generalization of sample results to wider population is also problematic, since “it is unlikely that the sample used will have been determined statistically to facilitate the making of such inferences valid and reliable”. (Brotherton 2008, 213.) Objectiveness of the interpretation relies on the possibility of someone else to be able “to apply the same techniques and procedure and confirm that they produce the same results” (Brotherton 2008, 213). According to Brotherton (2008), internal validity refers to credibility and authenticity of the results and external validity then again means transferability of the results to other contexts. Reliability of the results is dependent on time and space. There is also “another approach to dealing with validity and reliability issues” and that is called triangulation. It is used to “increase confidence in the accuracy and dependability of the results by utilizing more than one data analyst or interpreter, source of data or data collection method”. That way “the results are validated from a number of different directions”. (Brotherton 2008, 214.)

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter by Brotherton (2008), it is not possible show with the help of statistic that the results of qualitative study, but the author believes that the same techniques and procedure could be used in other qualitative studies as well. One just has to believe that the results are true and authentic and one key point here is that the interviewees were professionals and worked as leaders, so they had to have some kind of an idea about leadership credibility. The answers of the interviews also meet the theory part of this thesis quite well, except comparisons made between men and women, but the study of this thesis was not primarily about differences between men and women. It could be possible that the results of the study of this thesis could be transferred to other context as well, for example researches about

female leaders or leadership credibility. It did not take years' to conduct this research, but one should notice that this is a Bachelor's thesis and the author is not a professional researcher. Even though this study was done quite fast, one should notice that the author might have been very passionate about the topic and focused on this thesis, so maybe if a longer time would have been spent for this thesis, the author would have had problems with motivation and finishing the thesis.

When evaluating the limitations of this research, it can be thought that they were suitable for this research, since it was good to concentrate on just one industry, in this case tourism industry, in order to avoid too wide research. Also deciding to concentrate on female leaders in top management positions was wise, as interviewing female leaders from different managerial levels could have been confusing and the answers would not have been comparable that well as when interviewing female leaders, who all are leaders. Nevertheless, it might have been a good idea to interview both, female and male leaders about the differences of leadership credibility, so there would not only have been female leaders' perspective. It was also important to set limits for the area of research, whole Finland would have been too large area, but then it would have been interesting to compare the results with different areas, although in this case it would have been too wide research. The methods selected for this research, qualitative and deductive approach to research were suitable, because this topic is quite abstract and it would have been hard to answer just with numbers. Deductive approach was suitable, since first it was needed to know about the topic, before making the questions for the interview and comparing them with the literature related to the topic.

6.4 An evaluation of the thesis process

In the beginning several problems were I faced with this thesis. First, the topic was needed to be re-thought, since a thesis about almost same topic was already done. Second, there were problems in finding a supervisor for this thesis, but luckily third candidate agreed to supervise this thesis. Third, there were problems with timetables, as the interviewees were very busy and two months needed to be reserved for interviews and lengthened the whole thesis process. Despite the problems, I could say that otherwise

the thesis process went well and a second timetable, which was done after knowing the timetables of the interviews, was followed.

6.4 Suggestions for future research and development

According to findings and research of this thesis, leadership credibility is not researched that much and further researches seem to be needed, as leadership credibility is thought to be an essential part of leadership and every interviewee thought that it is important. So the following topics could be researched in the future:

- Perceptions of male leaders on leadership credibility
- Comparison of male and female leaders' perceptions of leadership credibility
- Do subordinates of a company X feel that their supervisor/manager/leader is credible?

In addition to the topics about leadership credibility, a few topics could be researched according to the comments of the interviewees and also the literature review.

- How leadership styles will change in the future?
- What do male leaders think about balancing work and family?
- Are there differences in work performance of leaders, who have a family and leaders, who are single?

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Interview model

Interview questionnaire	
1	Background
1.1	How old are you? (full years)
1.2	What kind of educational background do you have?
1.3	How many years have you worked as a leader?
1.4	How many years have you worked in tourism industry?
1.5	What is your current position?
2	Definition of leadership credibility
(A definition of leadership credibility is shown to the interviewee and then the interviewee answers to the questions in this section.)	
2.1	What do you think this means, when considering your job?
2.2	Do you feel that leadership credibility is important, considering your own job?
3	Essential and unessential factors of leadership credibility
3.1.	In your opinion which issues build and keep leadership credibility?
3.2.	In your opinion which issues have effects on lack of leadership credibility?
4	Comparison between men and women
4.1.	Do you think that there are differences in building leadership credibility between men and women?
4.2.	Have you faced problems with building leadership credibility in your career?
5	Future
5.1.	Do you think that importance of leadership credibility will change in the future?
5.2.	Do you think that differences of leadership credibility between men and women will change in the future?

