



**BUILDING A COHERENT CORPORATE
IDENTITY IN STARTUPS**
-Is it and should it be important?
A managerial perspective

Jannica Nyman

Department of Marketing

Hanken School of Economics

Helsinki

2013

HANKEN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Department of: Marketing	Type of work: Thesis
Author: Jannica Nyman	Date: 09.01.2013
Title of thesis: BUILDING A COHERENT CORPORATE IDENTITY IN STARTUPS – Is it and should it be important? A managerial perspective	
<p>Abstract: Entrepreneurship has remained as one of the positive elements in the current turbulent economy, however academic literature offers little theoretical rigor to support entrepreneurs in their brand building efforts. It has been proven that aligning the corporate identity constructs will create a stronger corporate brand in corporations, but though several scholars have questioned the applicability of this theory in a startup context, none have approached the matter from a managerial point of view nor has the importance of the corporate identity constructs been tested for startups.</p> <p>The aim of this study was to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies and to examine if specific corporate identity constructs are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneurs point of view.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of this study was heavily based on the UK and mainland Europe view on corporate identity and brand building. The framework centered around the corporate identity constructs; corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication, and discussed all constructs and their relationships.</p> <p>The study conducted for this paper consisted of responses from 109 startup entrepreneurs (N=109) and aimed at measuring the importance of both corporate brand building in general and the corporate identity constructs in a startup context. An electronic form was sent out to 823 potential respondents through four predetermined databases, and aimed at getting generalizable results.</p> <p>The results of the study indicate that entrepreneurs find brand building important for their companies and are implementing brand building activities in their strategies but unconsciously. All corporate identity constructs were also considered important, but corporate communication and corporate culture were considered more important than corporate behavior and corporate symbolism. This suggests that limited resources and time restrict startups from focusing equally on all corporate identity constructs.</p> <p>If entrepreneurs realized that all their activities build their corporate brand, they would be able to influence their corporate brand better and less startups might not fail due to brand related issues.</p> <p>Keywords: Corporate branding, Corporate identity, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism, corporate communication, startups, startup branding, entrepreneurship</p>	

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1.	Problem formulation	3
1.2.	Aim and scope.....	8
1.3.	Limitations.....	9
1.4.	Structure of the paper.....	10
2	BUILDING STRONG CORPORATE BRANDS THROUGH CORPORATE IDENTITIES	11
2.1.	Conceptual clarification.....	11
2.1.1.	Corporate identity as a concept	12
2.1.2.	Corporate branding as a concept	13
2.2.	Corporate branding vs. Product branding	14
2.3.	Corporate brands and their relationship to corporate identities	17
2.4.	Corporate identity.....	21
2.4.1.	Corporate culture	23
2.4.2.	Corporate behavior	27
2.4.3.	Corporate symbolism	30
2.4.4.	Corporate communication	32
2.5.	Corporate image	35
2.6.	Summary.....	37
3	METHOD	40
3.1.	Research methodology and method.....	40
3.2.	The Questionnaire	41
3.2.1.	Quality of the questionnaire	44
3.3.	Sample	45
3.4.	Data collection and reliability	46
3.4.1.	Startup Sauna database	48
3.4.2.	The Norwegian list and Arctic Startup databases	49
3.4.3.	ArabNet Startup database.....	50
3.5.	Data analysis.....	51
4	RESULTS	53
4.1.	Descriptive statistics.....	53
4.2.	Basic assumptions	55

4.2.1.	Divergent validity	56
4.2.2.	Reliability	58
4.3.	Testing the hypothesis	60
4.3.1.	T-tests for corporate identity constructs	60
5	DISCUSSION	66
5.1.	Answering the research questions	66
5.1.1.	Corporate brand building is considered important	67
5.1.2.	Corporate identity constructs are not equally important.....	69
5.1.2.1.	Risks of unequal importance	72
5.2.	Summary of discussion	74
5.3.	Implications	75
5.4.	Conclusion	77
5.5.	Limitations and future studies	78
	SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING.....	79
	REFERENCES	87

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Full questionnaire	95
Appendix 2	Country of origin of respondents.....	98
Appendix 3	Skewness & Kurtosis	99

TABLES

Table 1	Summary of main differences between corporate and product brands.....	17
Table 2	Summary of Corporate Culture concepts.....	27
Table 3	Summary of Corporate Behavior concepts	30
Table 4	Summary of Corporate Symbolism concepts.....	32
Table 5	Summary of Corporate Communication concepts.....	35
Table 6	Summary of hypotheses	39

Table 7	Summary of questionnaire	43
Table 8	Survey quality	45
Table 9	Data collection timeline.....	47
Table 10	Data flow analysis	52
Table 11	Origins of startups represented.....	53
Table 12	Descriptive statistics on constructs (in order of importance)	54
Table 13	Correlation matrix with (F stands for factor).....	58
Table 14	Reliability of scales	59
Table 15	Testing for H _{2A}	62
Table 16	Testing for H _{2B}	62
Table 17	Testing for H _{2C}	63
Table 18	Testing for H _{2D}	64
Table 19	Summary of statuses of hypothesis	65

FIGURES

Figure 1	Illustration of the relationship of constructs as explained in chapter 2.....	38
Figure 2	A comparison of quantitative research process and qualitative research process	40
Figure 3	Response timeline	47
Figure 4	Illustration of results	64

1 INTRODUCTION

Corporate brand building efforts have become increasingly popular among various types of companies during the 21st century due to the enhanced value these efforts can cause. It is therefore important that companies are led by CEOs' that understand the enhanced value corporate branding can result in. In startup companies it is the founder/entrepreneurs who is in charge of branding efforts as he/she can be claimed to be the core of the corporate identity (Aaker, 1996, Krake, 2005). Entrepreneurs need to have the right approach and attitude towards corporate branding in order to enable the co-creation of a strong corporate brand, and this notion is emphasized by the fact that startups are in the extremely fortunate situation where external stakeholders have no previous perceptions of the startup nor do they have any linkages or other associations connected to them. Startups can be called the only companies that are able to build their corporate brand from a clean slate, and thus the entrepreneur's mind-set towards corporate brand building is also key for successful brand building activities in a startup company.

Entrepreneurship has remained as one of the positive elements in the current turbulent economy and has therefore also gained increased media attention during the last couple of years in Finland. A new wave of entrepreneurs, both intentional but also unintentional, have taken it upon themselves to keep things rolling in the economy. At the same time, starting a business has become cool and entrepreneurs, in a way, modern day heroes (Business Insider, 2011). *"Entrepreneurship has become sexy in a lot of ways," says Clay Newbill, executive producer of ABC's Shark Tank, which features people pitching their dreams to a panel of deep-pocketed investors*" (Business Insider, 2011).

The beginning of the current decade has been extremely interesting for especially Finnish startup companies, and the quantity and quality of them have increased dramatically (YLE, 2012). The environment for creating startups is developing towards more favorable than ever before in Finland as TEKES funding for entrepreneurship is constantly growing and the government decided in late 2012 to cut down on taxation of business angel funding in startup companies (Valtiovarainministeriö, 2012). A foundation for Startups, *the Startup Foundation* was also created in the fall of 2012 with the goal to create the right preconditions for founding, growing and

internationalizing startups as well as supporting and assisting entrepreneurship in Finland (Startup-Säätiö, 2012).

The goal to create a prospering startup ecosystem in northern Europe (having Helsinki has the hub) has hence become visible with various actors from non-profit organizations to the government working hard to get the attention of foreign investors, potential employees, media and the most promising students, and bringing all of these stakeholders to Helsinki. Wired magazine recently picked out Helsinki as one of the European capitals with an impressive up and coming startup hub (Andersson, 2012a), and serial entrepreneur and Stanford professor Steve Blank called it the next potential Silicon Valley (Sitra, 2011). If this wasn't enough, the European Union has awarded Helsinki-Uusimaa the European Entrepreneurial Region of 2012 recognizing the area with the *"most credible plan of action promoting entrepreneurship with realistic foresight and outstanding political vision"* (City of Helsinki, 2010). Another issue concerning Helsinki is that it is geographically located to conveniently serve as gateway to Russia, which though becoming a member of WTO in August 2012 (WTO, 2012) *"is still a tough place to do business. It comes in at No. 120 on the World Bank's ranking of countries for their ease of doing business."* (Philips, 2012). This makes Helsinki further more an attractive ground for international investors interested in Russian startups. With Finnish Startup Accelerator program Startup Sauna *"becoming a European accelerator to be reckoned with"* (Anderson, 2012b), it is safe to say that both the Finnish government and non-profit organizations are going quite well with directing the limelight to entrepreneurship and startups at the moment.

Meanwhile both domestic and international media has recognized the potential of Finnish Startups; Red Herring mentioning 10 Finnish startups in their list of the 100 hottest European startups of 2012 (Red Herring, 2012) and MTV3 Media signing on a 3-year contract with Finnish startup accelerator program Startup Sauna (MTV3, 2012). On March 14th of 2012, 27 Finnish startups along with the Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade of Finland, Alexander Stubb, got the honor of opening NASDAQ in New York (Ulkoasiainministeriö, 2012), and in 2012 the biggest startup conference in Russia and Northern Europe, Slush (hosted in Helsinki), grew 100% from the year before attracting 3000 visitors during November 21-22. These events highlight the current hype of entrepreneurship in Finland.

The fall of giants in the paper and mobile industries have created a new wave of companies that are widely regarded as the future of Finland. A good example of such a

company is Jolla, an independent designer and developer of smartphones on the Nokia MeeGo platform together with N9 professionals and MeeGo community alumni (Jolla Mobile, 2012). More startups like Jolla are also needed in the more traditional industrial sectors where unemployment ratings are growing (Jaakkola, 2012). Even though the startup trend of the early 2010's have been in the mobile and IT industries, employees in more conventional occupations such as lawyers and architects have also realized the potential of starting their own venues (Jaakkola, 2012).

Entrepreneurship has never been more popular or hyped than it is right now and new startups are founded on a daily basis (YLE, 2012). For these companies and entrepreneurs, building a corporate brand is a long and rocky road where academic literature so far offers little support. Startups would however serve as an interesting addition to contemporary brand building literature due to their fast-paced characteristics, and their unique possibility to build a corporate brand from scratch. The lack of academic research on these companies in terms of corporate brand building, as well as the fundamental need to support startups as much as possible for future well being, are key motivators for this paper.

1.1. Problem formulation

Over the last two decades corporate branding has grown from a static application of visual presentation into a *“philosophy and a process of organisational change”* (Inskrip, 2004: 358). Branding and brand building activities have been studied extensively from various perspectives over the years, but contemporary academic research on brand management has focused on already established multinational businesses (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Krake, 2005). As brand building has been practiced in startups for decades and the phenomenon is in no way new for entrepreneurs, the lack of research on startup branding is astonishing. The lack of research on startups' brand building processes and especially on the coherency of startups' internal brand building activities, creates a substantial gap in branding literature, and the three main reasons why it should be studied more extensively are presented below.

Firstly, according to previous studies it can be claimed that brand management is paid very little attention to on a daily basis in small companies (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). One reason can be suggested to be that there is little theoretical rigor that supports

entrepreneurs' brand building processes. Practical examples presented below may well occur due to this specific reason.

In a study conducted by Merrilees (2007) a concerning amount of entrepreneurs did not grasp their companies' core values, market positioning or even business concepts. Functioning brand names and brand consistency were more often than not inconsistent, communication unclear, selection and training of staff inadvertent and the core of corporate identity unstructured. In a study conducted by Krake (2005) SMEs didn't even display their company name on their products, and Bresciani and Eppler (2010) contribute to the list by adding that only very few of the companies in their study of 15 Swiss startups had clear brand values or a brand measurement process. Ojasalo *et al.* (2008) state that small companies' branding goals are often badly designed and vague due to the lack of know how and resources, and they have in general a "*narrow interpretation of what branding is*" (Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008: 96). Summarizing the studies above two justified questions can be derived; are startup entrepreneurs concerned with corporate brand building at all or are they just not aligning their corporate identity properly resulting in them focusing on the wrong things?

Secondly, branding is often considered a privilege of big corporations and many consumers would associate "branding" with huge advertising expenditures (Merrilees, 2007). Startup branding is therefore often considered oxymoron also amongst scholars. The personality of the organization (both internal and external) should however be paid attention to on a long-term basis (Inskrip, 2004) regardless of company size as the core of corporate branding is much more than only a functioning website or funny ads. It is also e.g. the values and beliefs of the company communicated externally, which means that branding is also highly relevant in a startup context, and should thus be studied as such.

Thirdly, the most pressing reason why it is important to study brand building in a startup context is overwhelming. A gap that that is not necessarily found in academic research, but in real life is that especially in developed countries where the demographic is aging rapidly, more jobs are needed exponentially in the coming years. Europe is in the middle of another economic crisis where people are laid off and more jobs are needed urgently.

In 2010 there were 668 growth enterprises in Finland, creating more than 50,000 jobs. The average annual growth rate of employment in these companies was 20%, which suggest much bigger percentual growth in employment in startups than in big companies. The ministry of employment and the economy, TEM verbalized the importance of startups in Finland as follows “*From the point of view of long-term productivity...growth enterprises are therefore a key element in creative renewal, forming the foundation of our future well-being*”. (TEM, 2012)

Though the figures presented above only represent Finland, it can be claimed that in many developed countries the situation with employment and startup companies' growth is similar. When adding on the fact that a majority of startups fail, according to Wall Street Journal only 1/10 startups create a substantial ROI (Gage, 2012), it is prominent to realize that for our future well-being it is elementary to support startups in all ways possible.

If more studies on startup brand building were done to create greater understanding not only to support current entrepreneurs but also aspiring and potential entrepreneurs, less startups would fail due to brand related issues. This thesis' role in helping startups is that if entrepreneurs had better awareness of their corporate brand building, their companies could possibly perform better and more startups would create a positive ROI and survive.

Having discussed the three major reasons why scholars need to study brand building in startups more closely, it is of essence to emphasize the importance of entrepreneurs understanding the value in brand building activities and acting upon them. It is not enough that scholars study the issue and come with answers to problems if entrepreneurs and founders do not recognize that they are experiencing these problems. Two major issues can be mentioned here.

Firstly, entrepreneurs who are not paying attention to corporate brand building might end up overlooking potential benefits. Several studies (Abimbola, 2001; Boyle, 2003; Inskrip, 2004; Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008; Horan, 2009) emphasize the benefits of having a clear brand strategy, and not only could a well defined brand strategy help startups differentiate (Boyle, 2003), but the combination of financial benefits (Rode & Vallaster, 2005), greater awareness of the company and more consumer interest, ought to advise entrepreneurs to think carefully about brands from a strategic perspective (Simoaes & Dibb, 2001). A cohesive internal understanding of

what the brand ought to reflect will help a company achieve its branding goals in the long run (Abimbola, 2001) while also potentially making the corporation more transparent in terms of employees knowing what the company is striving for and knowing their part in reaching the goals set by themselves and managers. Abimbola (2001) points out that establishing a brand enables a company to introduce more innovative product offerings into the market place than without an established brand. A well-defined and coherent corporate brand can therefore be said to protect a new product to a certain degree as well as create brand awareness.

Secondly, startups in general act in a certain "window of opportunity" (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005) with fierce competition where time is of essence. It is therefore important to realize that the lifecycle of a startup is hugely different from that of a multinational company, where months for startups might equal years for MNCs in terms of e.g. growth and employee turnover. Many startups recognize too late that a clear brand strategy would have been a beneficial investment for them, because the cost of subsequent changes to the corporate identity in a later stage is too high (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). The importance of a coherent internal branding strategy is thus highlighted.

Having gone through the three major issues why corporate brand building in startups need to be studied more closely and the two major reasons entrepreneurs need to pay attention to these studies, it is important to note that though conceptual and epistemological issues need not vary much while studying branding in startups and big companies, different starting points need to be taken in studying them. This is mainly due to differences in resources, size and operations. (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007)

Kapferer (2004:147) argues that "*the best way for a new brand to succeed is to act like an old brand*". This notion can however be claimed unrealistic in a startup context for the following reasons; startups lack the internal structures and HRM processes MNC possess; they suffer from unstructured communication infrastructures, small networks (Rode & Vallaster, 2005), and limited resources in terms of finances (Abimbola, 2001) and know-how (Rode & Vallaster, 2005) as well as time (Krake, 2005; Boyle, 2003). Entrepreneurs are also often forced to act in contexts where their limited experience, uncertainty, product development and production increases add to the high complexity of the situation.

The reasons started above are precisely why startups' corporate branding should processes not be expected to work in the same way as MNC branding and it is therefore inaccurate to assume that startups could possibly have the necessary preconditions to act like their new brand would be an old one. The problem of applying MNC branding strategies on startups have been contemplated upon by scholars (Juntunen, 2012; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010), but none approached the issue from management perspective. Witt & Rode (2005) and Rode & Vallaster (2005) conducted interesting studies in 2005 that proved that the corporate identity constructs (corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) all affect the corporate identity in startups positively, and that a strong corporate identity positively affects the corporate brand. However none of the authors studied how much the constructs are paid attention to in startups and if they are considered equally important by startup entrepreneurs.

A general concern for the lack of studies in branding issues concerning startups and small companies can be detected. Merrilees (2007) is concerned with the small amount of studies in SME branding and points out that not enough time has passed for the limited amount of studies conducted to actually influence the marketing discipline. Boyle (2003:85) points out that "*research into entrepreneurial brand building is still in its infancy*" and continues by presenting two major obstacles to its development. Firstly she states that it is hard to define startups and secondly that lacking time and resources on startups' part might act as a disincentive to work with researchers around the time of success. The rising pay-it-forward culture among startups and serial entrepreneurs is a concept that is in direct contrast to Boyle's (2003) statement that startups basically do not have time to talk to researchers (Blank, 2011). Also defining a startup is a matter of choosing which perspective to use when defining it – a financial, a marketing oriented etc.

Another concerning issue with previous studies is that contributions to startups' corporate brand building have been made from the perspective of the external stakeholders (customers, media, investors etc.) of companies but not from the perspective of the corporation's internal stakeholders' and especially the entrepreneur's, who's ultimately in charge of his/her company's brand building activities (Krake, 2005), perspective. Balmer (2010:186) states "*corporate brands are born out of corporate identities but live in the minds of groups and individuals*". This claim highlights the importance of coherent and aligned corporate branding, focusing

on the corporate identity, and emphasizes the importance of studying the internal building blocks of what makes up a brand instead of constantly concentrating on the corporate image (external perception of a company). It also ties nicely together the fact that entrepreneurs need to have the right attitude towards brand building (as they are the core of the corporate identity) for it to actually be implemented successfully in a startup, thus also supporting the managerial perspective of this paper.

It is safe to say that more studies concerning how startups' internal branding is composed, is needed in order to understand the core of startup branding. Only by first concentrating on internal brand building is it possible for a startup build a coherent and strong corporate brand. Corporate brand building ought to be an important aspect of startups' strategies due to them basically being the only companies that aren't affected by consumers' previous perceptions or clouded by co-branding and different brand associations. A corporate brand can therefore actually be *built* together with the customer instead of being modified or shaped as it can be claimed is the case in big companies where e.g. image heritage has such an impact on consumer's perceptions that their view of the brand can merely be reshaped not actually built. Building a startup's corporate brand can therefore be called corporate brand building at it's purest and should be paid special attention to for that reason alone.

1.2. Aim and scope

Based on previous studies have proven that A) the corporate identity constructs positively affect the corporate identity but B) that brand management is paid very little attention to on a daily basis in small companies. Therefore a justified question can be derived; Do entrepreneurs understand the importance of internal brand building (though they are apparently not acting upon it) and is the corporate brand of a startup built similarly to big companies' (focusing on all corporate identity constructs equally)?

The first aim of this paper is to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies, while the second aim is to examine if specific corporate identity constructs (corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneurs point of view.

Meeting these aims would contribute to a greater understanding of internal brand building in startup companies, support entrepreneurship from a corporate branding

perspective and could help entrepreneurs create stronger corporate brands that could help them survive in the marketplace in the long run.

1.3. Limitations

This section outlines the most noticeable limitations of this paper and briefly explains why these limitations have come to be.

Firstly, this paper is going to follow the top American seed-stage startup funding firm Y-Combinator's definition of what a startup is. "*A startup is a business which has ambitions and plans to grow by a large factor (10x or more) over the next few (1-5) years*" (Y-Combinator, 2011) and adds that startups are companies that haven't existed longer than 5 years.

The empirical study of this paper is restricted to respondents contacted through four startup databases - the Startup Sauna database (internal use only), the Norwegian startup list database (Grønsund, 2012), ArabNet Startup database (Arabnet, 2012) and Arctic Startup database (Arctic Startup, 2012). These databases represent the biggest startup databases in the Nordic and Baltic countries as well as the Arab regions, which means that though the generalization of this study is worldwide, the findings of this study represents the above mentioned region. For further confirmation other researchers need to conduct the same study in other regions of the world. The databases mentioned will be presented in more detail in the next chapter of this paper.

Another restriction the databases result in is that most startups contacted are technologically and/or digitally heavy ventures. This is not an intended restriction for the thesis, but has occurred somewhat unintentionally due to the databases used, and this limitation needs to be mentioned and taken into consideration when discussing the results of this study.

On a more academic note it is of importance for the value of the findings of this paper to mention that this thesis is written based on the UK and mainland Europe view on corporate identity and brand building and has strong influences from the Nordic school of service and relationship marketing. This limitation will be discussed further in the next chapter.

1.4. Structure of the paper

This paper began with describing the state of entrepreneurship especially in Finland and its importance for economies overall. The research gap in contemporary branding literature with a substantial lack of research in corporate branding in the startup context, was presented as were the reasons why it would be essential to fill this gap.

The paper will continue with the second chapter; concept clarification and the theoretical framework of this paper. First concept clarification on key concepts are discussed to get a deeper understanding of the framework of this thesis. After this the corporate brand building process is discussed and relationships between concepts presented and analyzed. As the paper concentrates on startup internal branding a special emphasis will be placed on the elements that make up a corporate identity.

Chapter 3 will discuss the method used in this paper as well as describe the profiles of respondents reached through the four databases used. Data collection, analysis and survey data reliability and quality will also be contemplated upon.

The fourth chapter will present the results of the study conducted. Descriptive statistics will be presented and the hypotheses that were constructed in chapter two will be tested.

In the last chapter an analysis of the results as well as discussion and suggestions on future research will be conducted. Managerial implications will also be contemplated upon and practical suggestions on how managers should use the findings in this paper will be given before the conclusion of this thesis.

2 BUILDING STRONG CORPORATE BRANDS THROUGH CORPORATE IDENTITIES

This chapter presents the central concepts and previous studies used for the framework of this paper. Definitions and explanations of several concepts are in order because there is little consensus among scholars of what many of the central concepts used in this paper mean. Due to the subjective nature of concepts and the variety of their presentation by multiple authors, concepts used in this paper have been studied, compared and summarized to develop a clear framework that will be used later in the methodology and study. It is important to recognize that while many concepts presented in this paper partly overlap according to several scholars, the framework presented in the end of chapter 2 (see Figure 1) is also a subjective perception to the corporate brand building process.

This chapter begins with conceptual clarifications followed by a presentation of the brand building process. This is done by first comparing product and corporate brands, then defining a corporate brand as well as its relationship to corporate identities and finally concentrating on the key element of this paper; corporate identity and its constructs. A summary and an illustration of theories discussed will be presented at the end of this chapter.

2.1. Conceptual clarification

The terminology and concepts used while discussing corporate identity have become somewhat blurred with scholars from different disciplines discussing different issues synonymously. Balmer & Grey (2003) call this the “fog” on branding and corporate identity terminology that seem to overlap in several authors’ research. Andrew Lambert (1989) stated already in the 1980’s that *“unfortunately, its (corporate identity) usefulness to management both as a concept and as a method of determining managerial responsibilities has been limited by some misunderstandings and misinterpretations about the subject”* (Alessandri, 2001). The key concepts used in this paper will therefore be discussed next in order to distinguish and clarify the different views on core concepts, and to get a deeper understanding of the potential value of this thesis in general.

2.1.1. Corporate identity as a concept

Corporate identity is a commonly used concept among scholars in UK and mainland Europe. There is however some confusion of the meaning of the concept as multidisciplinary meanings have blurred the lines of terminology (Balmer & Grey, 2003). In a literature review by Balmer & Soenen (1997) the main reasons behind the confusion of the term corporate identity were discussed as being limited research in the area, the combination of language barriers (as the term corporate identity was first used in the UK and non-English speaking regions such as mainland Europe) and communication problems between researchers from different disciplines as well as the dilemma of using a positivistic research approach when explaining corporate identity. Cornelissen et al. (2012) indicate the overuse of umbrella concepts as being part of the problem when discussing concept clarity. The concepts corporate identity and organizational identity for example have become synonymous in certain cases (Hatch & Schultz, 1997) and need to be defined here in order to clarify the purpose of this thesis.

Hatch and Schultz (1997) make the distinction between corporate identity and organizational identity as having been born out of two different paradigms. Organizational literature has discussed the importance of organizational identity for decades, while marketing scholars have concentrated on discussing basically the same issues from a slightly different perspective and calling it corporate identity. The main difference between the two are that while both are managerially driven and managed, and while both create the distinctiveness of a business, organizational identity refers to what internal stakeholders feel and think about their company while corporate identity refers to how the company operates with commonly shared understandings and aims. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). In theoretical perspective, scholars studying corporate identity want to know “what we are?” in terms of a corporation, while organizational identity scholars care more for answering the question “who are we?” (Balmer and Greyser, 2003). For the purpose of this paper the term *corporate identity* will be used as this is a marketing thesis, and since the thesis focuses on a managerial perspective (entrepreneurs’ opinions have been studied) it will not focus on how internal stakeholders feel and think about their company, but how the entrepreneur alone rates the importance of constructs that make up the corporate identity. This also means that the thesis will focus on how managers and employees make a brand unique, which is according to Harris & de Chernatony (2001) what defines a corporate identity.

Corporate identity also often gets confused for only representing the visual and the graphics of a company (referred to in this thesis as corporate symbolism) (van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Though this might be what characterized corporate identity in its birth in the 1980's (Moingeon & Ramanantsoa, 1997), the concept has widened during the last couple of decades years to encompass much more. Alessandri (2001) cites Lambert (1989) in stating the two generalizations of corporate identity "*all those manifestations of an organization that enable it to be distinctive*" and "*projecting who you are, what you do and how you do it*". Lambert also reflects on corporate identity as an iceberg with visible elements above sea-level (logos, symbols, fonts, business cards, websites, e-mails, offices etc) and invisible elements below sea-level (Alessandri, 2001). The model implies that though not visible to the public, corporate identity consists of much more than just designs and symbols, but incorporates elements and structures such as behavior, business structures, norms, beliefs etc. that are hidden from the public but are in fact the foundation to how a company looks to the outside.

2.1.2. Corporate branding as a concept

Schultz *et al.* (2005) discuss corporate branding as having had two waves so far. The first wave took shape in the mid 1990s with authors (also referred to in this thesis) such as Balmer, de Chernatony, Kapferer, Aaker and Hatch & Schultz. The first wave ended up dividing corporate branding into two camps where "*one camp was characterized by a product driven tactical and visual focus, while the other camp emphasized corporate branding as a strategic and integrated field.*" (Schultz *et al.*, 2005: 10). The first perception started dominating academic literature and ended up resulting in the second wave of corporate branding, which sees corporate branding as a dynamic "*process through which an organization can continually work out its purpose – a purpose that is meaningful to people inside and outside the organization.*" (Schultz *et al.*, 2005: 16)

Balmer & Grey (2003) also discuss the evolving concept of corporate branding and state that in the beginning corporate branding was viewed merely as marks denoting ownership and were used as image–building devices. Corporate branding was therefore considered sender-ended where the company would brand itself to the customer. However during the 21st century corporate branding has become increasingly consumer oriented where consumption of brands by consumers expresses who they are and who they want to be. (Balmer & Grey, 2003) Corporate brands have thus evolved to this day

to promises and covenants (Balmer, 2010) not only contributing to customer-based images, but to the images formed and held by all its stakeholders, such as employees, customers, investors, suppliers, partners, regulators, special interests and local communities. (Hatch & Shoultz, 2003)

2.2. Corporate branding vs. Product branding

Branding originally emerged from the sphere of consumer products where only products were perceived as having brands and consumers would base their purchasing decisions on products' characteristics (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009). During the latest decade corporate and product brands have however become recognized as different entities in academic research (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009) and are considered involving multiple stakeholders interacting with employees and managers in the company. Quite simply, the strategic focus has changed from the product to the company (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). This does however not mean that corporations and its products wouldn't be related. On the contrary, both the corporation and its products make up the corporate brand that adds value to the existing and future products and services of a company.

Stephen King (1991) predicted that in the future consumers would make decisions on which products or services to buy based less on the product attributes and functional benefits of the product, and more on the people and company behind the product or service. He emphasized that the decision would be made according to the corporation's ability to communicate; the employees' skills, attitudes and behaviors – the whole company culture to be precise. In short, the corporate brand would have more weight in a purchase process than the product brand, and corporate branding would be an area on which companies would have to focus on.

Hatch & Shoultz (2003) characterize corporate branding as ignoring product features and concentrating on a strategic set of values alone. Also the people communicating these values are in a much more central position in corporate branding than in product branding. Harris & De Chernatony (2001) state that the role of employees has changed with the focus shift in branding where employees have grown to become the ambassadors of a brand. Balmer & Gray (2003: 979) add that employees are now at the heart of the corporate branding process as they *“provide the interface between the internal and external environments and help build and maintain the corporate brand”*.

The claim stated above suggests that HR processes in corporate branding also differ from those of product branding as employees and their behavior directly aim to convey the corporate identity and reflect the corporate brand. Employees need thus to be recruited much more carefully than in a company that focuses on product branding, in order to confirm that all employees behave according to the corporate brand. It can be claimed that as the strategic shift from product to corporation has transpired, so has the affect of the people behind the branding effort. When before, the marketing department would find a gap in a market and place a product there which was then branded accordingly, now all internal stakeholders make up the corporate brand which is considerably more durable and long lived than the product brands of old.

Balmer (2001) and Hatch & Schultz (2003) mean that corporate branding requires considerably more strategic focus and incorporation of corporate strategy, than product branding does. Such claims are hard to prove, but it can be assumed that if more focus is placed on the people behind the company and the method and content of communication then the scholars' claim can be considered correct. Corporate brands focus on networks based on a larger mixture of communications than just the traditional marketing mix, and they are practiced and communicated through corporate communication instead of just counting on the marketing communications mix (PR, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing) (Balmer & Gray, 2003). A more strategic departure point to corporate branding than product branding can therefore be assumed.

A much wider scope to brand building is achieved when companies do not only concentrate on a product or a service, but on the people that make, present, communicate and understand the product or service. This also means that a higher degree of strategic focus is needed to manage all branding activities. Harris & de Chernatony (2001) also emphasize the importance of a strategic approach to corporate brand building as they point out that corporate branding requires a holistic view of brand management, where everybody in an organization act accordingly with the organization's core values. As executing a strategy can be considered a deliberate action, the importance of a strategic orientation when it comes to corporate branding can be accepted for the purpose of this paper on the condition that it is recognized that un-strategic, un-deliberate and unexpected actions can also affect the corporate identity both positively and negatively.

Another key issue when comparing corporate and product brands is that the core beliefs and values of corporate brands stem from entrepreneurs, founders, managers and the entire organization while the core values of a product brands are mainly created in the marketing department (Balmer & Gray, 2003). A corporate brand can therefore be claimed to represent in a purer way a company's meanings and can therefore be suggested to appeal to a consumer better than solely the product brand. The corporate brand can also be claimed to develop a higher sense of trust in the customer towards the company.

Constructed by the definitions and claims stated above, the first baseline for this paper is that corporate branding is a *dynamic holistic strategic process* that originates internally (in the corporation); starting with the definition of core values and beliefs of the company, its internal activities to make cohesion between desired and delivered communication (externally) to stakeholders and how the company reacts to the response (of the communicated values) gained from external stakeholders. The process incorporates everything from creating a strategy to executing and redefining it according to deliberate and un-deliberate occurrences.

It is evident that corporate branding helps companies create significant competitive advantages such as differentiation (Spence & Essoussi, 2010) and innovation (Abimbola, 2001) and can affect customer behavior (Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008), the plasticity of demand (Abimbola, 2001), customer retention (Horan, 2009) as well as add value by supplying meaning to a product or service (Horan, 2009). A product or a company is made unique by its corporate brand, which is precisely why it should be considered carefully and strategically planned when setting up a new venture.

Table 1 Summary of main differences between corporate and product brands. Formulated by Jannica Nyman. Adapted from Balmer (2001), Balmer (2010), Hatch & Shoultz (2003), Harris & De Chernatony (2001)

	<i>Corporate Branding</i>	<i>Product Branding</i>
Main focus	Company	Product
Management responsibility	CEO	Brand Manager
General responsibility	Entire organization	Marketing personnel
Values	Real	Contrived
Values formed in	Management, entrepreneur, owner, organization	Marketing department
Communication channels	Organization wide communication and interaction	The marketing communication mix
Strategic focus	High	Medium
HRM focus	Extremely high	Medium to low
Stakeholder focus	Multiple stakeholders	Consumers
Value focus	Strategic set of values	Product features
Time horizon	Long (life of company)	Short (life of product)

2.3. Corporate brands and their relationship to corporate identities

“...Apple: its assets are worth some \$72bn, but its share price tells us the value of the business is a whopping \$566bn. The difference between the two is goodwill” (Saelensminde & Bengt, 2012).

Goodwill is all about the assets of a company that cannot be put a value on –like the effect of a corporate brand. The reason a brand has financial value, even though its intangible is because it has created assets in the minds and hearts of customers and other stakeholders (Kapferer, 2004). Consumers are ready to pay extra for a product or a service, due to (amongst other things) these assets, because they identify themselves with the corporate brand, sharing its’ values and beliefs and wanting to reflect those values upon themselves.

A brand can be suggested to be a set of associations and meanings held by different stakeholders, which enhances the perceived value of a product or a service. However, strong brands also have an intense emotional component, an emotional bond attached to them (Kapferer, 2004). Balmer (2010) is on the same page as Kapferer (2004) as he states that even though corporations’ possess the legal ownership of corporate brands

(they can be sold, shared and borrowed), customers have the emotional ownership, which makes up for the real value of the brand. A corporate brand has therefore got to be explained as a set of associations and meanings (shared by stakeholders), which create emotional bonds between external and internal stakeholders, which again add to the perceived value of a product or a service (see Figure 1).

The relationship between corporate identities and corporate brands can be very complex, but the fundamental difference between the two is that “*while the identity concept is applicable to entities of every variety, the corporate branding concept is not*” (Balmer & Gray, 2003). This means that while all companies need a corporate identity to exist, corporate brands on the other hand depend on the corporate identity, and after they are born (from corporate identities) they can have a life of their own being borrowed, sold or even shared between companies. This is not the case for corporate identities as they are the cornerstones that make up companies. (Balmer & Gray, 2003). Hatch & Shoultz (1997) concur and mean that corporate identities are linked to corporate brands and provide the basis on which corporate brands are molded. Hatch & Schoultz (1997) therefore also believe that corporate brands reach their full potential when the corporate identity and corporate image are aligned. For this thesis Balmer’s (2010:181) statement that “*corporate brand identities exist in our minds; corporate identities inhabit organisations.*” is therefore also considered a correct way of describing the relationship between corporate identity and corporate brands.

Grönroos (2010) approaches the concept of a brand from the service logic perspective and suggests that it is the consumer who builds it. Though it can be agreed that companies cannot control the corporate brand, one of the most essential starting points for this paper is that companies can steer the corporate brand through a coherent corporate identity and thus influence the corporate image and co-build a corporate brand. The company in a way gives external stakeholders the tools to create perceptions of the company. Grönroos’s (2010) statement, though partly correct for the scope of this paper, should therefore be broken down to stating that it is the consumer who creates the value of a brand by developing an emotional bond with the company, while the company provides meanings and associations i.e. the tools (through building the corporate identity) the customer develops the emotional bond based on. In other words, it is the consumer who builds the emotional bond with the company i.e. the value of the brand but it is the company that provides the necessary building blocks for

the emotions in a consumer to come forth (see Figure 1). For the scope of this paper, the argument of Balmer (2010:186) that “*corporate brands are born out of corporate identities but live in the minds of groups and individuals*” is therefore considered fitting to describe the process of creating a corporate brand and describing the relationship between corporate brands and corporate identities. Without corporate identities, there would be nothing for a consumer to create emotions about.

Fournier (1998) argues that a corporate brand is the consumer’s collection of perceptions about a company. This statement has two false arguments for the scope of this paper. Firstly, it is direct contrast with what King (1991) states when he describes corporate branding as a dynamic process incorporating both internal and external actors. King’s (1991) perception of corporate branding suggests that both internal and external stakeholders of a company build corporate brands, and both parties’ perceptions should therefore be incorporated in the corporate brand concept. A corporate brand cannot only be as Fournier (1998) claims the perceptions of the consumers, but should also encompass the building blocks of the brand as provided by internal stakeholders i.e. the corporate identity. Fournier (1998) definition is lacking, as it doesn’t take into consideration the dynamic reciprocal effect between all stakeholders, and describes more the essence that makes up a corporate image than it does a corporate brand. Secondly, the emotional dimension that is considered a key characteristic for the brand concept in this paper is missing, which again highlights the assumption that the author is in fact describing a concept which in this paper is considered “corporate image”.

Balmer (2001) suggests that a corporate brand is an explicit promise (see Figure 1) between an organization, and internal and external stakeholders. This promise is declared by an organization’s senior management and managed through a well-structured brand strategy (Balmer & Gray, 2003). The promise is conveyed through the company’s interaction with external stakeholders and experienced by these stakeholders through products and services provided by the company as well as the experience of the interactions (Balmer & Gray, 2003). A corporate brand can be said to be a contract between a company and its external stakeholders where the company promises the consumer certain added value through keeping its promise of a certain emotion, meaning or association e.g. quality, innovation, fun or other characteristics, which the customer is willing to pay for. This promise ought to be kept consistent, but

conveying it should stay dynamic so that the brand can be perceived “alive” and interchanging with society.

A great example of how e.g. innovation can be born out of adapting the promise to the current state of society is that of Coca-Cola Zero. The promise of Coca-Cola is “Open happiness” (Coca-Cola, 2011) and in 2005 the company launched a new zero-calorie version of its soda aimed at men (MacWilliams, 2010). A clear gap in the market was found by Coca-Cola where it was proven that men did not respond well to the “diet” versions of sodas but were becoming more concerned with their health and well-being. It can be argued that drawing from their promise of “Open happiness” Coca-Cola created something for men that they could happily drink (branding and naming the drink “zero” instead of the infamous “diet”), getting the same Coca-Cola taste and experience but zero calories.

To summarize the perspectives stated above, it is very important for companies to align their branding strategies for the purpose of creating a strong corporate brand and the brand promise must be kept in order to achieve added value. Creating a corporate brand is all about creating a positive emotional relationship or bond between the internal and external stakeholders of a company in order for the 1) company to differentiate and gain financial value, and 2) the customer to identify with the brand, share the values of it and experience the added value of the brand promise. The corporate identity creates the building blocks for a strong corporate brand where corporate brands cannot emerge without corporate identities. An aligned corporate identity is therefore elementary for any company.

Previous studies suggest that entrepreneurs do not know what branding is and do not act upon it on a daily basis. Having explained the purpose and characteristics of corporate branding and corporate brands the following hypothesis is constructed.

Construct		<i>Hypothesis</i>
Corporate Branding	H1	<i>Entrepreneurs consider corporate brand building unimportant</i>

2.4. Corporate identity

The corporate identity of an organization is the anchor that keeps the whole ship (company) from floating away; it is the sum of the organization's inner core values and beliefs, and the way they are communicated and presented.

Several scholars agree that the corporate identity concept represents an organization's internal values communicated to its' internal and external stakeholders in order to influence the corporate image (Meenaghan, 1995;24; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Krake, 2005; Spence & Essoussi 2010; Witt & Rode, 2005). Van Riel and Balmer (1997:341) add that *"Increasingly academics acknowledge that a corporate identity refers to an organization's unique characteristics which are rooted in the behaviour of members of the organization"*.

The corporate identity of a company is built out of four corporate identity constructs – corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication (see Figure 1) (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005). Corporate identity can be described as answering the question 'Who are we?'. Vallaster (2004) explains that in order to consistently communicate a company's values to its stakeholders every employee must develop a shared understanding of what the company stands for as well as common cognitive representations, procedures and task requirements. Managers thus need to converse their brand's purpose and values to employees unmistakably in order to *"inspire them and help them understand how their roles relate to it"* (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001:443) and behave accordingly. Witt & Rode (2005) suggest that internal branding activities are at any rate as important as the messages conveyed externally. This is understandable because if the people in an organization cannot or will not reach for the same goals based on certain values and beliefs, they cannot be claimed to share a culture thus being unable to share the value of that culture onwards.

Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006) point out that the corporate identity is strategically planned expressions of the corporation that are communicated through clues given by the company's behavior and symbols. Corporate identity can thus be said to guide a company's brand decisions leading to it also being the core of marketing actions over time. All messages by the company towards its external stakeholders should therefore be based on its corporate identity and straying from this could lead to mixed messages where employees and consumers might become confused by what the company actually

stands for. Coherency in planning and communicating the corporate identity can therefore be claimed to be key in a company's overall branding strategy. It is the corporate identity that employees and managers build on when making a brand unique (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 1997, Balmer 2010), and if the brand cannot be made unique, the competitive advantage and benefits of differentiation will be lost as will huge parts of the goodwill presented earlier.

Karaosmanoglu & Da Silvera *et al.* (2011) take on a different approach when describing the corporate identity by stating that it is dynamic and emanating from multiple actors (managers and consumers). This definition is in contrast with the above discussed because it suggests the corporate identity is a concept that is subjective to the external stakeholders of a company as well as its internal stakeholders. Aaker (1996:69) considers the company's external stakeholder's influence on the corporate identity merely as "*just one input to be considered*" but suggests therefore that the corporate identity is not solely made up of internal factors. The concept of corporate identity can however not be claimed to be subjective on external stakeholders' part as it derives from inside an organization. The external stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate identity is called corporate image and will be discussed later in this chapter.

It can be suggested based on the views presented above that 1) internal stakeholders of a company (often managers) decide on the construct of the corporate identity, 2) all internal stakeholders in the company live and execute it, 3) but they draw from the corporate image to decide how the identity is communicated and how it should be adjusted. As core values and beliefs of a brand are the "*timeless essence of a brand*" (Aaker, 1996:85) and should be changed only under extreme conditions, the core corporate identity cannot be claimed to be influenced by the corporate image. In fact, external stakeholders have been proven to respond better to brands that are consistent (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). This leads us to the conclusion that though the *core corporate identity* (see Figure 1) of a company is unaffected by external perceptions, what Aaker (1996; 87) calls the *extended corporate identity* (see Figure 1) can be influenced by external stakeholders perceptions of the identity (corporate image) thus dividing the corporate identity to; *core corporate identity* and *extended corporate identity*.

An analysis of the definitions above could be broken down into the following; identity stems from the corporation, it is strategically planned and therefore intended, it communicates in the most optimal way the company's behavior, culture and symbolism

in order to align its internal activities to influence consumers' perceptions (corporate image) of the company.

For this paper, the concept of corporate identity will be focusing on four key constructs that have been highlighted and discussed from several points of views in previous studies (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006; Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005). The four key concepts have been identified as corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication. Findings of Witt & Rode (2005) suggest that all of the constructs presented above are interrelated and positively affect one another, thus also positively affecting the corporate identity construct. The aim of this paper is however to 1) investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies and 2) to examine if specific corporate identity constructs (corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneur's point of view.

The fact that these constructs have been proven to positively affect the corporate identity does not mean that they are used by entrepreneurs for brand building purposes or viewed as important. This is why they should be inspected more carefully in a startup context and especially from the managerial point of view.

2.4.1. Corporate culture

In order to consistently convey brand values to a company's stakeholders, the employees first need to understand what the corporate brand stands for (Vallaster, 2004). Shenin (2009:21) views corporate culture as having three distinct layers that define "*the way we do things around here, the rites and rituals of our company, the company climate, the reward system and so on*". He describes the different levels of corporate culture as 'artifacts', 'espoused values' and 'underlying assumptions' and explains how culture goes from visible signs to unnoticed gestures that are planted in the unconsciousness. Only by understanding a corporate culture on all three levels can internal stakeholders according to Shenin (2009) create a coherent perception of what the company stands for. For this paper only the espoused values and underlying assumptions are considered elements of the corporate culture since for the purpose of this paper corporate symbolism is explored separately, and thus does not downplay the significance of 'artifacts' to the corporate identity.

Corporate culture incorporates the core of corporate identity; the mission (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005) and vision statements (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001) as driving forces in a brand's positioning. These elements are also incorporated in Shenin's (2009) model under 'espoused values'. It is extremely important for managers to set clear missions and visions in order to confirm coherent goals amongst employees and endorse certain behavior from them (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). If core values of the corporation aren't communicated clearly enough to its internal stakeholders and if the corporate culture isn't aligned with the corporate identity of the company, inconsistent behavior can occur and directly affect the corporate image in an undesired way.

Horan (2009) and Ojasalo *et al.* (2008) point out that if a small business wants to grow a context has to be created where the company culture can develop into representing the company – a common culture is the goal. As this paper defines a startup as “... *a business which has ambitions and plans to grow by a large factor (10x or more) over the next few (1-5) years*” (Y-Combinator, 2011), the conclusion can be made that all startups need to create a common culture in their organization. Khan and Ede (2009:340) also emphasizes the fact that “*having an integrated brand relies heavily on the people who live it; therefore a strong corporate culture can strengthen a brand*”. Much like other scholars (Balmer & Gray, 2003; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001) Khan and Ede (2009) underline the importance of the human factor in developing the corporate culture.

The purpose of a clear corporate culture is multi dimensional. First off, it presents the core values of the corporation creating guidelines for the organization of how to behave (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Secondly, it aims to align the other constructs of the corporation's identity (Khan & Ede, 2009) and thirdly it sets the starting point of what to communicate externally. Ojasalo *et al.* (2008) points out that though guidelines in brand building might seem simple to apply, getting everybody in an organization to follow them is extremely difficult. Clear communication of the corporate values and beliefs are therefore again stressed, but also the importance of making employees actually “live the brand”. It is a moot point to communicate a corporate culture to an employee that does not consider the company's values and beliefs something that he/she can/will live up to. This is discussed in more detail when describing the construct corporate behavior.

Due to Aaker's (1996) theory of the multidimensional character of the corporate identity (core identity and extended identity) explained before, it is safe to say that managers need to efficiently communicate also which aspects of the corporate culture will be kept consistent (core identity) and which aspects will have to be adjusted (extended identity) due to the influence of the corporate image. Corporate culture is considered by Rode & Vallaster (2005) the core of the corporate identity and would therefore according to Aaker's (1996:85) definition of the *core* be unchangeable and consistent.

As mission and vision statements are often changed only after extended periods of time and usually only during re-branding, they can be considered relatively constant. The core values of startups are generally considered reflections of the core values of the entrepreneur (Krake, 2005; Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Abimbola, 2001; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008). This is generally not the case in MNC or international companies (Spence & Essoussi, 2010).

Krake (2005) emphasizes that there should be a clear link between the entrepreneur's character and that of the brand's as she/he is the personification of the brand. If the corporate brand shares its values with the entrepreneur these values can also be considered relatively consistent as 1) the entrepreneur in startup scenes is usually also the manager (Abimbola, 2001) and 2) personal values and beliefs are characterized as long term elements of one's self (Hitlin, 2003). If the manager would happen to change during the startup's lifespan (5 years as defined in this paper) the core values and beliefs of the company would also most likely change in cohesion with the new manager and logically, so would the rest of the corporate identity which in turn would affect the corporate brand. The importance of the entrepreneurial component in corporate brand building can therefore be argued to create a huge difference between the configurations of brand building blocks between startups and big companies.

An assumption can be made on the core values and beliefs in a startup; the core values are much more aligned with the entrepreneur/owner/manager than the values and beliefs in a MNC or an international company. This in turn suggests for corporate behavior that the entrepreneur should surround him/herself with employees with similar values and beliefs to those of the entrepreneur so that understanding and aligning values would become easier. In a big company people should in contrast be hired according to how well their values and beliefs are aligned with the visionary management (brand manager, market manager, visual design manager etc.).

Based on the literature presented above it can also be suggested that when a company succeeds in creating a coherent corporate culture, employees can be expected to become more empowered as managers can trust that they will behave according to corporate values. This is mainly due to employees understanding what the company stands for and behaving accordingly.

The lack of startup brand building studies suggest that startups ought to build their corporate identity according to theories built around MNCs' brand building strategies. Based on the previous studies and the analysis of them, the first hypothesis in the corporate identity construct group is as follows.

Construct	<i>Hypothesis</i>
Corporate culture	^{H2A} <i>Corporate culture is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>

Table 2 Summary of Corporate Culture concepts

Author	Concept	Incorporates	Function
(Rode & Vallaster, 2005)	Corporate culture Corporate personality	Mission statement, basic core values of a company, philosophy	Provides key guidelines, carries gossip and stories
(Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)	Brand vision and culture	Vision, culture, core values, employees values and assumptions	Provides guiding principles, represents the source of competitive advantage, provides functional and emotional value
(Witt & Rode, 2005)	Corporate culture	Mission statement and its goals, founder's goals, goals of the corporate culture, instruments to implement this culture	-
(Hatch & Schultz, 2003)	Organizational culture	The internal values, beliefs and basic assumptions that embody the heritage of the company and communicate its meanings to its members	Understanding the way employees all through the ranks feel about the company they are working for
(Khan & Ede, 2009)	Internal culture	-	Re-branding exercises, strong internal communication and working together towards a common goal
(Shenin, 2009)	Corporate culture	Artifacts (visible organizational structures), espoused values (strategies, goals, philosophies), underlying assumptions (unconscious taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings)	To make people understand why they behave in a certain way in a corporation

2.4.2. Corporate behavior

The corporate identity is not only communicated through the messages a company sends out, but through the employees' interactions (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). It is therefore important to remember, that if King's (1991) claim that the corporate brand will matter more in purchasing decisions than product brands, is correct, then the employees are increasingly becoming a central part in a company's brand building process.

The concept of corporate behavior refers to the actions a company takes concerning human resource processes, their management and their support to strengthen the corporate identity (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005). Basically this encompasses the process of recruiting and empowering employees as well as supporting them and helping them create appropriate relationships between each other and other stakeholders.

As employees can be claimed to have become the ambassadors of a brand (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001), special emphasis should be placed on hiring the right people, whose values and beliefs can be aligned with those of the company. This matter was touched upon already when discussing the corporate culture of a company, but needs to be stressed again due to the peculiar notion that the core values of startups are generally characterized as reflections of the core values of the entrepreneur (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Abimbola, 2001; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008). As the corporate culture is the foundation for corporate behavior, staff should be employed partly according to how well their values and beliefs are aligned with those of the entrepreneur as stated before. It can thus be suggested that having common beliefs aids common behavioral processes, and that is exactly why corporate behavior should be paid attention to.

Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006) take a slightly different approach to corporate behavior where they divide the concept of behavior into corporate behavior and management communication. Corporate behavior for the authors incorporates not only recruitment and other HR issues, but also ethical and environmental issues. Though these issues are clearly important for the corporate identity and brand in general, the division of this paper would categorize environmental and ethical issues as belonging to corporate culture as they represent the values (i.e. green values, child labor issues etc.) of a company. The importance of the values of the entrepreneur can again be highlighted in the startup context where an individual's (the entrepreneur's) moral philosophy, or ethical ideology, is in fact a key factor to the foundation for behavior (Steenhaut & van Kenhove, 2006). Ethical issues are therefore not classified as behavior but the basis for it just like the corporate culture is the basis for corporate behavior.

A repeating element in the description of corporate behavior is that of management and employee behavior towards each other and external stakeholders through interaction. The human capital is seen as the essential brand builder in a company and its behavior

should therefore reflect the values of the company (Juntunen, 2012). Entrepreneurs and managers need to assist employees in understanding what kind of relationships are fitting among staff, customers and additional stakeholders based on the brand's core values (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). It is however important to remember that managers ought to live up to those relationships themselves if they want the entire corporate behavior to be aligned.

Hatch & Schultz (2003) also touch upon the subject of corporate behavior being about relationships as they state that corporate branding has led to the focus being shifted from the products to the corporation itself and has thus made corporations more transparent. The authors mean that the behavior of the organization even at level of normal day-today employee interactions and relationships have become so evident to consumers that it can in certain occasions become even newsworthy. A good example of this is the Transport Workers' Union AKT, which fired communications director Hilka Ahde. Later it was revealed that Ahde had filed an official complaint against the union's president Timo Rätty, accusing him of inappropriate behavior and harassment. The accusations against Rätty led to a police investigation and contracted wide media coverage, leading the former president Tarja Halonen to comment "*... the fact is that the unions have to treat people as well as employees are treated at other workplaces*" (Helsingin Sanomat, 2012). The scandal inevitably affected the image and brand of AKT (Talouselämä, 2012), which proves that it is of great importance to keep relationships appropriate and aligned inside the company.

It is clear that corporate culture and corporate behavior are somewhat overlapping concepts and are heavily intertwined. The main thing that sets them apart in this paper is the fact that the corporate culture is the foundation for corporate behavior. All values and beliefs in a corporation therefore result in certain corporate behavior (internally which is interacted to external stakeholders to strengthen the corporate identity and therefore also the corporate brand.

The following hypothesis is derived from previous studies and the aim of this paper.

Construct	<i>Hypothesis</i>
Corporate behavior	H2B <i>Corporate behavior is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>

Table 3 Summary of Corporate Behavior concepts

<i>Author</i>	<i>Concept</i>	<i>Incorporates</i>	<i>Function</i>
(Rode & Vallaster, 2005)	Corporate behavior	Human resource processes, employee empowerment, support, recruiting	Strengthening corporate identity
(Witt & Rode, 2005)	Corporate behavior	Employee relations, HRM, personnel development	Strengthening corporate identity
(Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006)	Behavior (divided into Corporate behavior and management communication)	Actions about environmental, ethical and recruitment issues, employee behavior and management behavior, the ability to represent a company's values	Representing the company through management and staff behavior
(Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)	Relationships	Management relationships to staff, appropriate relationships of staff to customers	

2.4.3. Corporate symbolism

The presence of strong corporate symbolism can be a key ingredient in successful brand development while its absence can develop a serious handicap as it makes visual differentiation problematic (Aaker, 1996). Hatch & Schultz (1997) support this on their part as they suggest that corporate identity is grounded in symbols, and Harris & de Chernatony (2001:445) (referring to symbolism as ‘presentation’) explain that “*symbolic meanings help customer’s understand and express aspects of themselves to others*”.

Corporate symbolism embodies all visual aids and the symbols a corporation uses in its branding activities (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005; Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006). This can include logos and designs but also goes as far as incorporating symbols such as programs and people. The golden arches of MacDonald’s is a well-known logo and immediately connects one’s thoughts with the restaurant chain. The same goes for the Nike “swoosh” logo and the seashell of Shell. However, as Aaker (1996) points out, people can also become symbols of a corporation. A good and current example of this is Peter Vesterbacka (CMO of Rovio Entertainment) who has become the embodiment of the product brand Angry Birds and corporate brand Rovio Entertainment.

For startups the issue of symbolism connected to a person becomes a key issue as the importance of the entrepreneur again is highlighted. If the entrepreneur is in fact as influential in a startup as scholars (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Abimbola, 2001; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008; Krake, 2005) claim, then it can be suggested that s/he is in a very likely position to become a symbol of his/her company especially as his/her values and beliefs can also be claimed to be the core of the corporate culture.

Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006) also discuss the corporate symbolism and expands the concept so that it encompasses; 1) the visual identity systems such as the logo, name slogan, colors and fonts, which Rode & Vallaster (2005) also discuss 2) company esthetics such as interior design, stationery, architecture and the overall look of stores and offices, and finally 3) staff apparels such as company uniforms. All of these elements reflect specific attributes of the corporate identity. However, it is the customers' attitudes towards them that define how they evaluate the identity (i.e. form the corporate image) it is extremely important to keep them consistent and clear. Having a brand change its logo and design too often is hazardous and can be claimed to be especially hazardous for startups as their overall brand awareness is usually low. This means that the few people who recognize the brand and have perceptions of it will be confused and disoriented. Clear communication and strategy can once again be highlighted in the corporate identity development.

The hypotheses for the corporate symbolism construct is as follows

Construct	<i>Hypothesis</i>
Corporate symbolism	H2c <i>Corporate symbolism is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>

Table 4 Summary of Corporate symbolism concepts

<i>Author</i>	<i>Concept</i>	<i>Incorporates</i>	<i>Function</i>
(Rode & Vallaster, 2005)	Corporate design	Jingles, logos basically all of its visual characteristics	Alignment with other dimensions of corporate identity creates coherent corporate branding
(Witt & Rode, 2005)	Corporate design	Company name, logo, slogan, characters, interior style, visualization, people who participate in design, economic goals of visualization	
(Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006)	Symbolism	Corporate Visual Identity Systems (CVIS) i.e. logo, name, slogan, color and typography, company aesthetics e.g. architecture, interior design, stationery, retail stores, etc., staff apparels - the application of company visuals on the clothing of the employees	Differentiating the company, represents the distinctive attributes of a corporation
(Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)	Presentation	Presentation styles, symbols	Present the brand's identity so as to reflect consumers' aspirations, help consumers understand and express aspects of their selves to others
(Aaker, 1996)	Symbols	Visual imagery, metaphors and the brand heritage	Represents the essence of a brand, provides structure to the identity

2.4.4. Corporate communication

Corporate communication can be claimed to be the most complex aspect of a corporate identity as it has an interactive relationship to all other building blocks (culture, behavior and design) as well as with all stakeholders (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). This also makes it the most dynamic concept in building a corporate identity as it basically incorporates all other concepts and makes them meaningful. A company can have e.g. fantastic potential corporate symbolism, but if it is not communicated to employees and other internal stakeholders it can never become strong or even decent as it's restricted to the people who created it and not conveyed to the people that need to

execute it. Without communication none of the other constructs of corporate identity can be used to their full potential.

Gróf (2001:193) points out that the *“process of strengthening an organisation takes place through communication, which either consolidates or changes the culture”*. It can thus be suggested that corporate communication has the ability to shape other elements of corporate identity where if the (management) desired values are communicated incorrectly staff might perceive said values differently and communicate them inappropriately through behavior and symbolism to external stakeholders.

Corporate communication consists of 1) the channels used to communicate (Balmer, 2010) internally (e-mail, skype, newsletters, intranet, chats, meetings, intercom ect.) and externally (advertising, PR, press releases etc.) and 2) the way communication happens (orally or in written form, it can be formal or informal and verbal and non-verbal communication) (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). The key, in corporate communication is that it needs to be both vertical and horizontal and has to be able to decipher and penetrate the entire corporation in order to clearly reach external stakeholders (Gróf, 2001). That is why appropriate channels and ways of communication need to be decided according to every company individually. Different sets of values, different HR systems and different management teams are only a few elements that can cause a totally different communication method and channel from working better in one company than in another. The right communications channels and processes need to be recognized for each company as it is important that everybody in the organization has all the information they might need to execute their job and communicate further to external stakeholders.

It is extremely important that internal stakeholders communicate with each other (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001), because the more frequently their perceptions of the company are presented and interpreted by other internal stakeholders, the less the chance of misunderstandings. Results of interaction and the continuous communication of values between internal stakeholders in a company (while getting appropriate feedback), the value system of staff, management and the entire organization will ensure that the company develops in synergy (Gróf, 2001). This also aids the company to reach employees' individual goals, the organization's goals, convey distinctive qualities of the corporate identity (thus highlighting differentiation), which in turn will affect corporate image and the corporate brand.

Harris & de Chernatony (2001) argue that communication within homogenous groups is considerably easier than within heterogeneous groups, because similar employees can be expected to have more congruent perceptions than employees who don't share the same values and beliefs. The earlier assumption that if the entrepreneur is as influential for the corporate identity formation as Krake (2005) argues, s/he would employ team members with similar values and beliefs, is therefore strengthened also by the corporate communication construct. This also suggest that communication in startups could be considerably clearer than in big companies as employees would have homogeneous values and beliefs.

The number of employees in a startup can be beneficial for clear corporate communication as suggested above, as hundreds or thousands of employees do not need to be informed about pressing issues on a daily basis. However, the size of a startups could also be a disadvantage for communication purposes as most information is gained informally and few clear guidelines are set in stone. Vinten (1999) points out that for e.g. SMEs the myth that communication is adequately and completely fulfilled through informal means is false as in reality there is a significant need for formal communication to get messages through to everybody even in a small organization. One could therefore also assume that while communication in startups is quite vibrant, the way it is conducted is not as efficient as it could potentially be and important issues should be discussed in depth and clear guidelines of how to proceed should be set.

Derived hypothesis of the corporate communication constructs is;

Construct	<i>Hypothesis</i>
Corporate communication	H2D <i>Corporate communication is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>

Table 5 Summary of Corporate Communication concepts

Author	Concept	Incorporates	Function
(Gróf, 2001)	Corporate communication	All communications from the company influenced by the environment	To transmit information and to interpret it, affect corporate output and efficiency, promote values
(Rode & Vallaster, 2005)	Corporate communication	Formal and informal communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, written and oral communication, response to organizational change	To help founders help employees accomplish both individual and organizational goals
(Witt & Rode, 2005)	Corporate communication	Information based facts, clarity of receivers of messages, founders' set of standards for communication, communication instruments, how values are communicated internally, communication with external partners	-
(Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006)	Communication	The form of communication which is targeted to support the products and services of the organization, corporate advertising, PR	To convey the distinctive qualities of the corporate identity
(Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)	Communication	Communication on team and organizational level	Forms congruent perceptions among team members, effectiveness
(Balmer J. M., 2001)	Corporate communication/ Total corporate communication	The channels used to communicate the corporate identity to internal stakeholders	Translates over time to corporate image

2.5. Corporate image

The customers' perceptions and beliefs about a company are denoted as a company's corporate image (Boyle, 2003; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Meenaghan, 1995;

Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Krake, 2005; Spence & Essoussi, 2008). The corporate image is influenced by the corporate identity (and vice versa) as the whole branding process is dynamic i.e. the perceptions of consumers creates a reaction in the company that adjusts its messages to again change the perceptions of the consumers. The corporate image however originates externally and “*refers to the public’s real perception of the organization which the entity cannot control*” (Tujillejas & Cuadrado, 2011:358). The statement above basically means that the company can merely give consumers (and other external stakeholders) tools to understand the corporation’s desired identity, but how the corporate identity is actually perceived by external stakeholders is what constitutes the concept ‘corporate image’. “*It is the net result of the interaction of a person’s beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about [organisations at a particular time]*” (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006:198). Corporate image can therefore be described in a nutshell as a set of meanings (or perceptions) by which a corporation is known, and how external stakeholders describe it to others.

The corporate image is constructed through different types of interaction aimed at the company’s external stakeholders (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). This interaction is formed through advertising, PR, sponsorship, press releases, customer service and through numerous other channels targeted towards the company’s environment. It is also a collected construct that is adjusted every time an external stakeholder has an experience with the company (Tujillejas & Cuadrado, 2011). This means that the concept of corporate image is constantly shaped. Based on Hatch & Schultz (1997:359) who state that “*image is a holistic and vivid impression held by...a particular group towards an organization and is a result of sense-making by the group and communication by the organization...*”, it can be claimed that the experience a consumer has does not necessarily need to be *with* the company as Tujillejas & Cuadrado (2011) suggest, but *about* the company (as analyzed in a group). Therefore an experience that e.g. a friend or a family member has had with a company might affect the consumer’s own perceptions of the same company. Everybody with brand knowledge of the company can be said to have a subjective image of the company (everybody has different perceptions and understandings) and can thus affect the images perceived by other people around him/her. This claim makes the concept of corporate image even more volatile and exposed to miscommunication than the concept explained by Tujillejas & Cuadrado (2011), and highlights the importance of coherent corporate communication.

Overall, a coherent and positive corporate image has been proven to lead to competitive advantages (Aaker, 1996: 333). Witt & Rode (2005) add that a strong corporate image improves customer's acceptance of a company's services or products, it makes recruiting easier as employees are drawn to the company and it reduced the cost of capital. *"It seems clear that a positive corporate image is of practical value, especially for start-ups trying to establish themselves..."* (Witt & Rode, 2005:279). These are all important points particularly to a startup as startups in general act in a certain "window of opportunity" (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005) with fierce competition where time is of essence. If a startup is unable to attract the right workforce to the company and if it is unable to capture an audience by differentiating from its competitors, it is highly likely that the startup lifecycle will be short-lived. It is therefore extremely important that startups monitor their corporate image closely and try to affect it by adjusting corporate identity elements if needed.

2.6. Summary

The corporate identity represents the company internal part of the corporate brand, corporate image however, refers to the external stakeholders' perceptions of the corporate identity. Only by aligning corporate identity with corporate image can an emotional bond between company and customer develop thus creating a strong corporate brand, which in turn can lead to economical benefits and will distinguish the company from its' competitors. Corporate brands thus gain their full potential when all elements of brand identity are coherent and when they are successfully communicated and influence positively the corporate image, because only then can the emotional bond be experienced. It is therefore through a coherent corporate identity that companies makes a corporate brand unique.

Figure 1 presented below is an illustration formulated by Jannica Nyman of the relationships explained in the literature review. The figure was referred to and explained further throughout chapter two.

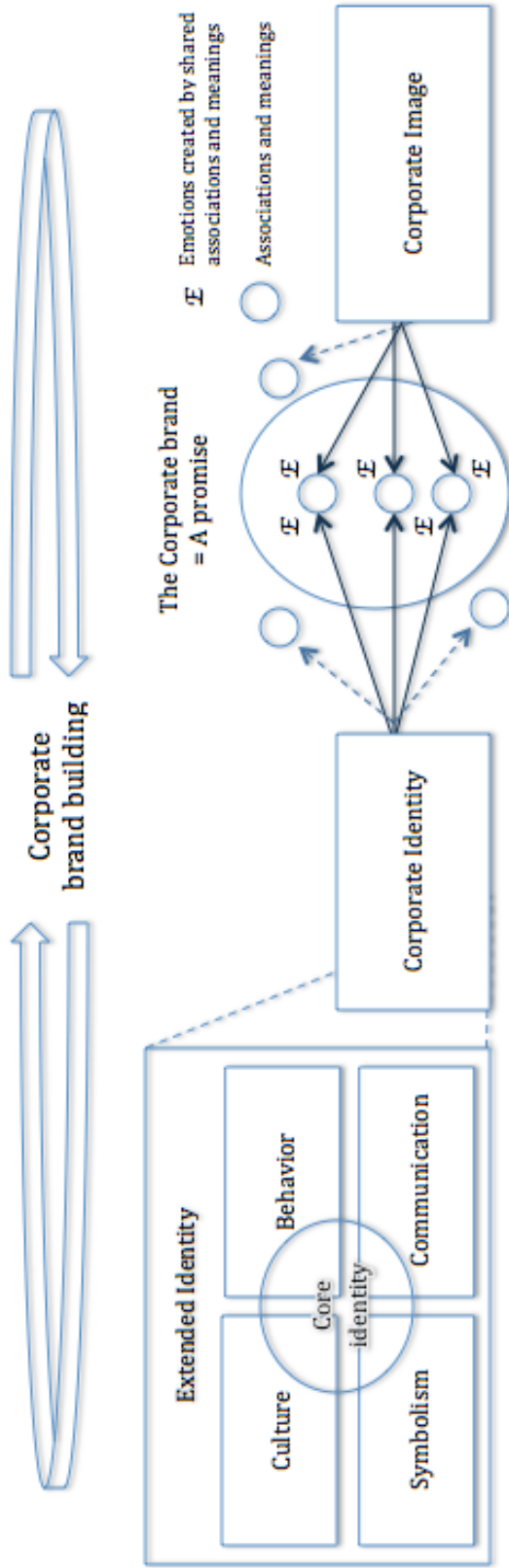


Figure 1 Illustration of the relationship of constructs as explained in chapter 2. Illustration formulated and created by Jannica Nyman.

Though previous studies have confirmed the interrelationship between the four corporate identity constructs and proven that they affect positively the corporate identity in a company, no studies have been conducted concerning if entrepreneurs realize this and consider brand building in startups as important at all.

In order to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies H1 has been constructed and will be tested in the ‘results’ chapter. Previous studies (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Merrilees, 2007; Krake, 2005; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008) suggest that entrepreneurs do not know what corporate branding is nor is it implemented in their overall corporate strategy. H1 can therefore be expected to be accepted.

H2 will investigate if all corporate identity constructs are considered equally important in a startup context from the entrepreneur’s point of view. If all four sub-hypothesis (A-D) of H2 are accepted it would suggest that corporate brand building is regarded similarly to how it is regarded in MNCs, and all four corporate identity constructs are focused on equally thus proving that corporate brand building theories generated for big corporations can also be applied in a startup context. However previous studies (Juntunen, 2012; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010) suggest that this will not be the case when they state that limited resources restrict startup companies branding efforts. However the lack of startup brand building literature suggest that startups ought to build a coherent corporate identity by focusing on all constructs equally. H2 is therefore expected to be accepted.

Table 6 Summary of hypotheses

Construct		<i>Hypotheses</i>
Corporate Branding	H1	<i>Entrepreneurs consider corporate brand building unimportant</i>
	H2	<i>All corporate identity constructs are considered equally important</i>
Corporate culture	H2 _A	<i>Corporate culture is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>
Corporate behavior	H2 _B	<i>Corporate behavior is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>
Corporate symbolism	H2 _C	<i>Corporate symbolism is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>
Corporate communication	H2 _D	<i>Corporate communication is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>

3 METHOD

This chapter explains the methods and methodology used to answer the aims of this paper. First the methodology and methods used will be discussed, followed by a detailed description of the variables in the questionnaire. The sample and data collection will be investigated next, and lastly the reliability and validity of the study will be judged.

3.1. Research methodology and method

There are two main research methodologies namely a deductive and inductive approach (Silverman, 2006). While the deductive approach aims at testing prior theories, confirming and rejecting them and generalizing the findings, the inductive approach moves from observations to generating theories. Basically, the positivist view of the world can be considered using deductive methods and that of the quantitative paradigm (testing theories), while the idealist view involves the inductive way of seeing things i.e. the qualitative paradigm (generating theories) of research methods (Deshpande, 1983; Bryman & Bell, 2007). Bryman & Bell (2007) add that many authors on methodological issues tend to separate quantitative and qualitative research because it aids them in classifying different research methods.

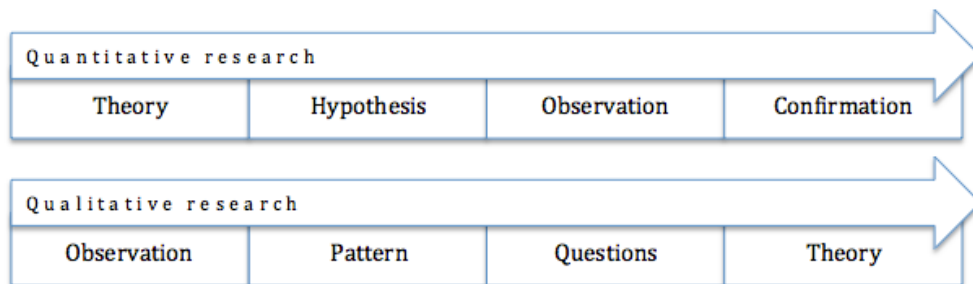


Figure 2 A comparison of quantitative research process and qualitative research process

It is important to keep in mind when deciding on the research approach that neither the qualitative nor the quantitative approach is better than the other as such, but has to be chosen according to the aim of the study (Patton, 2002). It is thus paramount that the researcher not choose the method of his/her liking, but to choose the approach best suited to answer the purpose of the study and what one wants to be able to explain by answering that purpose (Patton, 2002). A cautiously selected sample also has to

support the purpose of the paper (Silverman, 2006), thus giving a researcher the starting points for choosing the right approach for his/her research.

The aim of this paper is to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies and to examine if specific corporate identity constructs (corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneur's point of view.

The baseline for the methodology used in this paper is the previous verification that the corporate identity constructs used in this paper have a positive affect on corporate identity. This thesis applies this confirmation in a new context (startup context), creates a new theory and aims to confirm and generalize it i.e. aims to generate credible data that can be viewed in real life. A deductive approach with a quantitative method is therefore applied and considered the most suitable approach for the aim of this paper because the aim in its nature strives to be generalizable. Silverman (2006) points out that the core concept of a deductive approach is collected measurable (quantitative) data, which is why a questionnaire is usually used to collect this type of data.

3.2. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for the study was designed to group variables into more reliable constructs that could be measured in order for findings to be generalizable. Three to six questions were asked in each category in order to create reliable constructs. Entrepreneurs were asked to answer the questions according to how highly they agreed on statements (1= Fully disagree, 7=Fully agree), not to how high a degree they were followed in their company.

Due to the aim of this paper and its managerial perspective, the questionnaire was to be answered only by entrepreneurs and managers in a startup company. This notion is aligned with Krake's (2005) statement that entrepreneurs are in the center of a startup's brand building activities, thus he/she is the one who's at the core of the company's mission and vision, it's recruitment and HR processes as well as it's symbolism and presentation and it's communication. In order to sort out other respondents a nominal scale question "are you the manager/entrepreneur of this company" was added to the beginning of the questionnaire. An additional question was also placed in the questionnaire letting the entrepreneur/manager state where the

company is based. This question is not of great importance for the tests performed to answer the aim of this study, but is essential in confirming that the findings of this paper do not only apply to e.g. Finnish companies. The question was placed in the questionnaire in order to confirm the multitude of companies and to make sure that many countries were represented.

The first set of questions concerned corporate brand building in general. The set of questions was constructed in order to get the best insight into how entrepreneurs feel about corporate brand building in general. If previous studies are correct and entrepreneurs do not do anything to build the corporate brand in the company, the following questions need to be answered; do entrepreneurs understand the benefits of corporate branding? and are they still concerned with the issue even though they do not act upon it?

The second set of questions was designed to form a construct of corporate culture through asking six questions relating to the issue. The questions were concerned largely with the mission and vision statements that can be described according to Aaker (1996) as the *core* corporate identity. In order to find out if entrepreneurs think it is important to operate coherently according to shared value and beliefs, questions that entrepreneurs had to scale were presented as statements that the entrepreneur has to answer according to how high an degree he/she agreed with the statement. This ensured that the response of entrepreneurs was actually their opinion, not how this was done in their company.

The third fourth and fifth sets of questions were designed for the same purpose as the second one – to create a construct that could be used in the empirical study. Constructs that were created were corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication.

All questions in the questionnaire were derived from theories and statements presented in the theory chapter of this paper. The source of the question can be viewed in the right hand side of Table 7.

Table 7 Summary of questionnaire

<i>Construct</i>		<i>Questions (scalable questions 1-7)</i>	<i>Derived from</i>	<i>Variable</i>
Corporate brand building	1.	If the branding strategy of our company was enhanced we could gain financial benefits as well as distinguish ourselves from competitors	Boyle (2001) Rode & Vallaster (2005)	<i>Bra1</i>
	2.	Branding should be considered an important element in our company	Kapferer (2004), Aaker (1996)	<i>Bra2</i>
	3.	It is important to consider how different stakeholders feel about our company	Kapferer (2004), Aaker (1996)	<i>Bra3</i>
Corporate culture	4.	Our mission and vision has to be clear to everybody in the organization	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult1</i>
	5.	Our company has to operate based on our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult2</i>
	6.	Decisions made in our company have to be based on our defined mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult3</i>
	7.	Everybody in the organization needs to follow our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult4</i>
	8.	Everybody in our organization have to have common values and beliefs	Aaker (1996)	<i>Cult5</i>
	9.	Everybody in the organization needs to operate according to our shared values and beliefs	Aaker (1996)	<i>Cult6</i>
Corporate behavior	10.	All new employees are recruited based on agreed values and competences, as well as against agreed business targets	Vinten (1999), Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Beh1</i>
	11.	New employees are selected more according to how their mentality and values fit in the organization than by their specific set of skills	Vinten (1999), Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Beh2</i>
	12.	Employees are highly empowered to act on behalf of the company	Harris & DeChernatony	<i>Beh3</i>

		(2001)	
	13. High focus should be placed on supporting and developing personnel according to company goals	Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006)	<i>Beh4</i>
	14. It is important that people in our organization have appropriate and good relationships to each other	Hatch & Schultz (2003)	<i>Beh5</i>
Corporate symbolism	15. The most important function of our website and logo are to reflect who we are and what we do	Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006)	<i>Symb1</i>
	16. Our visual presentation (videos, presentation slides etc.) should be coherent with our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005)	<i>Symb2</i>
	17. Our office interior/merchandize should be coherent with who we are	Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006)	<i>Symb3</i>
Corporate communication	18. It is important that all communication (e-mail, website, phone conversations, meetings etc.) from the company towards external stakeholders is coherent	Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Com1</i>
	19. It is important that managers and employees get feedback on a regular basis	Harris & de Chernatony (2001) Gróf (2001)	<i>Com2</i>
	20. It is important that everybody in the organization participates in team meetings on a regular basis	Harris & de Chernatony (2001) Gróf (2001)	<i>Com3</i>
	21. Horizontal and vertical communication in our organization should be considered equally important	Gróf (2001)	<i>Com4</i>
	22. Internal and external communication in our organization should be considered equally important	Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Com5</i>

See appendix 1 for the full set of questions used for this study.

3.2.1. Quality of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed reliable and great emphasis was placed on making the quality of the questionnaire as high as possible. According to CustomerSat, 2005, a good questionnaire “*provides you actionable, clear information... Good surveys have higher response rates and higher quality data. Good surveys are easy to fill out and aren’t confusing*”. In order to design a good a questionnaire as possible the ten tips of CustomerSat (2005) were followed as described below (see Table 8).

Table 8 Survey quality

Tips to improve reliability and quality of a survey according to CustomerSat (2005)	Executed for this study
<i>1. Clearly define the purpose of the survey</i>	The questionnaire was sent out with a message stating who the researcher was, where she was studying and for what purpose the responses were used. It was also emphasized that the survey was anonymous. The survey itself began with an intro stating the same information (as a reminder)
<i>2. Keep the survey short and focused</i>	The survey contained overall 25 questions which we all closed ended so no extra time had to be spent on formulizing answers
<i>3. Keep the questions simple</i>	No abbreviations and only terminology that ought to be familiar (mission and vision statements) to entrepreneurs were used
<i>4. Use closed ended questions whenever possible</i>	Questionnaire contained no open ended questions
<i>5. Keep rating scale questions consistent through the survey</i>	All scale questions are identical (1-7, 1= fully disagree, 7=fully agree)
<i>6. Logical ordering</i>	Questionnaire consists of 3 intro questions and 5 sets of questions (branding in general, corporate culture, behavior, symbolism and communications) which are placed in a linear order
<i>7. Pre-test your survey</i>	3 respondents answered the pilot questionnaire
<i>8. Consider your audience when sending survey invitations</i>	All potential startups were contacted in the morning local time so the questionnaire wouldn't be buried under other e-mails during the day. However, ArabNet Startup entrepreneurs were contacted during the Hajj, which might have lowered the response rate.
<i>9. Consider sending several reminders</i>	Entrepreneurs in all other databases except Startup Sauna were reminded about the questionnaire. Only 30 people from the Startup Sauna database were reminded.
<i>10. Consider offering an incentive</i>	All respondents were promised a summary and the results of the study

3.3. Sample

In order to reach the aim of this paper a quantitative study was conducted where a number of startup entrepreneurs were sent a questionnaire, which they were asked to fill in anonymously. Entrepreneurs were contacted due to the perspective used in this

paper which is enforced by Krake's (2005) statement that entrepreneurs are "*the visionary individuals who are the focal points for brand building and identity creation*" (Spence & Essoussi, 2010:1039) i.e. they are the ones that make branding decisions in the company.

The respondents for this study were selected through using the four startup databases presented in chapter 1 – Startup Sauna, Norwegian startup, Arctic startup and ArabNet startup. These four databases were chosen based on convenience as lack of time and other resources did not allow for adding further respondents from other databases to the list of potential respondents.

To summarize the respondents' profiles and characteristics in this study (based on the four databases presented in chapter one), respondents were all entrepreneurs of tech or digital startup companies that may have applied to a seed accelerator program and were mainly originated in Russia or in Baltic, Nordic or Arabic Middle eastern countries.

3.4. Data collection and reliability

The questionnaire used for this study was sent out to 823 potential respondents electronically through Google forms where after it was transferred from an automatic excel spreadsheet to SPSS. The respondents were asked to spend 5 minutes answering the questionnaire and though no prize was rewarded, all respondents were promised the results of the study if they left their e-mail address in the last and only optional box in the questionnaire (55 respondents, 49,5%, wanted results in their e-mail). Startup Sauna mailing list startups were promised a summary of the study on the Startup Sauna blog during January 2013.

A pilot questionnaire was sent out to three entrepreneurs on the 19th of October. The feedback from these entrepreneurs was positive and based on that a decision was made not to adjust any questions. As the three entrepreneurs had startups that fit the criterion set for this paper, their responses were used in the overall data collection.

Data was collected from four databases for one week between October 22th and October 29th of 2012 (see Figure 3) and the overall amount of responses was 111. Of these responses two had to be rejected due to respondents admitting that they were not

entrepreneurs (question 1). The final amount of accepted responses was therefore $n=109$, making the response rate an acceptable 13,2%.

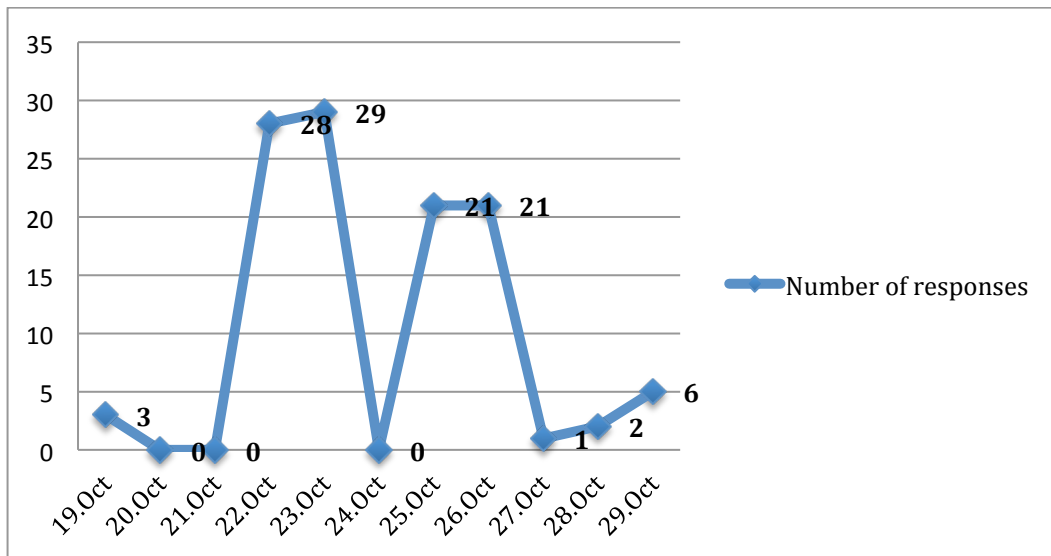


Figure 3 Response timeline

The following subchapters explain briefly the profiles of the databases used for the empirical study in this paper as well as the times and dates potential respondents were contacted (see Table 9). An overview is presented to create a greater understanding of the respondents' shared characteristics and profiles, as well as the generalizability of this paper on a greater scale.

Table 9 Data collection timeline

Database (amount of entrepreneurs contacted)	Questionnaire sent out	Reminder
<i>Startup Sauna (484)</i>	Monday 22. October	Friday 26. October (Only SoS alumni 2012 approx. 30 people)
<i>The Norwegian list (122)</i>	Wednesday 24. October	Friday 26. October
<i>Arctic Startup (142)</i>	Tuesday 23. October (Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia) and Wednesday 24. October (Latvia and Lithuania)	Friday 26. October (all countries)
<i>ArabNet startup (75)</i>	Tuesday 24. October (batch 1) , Wednesday October 25 (batch 2)	Friday 26. October (both batches)

3.4.1. Startup Sauna database

Startup Sauna, which was founded in 2010, is a Finnish open source seed acceleration program *”to the most promising startups from Northern Europe, Baltics and Russia”* (Startup Sauna, 2012). The whole database is not public, but accepted startups to Startup Sauna are public and can be accessed on the program webpage (Startup Sauna, 2012). The program internal database encompasses close to 500 startups that have either gone through or applied to the Startup Sauna or Summer of Startups accelerator programs.

Due to there already having been four batches of startups through Startup Sauna (in 2 years), it cannot be claimed that all respondents from this database are in seed funding stage anymore. The first startups might have raised millions of euros of funding already while newest additions may only just have registered their companies. The common factor in this database is that all companies have applied to a seed accelerator program in Otaniemi, Espoo during the last two years. The database includes startups from Canada, Finland, Sweden, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Estonia.

Entrepreneurs in the Startup Sauna database were contacted on Monday the 22nd of October through the company internal mailing list (see Table 9). This made reaching respondents extremely easy and fast as 484 potential respondents were reached simultaneously.

The researcher’s job position during this time as PR and Marketing Coordinator and later as PR Lead at Startup Sauna might have aided in the gathering of data through the mailing list as the researcher had come in contact with some of the startups before. The timing of the data collection was also favorable as the Startup Sauna accelerator program was to start the following week. This meant that respondents were anticipating information on new startups and other relevant information. The questionnaire was sent together with news and an invitation to the grand opening of the new program, in order to avoid potential respondents from overlooking the message.

A reminder was not sent to all startups in this mailing list due to the risk of overflowing recipients with other Startup Sauna related information. Only Summer of Startups (small summer accelerator program belonging to Startup Sauna) alumni 2012 teams were reminded. If a reminder of the survey could have been sent to all startups the overall response rate might have been enhanced. The questionnaire was however sent

out on a Monday, which according to CustomerSat (2005) is one of the days with the best expected response rate.

3.4.2. The Norwegian list and Arctic Startup databases

The Norwegian startup database has been formed by lecturer and entrepreneur Tor Grønsund. Grønsund has extensive knowledge of Norwegian startups though both his work running LINGO and lecturing at the University of Oslo. Having met Mr. Grønsund in Oslo the 5th of September 2012 and having talked with him about the Norwegian startup scene, the choice of using his database as a source to find Norwegian startups seemed very logical, rational and convenient for the purpose of this paper.

The database presents a crowd-sourced list on Norway's tech startups, which is updated on a regular basis to stay current. The list consists of a little over a hundred technology startups in Norway, which limits its reach to these two characteristics as well as companies that have been recommended to the list by somebody or have nominated themselves on the list.

Arctic Startup is *"The primary information resource of Nordic and Baltic startups (Previously known as ArcticIndex)"* (Arctic Startup, 2012) and has the biggest technology startup database in the Nordic and Baltic countries. It was founded in 2007 in order to collect all technology startups in the region into one easy list.

The database includes information on hundreds of startups from Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. The database is updated on a daily basis as startups can enlist themselves for free at any time without further supervision. Common factors of the startups found in this database is that they are either most likely Nordic or Baltic tech startups that have wanted visibility or opportunities by adding themselves to the arctic startup list. Startups in this database can be in any phase (can be funded or going through funding rounds) while startups in especially Startup Sauna database are generally early stage startups without funding.

Reaching potential respondents through the Norwegian list and Arctic startup databases was significantly harder than contacting Startup Sauna entrepreneurs as no mailing list was available for public use. The databases were used to identify startups that matched the criterion presented earlier in this paper, and startups (which matched the criterion for this paper) found in these databases were contacted after looking up

their contact information on every startup's webpage individually. A mailing list was constructed manually by storing all relevant e-mail addresses found. All contacted startups were then categorized according to country in order to maintain smaller mailing lists that could be altered accordingly e.g. asking Swedish startups to participate in order to get a decent amount of Swedish startups in the study. The startups were then contacted according to country during Tuesday 23. October and Wednesday 24. October and reminders were sent on Friday 26. October (See Table 9).

Startups that had contact forms on their webpage instead of contact information in the form of an e-mail address were excluded from this study. The reason for this was that all relevant e-mail addresses were categorized according to country in each database, so that no company was contacted twice (startups could be listed on several databases). Filling out a form on a company website did not allow for effective categorization of contacted startups, which resulted on them being excluded from the study. Idle startups and startups that did not have contact information available on their web page were also excluded due to A) time restrictions (couldn't spend too much time on each startup) and B) the fact that the four databases included thousands of startups and for the time restrictions it was more efficient to just choose another startup with contact info on their page.

Potential respondents contacted through the Norwegian startup list and Arctic startup databases were sent the questionnaire during 9-12 o'clock AM Finnish time in order for startups to receive the questionnaire before lunch local time. Most responses to a survey are gained during the same day the questionnaire is sent and it is of importance to send the survey early so that it doesn't get overcast by other mail (CustomerSat, 2005).

3.4.3. ArabNet Startup database

"The ArabNet Startup database is the most comprehensive collection of startups in the Middle East to date" (Arabnet, 2012). The database lists approx. 150 digital and tech startups from Arab regions in the Middle east with the following countries represented; Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Somalia. The ratio of each country represented varies however heavily.

The database is update on a regular basis and is free of charge for startups to list themselves, which makes the database as accessible for startups as the previous databases presented above. The common factor for startups in this database is that they want to be “found by professionals, entrepreneurs, potential business partners, investors and key players in the digital business” (Arabnet, 2012).

The ArabNet startups were contacted during the evening Finnish time so potential respondents would receive the questionnaire early in the morning local time. Entrepreneurs were contacted in two batches in order to better follow responses.

The same criterion of choosing which startups to contact in the Norwegian list and Arctic Startup databases was used in this database. Startups without contact information and startups with only Arabic text on their sites were discarded due to time restrictions.

Unfortunately the response rate of entrepreneurs though ArabNet startups can be expected to be low. 93% of the Arab population is Muslim (EveryCulture, 2012), and the Hajj (Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) took place September though October 2012 (Hajinformation, 2012), which was during the time that the survey was open for responses. This suggests that many of the potential respondents might have been out of office and not received the questionnaire before the religious holiday was over even though they were reminded of the study on Friday 26. October (see Table 9).

Due to the design of the questionnaire it is however impossible to determine which respondent was contacted through which database, and determining a database-to-database response rate is therefore impossible and would be purely speculation.

3.5. Data analysis

This part of the thesis presents how data was analyzed throughout the study. Table 8 already presented the questionnaire quality and it is safe to state that data has been collected in order to gain the highest quality of data possible. To analyze this data correctly, suggestions of Pallant (2010: 28) have been taken into consideration to assure the quality of this study.

Table 10 below presents Pallant (2010) suggestion on the flow of data analysis as well as how the suggestions were executed in this thesis. How data was actually analyzed is presented in the column to the right, and the heading under which this information can

be found is presented in the center of the table. Data analysis extends throughout chapters three and four.

The next chapter will present the results of the study conducted.

Table 10 Data flow analysis

Flow of data analysis (Pallant, 2010:28)	Found in heading nr.	Executed for this study
Prepare codebook	3.2	The questionnaire used for the study was designed to group variables into more reliable constructs that could be measured in order for findings to be generalizable.
Set up structure of data file	3.4	Done in SPSS
Enter data	3.4	The questionnaire was sent out electronically through Google forms where after it was transferred from an automatic excel spread sheet to SPSS.
Screen data for errors	4.1 & 4.3	After screening the data two respondents had to be discarded from the study due to them admitting to not being entrepreneurs of a startup leaving the final sample at n=109. Data was also checked for outliers to make sure they weren't distorting results.
Explore data using descriptive statistics and graphs	4.1	Descriptive statistics presented and discussed
Modify variables for further analyses	4.2.1 & 4.2.2	Divergent validity was confirmed through a factor analysis by deleting variables (cult5, cult6, com1, com5, beh4 and beh2). No variables needed deleting for the sake of reliability.
Conduct statistical analyses to compare groups (T-test)	4.3	T-tests conducted to compare corporate identity constructs and to test hypothesis

4 RESULTS

In the following chapter the results of the study will be presented. First descriptive statistics will be discussed. Secondly divergent validity and reliability of the constructs created will be revised in order to be certain that the T-tests performed and presented can be considered valid. Finally, T-tests will be used to accept or reject the hypothesis presented in chapter 1 Table 6.

4.1. Descriptive statistics

823 startup entrepreneurs were contacted for this study, which generated 111 responses over the period of one week. After screening the data two respondents had to be discarded from the study due to them admitting to not being entrepreneurs of a startup leaving the final sample at n=109.

Though the respondents were expected to be originating from Russia and the Baltic, Nordic or Arabic Middle eastern countries (according to the databases they were contacted through), responses were gained also from entrepreneurs whose startups originated in China, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain (see Table 11). The overall width of the study was 22 countries though their ratio was not evenly distributed. The conclusive list of countries and their ratio is presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Origins of startups represented

Country	Frequency (n)	Percentage
<i>Finland</i>	24	22%
<i>Norway</i>	20	18%
<i>Sweden</i>	19	17.4%
<i>Denmark</i>	11	10.1%
<i>Egypt</i>	5	4.5%
<i>Estonia</i>	4	3.7%
<i>Iceland</i>	4	3.7%
<i>Russia</i>	4	3.7%
<i>Lithuania</i>	3	2.8%
<i>Latvia</i>	2	1.8%
<i>USA</i>	2	1.8%
<i>China, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Spain, UAE</i>	1 (each)	.9% (each)
Total	109	100%

The five constructs (brand building construct and the four corporate identity constructs) that were investigated in this thesis and that were built out of data collected in the questionnaire were rated as presented in Table 12. With scale questions ranging from 1-7, 3.5 was considered the critical point where everything above 3.5 was considered important and everything below 3.5 unimportant. Some variables were left out of the study due to validity issues that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table 12 Descriptive statistics on constructs (in order of importance)

Const. group	Construct	Variables	Measured items	Mean
<i>Brand Building</i>	<i>Brand Building</i>	bra1, bra2, bra3	How important do startup entrepreneurs consider brand building?	5.83
<i>Corporate identity constructs</i>	<i>Corporate Culture</i>	cult1, cult2, cult3, cult4,	How important do startup entrepreneurs consider corporate culture?	5.83
	<i>Corporate Communication</i>	com2, com3, com4,	How important do startup entrepreneurs consider corporate communication?	5.74
	<i>Corporate Behavior</i>	beh1, beh3, beh5	How important do startup entrepreneurs consider corporate behavior?	5.64
	<i>Corporate Symbolism</i>	symb1, symb2, symb3	How important do startup entrepreneurs consider corporate symbolism?	5.43

All of the constructs tested were considered important by startup entrepreneurs as all constructs scored above 3.5. This suggests that corporate brand building in startups is considered important overall. The brand building construct and corporate culture were rated most important scoring 5.83. Corporate communication was considered second most important with a mean of 5.74 while this was followed by corporate behavior with 5.64 and finally corporate symbolism at 5.43. A clear order of importance could therefore be deciphered, but the t-test conducted later in this chapter will resolve if any of the constructs were considered statistically more important than the others.

4.2. Basic assumptions

For statistical analyses data is assumed to be normally distributed (Churchill & Brown, 2004), which means that for reliable calculations the data of this study needed to be tested for normality. Data was also checked for outliers to make sure they weren't distorting results. As the 5% trimmed mean deviated only slightly from normal mean, outliers weren't excluded from this study (Pallant, 2010).

There are several ways to test for normality but for the purpose of this paper the best ways were selected to be viewing skewness and kurtosis of data as well as conducting the Shapiro-Wilk's test. Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test was not conducted as it was already proven by Stephens in 1974 that the test doesn't provide as powerful testing tool for normality as the Shapiro-Wilk's test even in its corrected form (Stephens, 1974). The matter was discussed also by Rosenkranz (2000) who agreed with Stephens (1974) on the reliability of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test. The Shapiro-Wilk test on the other hand is capable of correctly analyzing a sample of up to 2000 (Lund Research, 2012), which made it a suitable test of normality for this study.

When using skewness and kurtosis to examine normality of data, the closer the value of skewness and kurtosis are to 0 the more normal the distribution ($S=0$, $K=0$) (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Pallant, 2010). Skewness measures the lack of symmetry of the distribution, where if $S \neq 0$ data is not symmetrical i.e. it is not normally distributed. In practice a symmetric sample looks identical to the left and right of the center point in a graph (Engineering Statistics Handbook, 2012). Kurtosis measures how peaked or flat data is (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Low kurtosis suggests flat data while a high K value reflects peakedness as appears as a distinct peak with rapid decline in a graph (Engineering Statistics Handbook, 2012).

Results of skewness and kurtosis calculations in this study suggested that data was not normally distributed (see full set of values in Appendix 3). Data was generally skewed to the right (negative skewness), which suggest large response rates on high values on the likert chart. This notion explains the high means of constructs presented earlier i.e. the high importance of constructs. The values of kurtosis $K > 0$ suggests peakedness in data where respondents have given quite similar values for questions where as $K < 0$ suggests flatness where responses have been spread out on different values. Data can be described as not normally distributed when viewing skewness and kurtosis.

The complete sample of a study is considered normal if the significance value of Shapiro-Wilk's test exceeds .05 (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). If the value therefore is below .05 the entire sample significantly deviates from normal. The Shapiro-Wilk's test also proved that data was not normally distributed with values exceeding .05.

Even though data was not normally distributed as often assumed in statistical analysis, it was possible to proceed with the study due to the large sample size of more than 40 respondents which Ghasemi & Zahediasl (2010) state that is the limit where data doesn't need to be normally distributed to continue a study. The violation of normality should therefore not cause major problems when proceeding with the study (Pallant, 2010).

4.2.1. Divergent validity

The variables used for this study were derived from several different sources (see Table 7). Scholars had therefore not used the variables in previous studies, which for a thesis is quite unusual. In order to make sure that variables were usable and measured what they were supposed to measure, divergent validity had to be investigated. Divergent validity aids a researcher *“to establish variables with construct validity by demonstrating that the construct you are interested in... is different from other constructs that might be present in your study”* (Lund Research Ltd, 2012).

In this case it was of importance to make sure that e.g. the corporate identity constructs measured only corporate identity and not also brand building. Measuring the divergent validity in a study like this is essential to make sure that there is only little or preferably no undelaying relationship between the scores of two constructs measured similarly (through the questionnaire constructed for this study) (Pallant, 2010).

For the purpose of investigating the divergent validity of scales used in this study a factor analysis was conducted. Holton *et al.* (2007) argue for this technique, and state that factor analysis can be used as an instrument in the validation process. The actual aim of a factor analysis is to summarize large amounts of data into smaller underlying subcategories (factors) that might not be visible to the researcher. In this case, a factor analysis was conducted to confirm the already presented constructs (brand building, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate

communication) by indicating variables that did not measure only one construct clearly enough. These variables were deleted in order to assure divergent validity.

Before being able to conduct a factor analysis, the researcher has to test the suitability of the data for a factor analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test were conducted in order to value the suitability of a factor analysis. The KMO test is an index that measures sampling adequacy while Bartlett's test focuses on the sphericity i.e. that the correlation matrix generated out of the factor analysis is an identity matrix and thus doesn't correlate between several factors. The acceptable KMO value ranges from .6 to 1 and was in this study .755. For a factor analysis to be suitable measure for testing data, Bartlett's test should be significant and was in this study $p=.000$ which indicates absolute significance. The results of these tests prove the suitability of a factor analysis for the dataset used in this study and a factor analysis could therefore be used to decipher divergent validity. (Pallant, 2010)

According to Kline (1994:52) a factor loading of .3 is salient in a factor analysis where the sample is at least 100. In this case however, with the factor analysis aimed at confirming already existing constructs loadings were assumed significant at .5. Out of the 22 variables presented in Table 7, 6 were deleted (cult5, cult6, com1, com5, beh4 and beh2) in order to establish validity resulting in 16 variables that were used in the final factor analysis (see Table 12, see questions in table 7). Variables loaded relatively strongly on only one factor, and values between .0-.45 were considered low enough values to be discarded from the correlation matrix presenting loadings (see Table 13). The five factors generated through the factor analysis explained 64,6% of the total variance.

Bra3 was considered a troublesome variable because it didn't load quite as strongly on only one factor as it should have. A loading factor of .494 can be considered mediocre for the purpose of proving validity, but as all variables of the brand building (bra) construct were calculated together, deleting Bra 3 would have resulted in weaker loadings on all Bra variables. Deleting Bra 3 would also have affected the reliability of the study negatively as proven in a test where deleting Bra 3 resulted in a significantly lower Cronbach's alpha for the entire brand building construct. Bra3 was ultimately kept for these reasons and also as the brand building construct was not to be tested against any other constructs in T-tests.

Table 13 Correlation matrix with (F stands for factor)

Variable	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Cult2	.791				
Cult4	.732				
Cult1	.726				
Cult3	.700				
Symb1		.820			
Symb2		.799			
Symb3		.623			
Com3			.839		
Com2			.756		
Com4			.598		
Bra2				.823	
Bra1				.816	
Bra3				.494	
Beh5					.816
Beh1					.668
Beh3					.543

Going back to the aim of this factor analysis being establishing validity of scales i.e. to confirm the already presented constructs (brand building, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication), the factor analysis resulted in strengthening the already presented constructs instead of constructing new ones. As variables loaded on factors that made up exactly the same constructs as presented throughout this thesis it can be confirmed that the validity of this study is strong and it is ok continue the study. It also means that the scales that were constructed by the researcher and that haven't been tested in any other study before, are valid.

4.2.2. Reliability

A major concern when setting up constructs (in this case the five constructs; brand building, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) is the reliability of scales and the internal consistency. While the reliability of scales measures how free scales are from random error, the internal consistency investigates how well the variables that make up the constructs fit together i.e. that they measure the same thing. Cronbach's alpha (α) is one of the most used

measurements when investigating internal consistency as it assesses the consistency of an entire scale. (Pallant, 2010)

Cronbach's alpha coefficient should preferably be over .7 for internal consistency (Pallant, 2010), but for the design of the questionnaire used in this study it is essential to point out that Cronbach's alpha has its flaws when it comes to the number of items in a scale (Cortina, 1993). Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency of a scale best when there are ten or more items to measure per scale (Cortina, 1993). In this study the number of items per scale were 3-4, which meant that proceeding with Cronbach's alpha (α) should be done with caution. Pallant (2010) also points out that when there are less than ten items in a scale, it is not uncommon for the α value to be quite low. An alternative that Pallant (2010) mentions is to confirm α by also investigating means of inter-item correlations where the optimum value would be between .2-.4. If either or both of these measures are in the optimum values the construct can be considered reliable

The reliability of the scales brand building, corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication were tested and results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14 Reliability of scales

Construct	Nr. of items	Mean values	Cronbach's alpha (α)
<i>Brand building</i>	3	5.83	.628*
<i>Corporate culture</i>	4	5.83	.806*
<i>Corporate behavior</i>	3	5.64	.595 ¹
<i>Corporate symbolism</i>	3	5.43	.741*
<i>Corporate communication</i>	3	5.74	.651*

***Value suggest reliability**

1) Inter-item correlation acceptable .339*

The corporate behavior construct scored a low Cronbach's alpha and was therefore investigated further by inspecting inter-item correlations as suggested by Pallant (2010). Inter-item correlation measures the relationship between all items in a

construct by computing correlations between pairs of items (Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2012). The optimal range of .2-.4 was achieved within the corporate behavior construct with a value of .339. With this in mind also this construct was considered reliable enough to continue with the study.

4.3. Testing the hypothesis

After having discussed the normality of data and confirmed the reliability of scales as well as the divergent validity of data, hypothesis can now safely be tested in order to meet the aim of the paper.

The first aim of the study was to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies. H1 addressed this question by stating *Entrepreneurs consider corporate brand building unimportant* as previous studies (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Merrilees, 2007; Krake, 2005; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008) suggested that entrepreneurs do not know what corporate branding is nor do they implement it in their overall corporate strategy which led to an assumption that H1 would be accepted.

The mean of the brand building construct was however 5.83 (see Table 14) which is higher than the critical point of 3.5, and therefore brand building can be said to be in fact considered important by entrepreneurs in a startup context. H1 is therefore rejected, and suggests that entrepreneurs do realize the benefits of brand building in their startups.

Construct	Hypothesis	Status
Corporate Branding	H1 <i>Entrepreneurs consider corporate brand building unimportant</i>	Rejected

4.3.1. T-tests for corporate identity constructs

The second aim of this paper was to examine if specific corporate identity constructs (corporate culture, corporate behavior, corporate symbolism and corporate communication) are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneur's point of view. The set of H2 (A-D) hypothesis were constructed to examine this question.

If all four sub-hypothesis of H2 would be rejected it would suggest that corporate brand building is not regarded similarly to how it is regarded in MNCs, and all four corporate identity constructs would not be focused on equally. This would also suggest that corporate brand building theories generated for big corporations cannot be applied in a startup context. Previous studies (Juntunen, 2012; Spence & Essoussi, 2010; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010) suggest that this could be the case, but no studies have confirmed the matter. The lack of theoretical rigor on startup branding and based on the previous studies conducted (Witt & Rode, 2005; Rode & Vallaster, 2005) on brand building in general it can be assumed that startups should focus on the corporate brand building constructs equally.

Due to the lack of multivariate tests that could successfully compare different constructs made up of several variables when the pool of respondents is not limited by e.g. age, country of origin or gender (but all respondents are included in the pool), the most rational way of comparing the constructs was by measuring means of constructs and comparing them against each other with a t-test. The T-test measures “*whether the means of two groups are statistically different*” (Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2012) and can therefore decipher if one or several of the constructs are considered significantly more important than others.

The t-test conducted for this study was a paired-sample t-test. This type of t-test was used because it is able to compare the mean values for the same pool of people in different contexts (Pallant, 2010). Pallant (2010) points out that a paired-sample t-test is also appropriate when investigating a pool of respondents’ opinion on two different questions. This is exactly what was done in the questionnaire; asking for a pool of respondents’ (entrepreneurs’) opinions on two different questions (e.g. culture-behavior, symbolism-communication, behavior-symbolism etc.).

H2_A. *Corporate culture is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity*

Hypothesis H2_A concerned the importance of corporate culture in a startup context and measured how important it is considered in relation to other corporate identity constructs. Corporate culture was considered the most important corporate identity construct with a mean value of 5.83, equaling the brand building construct. This suggests corporate culture is considered important and t-tests proved it was considered significantly more important than corporate behavior ($p=.036$) and corporate

symbolism ($p=.000$) by entrepreneurs in a startup context. H_{2A} is therefore rejected (See Table 15).

Table 15 Testing for H_{2A}

Paired constructs	Mean of culture	Mean of paired construct	t-value	p-value
Culture/Behavior	5.83	5.64	2.127	.036*
Culture/Symbolism	5.83	5.43	3.849	.000*
Culture/Communication	5.83	5.74	.834	.406

H_{2B} . *Corporate behavior is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity*

Hypothesis H_{2B} concerned the importance of corporate behavior in a startup context and measured how important it is considered in relation to other corporate identity constructs. Corporate behavior was considered the third most important corporate identity construct with a mean value of 5.64 which still made it considered important overall. Corporate culture was considered significantly more important than corporate behavior ($p=.036$), but statistically corporate behavior was considered equally important to corporate symbolism and corporate communication. H_{2B} is rejected (see Table 16).

Table 16 Testing for H_{2B}

Paired constructs	Mean of behavior	Mean of paired construct	t-value	p-value
Behavior/Culture	5.64	5.83	-2.127	.036*
Behavior/Symbolism	5.64	5.43	1.876	.063
Behavior/Communication	5.64	5.74	-.960	.339

H_{2C} . *Corporate symbolism is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity*

Hypothesis H2_c concerned the importance of corporate symbolism in a startup context and measured how important it is considered in relation to other corporate identity constructs. Corporate symbolism was considered least important for startups according to entrepreneurs. However, scoring higher mean than 3.5 corporate symbolism is considered important overall. Both corporate culture (p=.000) and corporate communication (.006) were considered significantly more important than corporate symbolism. H2_c is therefore also rejected (see Table 17).

Table 17 Testing for H2_c

Paired constructs	Mean of symbolism	Mean of paired construct	t-value	p-value
Symbolism/Culture	5.43	5.83	-3.849	.000*
Symbolism/Behavior	5.43	5.64	-1.876	.063
Symbolism/Communication	5.43	5.74	-2.792	.006*

H2_D. *Corporate communication is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity*

Hypothesis H2_D concerned the importance of corporate communication in a startup context and measured how important it is considered in relation to other corporate identity constructs. Corporate communication was considered the second most important construct that makes up the corporate identity in a startup. There was no significant difference between the importance of corporate communication and the most important construct, corporate culture or the third most important construct, corporate behavior. However, corporate communication was considered significantly more important than the least important construct, corporate symbolism (p=.006). H2_D as the last construct tested for the H2 group is also rejected which means that all H2 hypothesis were rejected (See Table 18).

Table 18 Testing for H2D

Paired constructs	Mean of communication	Mean of paired construct	t-value	p-value
Communication/Culture	5.74	5.83	-.834	.406
Communication/Behavior	5.74	5.64	.960	.339
Communication/Symbolism	5.74	5.43	2.792	.006*

None of the hypothesis constructed for this study were accepted. This means that contrary to what can be read in previous studies, brand building is in fact considered important in a startup context by entrepreneurs. Another interesting revelation about the results is that current brand building models concentrating on building a coherent corporate brand through the corporate identity are not applicable on startups. The results will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this thesis. An illustration of the results and their relationships are presented in Figure 4 below. T-values are presented in the figure and the significance marked with an *. The order of importance has also been added to the figure with numbered circles.

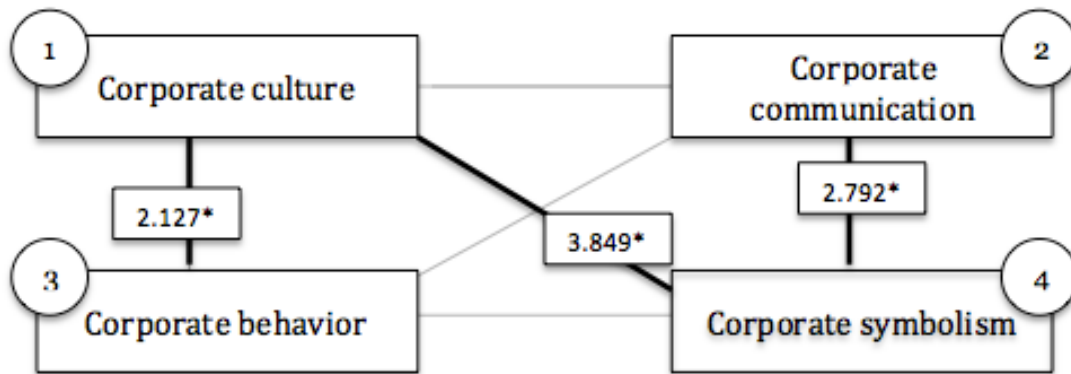


Figure 4 Illustration of results

A summary of statuses of the hypothesis are presented in Table 19 below as a reminder before continuing to the discussion of the results in the next chapter.

Table 19 Summary of statuses of hypothesis

Construct		<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Status</i>
Corporate Branding	H1	<i>Entrepreneurs consider corporate brand building unimportant</i>	Rejected
	H2	<i>All corporate identity constructs are considered equally important</i>	Rejected
Corporate culture	H2A	<i>Corporate culture is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>	Rejected
Corporate behavior	H2B	<i>Corporate behavior is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>	Rejected
Corporate symbolism	H2C	<i>Corporate symbolism is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>	Rejected
Corporate communication	H2D	<i>Corporate communication is considered equally important to all other constructs of corporate identity</i>	Rejected

5 DISCUSSION

The last chapter of this thesis is going to be used to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter. The possible reasons and risks relating to concentrating unequally on corporate identity constructs in startups are contemplated upon where after a summary of the discussion is presented. Both theoretical and managerial implications are discussed before the conclusion and limitations and further studies are presented.

5.1. Answering the research questions

As previous studies had already proven before this thesis that A) the corporate identity constructs positively affect the corporate identity but B) that brand management is paid very little attention to on a daily basis in small companies, two justified questions for this thesis were derived; Do entrepreneurs understand the importance of internal brand building (though they are apparently not acting upon it) and is the corporate brand of a startup built similarly to big companies' (focusing on all corporate identity constructs equally)? Another question that was presented already in the problem formulation of this thesis was whether entrepreneurs are not aligning their corporate identity properly (according to previous studies) resulting in them focusing on the wrong things.

The first aim of this paper was therefore to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies, while the second aim was to examine if specific corporate identity constructs are considered more significant than others in a startup context from the entrepreneurs point of view.

This thesis was written in order to get a clearer image of entrepreneur's opinion of brand building and was motivated by the lack of academic research on startups in terms of corporate brand building, as well as the fundamental need to support startups as much as possible for future well being. The overall goal was to have contributed to a greater understanding of internal brand building in startup companies, supported entrepreneurship from a branding perspective and helped entrepreneurs reading this paper create stronger corporate brands that can help them survive in the marketplace.

5.1.1. Corporate brand building is considered important

The overall framework of this paper was presented and argued for in Figure 1 and chapter two, where it was suggested that companies should strive for building a coherent corporate identity through aligning the corporate identity constructs to ultimately enjoy long term benefits. These benefits include helping startups differentiate (Boyle, 2003), gaining financial benefits (Rode & Vallaster, 2005) and gaining greater brand awareness (Simoaes & Dibb, 2001). Abimbola (2001) also points out that establishing a brand enables a company to introduce more innovative product offerings into the market place than without an established brand.

Several authors such as (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Merrilees, 2007; Krake, 2005; Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008) however suggested that entrepreneurs do not know what corporate branding is nor do they implement it in their overall corporate strategy, which led to the assumption that entrepreneurs do not care about brand building in their startups. This notion was however proven only partly right in the study.

Results indicate that entrepreneurs do find corporate brand building important, but after having talked to some entrepreneurs during the process of this thesis, and judging by the fact that the corporate identity constructs that make up the corporate brand weren't regarded as important as corporate brand building itself, it can be suggested that entrepreneurs do not know what branding is, but do implement it in their companies unconsciously. Ojasalo *et al.*, (2008: 96)'s statement that startups in general have a "*narrow interpretation of what branding is*" can therefore be supported by this study.

Having talked to a lot of entrepreneurs during the course of this thesis, many of them stated that they do not engage in brand building activities and that they simply do not have the time and money for it. However when asking them about visions and missions, business cards and t-shirts etc. these were issues that entrepreneurs did put at least some effort in. It is also interesting to note that while entrepreneurs often print t-shirts with the company logo and wear them at different events, it is not done consciously for branding purposes but because startups need different stakeholders (investors, media, competitors, potential employees) to connect them to their company. When asking around at SLUSH (biggest Startup conference in Northern Europe and Russia) entrepreneurs also stated that business cards are handed out so external stakeholders

can get in touch with startups after the conference. However none of the entrepreneurs stated that printing business cards was done to increase brand awareness. This suggests a lack of understanding in the whole corporate brand building concept even though according to the study entrepreneurs considered brand building important. This also suggests that when talking to entrepreneurs about branding issues, it would be wise to refrain from using corporate language and branding terminology, as this is perceived in my experience as “corporate” and not something startups would do. When digging deeper however issues like the ones with business cards and t-shirts appear.

It is also notable to mention that the ignorance on what brand building actually is, is not limited to startup’s activities, but to their mindset. In my experience, many entrepreneurs consider brand building an afterthought where a company is first built, customers attracted and only after that does the brand building begin by making the design look pretty. This notion is also visible in the results, as e.g. corporate symbolism was considered less important than brand building in a startup context. Going through the process of building a company and not concentrating on brand building from day one is a huge risk as mentioned by Bresciani & Eppler (2010). This is because many startups recognize too late that a clear brand strategy would have been a beneficial investment for them, because the cost of subsequent changes to the corporate identity in a later stage is too high. Concentrating on branding in an early stage would however help the startup build a foundation for the company where better promotion and user retention can be assured.

If startup entrepreneurs are still asking why corporate branding through a coherent corporate identity is important for them, the following quote ought to make it crystal clear. *“If Coca-Cola were to lose all of its production-related assets in a disaster, the company would survive. By contrast, if all consumers were to have a sudden lapse of memory and forget everything related to Coca-Cola, the company would go out of business”* (Design Council, 2012)

It is important for startups to remember that their branding efforts should not only be aimed at customers, but at all external stakeholders (media, angel investors, VCs, potential employees and partners etc.). If everything else fails these external stakeholders need to have a perception of the startup as being able to work through difficulties, and only by keeping their promise (corporate brand) to all external stakeholders can they survive in a difficult situation.

5.1.2. Corporate identity constructs are not equally important

Previous studies suggest that startups ought to use the same corporate identity models as MNC's in their brand building strategies. Witt & Rode (2005) and Rode & Vallaster (2005) calculated that all four corporate identity constructs have a positive affect on corporate identity also for startups. Kapferer (2004:147) even argued that a new brand should act like an old brand to succeed. Juntunen (2012), Spence & Essoussi (2010), Bresciani & Eppler, (2010) however questioned startups' ability to operate like MNC's in regards to brand building activities, but didn't study the matter further.

This study proved that startup entrepreneurs do not consider all corporate identity constructs equally important and as the entrepreneur is at the heart of startup brand building decisions (Krake, 2005), it can be claimed that startups do not concentrate on all corporate identity constructs equally either. Results of this study suggest that corporate culture and corporate communication are regarded more important than corporate symbolism and corporate behavior as seen by entrepreneurs. This might be due to the following reasons.

Firstly, as explained in the problem formulation, startups have very different lifecycles than big companies. They operate in a certain "window of opportunity" (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Krake, 2005; Boyle, 2003; Witt & Rode, 2005) where time needs to be right for the product/service, the technology it is based upon and on the people working for it. If a startup misses this window of opportunity, important employees might have left the organization, the technology might be outdated or stronger competitors might already have created a big obstacle for entering the market. Employees in a startup need to be aware of everything happening around them to be able to adapt as quickly as possible to any changes in the environment. It is elementary for a company with a fast paced lifecycle to have rapid and effective communication as it is logical to have everybody in the organization conscious of where the company is heading and why. It would therefore be understandable that corporate culture and corporate communication would be the two most important constructs for startup brand building purposes.

In MNC like e.g. Nike or Apple every employee does not need to be informed about all decisions made at top management level. These decisions and what they will result in within the company only needs to be communicated to the appropriate people the decisions affect. If e.g. all Nike employees were informed about all decisions made at

top management level, employees would never have any time to work as they would be called into meetings and would have to read memos constantly. MNCs also work at a slower pace where products might be planned months or even years before they are launched. Due to their limited resources startups do not have the same luxury, and due to the window of opportunity (discussed by Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Krake, 2005; Boyle, 2003; Witt & Rode, 2005), they need to be able to adapt quickly as stated above. This also requires effective communication throughout the organization as well as making sure everybody understands where the company is heading. The fact that startups are often small in size of employees only serves to highlight the importance of effective communications and shared values.

Secondly, communication brings people closer together in terms of knowing what their common aim is. In my experience as PR Lead in the biggest startup community in Finland I have found that startup entrepreneurs view the role of mission and vision statements differently from CEO's in big corporations. In startups mission and vision statements aren't needed as badly as in big corporations mainly because they are there to explain to the internal stakeholders the purpose and aim of the company. In startups such statements aren't needed because the distance between the founders and e.g. the fourth employee is very short and these people will most likely end up speaking and working together on a daily basis. It is therefore only essential that a vision and a mission for a startup exists, not that it has been scribbled down in two sentences somewhere. Having said that it is important to emphasize that variables of corporate culture in the questionnaire concerned mission and vision instead of physical mission and vision statements. E.g. cult1 = *Our mission and vision has to be clear to everybody in the organization.*

When discussing mission and vision statements, it is a completely different matter when a startup has grown to a company of e.g. 60 people because the distance between people will inevitably grow and the founder won't be able to work directly together with all employees anymore. This is when physical mission and vision statements are needed, when the founder needs something else than his/her voice to remind employees what they are working for and aiming towards. The main issue is startups can therefore be claimed to be that people within the organization share their values, beliefs and drive in order to effectively work towards a common goal, and communication is a strong part of this process.

In a interview conducted by Kim-Mai Cutler with CEO of Supercell (a 2 year old Finnish gaming startup holding the #1 and #2 slots on the world wide iPad grossing lists of games in November 2012) Ilkka Paananen, Paananen answered the following when discussing the importance of communication and stating that he sends out a company wide e-mail every morning to his staff. *“Funnily enough, it makes my job easier... I don’t need to think – what do I tell my people? Because they know it all anyway”* (Cutler, Kim-Mai, 2012). This statement highlights the importance of communication and a strong corporate culture in a startup context.

Thirdly, startups generally employ people not only because of a certain set of skills and knowledge, but because their ability to adapt and grow with the startup. It would be logical to assume that due to the fast pace of a startup’s lifecycle, entrepreneurs employ people based on their ability to learn new things and adapt. Findings indicate that entrepreneurs think it is important to support and empower employees, and this can obviously be done by giving employees constant feedback as well as discussing problems and challenges faced at the workplace. Corporate behavior can therefore also be considered less important than corporate communication for entrepreneurs as the close distance between them and their employees does not require expensive HR systems, rather communication can be used for support and development. It can be claimed that even though time is of essence to startups, entrepreneurs tend to seek out the best people for the job while simultaneously saving in expenses when not choosing the most educated person for the job. This is also supported by the recent TechCrunch interview of Ilkka Paananen who said that *“When you set up a company, the only thing – the only thing – you should care about is getting the best people,”* he said. *“From that, good things will happen.”* (Cutler, Kim-Mai, 2012)

Fourthly, communication and corporate culture might be considered significantly more important than corporate symbolism for startups because at an early stage entrepreneurs are more concerned with building a prototype of their service/product than displaying it. Having discussed with a few entrepreneurs who participated in the study, a point was made that the most important task a website has is to provide contact information of the people working at the company. Other design related issues such as business cards, slogans, logos and such might also be considered secondary at a very early stage of a startup’s existence as developing the product/service is the primary concern of the entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs finding communication and culture more important than symbolism might also stem from several reasons. Firstly, startups' limited financial resources that Abimbola (2001) points out can materialize in a scenario where none of the funders in a startup were graphically gifted and a designer would have to be employed or digital marketing agencies hired to fix the visuals of the startup. This might lead to expenditures on the startup's part, which entrepreneurs aren't ready to invest in given their R&D and other costs of building the product/service itself. It can be suggested that entrepreneurs' might choose to leave these kinds of issues to a later stage when funding has been granted and the product/service has been launched when there is more time and money available for marketing efforts.

Another issue, in my experience, when it comes to corporate symbolism in especially technology heavy startups is that entrepreneurs tend to be hesitant to give their project away to a designer. This might stem from entrepreneurs guiding their projects a little too closely and not being ready for the criticism they might receive from a designer. Another issue is that while a timetable is usually set for different projects, taking in a designer to look through plans is often considered taking too much time. Coders also tend to have routines and tend to think of designers as throwing a monkey wrench in the works i.e. hindering the work of the coders themselves with their visual ideas. This might also be a reason to why corporate design isn't regarded as important as corporate communication and corporate culture.

It is interesting to see that while Rode & Vallaster (2005) claim that startups suffer from unstructured communication infrastructures, it is actually just that which entrepreneurs seem to find important for brand building purposes. A question whether startups actually need structured communication infrastructures given their small size, can therefore be asked.

5.1.2.1. Risks of unequal importance

Thus far the reasons why the model of building a corporate brand through strengthening the corporate identity constructs (as suggested amongst others by Witt & Rode, 2005) cannot be applied on startups have been discussed. However, it is important to keep in mind that while entrepreneurs consider certain constructs of the corporate identity more important than others, this may have certain consequences.

Firstly, concentrating too heavily on only the two most important constructs of corporate identity, corporate culture and corporate communication can make it harder for startups to reach the early majority of customers when they need to reach them, as they won't have brand awareness through WoM (word-of-mouth) or corporate symbolism as they do not necessarily have websites, logos, contact info online etc. Startups become unreachable to the general public while trying to stay very visible only to investors and forgetting about the potential customers. Webpages are often the first contact a customer has to a company after hearing about the company from somewhere else. If a startup's website isn't convincing and informative enough the customer's interest in the company will fade and the entire company might be forgotten thus not leading to purchases or positive WoM. Future studies could concentrate on finding gaps in startups' websites on how they are provided by startups and how customers perceive them, and what kind of communication issues this might lead to.

Another negative issue that concentrating heavily on corporate communication and culture might lead to is communicating too much to both internal and external stakeholders. An example would be aiming to answer all requests and questions that the startup is faced with and constantly having team meetings to enhance the corporate culture of the startup. While it is in theory good to be transparent and informative, concentrating on over the top transparency might lead to it taking too much time out of other important issues such as developing the product/service. Having somebody constantly answering inquiries is not time-efficient in terms of product development, and can actually lead to high expectation (fast answers, answers to every e-mail) that the company cannot possibly meet, leading to unhappy customers. On the other hand feedback is the best and cheapest way for startups to gain knowledge about their offering and developing it towards a better version. Too transparent internal communication can also be hazardous as information overflow might confuse employees. Too controlled mission and visions might on their part contribute to restricting creativity and hindering the reach of bigger goals.

Neglecting corporate behavior in the long run can lead to startups losing important employees in the organization if employees aren't supported or empowered to a high enough degree when the company grows. However it is logical to assume that entrepreneurs would care for employee welfare also by keeping up a favorable corporate culture and thus managing employee relations and supporting employee development. For startups, allocating their resources on other things than e.g. HR

systems might be wise in the early stage, but if the company starts to grow radically at some point concentrating on corporate behavior becomes essential in order to keep the company efficient and employees happy.

Finally, a risk in putting too much effort into corporate communication and culture might lead to entrepreneurs thinking they have something newsworthy to announce to the press or internal stakeholders even though they actually have nothing new to come with. This was evident in some cases at the SLUSH conference in November 21-22, 2012, where various startups were distributing press releases to the media even though they didn't have anything newsworthy to announce. This leads to employees concentrating on formulating press releases or maybe even outsourcing this task, only to find that the press won't be writing about their release anyway. In the worst case the press and potential customers will be tired of these "news" and when something newsworthy actually happens people will not care anymore. It is therefore very important to not push for too much communication, but stay focused and only communicate news when it benefits the startup. This also minimizes risk of disappointing employees.

5.2. Summary of discussion

It is encouraging to find that entrepreneurs do realize the importance of brand building in startups, as their opinions and personalities are the driving force behind decisions made in startups (Krake, 2005; Rode & Vallaster, 2005). However, probably the most noticeable result of this study suggests that entrepreneurs do not understand they are building their corporate brand through everything they say, do and write. T-shirts with company logos are printed for events and business cards handed out. However entrepreneurs do not consider this building a corporate brand. All of the chats between the researcher and entrepreneurs during the making of this thesis also support the notion that entrepreneurs do not understand the concept of brand building and do not realize they are building their brand on a daily basis. The brand building activities in a startup can therefore be claimed to be unconscious.

The next step for entrepreneurs would be to open their eyes and understand that most of what they do, say and write is building the corporate brand. It is in general very difficult to influence matters that you are facilitating unconsciously, so when entrepreneurs realize that all their actions facilitate building their corporate brand in

one way or another, they can better influence the overall corporate brand of their startup.

The other point that this study suggests is that previous theory of strengthening the four corporate identity constructs to create a coherent corporate brand is not applicable as such in a startup context. This option is enforced by Juntunen (2012), Spence & Essoussi (2010) and Bresciani & Eppler (2010) who have contemplated upon the problem of applying MNC branding strategies in a startup context. Discussion of results in the previous section emphasized the fact that it is likely that the previously presented theories aren't applicable in a startup context due to startups' limited resources. Also getting back to the notion of startups operating in a "window of opportunity", startups really need to consider what they spend their time and money on. In a very early stage a startup might need to spend all the time and money on product development, but it is only logical that in different stages of the startup's lifecycle different things need to be focused on. In a very early stage startups need to concentrate on building their offering while it is later important to reach the target audience and investors to boost their sales, which would require more marketing and branding efforts than in the early stage.

Findings also suggest that limited resources might be a factor in deciding on what is important for entrepreneurs and what is not. Employing skilled people instead of "right minded people" and developing HR systems (corporate behavior) can be argued more expensive than training right minded people and supporting them by giving them feedback and having regular team meetings. Creating a visual design by hiring designers to create jingles, logos, websites and business cards can also be argued to be expensive and using money that could be spent on developing and producing the product/service. It is however important to point out the fact that was already mentioned in the methodology part of this paper that the sample of this study is early-stage tech-startup heavy, which might influence the results and thus the findings of this paper.

5.3. Implications

This study is implying that entrepreneurs do not know how to build a strong corporate brand even though they think it is important to do so, confirming Ojasalo *et al.* (2008:96) claim that entrepreneurs have "*narrow interpretation of what branding is*". Findings of this study also suggests that entrepreneurs might feel it important to focus on different corporate identity constructs in different stages of the startup's lifecycle.

In order to make sure their companies do not fail due to branding issues, every entrepreneur should make sure that at the early stage of their startup's lifecycle, an employee with good knowledge in marketing and branding is employed. This will help startups reach their target audience, and will let other employees in the organization concentrate on what they do best (e.g. coding, designing, producing). Only by having somebody in the organization who understands the concept of corporate branding and especially the importance of a coherent corporate identity is it possible to build a strong brand in the long run and reach the customers.

As stated earlier in the discussion part of this paper, if entrepreneurs were neglecting corporate behavior and corporate symbolism, reaching the early majority of customers might get extremely challenging due to the lack of awareness of the company. This is why it is warmly recommended for all entrepreneurs to make sure their companies are also reachable and even if they do not have a product or service on the market yet, it is important that the target audience will get an awareness of the startup by visiting webpages, meeting entrepreneurs in fairs and other events etc. This gives a company more credibility and creates trust in the customers that can in a later stage protect the offerings of the company (Abimbola, 2001).

Also entrepreneurs need to start controlling and influencing their corporate brand. This can only be done by gaining a basic understanding what branding is all about, and seeing that everything a company says, does and writes is branding. Also not reacting to certain issues (respond to e-mails, comment on failures etc.) can affect the external stakeholder's perception (corporate image) of a startup and thus affect the corporate brand.

As for implications for scholars, an important issue to mention is that entrepreneurs really do find corporate branding important for their startups, but are not able to consciously implement brand building activities in their daily routines because they do not realize what they are doing is building a corporate brand. When researchers ask them if they are "building a corporate brand" entrepreneurs would most likely answer "no" as they do not understand the meaning of brand building. This suggests that researchers in the future need to pay extra attention on formulating their questions so that they are easily communicated to entrepreneurs. An interesting question about whether miscommunication issues in previous studies might have distorted results in the past can be raised. This is however pure speculation, but is an issue worth mentioning.

For scholars this thesis also opens up new research possibilities that will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.5.

5.4. Conclusion

While previous studies showed that startups do not concentrate on brand building questions, whether they actually care about brand building and if previous research on brand building can be applied in a startup context, were raised. This led to the aim to investigate if entrepreneurs consider brand building as important for their companies, and to examine if specific corporate identity constructs are considered more important than others in a startup context from the entrepreneur's point of view.

Findings indicated that entrepreneurs do find brand building important, but do not consider all corporate identity constructs equally important with corporate culture and corporate communication being the most important constructs in a startup context. This suggests that 1) entrepreneurs do not understand how a corporate brand is built, and thus cannot influence it efficiently and 2) that previous research on corporate brand building models cannot be applied on startups, and more studies need to be conducted to work out a functioning model especially for startups.

What can be concluded from this study is that entrepreneurs do not seem to understand that all they do, say and write is building a corporate brand and realizing this would give them more power to influence and control the brand building process in their startup. Deeper understanding of how to build a strong corporate brand through a coherent corporate identity in a startup context needs thus to be gained both in the academic world and amongst entrepreneurs. By gaining this understanding scholars and entrepreneurs would learn how to build a successful venture by concentrating on branding, and less startups would fail due to failed branding attempts.

Hopefully this paper will have contributed to a greater understanding of internal brand building in startup companies, supported entrepreneurship from a branding perspective and helped entrepreneurs reading this paper create stronger corporate brands that can help them survive in the marketplace.

5.5. Limitations and future studies

Results of this study indicate as already stated that entrepreneurs are concerned with brand building, but that they are not aligning their corporate identities properly according to previous research. This does however not mean that previous research on brand building is necessarily applicable on startups or that it should be considered the “right thing to do”. It would be extremely interesting to see a study where the corporate identity constructs of successful and unsuccessful startups would be compared. This way the most important constructs in terms of success could be identified and strengthened accordingly to make sure that startups do not fail because of ignorance in the branding department.

This thesis was unintentionally somewhat limited to answers from early stage tech startups due to the databases used for the purpose of this study. This limitation was discussed already in the first chapter of this thesis and should be taken into consideration when reviewing the results presented here. It would therefore be of huge interest to study how the importance of corporate identity constructs vary in different phases of a startup’s lifecycle, not only at an early stage. If limited resources are a reason why entrepreneurs’ do not concentrate as much on corporate symbolism as they do on corporate communication, would this still be the case after the second funding round where the startup would have boosted financial assets? Also, would startups concentrate more on building a functioning website after the product/service was launched? Would the mission and vision statement be of more importance to startup entrepreneurs that was employing the 60th or 70th employee than if they were employing the fourth?

While this study aimed to be generalizable worldwide, limiting respondents from four databases restricts the pool of respondents somewhat. It would be interesting and theoretically of value to study if same answers were gained in other parts of the world in order to confirm the generalizability of the findings of this study in a wider scale. It would also enable comparisons between different regions when it comes to entrepreneurs’ opinions on corporate branding in startups.

SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Introduktion, problemområde och syfte

Under 2000-talet har vikten av att bygga ett varumärke (brand building) inom ramen för företag blivit större då man insett alla de förmåner varumärket kan föra med sig. Det är därmed väldigt viktigt att startup-företag leds av entreprenörer som inser mervärdet av att bygga på företagets varumärke. Entreprenörer bör också ha rätt inställning gentemot varumärkes byggande aktiviteter för att kunna skapa en stark företagskultur inom företaget. Startup-företag är dessutom i en väldigt bra situation varumärkesmässigt eftersom externa intressenter inte från tidigare har någon uppfattning om varumärket som kunde förvränga intressenternas uppfattning om det. Startup-företag kan därför kallas de enda företagen som egentligen kan bygga upp ett företagsvarumärke.

Entreprenörskap har bedömts som ett av de positiva inslagen i den nuvarande turbulenta ekonomin och har därför också fått ökad uppmärksamhet i medierna under de senaste åren i Finland. Samtidigt som arbetstagare blir avskedade i mobil- och pappersbranschen har en ny våg av entreprenörer, både avsiktliga men också oavsiktliga, tagit på sig att hålla ekonomin igång. Samtidigt har det blivit populärt att starta företag (Business Insider, 2011) möjligen med inspiration av framgångsrika finska startup-företag som Supercell och Rovio. "Entreprenörskap har blivit sexigt på många sätt", säger Clay Newbill, producent för ABC-kanalens program Shark Tank, som visar entreprenörer för fram sina drömmar till en panel av investerare" (Business Insider, 2011).

Varumärkesbyggande aktiviteter har studerats ingående ur olika perspektiv under de senaste åren, men medan entreprenörskap har vuxit i popularitet, har akademisk forskning om varumärkesbyggande fokuserat på etablerade multinationella företag (Abimbola & Kocak, 2007; Krake, 2005). Eftersom startup-företag har byggt på sina varumärken i årtionden och fenomenet inte på något sätt är nytt för entreprenörer, är bristen på forskning om startup-varumärken överraskande. Bristen på forskning inom varumärkesbyggande i startup-företag och särskilt startup-företagens interna varumärkesbyggande utgör en betydande lucka i litteratur om varumärkning, och tre huvudsakliga skäl till att det borde studeras mer ingående presenteras nedan.

För det första påstår tidigare studier att det fästs alltför lite uppmärksamhet på varumärkesarbetet i små företag i dagliga rutiner (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). För det

andra anses varumärkning ofta vara ett privilegium för stora företag och många konsumenter associerar varumärkesarbete med stora reklamutgifter (Merrilees, 2007). Startup-branding anses därför också ofta som obetydligt bland forskare. Det tredje och mest akuta skälet till att det är viktigt att studera varumärkesarbete i samband med startup-företag är överväldigande. Ett gap som inte nödvändigtvis finns i akademisk forskning, men i verkliga livet är att särskilt i utvecklade länder där befolkningen åldras snabbt, kommer flera jobb att behövas akut inom de kommande åren i och med behovet av en större sysselsättningsgrad. Europa är mitt i en annan ekonomisk kris där människor avskedas och fler arbetstillfällen behövs snarast möjligt. I en undersökning av Arbets- och Näringsministeriet (TEM, 2012) visade det sig att små tillväxtföretag i Finland anställer 50000 personer och dessa företags genomsnittliga tillväxt var ca 20 % per år. Det betyder procentuellt sett mera nya jobb inom tillväxtföretag än inom stora företag.

Ifall fler studier om startup-företags varumärkes byggande gjordes för att skapa större förståelse skulle inte bara nuvarande entreprenörer utan också blivande och potentiella företagare ha ett bättre stöd för sina varumärkes byggande aktiviteter, och färre nystartade företag skulle misslyckas i sin verksamhet på grund av varumärkesfrågor. Denna avhandlings roll för att hjälpa nystartade företag är att om företagarna hade bättre kännedom om varumärkes byggande, skulle deras företag eventuellt prestera bättre och fler startup skulle skapa ett positiv ROI och överleva på marknaden. Entreprenörer borde å sin sida följa med forskning om startup-företags varumärkning. För det första kan nämligen företagare som inte fäster uppmärksamhet till företagets varumärkesbyggande gå miste om sådana potentiella fördelar som varumärkning skulle kunna medföra, och för det andra agerar startups i allmänhet inom en relativt kort tidsram (Rode & Vallaster, 2005, Witt & Rode, 2005) med hård konkurrens, där tiden är ytterst viktig. Det är viktigt att inse att livscykeln för ett startup är annorlunda än livscykeln för ett multinationellt bolag. Månader för startups kan motsvara år för multinationella företag när det gäller t.ex. tillväxt och personalomsättning. Många entreprenörer inser för sent att en tydlig varumärkesstrategi skulle ha varit en bra investering för dem, eftersom kostnaderna för ändringar i företagets identitet i ett senare skede är alltför höga (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010).

Ett stort problem med tidigare studier om startup-företags varumärkning är att de har gjorts med utgångspunkt i de externa intressenternas perspektiv (kunder, medier, investerare etc.) inte med utgångspunkt i företagets interna intressenters och framför

allt inte entreprenörens perspektiv. Och ändå står entreprenören i centrum för företagets varumärkes byggande verksamhet (Krake, 2005). Balmer (2001) hävdar att "företagens varumärken föds ur företagets identiteter men lever i medvetandet hos grupper och individer". Detta påstående belyser vikten av sammanhängande och inriktad företagsvarumärkning, med fokus på företagets identitet, och betonar vikten av att studera de inre byggstenar som skapar ett varumärke i stället för att hela tiden koncentrera sig på företagets image. Det stämmer också fint ihop med det faktum att företagare måste ha rätt inställning till varumärkesbyggande (eftersom de utgör kärnan i företagets identitet) för att det faktiskt ska kunna genomföras framgångsrikt i ett startup.

Tidigare studier har visat att a) de olika byggstenarna som skapar företagsidentiteten påverkar företagets identitet positivt, men b) det fästs mycket lite uppmärksamhet på varumärkesbyggande aktiviteter i vardagen i småföretag. Därför är en berättigad fråga ifall företagare förstår vikten av internt varumärkesbyggande (även om de uppenbarligen inte agerar på det) och om ett startup-företags varumärke är uppbyggt på ett likadant sätt som multinationella företags där lika mycket tyngd läggs på alla byggstenar i företagsidentiteten?

Syftet med denna avhandling är att undersöka om entreprenörer anser varumärkesbyggande som viktigt för sina företag, och att undersöka om specifika byggstenar i företagsidentiteten (företagskulturen, företagets beteende, företagets symboler och företagskommunikationen) anses viktigare än andra i ett startup-sammanhang ur entreprenörernas synvinkel.

Presentation av tidigare forskning inom ämnet

Varumärkeslitteraturen härstammar från konsumentprodukter där endast produkter uppfattades ha varumärken och konsumenter skulle basera sina inköpsbeslut på produkternas egenskaper (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009). Under det senaste decenniet har företags- och produktvarumärken dock blivit beaktade som olika enheter i akademisk forskning (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009). Den strategiska inriktningen har ändrats från produkten till företaget (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Detta innebär däremot inte att företag och dess produkter inte skulle vara relaterade. Tvärtom utgör både företaget och dess produkter företagsvarumärket.

Hatch & Shoultz (2003) kännetecknar byggande av företagsvarumärket som aktiviteter som ignorerar produkttegenskaper och koncentrerar sig på en strategisk värdegrund.

Även de människor som kommunicerar dessa värden står i en mycket mer central roll i företagens varumärkesbyggande än vad gäller produktvarumärket. Harris & De Chernatony (2001) menar att arbetstagarnas roll har förändrats med ändrad fokus på företaget så att anställda har vuxit fram som ambassadörer för ett varumärke. Företagsvarumärket fokuserar dessutom på nätverk baserade på en större sammansättning av kommunikation än den traditionella marknadsmixen och företaget utövar och kommunicerar det genom all kommunikation istället för att bara satsa på marknadskommunikationsmixen (PR, reklam, säljfrämjande åtgärder, personlig försäljning och direkt marknadsföring) (Balmer & Gray, 2003).

En annan viktig fråga när man jämför företags- och produktvarumärken är att de centrala uppfattningarna om och värderingar av företagsvarumärken härstammar från företagare, grundare, chefer och hela organisationen medan kärnvärden i ett produktvarumärke främst skapas på marknadsavdelningen (Balmer & Gray, 2003). Ett företagsvarumärke kan därför påstås representera ett mer genomskinligt sätt att visa ett företags värden och därför troligen tilltalar konsumenten bättre än produktvarumärket.

Konstruerad av de definitioner som angivits ovan, är den första utgångspunkten för denna avhandling att företagsvarumärket är en dynamisk, holistisk, strategisk process som har sitt ursprung internt i företaget, som börjar med definitionen av grundläggande värderingar och övertygelser i bolaget, dess interna aktiviteter, sammanhållningen mellan önskad och levererade kommunikation (externt) till intressenter och hur företaget reagerar på konsumenternas svar (av de kommunicerade värden). Processen innehåller allt från att skapa en strategi till att genomföra och omdefiniera den enligt avsiktliga och icke-avsiktliga händelser.

När det gäller företagsidentiteter kan det hävdas att förhållandet mellan företagens identiteter och företagsvarumärken kan vara mycket komplicerade, men den grundläggande skillnaden mellan de två är att "medan företagsidentitetskonceptet är tillämpligt på alla företag och organisationer, är företagsvarumärket inte det" (Balmer & Gray, 2003). Balmer (2010) argumenterar för att "företagsvarumärken föds ur företagens identiteter men lever i medvetandet hos grupper och individer". Denna definition kan? anses passande för att beskriva processen för att skapa ett företagsvarumärke och beskriver väl förhållandet mellan företagens varumärken och företagsidentiteter. Utan företagsidentiteter skulle det inte finnas något för en konsument att skapa känslor för.

Företagsidentiteten i ett företag är uppbyggd av fyra byggstenar eller konstrukter - företagskultur, företagets beteende, företagssymbolik och företagskommunikation (Rode & Vallaster, 2005; Witt & Rode, 2005). Företagsidentiteten kan beskrivas som att svara på frågan "Vem är vi?". Vallaster (2004) förklarar att för att kunna kommunicera företagets värderingar till dess intressenter är alla anställda tvungna att utveckla en gemensam förståelse för vad företaget står för samt bygga gemensamma kognitiva representationer, förfaranden och målsättningar. Entreprenörer bör därför kommunicera företagsvarumärkets syfte och värderingar till anställda tydligt för att "inspirera dem och hjälpa dem att förstå hur deras roller relaterar till varumärket" (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006) påpekar att företagsidentiteten är strategiskt planerade uttryck som kommuniceras med ledtrådar som ges av företagets beteende och symboler. Företagsidentiteten kan därmed påstås leda ett företags varumärke och därmed också alla beslut som leder till marknadsföringsåtgärder.

Företagskulturen innehåller kärnan i företagsidentiteten, missionen (Rode & Vallaster, 2005, Witt & Rode, 2005) och visionen (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001) som drivkrafter i positioneringen av varumärket. Det är oerhört viktigt för chefer att sätta upp tydliga uppdrag och visioner för att bekräfta sammanhängande mål bland anställda och stödja ett visst beteende hos dem (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Om kärnvärdena hos företaget inte kommuniceras tydligt nog för dess interna intressenter och om företagskulturen inte är i linje med företagsidentiteten kan inkonsekvent beteende förekomma och det påverkar direkt företagets image på ett oönskat sätt.

Begreppet företagsbeteende avser de åtgärder ett företag vidtar vid HR-processer, förvaltningen av dem och deras stöd för att stärka företagsidentiteten (Rode & Vallaster, 2005, Witt & Rode, 2005). I grund och botten omfattar processen att rekrytera medarbetare samt stödja dem och hjälpa dem att skapa lämpliga relationer sinsemellan och till andra intressenter. Humankapital ses som en viktig varumärkesbyggare i ett företag, och personalens beteende bör därför återspegla de värderingar som företaget VAD?(Juntunen, 2012).

Företagsymbolik handlar om alla visuella hjälpmedel och symboler ett företag använder i sina varumärkningsaktiviteter (Rode & Vallaster, 2005, Witt & Rode, 2005, Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006). Detta kan inkludera logotyper och design, men också gå så långt som till symboler i form av program och personer. De gyllene bågarna som står för MacDonalds är en välkänd logotyp och omedelbart tänker man på

restaurangkedjan. Detsamma gäller för Nike's "swoosh"-logotyp och snäckana som används av Shell. Men som Aaker (1996) påpekar, kan personer också bli symboler för ett företag. Ett bra och aktuellt exempel på detta är Peter Vesterbacka (CMO av Rovio Entertainment) som har blivit företagsvarumärket för Rovio Entertainment.

Företagskommunikation kan hävdas vara den mest komplexa konstruktionen inom företagsidentiteten eftersom den har en interaktiv relation till alla andra byggstenar (kultur, beteende och symbolik) samt till alla berörda parter (Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Detta gör också kommunikationen till det mest dynamiska konceptet att bygga en företagsidentitet på. Ett företag kan t.ex. ha fantastisk potential i företagssymboliken, men om den inte kommuniceras till de anställda och andra interna intressenter kan den aldrig bli stark eftersom den begränsas till de människor som skapade symbolerna och inte överförs till de människor som borde kunna använda symbolerna. Utan kommunikation kan ingen av de andra delkonstruktionerna inom företagsidentiteten användas till sin fulla potential.

Hypoteserna som konstrueras och testas i resultatkapitlet är följande:

Delkonstruktion		Hypoteser
Företags-varumärkes byggande	H1	<i>Entreprenörer anser företagets varumärkesbyggande oviktigt</i>
	H2	<i>Alla företagsidentitetskonstrukt anses lika viktiga</i>
Företagskultur	H2 _A	<i>Företagskulturen anses lika viktig som alla andra konstrukt</i>
Företagsbeteende	H2 _B	<i>Företagsbeteendet anses lika viktigt som alla andra konstrukt</i>
Företagssymbolik	H2 _C	<i>Företagssymboliken anses lika viktig som alla andra konstrukt</i>
Företags-kommunikation	H2 _D	<i>Företagskommunikation anses lika viktig som alla andra konstrukt</i>

Val av metoder, material och en redogörelse för genomförandet av undersökningen

Företagsidentitetens byggstenar som används i denna avhandling har en positiv inverkan på företagets identitet. Denna avhandling undersöker denna inverkan i ett nytt sammanhang (startup-företagssammanhang), skapar en ny teori och syftar till att bekräfta och generalisera resultaten, det vill säga syftar till att skapa trovärdiga uppgifter som kan presenteras i företagsvärlden. En deduktiv ansats med en kvantitativ

metod tillämpas därför i detta fall och anses vara den mest lämpliga metoden för syftet. Silverman (2006) påpekar att det ofta används en enkät för att samla in data i en deduktiv ansats eftersom mätbara (kvantitativa) uppgifter krävs för genomförandet av studien.

En elektronisk enkät med 22 frågor som används för denna studie skickades ut till 823 potentiella respondenter via Google Forms varefter den överfördes från ett automatiskt Excel-ark till SPSS. Respondenterna ombads att reservera 5 minuter för att besvara enkäten och även om inget pris erbjöds, lovades alla respondenter resultaten av studien ifall de lämnade sin e-postadress i den sista och enda frivilliga rutan i frågeformuläret (55 respondenter, 49, 5%, ville ha resultaten).

En pilotenkät skickades ut till tre entreprenörer den 19 oktober. Responsen från dessa entreprenörer var positiv och därmed fattades ett beslut att inte justera några frågor. Eftersom de tre företagen hade startup-företag som passar kriterierna för denna avhandling, har deras svar räknats in i den totala datainsamlingen.

Data samlades in från fyra databaser under en vecka mellan 22 oktober och 29 oktober 2012 och den totala mängden användbara svar var 109. Även om respondenterna förväntades ha sitt ursprung i Ryssland eller de baltiska, nordiska eller arabiska länderna i Mellanöstern (enligt databaserna de kontaktades igenom), kom det svar också från entreprenörer i Kina, Tyskland, Italien, Portugal och Spanien. I studien ombads entreprenörer poängsätta viktigheten av varumärkesarbete i startup-företag på skalan 1-7. Hela listan på frågorna i enkäten finns i Appendix 1 s 96.

Resultatredovisning

Syftet med studien var att undersöka om företagen anser varumärkesbyggande som viktigt för deras företag. H1 påstod att entreprenörer anser företagets varumärkesbyggande oviktigt, eftersom tidigare forskning (Rode & Vallaster, 2005, Merrilees, 2007, Krake, 2005, Bresciani & Eppler, 2010, Ojasalo et al, 2008) har påstått att entreprenörerna inte vet hur man bygger ett företagsvarumärke. Även om man kunde anta att H1 skulle bekräftas, förkastades hypotesen. Medelvärdet av varumärkes byggande konstruktionen var 5,83 som är högre än den kritiska punkten 3,5, och därför kan varumärkesbyggande aktiviteter sägas vara viktiga för entreprenörer med startup-företag.

Det andra syftet med denna avhandling var att undersöka om särskilda företagsidentitetskonstruktioner (företagskultur, företagsbeteende, företagssymbolik och företagskommunikation) anses viktigare än andra i ett startup-sammanhang ur företagarens synvinkel. H2-hypoteserna(A–D) konstruerades för att undersöka denna fråga. Ingen av H2-hypoteserna konstruerade för denna studie kunde bekräftas vilket betyder att startup-företag inte följer samma strukturer som multinationella företag när det gäller att bygga upp företagsidentiteten. Alla delmoment i företagsidentiteten anses alltså inte jämligt viktiga av entreprenörer i startup-företag.

Slutsatser

De tydligaste resultaten av denna studie tyder på att företagare inte förstår att de bygger på sina företagsvarumärken genom allt de säger, gör och skriver. T-shirts med företagslogotyper printas för evenemang och visitkort delas ut, men entreprenörerna inser inte att detta är en aktivitet som bygger på företagsvarumärket. Merrilees (2007), Krake (2005) och Ojasalo et al. (2008) som kommer till slutsatsen att startup-företagare inte har kunskap om att bygga ett företagsvarumärke, har rätt i sina uttalanden. Ett annat bevis på detta är att medan varumärkesbyggande ansågs viktigt i studien nådde endast företagskultur samma viktighetsnivå som varumärkesbyggande i allmänhet. Alla andra delkonstruktioner ansågs mindre viktiga även om de i själva verket är essentiella byggstenar i varumärkesbyggandet. Ojasalos m.fl., (2008: 96) uttalande att startup-företag i allmänhet har en "snäv tolkning av vad varumärkning är" kan därför stödjas av denna studie. Alla diskussioner med företagare under arbetet med denna avhandling stöder också uppfattningen att företagare inte förstår begreppet varumärkesbyggande och inte inser att de bygger sitt varumärke på daglig basis, även om det görs omedvetet.

Det är dock glädjande att märka att entreprenörer faktiskt inser vikten av varumärkesbyggande i startup-förteag, eftersom deras åsikter och personligheter är den drivande kraften bakom beslut som fattas i startup-företagen (Krake, 2005, Rode & Vallaster, 2005). Nästa steg är att förstå att det mesta av vad de gör är att bygga företagets varumärke. Det är i allmänhet mycket svårt att påverka beslut som fattas omedvetet, så när entreprenörer inser att allt de gör, säger och skriver bygger deras varumärke på ett eller annat sätt, kan de bättre påverka det övergripande varumärket för deras startup-företag.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd. .
- Abimbola. (2001). Branding as a Competitive Strategy for Demand Management in SMEs. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship* , 3 (2), 97-106.
- Abimbola, T., & Kocak, A. (2007). Brand, organization identity and reputation: SMEs as expressive organizations. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* , 10 (4), 416-427.
- Alessandri, S. W. (2001). Modeling corporate identity: a concept explication and theoretical explanation. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* , 6 (4), 173 - 182 .
- Aluesanommat. (2010, April 21). *Aluesanommat*. Retrieved October 21, 2012 from Kymmenen maan kansalaiset ovat Suomessa paremmin työllistettyjä kuin suomalaiset: <http://www.aluesanommat.fi/sahkeet.php?id=33>
- Anderson. (2012b, August 23). *Arctic Startup*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Startup Sauna Heats The Coals For Fall 2012 Batch, Applications Open: <http://www.arcticstartup.com/2012/08/23/startup-sauna-fall-2012-application>
- Andersson, G. (2012a, August 9). *Arctic Startup*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Wired's 'Europe's 100 Hottest Startups' Picks Out Helsinki, Stockholm, Moscow: <http://www.arcticstartup.com/2012/08/09/wireds-europes-100-hottest-startups-picks-out-helsinki-stockholm-moscow>
- Arabnet. (2012, - -). *Arabnet Developers Program*. Retrieved October 25, 2012 from Startup Database: <http://startupdb.arabnet.me/>
- Arctic Startup. (2012, - -). *Arctic Startup*. Retrieved October 25, 2012 from Startups: <http://www.arcticstartup.com/companies>
- Balmer, J. M. (2001). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing - Seeing through the fog. *Journal of Marketing* , 35 (3/4), 248-291.
- Balmer, J. M. (2010). Explicating corporate brands and their management: Reflections and directions from 1995 . *Journal of Brand Management* , 18, 180-196.
- Balmer, J. M., & Gray, E. R. (2003). Corporate brands: what are they? What of them? *European Journal of Marketing* , 37 (7), 972-997.
- Balmer, J., & Soenen, G. (1997). Operationalising the concept of corporate identity: articulating the corporate identity mix and the corporate identity management mix' . *University of Strathclyde International Centre for Corporate Identity Studies* , -.

- Blank, S. (2011, September 15). *Steve Blank*. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from <http://steveblank.com/2011/09/15/the-pay-it-forward-culture/>
- Boyle, E. (2003). A Study of entrepreneurial brand building in the manufacturing sector in the UK. *Journal of Product and Brand Management* , 12 (3), 79-93.
- Bresciani, S., & Eppler, M. J. (2010). Brand new ventures? Insights on start-ups' branding practises. *Journal of Product and Brand Management* , 19 (5), 356-366.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2007). *Business Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Business Insider. (2011, December 19). Retrieved December 5, 2012 from 10 Startup Trends That Will Be Huge In 2012: <http://www.businessinsider.com/10-hot-startup-trends-for-2012-2011-12>
- Churchill, G. A., & Brown, T. J. (2004). *Basic Marketing Research, 5th edition* (5th edition ed.). -: Thomson South-Western .
- City of Helsinki. (2010, February 11). *Helsinki*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Helsinki-Uusimaa Region awarded the European Entrepreneurial Region 2012: <http://www.helsinki.eu/index.php?id=809>
- Coca-Cola. (2011). *Coca-Cola Homepage*. Retrieved September 23, 2012 from <http://www.coca-cola.com/en/index.html>
- Cornelissen, J., Christensen, L. T., & Kinuthia, K. (2012). Corporate brands and identity: developing stronger theory and a call for shifting the debate. *European Journal of Marketing* , 46 (7), 1093 - 1102 .
- Cortina, J. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications. . *Journal of Applied Psychology*98-104 .
- CustomerSat. (2005, - -). *10 Tips to Improve Your Surveys*. Retrieved October 30, 2012 from -: http://marketing.markettools.com/rs/markettools/images/zoomerang_wp_ten_tips.pdf
- Cutler, Kim-Mai. (2012, November 21). *TechCrunch*. Retrieved December 10, 2012 from Why Culture Matters: Supercell's Calculated Path To The Top Of The App Store: <http://techcrunch.com/2012/11/21/supercell/>
- Deshpande, R. (1983). "Paradigms Lost": On Theory and Method in Research in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing* , 40, 101-110.

- Design Council (2012, --) *The power of branding: a practical guide*. Retrieved January 3, 2013 from <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources-and-events/business-and-public-sector/guides/the-power-of-branding/>
- Engineering Statistics Handbook. (2012, - -). *Engineeering Statistics Handbook*. Retrieved November 5, 2012 from Measures of Skewness and Kurtosis: <http://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/handbook/eda/section3/eda35b.htm>
- EveryCulture. (2012, - -). *Countries and their cultures*. Retrieved October 30, 2012 from Arabs - Religion: <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Arabs-Religion.html>
- Forbes. (2012, May 22). *Forbes*. Retrieved September 30, 2012 from Apple Tops Ranking Of World's Most Valuable Brands: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/eric savitz/2012/05/22/apple-tops-ranking-of-worlds-most-valuable-brands/>
- Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research* , 24 (3), 343-373.
- Gage, D. (2012, September 19). *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved November 16, 2012 from The Venture Capital Secret: 3 Out of 4 Start-Ups Fail: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443720204578004980476429190.html>
- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, Z. (2010). Normality Tests for Statistical Analysis: A Guide for Non-Statisticians. *Int J Endocrinol Metab.* , 10 (2), 486-489.
- Grönroos, C. (2010). *Service Management and Marketing (Third Edition ed.)*. John Wiley&Sons, Ltd.
- Grønsund, T. (2012, - -). *The Metodologist*. Retrieved October 25, 2012 from Norwegian Startups: <http://torgronsund.com/norwegianstartups/>
- Gróf, A. (2001). Communication in the creation of corporate values. *An International Journal* , 6 (4), 193-198.
- H&M. (2012). *H&M Homepage*. Retrieved September 29, 2012 from <http://about.hm.com/content/hm/AboutSection/en/About/Facts-About-HM/People-and-History/Our-Employees.html>
- Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th edition ed.). -: Prentice Hall.
- Hajinformation. (2012, - -). *Ministry of Hajj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. Retrieved October 30, 2012 from Hijri Dates for 1433H Hajj and Umrah seasons:: <http://www.hajinformation.com/Hajjdates2012.htm>

- Harris, F., & de Chernatony, L. (2001). Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing* , 35 (3), 441 - 456.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2003). Bringing the corporation into corporate branding. *European Journal of Marketing* , 37 (7/8), 1041-1064.
- Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (1997). Relations between organizational culture, identity and image. *European journal of Marketing* , 31 (5), 356-365.
- Helsingin Sanomat. (2012, March 9). *Helsingin Sanomat*. Retrieved October 2, 2012 from INTERNATIONAL EDITION - HOME:
<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Halonen+to+MTV3+R%C3%A4ty+case+hurts+reputation+of+labour+union+movement/1329103586096>
- Hitlin, S. (2003). Values as the core of personal identity: Drawing theories between two links of self. *Social Psychology quarterly* , 66 (3), 118-137.
- Holton, E. F., Bates, R. A., Bookter, A. I., & Yamkovenko, B. (2007). Convergent and Divergent Validity of the Learning Transfer System Inventory. *HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY* , 18 (3).
- Horan, G. (2009). Exploring Management Perspectives of Branding in Service SMEs. *Journal of Service Marketing* , 25 (2), 144-121.
- Hurmola, J. (2012, August 7). Aaltoes Summer of startups demo day 2012. *Key note speak* . Otaniemi, Espoo, Finland: AaltoES.
- Inskrip, I. (2004). Corporate branding for small to medium-sized businesses — A missed opportunity or an indulgence? . *BRAND MANAGEMENT* , 11 (5), 358–365.
- Jaakkola, J. (2012, August 28). *YLE Uutiset*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Startup-yrityksiä nousee kiihtyvää vauhtia - myös rahoitusta löytyy:
http://yle.fi/uutiset/startup-yrityksia_nousee_kiihtyvaa_vauhtia_-_myos_rahoitusta_loytyy/6273094
- Jensen, M. B., & Beckmann, S. C. (2009). Determinants of innovation and creativity in corporate branding: Findings from Denmark. *Brand Management* , 16 (7), 468-479.
- Jolla Mobile. (2012, October 2). *Jolla Mobile Twitter*. Retrieved October 2, 2012 from <https://twitter.com/JollaMobile>
- Juntunen, M. (2012). Co-creating corporate Brands in start-ups. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* , 30 (2), 230-249.
- Kapflerer, J.-N. (2004). *The New Strategic Brand Management* (Third ed.). London: Les Editions d'organisation.

- Karaosmanoglu, E., & Melewar, T. (2006). Corporate communications, identity and image: A research agenda . *Brand Management* , 14 (1), 196-204.
- Khan, H., & Ede, D. (2009). How do not-for-profit SMEs attempt to develop a strong brand in an increasingly saturated market? *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* , 16 (2), 335-354.
- King, S. (1991). Brand building in the 1990's. *The journal of consumer marketing* , 8 (4), 43-52.
- Kline, Paul (1994) *An Easy Guide to Factor Analysis*. London: Rutledge
- Krake, F. (2005). Successful Brand management in SMEs: a new theory and practical hints. *Journal of Product and Brands Management* , 14 (4), 228-238.
- Lambert, A. (1989). CORPORATE IDENTITY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT. *Facilities* , 7 (12), 7-12.
- Li, J. (2008). Ethical Challenges in Participant observation: A reflection on ethnographic fieldwork. *The Qualitative report*, Vol. 13, No. 1 , 100-115.
- Lund Research. (2012, - -). *Statistics Laerd*. Retrieved November 5, 2012 from Testing for Normality using SPSS: <https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/testing-for-normality-using-spss-statistics.php>
- MacWilliams, j. (2010, September 13). *Atlanta Journal consituion*. Retrieved September 23, 2012 from Coke Zero becomes a hero for Coca-Cola Co.: <http://www.ajc.com/news/business/coke-zero-becomes-a-hero-for-coca-cola-co/nQkHh/>
- Merrilees, B. (2007). A Theory of Brand-led SME new venture development. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* , 10 (4), 4013-415.
- Moingeon, B., & Ramanantsoa, B. (1997). Understanding corporate identity: the French school of thought. *European Journal of Marketing* , , 31 (5/6), 383-395.
- MTV3. (2012, June 18). Retrieved September 5, 2012 from MTV3 ja Slush-hanke tähtäävät yhdessä uusien menestysyritysten luomiseen: <http://www.mtv3.fi/uutiset/kotimaa.shtml/mtv3-ja-slush-hanke-tahtaavat-yhdessa-uusien-menestysyritysten-luomiseen/2012/07/1582346>
- Muzellec, l., & Lambkin, M. C. (2009). Corporate branding and Brand architecture: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Marketing Theory* , 9 (1), 39-54.
- Ojasalo, J., Nätti, S., & Olkkonen, R. (2008). Brand building in software SMEs: an empirical study . *Journal of Product & Brand Management* , 17 (2), 92-107.

- Ormerod, R. J. (2010). Rational inference: deductive, inductive and probabilistic thinking . *The Journal of the Operational Research Society* , 61 (8), 1207-1223.
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS Survival Manual* (4th edition ed.). Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd Edition ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Philips, M. (2012, August 22). *Bloomberg Businessweek*. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from Don't Get Too Excited About Russia's WTO Deal: <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-08-22/dont-get-too-excited-about-russias-wto-deal>
- Red Herring. (2012). *Red Herring*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Europe 2012 Top 100: <http://www.redherring.com/red-herring-europe/europe-2012-top-100/>
- Research Methods Knowledge Base. (2012, - -). *Social Research Methods*. Retrieved November 6, 2012 from Research Methods Knowledge Base: http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/stat_t.php
- Rode, V., & Vallaster, C. (2005). Corporate Branding for Startups. *Corporate Reputation Review* , 8 (5), 121-135.
- Roll, M. (2004, April 12). *Understanding the Purpose of a Corporate Branding Strategy* . Retrieved December 8, 2012 from Brand Channel: http://www.brandchannel.com/brand_speak.asp?bs_id=81
- Saelensminde, & Bengt. (2012, July 21). *Moneyweek*. Retrieved October 2, 2012 from How can you value thin air?: <http://www.moneyweek.com/investment-advice/how-to-invest/strategies/right-side-how-can-you-value-goodwill-59719>
- Schultz, M., Antorini, Y. M., & Csaba, F. F. (2005). *Towards a second wave of corporate branding*. Koge: Copenhagen Business School press books international.
- Shapiro, S., & Wilk, M. B. (1965). An Analysis of Variance Test for Normality (Complete Samples). *Biometrika* , 52 (3/4), 591-611.
- Shenin, E. H. (2009). *The corporate culture survival guide* (Vol. New and revised). San Francisco: Jossey-Baas.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting qualitative Data: Analyzing talk, text and data*. London: Sage Publications.
- Simoaes, C., & Dibb, S. (2001). Rethinking the brand concept: new brand orientation . *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* , 6 (4), 217-224.

- Sitra. (2011, September 5). Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Start-up guru Steve Blank: Suomesta kasvuyritysten keskittymä:
<http://www.sitra.fi/uutiset/2011/start-guru-steve-blank-suomesta-kasvuyritysten-keskittyma>
- Spence, M., & Essoussi, L. H. (2010). SME Brand Building and management: an exploratory study. *Journal of Marketing* , 44 (7/8), 1037-1054.
- Startup America Partnership. (2012). Retrieved september 17, 2012 from Startup 'Pay-It-Forward' Culture Drives Innovation: <http://www.s.co/startup-pay-it-forward-culture-drives-innovation>
- Startup Sauna. (2012, - -). *Startup Sauna*. Retrieved October 25, 2012 from Featured Startups: <http://startupsauna.com/en/startups/#featured>
- Startup-Säätiö. (2012, - -). *Startup-Säätiö*. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from <http://startup-saatio.fi/>
- Steenhaut, S., & van Kenhove, P. (2006). An Empirical Investigation of the Relationships among a Consumer's Personal Values, Ethical Ideology and Ethical Beliefs. *Journal of Business Ethics* , 64, 137-155.
- Stephens, M. (1974). EDF Statistics for Goodness of Fit and Some Comparisons. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* , 69 (347), 730-737.
- Talouselämä. (2012, March 5). *Talouselämä AKT*. Retrieved November 11, 2012 from AKT:n Rätty A-Studiossa: Ahde-kohu vahingoittanut koko ay-liikettä:
<http://uutisvirta.fi/uutiset/3587141-aktn-raty-ahde-kohu-vahingoittanut-koko-ay-liiketta?show=1>
- TEM. (2012, May 15). *Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö*. Retrieved November 15, 2012 from Kasvuyrityskatsaus 2012: <http://www.tem.fi/julkaisut?C=98033&xmid=4807>
- Tujillejas, B., & Cuadrado, M. (2011). A Model of Determinant Attributes of Corporate Image in cultural services. *Non-profit and Colontary Sector Quarterly* , 40 (2), 356-376.
- Ulkoasiainministeriö. (2012, March 14). *Ulkoasiainministeriö*. Retrieved September 5, 2012 from Ministeri Stubb avasi NASDAQ-markkinapaikan kaupankäynnin New Yorkissa:
<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=244291&nodeid=15261&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>
- Vallaster, C. (2004). Internal Brand Building in multicultural organizations: a roadmap towards action research. *Journal of Qualitative Market Research* , 7 (2), 100-113.

- Valtiovarainministeriö. (2012, December 20). *Vuodenvaihteen muutoksia VM:n hallinnonalalla*. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from Tiedotteet: http://www.vm.fi/vm/fi/03_tiedotteet_ja_puheet/01_tiedotteet/20121220Vuoden/name.jsp
- van Riel, C. B., & Balmer, J. M. (2001). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing - Seeing through the fog. *European Journal of Marketing* , 35 (3/4), 248 - 291.
- Vinten, G. (1999). Corporate communications in small- and medium-sized enterprises. *Industrial and Commercial Training* , 31 (3), 112-119.
- Witt, P., & Rode, V. (2005). Corporate brand building in startups. *Journal of Enterprising culture* , 13 (3), 273-294.
- WTO. (2012, August 20). *Russian Federation*. Retrieved December 28, 2012 from http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/acc_e/a1_russie_e.htm
- Y-Combinator. (2011, December 17). *SWOMBAT*. Retrieved September 7, 2012 from What is a startup?: <http://swombat.com/2011/12/17/what-is-a-startup>
- YLE. (2012, August 28). *YLE uutiset*. Retrieved November 22, 2012 from Startup-yrityksiä nousee kiihtyvää vauhtia - myös rahoitusta löytyy: http://yle.fi/uutiset/startup-yrityksia_nousee_kiihtyvaa_vauhtia_-_myos_rahoitusta_loytyy/6273094

APPENDIX 1 FULL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to measure your opinion as an entrepreneur/ manager of brand building activities. Please answer the questions according to your personal opinion of how things should be done, not according to how they are done in your company.

This questionnaire is anonymous and in no section are you required to give out your name or the name of your company.

The results and findings of this questionnaire are going to be used for a master of economics' thesis at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland. The thesis concentrates on company-internal brand building in startup companies.

1. Are you the entrepreneur/managers of your company? YES NO

2. What is the country of origin of your company?

VISIBLE TO RESPONDENT			
<i>Construct</i>	<i>Question (scalable questions 1-7)</i>	<i>Derived from</i>	<i>Variable</i>
Corporate brand building	1. If the branding strategy on our company was enhanced we could gain financial benefits as well as distinguish ourselves from competitors	Boyle (2001) Rode & Vallaster (2005)	<i>Bra1</i>
	2. Branding should be considered an important element in our company	Kapferer (2004), Aaker (1996)	<i>Bra2</i>
	3. It is important to consider how different stakeholders feel about our company	Kapferer (2004), Aaker (1996)	<i>Bra3</i>
Corporate culture	4. Our mission and vision has to be clear to everybody in the organization	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult1</i>
	5. Our company has to operate based on our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony	<i>Cult2</i>

		(2001)	
	6. Decisions made in our company have to be based on our defined mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult3</i>
	7. Everybody in the organization needs to follow our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005), Witt & Rode, (2005), Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Cult4</i>
	8. Everybody in our organization have to have common values and beliefs	Aaker (1996)	<i>Cult5</i>
	9. Everybody in the organization needs to operate according to our shared values and beliefs	Aaker (1996)	<i>Cult6</i>
Corporate behavior	10. All new employees are recruited based on agreed values and competences, as well as against agreed business targets	Vinten (1999), Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Beh1</i>
	11. New employees are selected more according to how their mentality and values fit in the organization than by their specific set of skills	Vinten (1999), Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Beh2</i>
	12. Employees are highly empowered to act on behalf of the company	Harris & DeChernatony (2001)	<i>Beh3</i>
	13. High focus should be placed on supporting and developing personnel according to company goals	Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006)	<i>Beh4</i>
	14. It is important that people in our organization have appropriate and good relationships to each other	Hatch & Schultz (2003)	<i>Beh5</i>
Corporate symbolism	15. The most important function of our website and logo are to reflect who we are and what we do	Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006)	<i>Symb1</i>
	16. Our visual presentation (videos, presentation slides etc.) should be coherent with our mission and vision	Rode & Vallaster (2005)	<i>Symb2</i>
	17. Our office interior/merchandize should be coherent with who we are	Karaosmanoglu & Melewar (2006)	<i>Symb3</i>
Corporate communication	18. It is important that all communication (e-mail, website, phone conversations, meetings etc.) from the company towards external stakeholders is coherent	Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Com1</i>

19.	It is important that managers and employees get feedback on a regular basis	Harris & de Chernatony (2001) Gróf (2001)	<i>Com2</i>
20.	It is important that everybody in the organization participates in team meetings on a regular basis	Harris & de Chernatony (2001) Gróf (2001)	<i>Com3</i>
21.	Horizontal and vertical communication in our organization should be considered equally important	Gróf (2001)	<i>Com4</i>
22.	Internal and external communication in our organization should be considered equally important	Harris & de Chernatony (2001)	<i>Com5</i>

APPENDIX 2 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS**What is the country of origin of your company**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
China	1	,9	,9	,9
Denmark	11	10,1	10,1	11,0
Egypt	5	4,6	4,6	15,6
Estonia	4	3,7	3,7	19,3
Finland	24	22,0	22,0	41,3
Germany	1	,9	,9	42,2
Iceland	4	3,7	3,7	45,9
Italy	1	,9	,9	46,8
Jordan	1	,9	,9	47,7
Kuwait	1	,9	,9	48,6
Latvia	2	1,8	1,8	50,5
Valid Lebanon	1	,9	,9	51,4
Lithuania	3	2,8	2,8	54,1
Norway	20	18,3	18,3	72,5
Palestine	1	,9	,9	73,4
Poland	1	,9	,9	74,3
Portugal	1	,9	,9	75,2
Russia	4	3,7	3,7	78,9
Spain	1	,9	,9	79,8
Sweden	19	17,4	17,4	97,2
UAE	1	,9	,9	98,2
USA	2	1,8	1,8	100,0
Total	109	100,0	100,0	

APPENDIX 3 SKEWNESS & KURTOSIS

<i>Variable</i>	Question	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
<i>Bra1</i>	1. If the branding strategy on our company was enhanced we could gain financial benefits as well as distinguish ourselves from competitors	<i>-.938</i>	<i>1.107</i>
<i>Bra2</i>	2. Branding should be considered an important element in our company	<i>-1.677</i>	<i>3.561</i>
<i>Bra3</i>	3. It is important to consider how different stakeholders feel about our company	<i>-1.093</i>	<i>1.043</i>
<i>Cult1</i>	4. Our mission and vision has to be clear to everybody in the organization	<i>-1.908</i>	<i>3.511</i>
<i>Cult2</i>	5. Our company has to operate based on our mission and vision	<i>-.793</i>	<i>-.224</i>
<i>Cult3</i>	6. Decisions made in our company have to be based on our defined mission and vision	<i>-.825</i>	<i>.565</i>
<i>Cult4</i>	7. Everybody in the organization needs to follow our mission and vision	<i>-.984</i>	<i>.813</i>
<i>Cult5</i>	8. Everybody in our organization have to have common values and beliefs	<i>-.359</i>	<i>-.977</i>
<i>Cult6</i>	9. Everybody in the organization needs to operate according to our shared values and beliefs	<i>-.942</i>	<i>.272</i>
<i>Beh1</i>	10. All new employees are recruited based on agreed values and competences, as well as against agreed business targets	<i>-.807</i>	<i>.277</i>
<i>Beh2</i>	11. New employees are selected more according to how their mentality and values fit in the organization than by their specific set of skills	<i>-.358</i>	<i>-.763</i>
<i>Beh3</i>	12. Employees are highly empowered to act on behalf of the company	<i>-.675</i>	<i>-.071</i>
<i>Beh4</i>	13. High focus should be placed on supporting and developing personnel according to company	<i>-.623</i>	<i>.288</i>

	goals		
<i>Beh5</i>	14. It is important that people in our organization have appropriate and good relationships to each other	-1.069	.943
<i>Symb1</i>	15. The most important function of our website and logo are to reflect who we are and what we do	-.913	.419
<i>Symb2</i>	16. Our visual presentation (videos, presentation slides etc.) should be coherent with our mission and vision	-1.168	1.250
<i>Symb3</i>	17. Our office interior/merchandize should be coherent with who we are	-.747	-.289
<i>Com1</i>	18. It is important that all communication (e-mail, website, phone conversations, meetings etc.) from the company towards external stakeholders is coherent	-.830	.567
<i>Com2</i>	19. It is important that managers and employees get feedback on a regular basis	-.657	.128
<i>Com3</i>	20. It is important that everybody in the organization participates in team meetings on a regular basis	-1.144	1.345
<i>Com4</i>	21. Horizontal and vertical communication in our organization should be considered equally important	-1.355	1.947
<i>Com5</i>	22. Internal and external communication in our organization should be considered equally important	-.899	.743