

Master thesis

Brand development on digital media among Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs

The usage of social media influencers to develop brands of
Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs on Instagram

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Abstract

Social media technologies have influenced the practices and the processes of entrepreneurs (Shen, Lindsay & Xu, 2018). Social media technologies have thoroughly transformed the ways in which people and companies communicate and organize themselves (Lindgren, 2017, p. 5). The relation between how digital media enable or shape branding opportunities for entrepreneurs has received scarce attention in the literature (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007; Merrilees, 2007). Hence, this study will first focus on how entrepreneurs, in particular, lifestyle entrepreneurs, position themselves on social media. Since social media changes entrepreneurial practices, a shift has taken place from WOM to EWOM, CRM to social CRM and entrepreneurs start making use of customer intelligence (Khajehian, 2013; Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowbury; 2009). Lifestyle entrepreneurs make use of different kinds of social media marketing strategies such as co-creation, online advertising, storytelling, hashtag letters, and brand collaborations (Goldfarb, 2014; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Pulizzi, 2012). The purpose of this study focuses on how lifestyle entrepreneurs make use of social media marketing, in particular, influencer marketing to develop their brand on social media platforms. Influencer marketing is based on the concept of a brand using a social media influencer to influence potential buyers by making them uploading advertised products/services (Woods, 2016). Influencers are currently tearing up the traditional marketing strategies and are widely used as a novel way of advertising (Khamis, et al., 2017). The focus on influencer marketing by Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs is being researched with the use of qualitative content analysis. 21 interviews have been conducted with predominantly Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur and a minority of interviews have been conducted with social media influencers. As a result, influencer marketing can function as a subtle and subliminal way of advertising. It functions as a short term boost for a company. It mainly leads to more exposure. With this short term exposure, a brand is able to generate more followers, increase their brand's awareness and product visibility but is also able to generate a boost in sales.

Keywords: lifestyle entrepreneur, social media marketing, social media influencer, influencer marketing & Instagram.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Topic of research

The development of brands by start-ups and entrepreneurs is an important topic for research today (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). This is because the intersection of branding and entrepreneurship is an under-explored area and because the development of social media platforms creates new challenges and opportunities (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010). For example, the competitive environments for entrepreneurs have changed due to new digital media technologies with new functionalities (Shen, Lindsay & Xu, 2018). One of the new functionalities is that the power and position of consumers have shifted (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumers have become co-creators, taking part in producing content and giving feedback, allowing the consumer to co-construct the product or service with the company (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This is particularly interesting for lifestyle entrepreneurs because we know very little about their use of digital media and how they develop brands. Furthermore, there is still little research about the role that digital technologies play and the role that users and agents play in entrepreneurship (Shen, et al., 2018), which means, it is captivating to study how lifestyle entrepreneurs are using digital media technologies, and in turn how digital media may enable or shape their branding opportunities since this has received scarce attention in the entrepreneurship literature (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007; Merrilees, 2007). Essentially, the question of how lifestyle entrepreneurs develop their brands over digital media platforms needs to be further explored (Shen, Lindsay & Xu, 2018; Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). Now, complementary to this theoretical relevance, I want to emphasize the personal relevance for me of this topic. I am strongly engaged in the topic of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs because I started developing an African influenced clothing brand, combining both fashion and African heritage to create a brand. This highlights that the thesis carries a strong international component, which adds to the strong foundation towards building a theoretically sound and engaging thesis.

For this thesis, lifestyle entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who own and operate a business which is closely aligned with their personal values, interests, and passions (Marcketti, Niehm, and Fuloria, 2006). This includes apparel retail, interiors, food service, and hospitality firms (Marcketti, et al., 2006). Moreover, it is vital to give a definition of entrepreneurship because there is a wide scale of definitions (Davidsson, 2015). Therefore, an entrepreneur is defined for the thesis “as someone who is creating their own venture(Gartner, 1990).”

Now that we have addressed the concepts entrepreneurship and lifestyle entrepreneurs, what about digital media technologies. Digital media technologies are influencing the processes and practices of working in a start-up (Horst, Perez Latre & Hitters, 2018). Therefore, entrepreneurs need to be aware of these changing factors and know how to cope with them. Digital media has changed the way companies and people communicate and organize themselves (Lindgren, 2017, p. 5). Digital media includes mobile applications and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Lindgren,

2017, p. 5). Currently, entrepreneurs are using digital media in various ways: for responding to stakeholder demands, creating value and dealing with technological change, and building entrepreneurial opportunities (Horst, et al., 2018). Moreover, entrepreneurs use social media platforms to communicate advances, prototypes, and new products over their social media accounts (Horst, et al., 2018). Subsequently, entrepreneurs are also able to develop relationships with potential customers and build their organization for digital business realities (Horst, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the study will in particular focus on the social media platform Instagram, since the fact that Instagram is the most popular photo capturing and video sharing platform, it has received little attention in the literature (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Instagram is a mobile photo and video capturing and sharing service (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). It provides consumers with an immediate way to capture and share their life moments through pictures and videos. These pictures and videos can be manipulated by filters (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati (2014), claim that Instagram deserves more attention from the research community. Mainly because other platforms like Twitter and Facebook have been given more attention in the literature when compared to Instagram. Moreover, on Instagram, a picture can be worth a thousand words, whereas Twitter is a text-based communication platform with a limited word count (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Therefore, the choice for this study goes out to Instagram, since it will also help us gain deep insights about social, cultural, and environmental issues about people's activities (through the lens of their camera) (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). In addition, there is a lack of research on how lifestyle entrepreneurs, in particular, use Instagram for branding purposes (Wally & Koshy, 2014).

Afterwards, the focus will be on how brands do their social media marketing. Marketers should focus on establishing digital relationships by using promotional strategies that address the co-creation of meaning and content (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Firms are investing in social media to foster relationships and interact with customers. One way of achieving this goal is to create brand communities by establishing brand fan pages in order to get loyal and committed consumers (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014).

Lastly, digital technologies give rise to a new way of collaboration, leveraging resources, product/service design, development, and deployment over open standards and shared technologies (Shen, et al., 2018). A new way of collaboration is by independent third party endorsers who shape audience attitudes by the use of tweets, blogs, and other use of social media tools (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg; 2011). These new endorsers are called social media influencers (SMIs). Social media influencers are a new component who have a more intimate and credible relationship with their audience (Khamis, et al., 2017). SMIs offer a possibility for alliances to promote a brand or organization (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg; 2011).

1.2 Scientific and social relevance

Currently, there is a scarcity of studies on digital media and start-ups (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Shen, et al., 2018). At the same time, we know that digital media enables, shapes and supports processes and practices of strategy, product development, and branding because it provides the means and conditions over which to communicate products, ideas and relate to consumers (Shen, et al., 2018). However, we know very little about how lifestyle entrepreneurs in specific develop their brands and how digital media supports these processes because it has received scarce attention in the entrepreneurship literature (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). Subsequently, social media is a relatively new phenomenon since most of the companies only started using social media as of 2007/2008 (Mortleman, 2011). Hence, a lot still needs to be discovered within this emerging field. Multiple review articles on entrepreneurship stipulate that there are gaps in understanding the new usage of digital technologies for entrepreneurs (Shen, et al., 2018). In addition, this shows that there is a distinct gap in how digital technologies shape lifestyle entrepreneurs.

Further, previous research focuses on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, however, despite its popularity little research has been focused on Instagram (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Besides, SMIs tear up the traditional marketing strategies which have existed for over 100 years. In short, this means that the SMIs have a more direct relationship with their audience than companies (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). Which results to that SMIs sustain a more ‘real’ relationship with their followers than conventional mainstream media stars and their followers, hence it tears up the traditional way of marketing (Khamis, et al., 2017). Therefore, it is relevant to study how Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs cope with this new marketing strategy.

The social relevance of this study is connected to better understand the actions, routines, and practices of (often) young entrepreneurs, and in turn, enabling them to develop in a more coherent and sustainable manner. They can benefit from this study since they often find themselves in an early stage of developing a brand. Therefore, this research provides strategies and tactics on how they can develop their brand on social media. Moreover, they would be able to acquire a better understanding of how to work with SMIs.

On this basis, the study aims to find patterns and/or strategies from Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs to develop their brand on Instagram. To do so, the following research question is formulated: *‘How do Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media influencers to develop their brand on Instagram?’*

The research is structured as follow. Firstly, the core concepts of this study will be defined. Secondly, the methodology will be discussed. Then, the researcher will provide the findings, which will be followed by a discussion and a conclusive section. Lastly, in the appendix, the coding tree, the interview lists, and data supporting interpreting of the axial codes are included.

2.0 Theory and previous research

This theoretical framework will be dedicated to discussing the different concepts that will be measured in this study using previous academic theory. I will start by giving general definitions of the main concepts, which are entrepreneurship, lifestyle entrepreneurs, the role of digital media in contemporary entrepreneurship, the role of social media for marketing in entrepreneurship and the role of social media influencer for building start-ups. Next, I will narrow the concepts down in order to match with the purpose of the research.

2.1 Entrepreneurship

We find the need to have an understanding of the concept entrepreneurship. Multiple definitions of entrepreneurship have been offered, none have prevailed (Venkataraman, 1997). Researchers have embroiled in a never-ending debate on the definition of entrepreneurship (Bygrave & Hofer, 1992). Therefore, it is the responsibility of every researcher to clearly state what is meant by entrepreneurship when it is being used (Bygrave & Hofer, 1992). Entrepreneurship has been regarded as an overarching transformational change that may extend to social or institutional spheres (Sutter, Bruton & Chen, 2019). Sutter et al., (2019, p. 199) define entrepreneurship as ‘situations in which new goods, services, raw materials, markets, and organizing methods can be introduced through the formation of new means, ends or means-ends relationships. To contribute, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) argue that an entrepreneur can also hold a managerial role in an organization since one can be innovative in that specific role. Therefore, they define entrepreneurship as an examination of how, by whom and with what effects opportunities to create future goods, and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). For the purpose of this study, the definition of entrepreneurship provided by Shen and Venkataraman (2000) will be used. In addition, entrepreneurship is a crucial driving force for economic growth (Low & MacMillan, 1988). Since it creates more than thousands of jobs, increases the local and national tax revenues and generally increasing national productivity and boosting exports (Low & MacMillan, 1988).

Furthermore, in entrepreneurship studies, it is possible to discriminate factors that influence entrepreneurial behaviour. These are social, environmental, and individual factors (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). Firstly, social factors related to the personal background, family background, stage of career, early life experiences and growth environment (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). Secondly, environmental factors look at the value of wealth, tax reductions, indirect benefits, timing of opportunities in the career process, and social end economic culture (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). Lastly, individual factors are widely known and discussed the most in entrepreneurial studies, this is also known as personality characteristics of entrepreneurs (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). This factor rests on the assumption that an entrepreneur held unique characteristics, attitudes, and values that provides a drive that distinguishes them from non-entrepreneurs, such as corporate managers (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). This is researched in various studies. The most frequently cited personality characteristics for entrepreneurs are: the need

for achievement, locus of control, risk-taking, self-confidence, innovativeness, tolerance for ambiguity, and propensity (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). To add, Roper (1998) claims that the determining factor of whether a business will succeed or fail depends if the entrepreneur is a dynamic, risk-taking individual.

2.2 Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs

Next, by having an understanding of entrepreneurship, this allows the study to move on to the concept of lifestyle entrepreneurs. According to Bhide (1996), lifestyle entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs who are interested in producing just enough money to maintain a certain way of life. In addition, they want to merge job and passion together and they are looking for independence and control (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). Moreover, lifestyle organizations are businesses which are primarily set up to undertake an activity the founder enjoys or to achieve a level of activity that generates sufficient income (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). They don't need to grow their business very large, otherwise, they might feel disconnected from the brand to remain personally involved in every aspect of the work (Bhide, 1996). Lifestyle entrepreneurs set up businesses which are primarily focused to either undertake an activity the lifestyle entrepreneur enjoys or an activity that provides an adequate income (Peter, Freshe & Buhalis, 2009). As Peter, Freshe & Buhalis put it: 'From an economist perspective, lifestyle entrepreneurs accept suboptimal levels of production (2009, p. 51).'

Subsequently, lifestyle entrepreneurs don't feel the urgency to build a business that could survive without them (Bhide, 1996). However, they do want to strive for a kind of sustainability in order to sell their business eventually (Bhide, 1996). What becomes clear is that the concept of lifestyle entrepreneur really focuses on offering a service or product which is closely aligned with their personal values, interest and passion in order to maintain a certain lifestyle instead of creating an innovative lifestyle product or service (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007; Marcketti, et al., 2006). Moreover, lifestyle entrepreneurs value success differently. Instead of valuing success in terms of economic rewards, lifestyle entrepreneurs value success in terms of the opportunity of a better life (Alina & Daniel, 2014; Rodriguez, 2003). It is important to note as well, that lifestyle entrepreneurs don't completely ignore economic rewards. Lifestyle entrepreneurs don't value financial suicide or business stagnation, but instead an opportunity to do something they enjoy (Markantoni, Koster & Strijker, 2014). Besides, lifestyle entrepreneurs are often found in leisure and tourism industries, since the attractive parts of the city, closeness to the beach are perceived as a nice life, which motivated entrepreneurs to leave their jobs and follow their dreams (Peter, Freshe & Buhalis, 2009). Nevertheless, lifestyle entrepreneurs are not only active in leisure and tourism industries, but they are also active in the food, fashion, interiors, and hospitality goods and services industries (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006). This research covers almost all of the industries where lifestyle entrepreneurs are active in.

However, Marchant & Mottiar (2011) argue that not all lifestyle entrepreneurs are the same, therefore, they conceptualize the ideas of constraint and non-constraint lifestyle entrepreneurs. First, constraint entrepreneurs are predominantly young entrepreneurs and have a strong connection between lifestyle and economic motives. Yet, they have little business experience but they do have a professional background (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006). They are constrained by the desire to gain financial growth while they also want to keep a certain lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). Nevertheless, non-constrained entrepreneurs don't feel the urge to gain economic growth and just want to live a certain lifestyle, which makes them non-constrained. Non-constraint lifestyle entrepreneurs are rather driven by living in another area than the desire to become an entrepreneur (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006). They have a very limited growth orientation (Peter, Freshe, Buhalis, 2009). Moreover, they have little business experience and they just want to sustain an income which will maintain their lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). For this study, I will focus on the constraint lifestyle entrepreneur, to be more specific, Dutch constraint lifestyle entrepreneurs since the study will be conducted in the Netherlands, interviewing Dutch people. This shows, there is also an integrative international component, which will be reflected upon later in the discussion.

2.3 The role of digital media in contemporary entrepreneurship

This study focuses in particular on how Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs develop their brand on digital media. Digital media is just like entrepreneurship a very broad concept with multiple definitions. Digital media are 'tools, channels, platforms and strategies which we can obtain, produce, and share knowledge about the world around us, through communication and interaction', Lindgren (2017, p. 5). Digital media enables us to watch TV, films, and listen to the radio (Hang & Van Weezel, 2007). Furthermore, because of its worldwide reach, it is accessible for everyone (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Which makes digital media an increasingly important way for brands to interact with their (potential) customers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Digital media is also known as social media. The usage of social media for companies is relatively new since most of the companies only started using social media as of 2007/2008 (Mortleman, 2011). Treem, Dailey, Pierce, and Biffel (2016) claim that social media can be defined as three forms of sociality as a focal point, these focal points are cognition, communication, and cooperation. Firstly, cognition is concerned with shared knowledge platforms like newspapers, websites, and TV. Secondly, communication is regarded as bi-directional such as chat, e-mail, and discussion forums. Lastly, cooperation is where interdependent actors are working towards a communal goal like online games or Wikipedia for instance (Treem, et al; 2016). After the emergence of Web2.0, social/digital media has become more popular and now it is the dominant form of internet usage (Khajeheian, 2013).

Moreover, new media technologies are continuously being made. These new media technologies influence the entrepreneurship phenomenon (Khajeheian, 2013). Since digital media cultivates internal discussion that improves quality, lowers costs and enable the creation of customer

and partner communities which offer new opportunities for marketing, advertising, customer support, and coordination (Khajeheian, 2013). Due to digital technology changes, the production costs have become lower and because of the low-cost media activity, niche markets become profitable for entrepreneurs (Khajeheian, 2013). As a result of its lower costs and low-cost media activity, market opportunities and regulations change (Khajeheian, 2013). It allows entrepreneurs to access resources that otherwise might not be available to them (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013).

As social media become an integral part of people's lives, the general public has been shifting their interaction to virtual platforms (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). Multiple studies have shown that social media has become the most efficient and impactful tools to engage with people's social life, business life, political life, and education life (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). Hence it is crucial for a business to promote their brand through social media platforms to directly engage with the audience and remove the opportunity cost of the standard middleman (Sajid, 2016).

Next, it is interesting to look at how entrepreneurs use social media in order to grow their company. The new set of communication tools made exchanging information both easier and faster, and companies needed to rethink their communication strategies in order to stay relevant (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Jagongo & Kinyua (2013) claim that in order to gain success with social media, entrepreneurs need to have a presence in the environment where the customers reside. In addition, Jagongo & Kinyua (2013) argue that relationships which are built over the internet can increase sales and create opportunities for novel products and services.

As a consequence of social media, there has been a shift taken place from WOM to EWOM. WOM is the abbreviation for word-of-mouth, whereas EWOM stands for electronic word-of-mouth. WOM is the process of communicating information from one person to another (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowbury; 2009). It is a leading role in customer buying decisions (Jansen, et al.; 2009). WOM used to be one of the most effective marketing methods. However, WOM partially lost its impact since the rise of social media (Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels; 2009). Hence, the emergence of EWOM. EWOM is defined as 'any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (Chu & Kim; 2003, p. 48).' A plausible reason why EWOM has become popular is that its reach stretches wider than offline practices. Mainly, because online conversations are more accessible to a wider audience of potential readers (Reichelt, Sievert & Jacob; 2014). Subsequent, another reason has been given by Park, Wang, Ya, and Kang (2011), who claim that EWOM became popular since the first step for online purchases mostly starts by searching for online reviews, which is a form of EWOM.

Besides, another change in the social web is that the customer becomes an integral part of the sales process (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Which means that customer reputation management (CRM) needs to be changed accordingly. It is now possible to track down what customers think and are likely

to do next. This caused a shift from CRM to social CRM (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Hereby, entrepreneurs are recognizing the importance of the role of customers and the vital element of understanding and managing conversations around the brand, product, and service. Figure 1 shows the shift from CRM to social CRM.

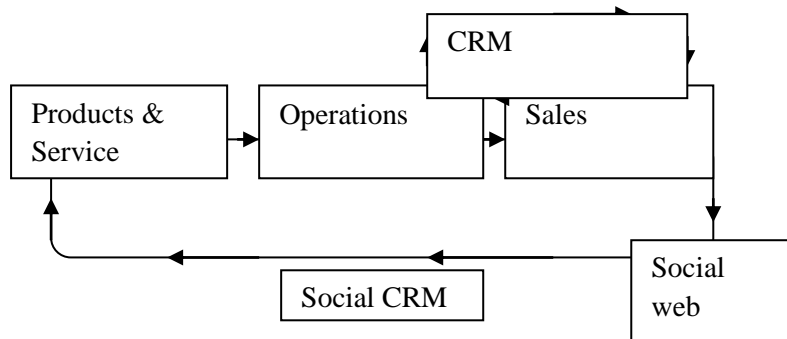


Figure 1. CRM and Social CRM in a business context (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013)

Furthermore, customer intelligence acquired via social media is relevant in driving innovation in companies (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). This adds to the growth of entrepreneurial business because the use of 'social media technologies provide insights, thoughts, and ideas on how to better serve customers and enables a business to discover innovative ways to conduct business or new products and services to offer customers' (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013, p. 216).

2.4 The role of social media for marketing in entrepreneurship

It has been shown that the rise of digital media influenced the mindset of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs have to act differently and come up with new marketing strategies which include strategies on social media platforms. This is also linked to the fact that social networks are changing the way customers interact with the web and, therefore, challenge entrepreneurial business practices (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). Consumers become the starting point for marketing activities. Marketing has an overall positive impact on a company's performance, and marketing procedures are effective instruments (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012).

The communication process is one of the most important aspects that have changed on social media (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). Consumers are now able to react and share their opinions about everything that is related to a brand. As a result, brands need to be able to talk with their customers and give them regular information and continuously improve the brands' online reputation (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). In other words, consumers have become co-creators and have increased their power (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004, p. 8) define co-reaction as a phenomenon which 'is about joint creation of value by the company and the customer. It is not the firm trying to please the customer.', it allows the customer to co-construct the product or service experience to fit her context. Co-creators can become a 'fan' of a brands page and promotes the products or services. With the brand pages, customers are able to express their

enthusiasm about the brand and be united by their common interest in the brand (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012). Moreover, as a consequence of the engagement with social media platforms, entrepreneurs are now able to track down information patterns about customers behaviour and preferences instruments (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). Hence, entrepreneurs can use this data to influence online consumer attitudes (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012).

Besides, Kushner (2016) describes the phenomenon where entrepreneurs use the data to influence online attitudes as the free lunch concept. The free lunch concept means that the online population uses various social media platforms for free (Kushner, 2016). However, these platforms receive a lot of data about users. With this specific information, companies can classify their users free (Kushner, 2016). These data profiles become very interesting for companies who want to effectively reach their audience, so they pay a lot of money to social media platforms for advertisements (Kushner, 2016). Besides, entrepreneurs are also able to grasp data profiles as a result of a more intimate and interactive relationship with the consumers.

Furthermore, another way to influence online consumer attitudes can be done via the use of advertising. Companies use advertising for persuasive purposes, altering consumers tastes, reducing the cost of information acquisition by consumers and advertising can also be informative (Goldfarb, 2014). Goldfarb (2014) adds to this that advertising: 'can be complementary to the advertised product, increasing the consumption value of a product without altering underlying preferences.' Advertising is used by marketers in various forms. Nowadays, people can't turn on the radio, drive down the highway, or even buy a soda without being exposed to an advertisement (Wright, Khanfar, Harrington & Kizer, 2010). In 2006, it was believed that an American is exposed to 5.000 ads per day. Nowadays, the consumer has become more resistant towards ads, therefore, advertisers must become more subtle and subliminal (Wright, et al., 2010). In addition, the consumer no longer has their attention to merely one activity. Hence, to grasp the consumer's attention, marketers can either make their ads more entertaining and more appealing by integrating, for example, games or shows, or marketers focus where the attention of the consumers have been shifted to (Wright, et al., 2010). Since the rise of social media more and more attention has been shifted to these social networking sites (Knoll, 2016). Therefore, advertisers have responded to this development by allocating a larger part of their budget to social media (Knoll, 2016). In addition, it is understandable that companies shift their focus to online advertising too, since the costs of targeting by online advertising are lower than offline advertising (Goldfarb, 2014).

Subsequently, social media has become one of the latest environments where advertising takes place. To illustrate the rise of social media advertising, it was predicted that between 2011 and 2017, the advertising revenues of social media increased by \$6.3 billion (Knoll, 2016). Nevertheless, because so many companies make use of social media advertising, it is important to segment the market by defining customers which share similar values. This allows companies to make a more tailored advertisement instead of the mass advertisement which is too general (Wright, et al., 2010).

Next, online advertising can be divided into three categories: search advertising, classified advertising, and display advertising (Goldfarb, 2014). First, search advertising is advertising that appears along with the algorithmic results on search engines such as Google and Bing. Second, classified advertising is advertising that appears on websites that do not offer other media content or algorithmic search, such as dating sites (Goldfarb, 2014). Third, display advertising includes banner ads, plain text ads, media-rich video ads, the typical ads that are shown by social media websites and video ads. This is the main revenue generator for online media apart from search engines (Goldfarb, 2014).

Nonetheless, the opposite of advertising is storytelling (Pulizzi, 2012). Storytelling is the fastest growing search term in the business marketing environment (Pulizzi, 2012). Whereas advertising is generally focused more transmitting around someone else's content, storytelling revolves around creating valuable, relevant and compelling content by the brand itself on a consistent basis (Pulizzi, 2012). It is used by brands to generate positive feedback towards the brands (Pulizzi, 2012). Storytelling has always been an important marketing strategy. It is very useful because human memory is story based (Woodside, 2010). People are fascinated by stories instead of facts (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013). To add, information is indexed, stored, and retrieved in the form of stories. Brands make use of storytelling as a marketing strategy since one of the best ways to persuade someone is by telling a compelling story. A good (compelling) story reveals the struggle between expectation and reality in all its nastiness (Woodside, 2010). Well told stories regarding a brand have the potential to influence consumers' brand experience (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013). Another factor that supports a well-told story is when the audience identify with the characters from the story and when the message puts the brand in a positive light (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013). Although, a story should convey only one message since it needs to have the option to be summarized in two sentences (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013). Subsequent, consumers seek for experiences which resonate with their emotions and dreams, storytelling can create such experiences (Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus & Van Riel, 2013).

Next, storytelling is a part of content marketing, and all the available technology tools are worthless without a content marketing strategy at the centre of the marketing approach (Pulizzi, 2012). Since storytelling is such an important strategy nowadays, Pulizzi (2012) claims that the marketing department is transforming into a publishing department, considering the amount of content that a company uploads. Moreover, it is important to note that stories are shared more often when the brand is removed from the story. In other words, the removal of sales pitches from the content will lead to an improvement in trust and credibility (Pulizzi, 2012).

2.5 The role of social media influencers for building start-up brands

Currently, there is a lack of studies addressing the phenomenon between SMIs and lifestyle entrepreneurs. What has been discovered so far is the major change in customer engagement on social

media. As a result, companies can no longer control conversations, however, they can influence them (Booth, & Matic, 2011). One way to influence the conversations and change customer attitudes is to collaborate with social media influencers (SMIs). SMIs are working to acquire a kind of celebrity capital by developing as much attention on social media platforms as possible to craft an authentic brand (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). This authentic brand can be used by business and advertisers for consumer outreach. Through the alliance with an SMI, a business tries to build a more direct relationship with consumers in their daily life (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). With this more direct relationship, companies hope that by showcasing SMIs who fit the companies target group, consumers are more inclined to try the product or service that the company offers (Glucksman, 2017). Consumers tend to look at fellow consumers to get informed about a purchasing decision (Glucksman, 2017). Since SMIs are also regarded as a fellow consumer they are able to influence other consumers on a commercialized product which SMIs upload on their social media channel (Glucksman, 2017).

Next, SMIs determine their success by return on influence (Khamis, et al., 2017). Managers want to collaborate with them in order to capitalize on the wide social networks of the SMIs and their intimate, more credible relationships between their followers (Khamis, et al., 2017). The usage of individuals rather than a target market as a whole is called influencer marketing (Woods, 2016). Influencer marketing identifies the individuals who influence over potential buyers, and orients marketing activities around these individuals (Woods, 2016). Influencer marketing is also strongly linked to EWOM since one is advocating for a specific product or service (Woods, 2016). The wide social networks of SMIs can sometimes contain a following base which reaches more than hundreds of thousands, or even over millions of followers (Abidin & Ots, 2016). This is making their reach comparable to that of traditional media (Abidin & Ots, 2016). Yet, to measure the success between an SMI and a brand, the success depends on multiple factors ranging from difficult to measure criteria, such as quality of content, to highly measurable factors such as page views, search engine rank, participation level, frequency or activity and prominence in the market of community (Glucksman, 2017). In addition, the success of a collaboration between an SMI and a brand is also measured in forms of return on investments (Woods, 2016). With influencer marketing, these return on investment aspects are measured in terms of reach, engagement and ultimately sales. (Woods, 2016). An interesting finding is made by Woods (2016), who claims that influencer marketing has the ability to trigger 11 times more return on investment than other forms of traditional marketing annually.

Further, SMIs carefully aim to build awareness and audience growth. Yet, central to their success is the deep and intimate relationship they have with their followers (Abidin & Ots, 2016). SMIs use four practices to build these deep and intimate relationships with their followers: endearment and personal language, authenticity through unaltered (behind the scenes) material, real-life meetings with their followers, and commonality with readers by displaying shared ordinary practices, despite showcasing a luxurious lifestyle (Abidin & Ots, 2016).

Next, SMIS has a prominent presence in industries like fashion, electronic goods, and beauty (Abidin & Ots, 2016). SMIs are a perfect example of how social media enables and empowers their consumers and audiences. As this gives the possibility for ordinary users to cultivate fame and influence (Khamis, et al., 2017). Further, brands pay SMIs to upload commercialized content on social media platforms. Via this way, SMIs become the new carrier and face of branded messages (Abidin & Ots, 2016). They promote brands through their personal lives, making them relatable to the average consumer (Glucksman, 2017).

Moreover, it is interesting to connect micro-celebrities to Instagram, since on this platform they are able to obtain Instafame. Instafame is a situation of someone having a relatively big number of followers on Instagram (Khamis, et al., 2017). Additionally, commercial activities of SMIs are most noted on Instagram (Abidin, 2016). Besides, micro-celebrities are not famous in a common way (Korotina, & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). Khamis et al. (2017) refer to them as a promise of ‘authenticity’. Micro-celebrities can come across as more trustworthy than the bigger SMIs since they give more of an insight into the practitioners’ private lives. In addition, their narratives and their branding can come across as more accessible and intimate (Khamis, et al., 2017). They try to create a fan-base, gaining followers outside their circle of friends and acquaintances (Korotina, & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). Success for a micro-celebrity is defined through the numbers of likes, tweets, retweets, shares, followers and comments one has (Khamis, et al., 2017). However, compared to bigger SMIs, micro-celebrities will not, in most cases, achieve their dreams of financial success (Khamis, et al. 2017).

3.0 Methods

3.1 Description of methods

To answer the research question, ‘how do Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media influencers to develop their brand on Instagram?, this thesis employs a qualitative methodology. First, the research question is qualitative in its nature since it aims to gain subjective understandings, feelings, opinions, and beliefs (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Second, to answer the research question, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs respond with stories and subjective findings, therefore, the approach to the data collection method is semi-structured interviews. Interviews in qualitative interview methods are one of the most dominant research methods (Flick, 2018). Furthermore, the use of semi-structured interviews is suitable because the interviewer operates by following a topic list, but I don’t have to follow the question list strictly (Bryman, 2016, p. 212; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Yet, it leaves space for the interviewer to ask more question which emerges during the interview or to use probing questions when the interviewer is unsatisfied with the answer from the interviewee and wants more clarification on this subject (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Bryman, 2016). In semi-structured interviews, there is a huge interest in the interviewee's point of view (Bryman, 2016, p. 212). With semi-structured interviews, I have a list of questions, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in their response (Bryman, 2016). The interviews are face-to-face interviews, after asking the interviewee in preliminary contact to participate in the interview and arrange a meeting (Flick, 2018). Next, the interviews are recorded. The recorded interviews are transcribed verbatim to turn the oral data into written text (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

3.2 Data collection

According to Flick (2018), a sample is focused on interviewing the right people who have made the experience relevant to the research. Therefore, the choice has been made to interview Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMIs considering their relevance to the research. The objective was to interview between 10-15 Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. Eventually, this research has conducted 15 interviews with Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. Since I didn’t personally know 15 Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs a snowball sampling method has been applied. Mathews and Ross (2010, p. 162) define snowball sampling as ‘a technique where members of an initial sample are asked to identify others with the same characteristics as them, who the researcher then contacts. Bryman (2016, p. 202) defines snowball sampling as a method where the researcher first contacts a small group of people who are relevant to the research. Those people are then being asked to suggest others who have the same experience or characteristic relevant to the research. These interviewees are then asked to suggest others and so on (Bryman, 2016). This enables drawing on the networks other entrepreneurs have to connect with more people in the scene of lifestyle entrepreneurs.

To measure the credibility of the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, SMIs have been interviewed as well. In order to see if SMIs contradict the statements of the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs.

Snowball sampling has been applied to interview the SMIs for the same reasons. The intention was to interview at least 5 SMIs. In the end, the research has conducted 6 interviews with SMIs. As can be seen, I conducted fewer interviews with SMIs compared to Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. This decision has been made based upon the fact that the focus of the study is aimed at Dutch life entrepreneurs.

In addition, the study includes purposive sampling as well to ensure an efficient amount of interviews gathered. Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 154) define purposive sampling as 'a sample of selected cases that will best enable the researcher to explore the research questions in depth'. This kind of sampling is related to the selection of units, which can be people, organizations, documents and so on (Bryman, 2016). Purposive sampling is non-probability based. Purposive sampling can be applied since the study is a quite small, in-depth qualitative study focused on exploration and interpretation of experiences and perceptions (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Most sampling in qualitative studies applies to purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016). However, when this sampling method is applied there is no attempt to develop a sample that is statistically representative of the population (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Besides, this study draws on interviews with Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs who are working in various lifestyle fields. I interviewed lifestyle entrepreneurs who are active in the following lifestyle fields: fashion industry, jewellery industry, events industry, exercise industry, technology, real estate, and photography. I got a variety of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs to exclude a bias which only covers one field of lifestyle entrepreneurs. Data derived from these groups give valuable insights into practices and responses of brand development on Instagram among Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs.

In addition, the semi-structured interviews have been conducted with the help of an interview guide (Matthew & Ross, 2010). The interview layout with the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs looks different compared to the SMIs. However, both the interview guides have been focused on 'what' and 'how' questions since it forces the interviewee to explain personal experiences and meaning making of personal and more general issues (Flick, 2018). In addition, the interviewer also asked both groups how they began, developed and/or changed their practice because of transforming themselves into a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur or SMI. The interview questions can be viewed in the appendices.

While it would have been interesting to also collect Instagram posts, I only foresaw to collect interview data. In the case of collecting Instagram posts, I would learn something from the interviews that makes it important to show specific examples. I would select posts that are seen to be successful in the eyes of the entrepreneurs and SMIs in order to exemplify that it is a good post and to highlight the success of a collaboration for instance. However, that is not the case and this method hasn't been used. Below is an overview presented of the interviewee's data. It includes their name, age, profession, minutes of the interview and remarks if useful.

Interview number	Name	Age	Profession	Minutes	Remarks
1	Angel	20	SMI	00:48:35	Feels that people are hating on Instagram
2	Aylano	22	Event's organiser	00:47:24	
3	Bart van Houten	20	SMI	00:41:51	Conducted in Dutch
4	Bart Vermaten	23	Founder Turn-up Events	1:00:46	Faked messages to get more engagement
5	Bassourama	23	Founder Goal Trainer	00:48:38	Insightful on the entrepreneurial topic
6	Carlijn	21	Founder Wolff Jewellery	00:46:33	Collaborations with multiple influencers
7	Cheyenne	23	SMI	00:44:16	Conducted in Dutch
8	Dani	29	Founder of Sulex International	00:40:29	Against the concept entrepreneurs
9	Joel	45	Founder of Denoism	00:54:17	
10	Dylan	23	Founder of L'origin3	00:27:16	During lunch, a short interview
11	Frank	30	Radio DJ/SMI	00:51:25	Conducted in Dutch
12	Linda	29	SMI	00:38:52	Doesn't like the concept influencer
13	Mary	26	Founder MAFcouture	00:56:11	
14	Moreno	23	Founder of The Interlude	1:06:19	
15	Nana	24	Event's organiser/DJ/MC	00:40:44	Interview in between Dj'ing at a restaurant
16	Pernille	23	Founder of Gardien Sports	00:47:25	Shy in the beginning
17	Peter	21	Founder of DeciBrace	1:00:01	Knowledgeable
18	Sharon	23	Photographer	00:59:03	
19	Stijn	33	Reginar Photographer	00:54:38	Warns for not delegating tasks in time
20	Tsehai	43	Founder of Afropolitan Luxury	00:47:47	Attempting to try out social media
21	Wesley	32	SMI	00:40:55	Warns for the downsides of social media

Table 1: Data overview

3.3 Operationalization

This section clarifies how the theoretical framework had been used throughout the different stages of the study in relation to how it had been operationalized. Since this study focuses on qualitative content analysis with the use of interviews, an interview guide has been made to cover the topics which are being discussed in the theoretical framework such as entrepreneurship, lifestyle entrepreneurs, the role of social media, social media marketing, and influencer marketing with a specific focus on SMI and Instagram. By covering these topics during the interviews, it is possible to formulate an answer to the research question. In addition, the questions from interviews are based on relevant literature, since it is semi-structured, it still left room for emergent questions or arguments which seemed relevant during the interview (Bryman, 2016). Considering that this study is aimed at the relation between lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMIs, this research uses two different interview guides to separate the different groups. The first interview guide can be found in Appendix C. – Interview guide: Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, the second interview guide can be found in Appendix D. – Interview guide: SMIs.

Lastly, the interviews give insights to formulate a comprehensive picture of the current phenomenon of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs in relation to social media influencers from the perspective of brand development on Instagram.

3.4 Processing and analysing data

In this research, the focus lies on analysing semi-structured interviews, some of which have been quite long (over an 1h). Therefore, attention has to be given to the big amount of raw data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The data has been processed with the use of qualitative content analysis. I used this type of analysis since it is usually applied to textual data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Interviews can be categorised as a form of textual data, hence, that qualitative content analysis is suitable (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Besides, content analysis tries to understand the meanings and relations of certain words or phrases in a text, so it should help to discover patterns in the data (Matthew & Ross, 2010).

Next, content analysis requires to create a coding scheme. I am familiar working with a coding scheme, therefore, I liked to work with this method again. The first step of a coding scheme is to create open codes. Open codes are the first stage of identifying and describing research phenomena and assigning them with suitable names (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The second step of coding data consists of axial coding. Axial coding involves relating codes to each other (Bryman, 2016). The final part of coding is selective coding. Selective coding is the process of choosing a central category and then link all the related codes, themes, and categories to this central category (Matthews & Ross, 2010). In addition, the tool which has been used for data collection and data analysis is called Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is applicable to easily manage the big amount of raw data. Atlas.ti makes it able to pick and choose open codes, which makes it easier to group them into axial codes and later formulate selective coding.

Subsequent, it is important that the overall practice of conducting research should be done in a systematic and rigorous manner (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 26). This contributes to the reliability of the study. The reliability of this research improves once the interviews are carefully recorded and transcribed, and the data is carefully coded and organized (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 26).

Besides, my presence in the interview may affect the willingness of the interviewee to answer personal or sensitive questions or even participate in the interview (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, I was aware of the impact of gender, ethnicity, age and perceived social status of the interviewee to prevent biases (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Further, another bias which can endanger the validity of the research is the social desirability bias. This means that an interviewee tends to answer a question of what is perceived as socially acceptable (Fisher, 1993). According to Fisher (1993), social desirability bias occurs in nearly all social sciences literature. Hence, it is important to be aware of this bias since this can lead to misleading research results (Fisher, 1993).

Next, a critique of qualitative research is that it is too impressionistic and subjective (Bryman, 2016). In other words, Bryman (2016) means that findings are relying too much on what the researcher finds important and significant. As a result, this can endanger external validity because it is difficult to replicate this kind of studies. Therefore, generalization problems occur. The scope of the

findings of qualitative research is restricted (Bryman, 2016). However, replicating qualitative studies are never by no means straightforward to replicate (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the interviewees are not meant to be representative of a population (Bryman, 2016).

Subsequently, generalization and transferability are controversial issues in qualitative research (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 26). It is widely agreed upon that research results should be transferable to some situations or contexts in order to be valid. However, this is not something qualitative researchers should aim for in the first place (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 26). Qualitative research should rather aim to ‘analyze language and signifying practices to learn about the cultural practices through which people are governed and make sense of their world’ (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 28). This analysis can be viewed as a generalization operation as such. Since language provides us with a set of objects, reality, or sites of analysis can be looked at as texts (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 28). To add, the structures of those texts can be analyzed to obtain comprehension of the broader cultural structures, practices, and institutions that produce them (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 28).

Lastly, the research contains sensitive data because entrepreneurs share entrepreneurial/business conducts and strategies. Therefore, the researcher has been taken some specific measures to ensure that these interviews didn’t influence the company’s competitive position (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Hence, at the start of every interview, the respondent was asked to sign a consent form. This needed to be done to ensure their anonymity if desired, and to inform them about their rights as a respondent. Conclusively, below is a visual representation of the coding scheme which can also be found in Appendix A.

<u>Selective Codes</u>	<u>Second order themes</u>	<u>First order observations</u>
What makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur	Entrepreneurship interpretation	Characteristics of entrepreneurs, encountered problems, contribution to other people’s lives, building a personal brand & realizing a dream.
	From hobby to work	Expressing passion, developing to a more serious way of working, enjoyment out of the work you do,
	Liking the style of life	Personal growth, making a living, happiness over generating money, acquiring freedom & in touch with what matters.
Role of social media for Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs	Showing activity	Attention is focused on social media, people need to be intrigued by what one does, visibility, post frequency, personification, showcasing product/service.
	Positioning on social media	Communication strategies, CRM, staying true to core values & distinguish by showing that one is real,
	Role of Instagram	Social media is a tool, metaphors, getting validation out of Instagram, role of captions, Instagram has its own crowd & stories versus posts.
	Social media platform difference	Facebook and Instagram, a shift in usage, each platform have a difference in reach, the difference in advertisement, chatbots, interactions versus views, posts.

	Algorithm	Post visibility decreases, new algorithm asks for new methods, losing followers/engagement & tricks to beat the algorithm.
Social media marketing strategies	Advertising	Facebook & Instagram difference, advertisement frequency, advertisement design, gaining clients, company growth, ads don't feel real, measured by the amount of clicks/views/sales, advertise valuable ads.
	Storytelling	Inceptive stories, a mix of education and flashy stories, storytelling creates ownership by the public, relationship building, compared to the new Coca-Cola, loaded message, vlog the launch process to get people engaged.
	Ways to attract new followers	Buying followers is fake/unreal, using hashtags to gain followers, engagement, post consistency, word of mouth in relation to social media, asking direct circle to follow, good looking feed & lying to the audience.
	Brand collaborations	Spreading your word, the importance of contracts, featured to a different audience, brand awareness, increase in sales, publication on other accounts.
Influencer marketing usage	View on SMI's	Work of SMI's is underrated, SMI's feel high of themselves, a flux in micro & macro influencers, SMI's are disloyal, concept SMI has the wrong connotation rather content creator or source of inspiration, influencer types.
	Impact SMI	Being a role model for followers leads to more impact, SMI has a more intimate relationship with the audience than a brand, targeting the right target group, short term boost & Alignment between SMI and brand.
	Collaboration with SMI	Criteria to collaborate, work with/without contracts, pricing, more brand exposure, assessing outcomes, creative quality, discount code, amount of sales & long term SMIs are unsuccessful.
	Sustainability SMI	The creativity of people that gives rise to a new type of influencer, the attention and eyeballs are focused on the SMI's, uncertainty because of development of the world and it is poisoning the world & not enough meaning in social media.

Table 2: coding table

4.0 Findings

In the following section, I will present the findings of the qualitative content analysis and relate them to the research question: ‘How do Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media influencers to develop their brand on Instagram?’. In order to process the data with my theoretical lens, a coding tree has been made which can be found in the appendices as Appendix A. The coding tree helped in structuring the analysis and is used to guide the development of this section. In addition, Appendix B (Data supporting interpretations of axial codes), shows quotes supporting the interpretations.

Four central themes emerged from the analysis, which is represented as the four selective codes in the coding table. These are: what makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur, the role of social media for Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur, social media marketing strategies and influencer marketing usage. These selective codes (overarching topics) are supported by axial codes that represent emerging themes and patterns in the data. Moreover, axial codes are supported by open codes to identify and describe research phenomena, which are observations made during the first step of the analysis (Bryman, 2016). Given the structure, I will start by explaining what makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur. In this part, the focus relies on explaining but also looking at how interviewees contradict and support each other in interpreting the concept.

4.1 What makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur?

4.1.1 Entrepreneurship interpretation

Before moving into depth on how the interviewees describe the concept of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur, it is first relevant to investigate how the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs define entrepreneurship. The concept lifestyle entrepreneur is derived from entrepreneurship, therefore, to get a grasp on what the interviewee’s claim what lifestyle entrepreneurship is, it is relevant to look at how they describe entrepreneurship in the first place.

As literature has shown, the most accepted definition of entrepreneurship is given by Shane and Venkataraman (2000) who defines entrepreneurship as an examination of how, by whom and with what effects opportunities to create future goods, and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited. This is still a very broad definition of entrepreneurship. The most prevailing answers on how lifestyle entrepreneurs describe entrepreneurship is as the possibility of creating your own job and creating your own path by doing what makes you happy apart from any restrictions by a boss or a manager. Aylano, 22-year-old, who organizes club events and has stages on festivals, defines entrepreneurship as “doing and becoming successful and what makes you happy” He also stresses the relevance of working without a boss by saying that entrepreneurship is “just resisting and rejecting authority, I guess is what it was for me.” Another important aspect of entrepreneurship is that you have the ability to realize your dreams (Bart, 23). Bart, a 23-year-old club event organizer, states that

“Entrepreneurship is that you have to make your dreams come true.” Moreno, a 23-year-old club event organizer, also agrees with Bart (23) that entrepreneurship is the willingness to pursue your dream if the business is your dream. For Dyllan, a 23-year-old founder of a clothing brand which represents encapsulates Ghanian identity refers to entrepreneurship as the process of trial and error with the explanation that “Because you're going to make enough mistakes anyway, you shouldn't let those mistakes define you. You should not let those mistakes make sure that you do not continue.” One important remark is made by Mary, a 26-year-old founder of the African fashion brand MAFcouture, who claims that entrepreneurship is all the activities in making and being a business. To contribute, Peter, a 21-year-old and developer of a bracelet which prevents ear damage which goes by the name DeciBrace, claims that most people have a misconception about what entrepreneurship means. It is namely not a job where you employ hundreds of people, have a lot of money and don't rest. He argues that entrepreneurship is “literally what it means by definition; it is taking initiative and is having responsibility for a certain subject or a certain problem.” He doesn't only focus on the business part but claims that it is incorporated in daily life. For instance, when you plan a vacation trip. If you take the initiative and responsibility to plan a trip you are being entrepreneurial.

However, the concept of entrepreneurship also aroused some negative connotations. The concept of entrepreneurship has become a hype and lost its value. Bassourama, a 23-year-old founder of a calisthenics company called GoalTrainers, claims that entrepreneurship and being an entrepreneur has almost become a celebrity status. It has become a trend. Dani, a 29-year-old founder of a real-estate company in Africa called Sulex International, contributes to that saying that “I don't believe in the word entrepreneurship”, he made the argumentation that people use the word entrepreneur as it is a very chic word nowadays, since everyone calling themselves an entrepreneur the last couple of years. Dani (29) calls this a hype and he doesn't like hypes at all. He even goes further and criticizes entrepreneurs since:

So, it's a fact that the average entrepreneur makes 20 k a year. Yeah, there's even less than when you're an employee. Employees make 30k year average. So, I don't want to be an entrepreneur just to become an entrepreneur. I want to start a business and make it a profitable business.

Next, the interviewees were convinced that to be entrepreneurial one needs have certain characteristics. The most prevalent characteristics were committed, independent, taking risks, ambitious, disciplined, hardworking, solution-oriented, flexible, open-minded, persistence and the urge to keep developing yourself. However, you don't need all of these characteristics to become an entrepreneur (Dyllan, 23). One main characteristic that kept popping up was the ability to take risks. Since you have to do things, which you are uncertain about in the long term (Peter, 21). In addition, Mary (26) says that we all have ideas, but entrepreneurs distinct themselves from others since they are

the ones who are taking risks and working on their own dreams instead of living someone else's dream. Nana, a 24-year-old club events organizer, also agrees with both Mary and Peter, he explains this with an example. He once organized an event where invested €7.000,- in, with only a profit of €50,-. He had put a lot of hours in this event. Hereby, he wanted to show that sometimes you have to take risks even if you are unsure what the outcome will be. Furthermore, taking risks also includes doing something different (Pernille, 23). According to Pernille, a 23-year-old founder of a female football sports company called Gardien Sports, taking risks is about the willingness to go out of your comfort zone, even if it means that people will not always support you at the beginning of the process.

Besides, persistence is also frequently named in several interviews. Tsehai, a 43-year-old founder of a company which trades in African goods called Afropolitan Luxury, formulates this as the ability to never give up. Stijn, a 33-year-old founder of his own photography company called Reginar Photography, defines persistence as follow: "Not running through walls which I used to do you know, you also need to know where your limits are", he shows that persistence is not only about never giving up but also the ability to know where your limits are. Commitment is closely aligned to persistence since both are about to continue working on your dream. Dani (29) explains this perfectly by saying that "Clearly what I mean by commitment is doing the things you said you will do, way after the moment you said it has left you". Here he refers to not only taking action in times of emotion but staying committed once the emotions have left you (Dani, 29). Another important characteristic is being independent as an entrepreneur. Being independent is vital since you will be your own boss, where you need to decide your own time for example (Bart, 23).

Nevertheless, Peter makes one limitation that you can't always be independent, although you would like to feel you are. Even though being independent is a necessary characteristic, an entrepreneur will in reality never be since:

Even though you'd love to be independent, you are also depended on certain things or I'm depended for a manufacturer in China and dependent on other people to react. So, you don't have anything on your own hand, which can be sometimes frustrating.

Other problems which entrepreneurs quite often experience include the lack of time, the lack of financial resources, the lack of experience, dealing with the opinion of others, the fear of failure and finding the right people to work with. To start with, the lack of experience can hard in the early phases of because one doesn't have all the information at their disposal (Dyllan, 23). One really has to find out a lot. It can also be difficult to find out that the people who are close to you aren't supporting you the way you foresaw it. Hence, consumer acceptance is important to cope with this problem (Dyllan, 23). Subsequent, Bart (23) claims that it is hard to lose money. Besides losing money, as a lifestyle start-up financial resources are also seen as a problem especially if you are in the beginning stage (Moreno, 23). Even when you are a bit further down the line it can still be a problem, when a

company wants to do a big campaign, for instance, financial resources are a big problem (Carlijn, 21). According to Carlijn, a 21-year-old founder of a jewellery company called Wolff Jewellery, then looks for other affordable options to cope with this financial problem. Besides, time is also considered as a problem, especially when you have another job on the side (Tsehai (43; Stijn, 33). Stijn formulated it like this “I always overestimate my time and what I can do in a week.” An option to solve this is to use every free time one has (Tsehai, 43). Opinions of others can also be a big obstacle since people either don’t know what you are doing or don’t like it (Pernille 21). This is directly the most important aspect to change when starting a business, which is not caring about other people’s opinion. This goes hand in hand with the fear of failure because when people don’t like a product or service you are offering you shouldn’t stop (Pernille, 23). People expect short term results but everything that comes quickly wouldn’t last for the long term (Dani, 29).

Another important problem which was mentioned was the difficulty to find the right people. As Mary (26) puts it, being an entrepreneur can be very busy, in particular when you do everything yourself. Even working with a team can drain you when you are still a student and combining lectures with having events multiple times a week (Aylano, 22). Therefore, it is important to find the right people who share the same vision as you (Tsehai, 43). Tsehai (43) experienced this the hard way, she was working with a business partner who didn’t share the same vision. Eventually, they split and caused a major setback for the company where Tsehai had to look for a new partner and haven’t found one ever since (Tsehai, 43).

Next, entrepreneurs are driven to contribute and add value to other’s people life. Entrepreneurs feel that they shouldn’t keep the knowledge they have to themselves but share this to others (Mary, 26). Mary (26) said that “My goal is literally to make as many entrepreneurs as I can”. Another example is shown by Dani “what I wanted. To give value. And personally I get valued, you know, reading the right books, surrounding yourself with the right people. Yeah. So, I’m the Messenger.” Peter (21) gives value to people as well by vlogging his whole journey from taking a product to the market, so people will know how they can do it as well. This can also be done in the event industry for example, Moreno “Like every Friday, we gonna like doing, we gonna say like, Yo, this or this, this music all come out today”, in order for people to know more songs and even familiarize themselves with the songs before Moreno will play this kind of music at his event. The overarching similarity between the opinions of the people interviewed, is that they all find value from their customers.

4.1.2 From hobby to work

Having discussed the concept of entrepreneurship, it is now possible to move to the concept of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. An interesting fact is that 10 out of the 15 lifestyle entrepreneurs, started with their business as a hobby. Good examples of turning a hobby into work are Aylano (22) and Bart (23). Aylano (22) mentioned that “it was like an organic process that we kind of ruled into

a point where we'd actually become a company and not just, uh, friends doing fun stuff.”. Bart explained the transition of doing something fun to a serious way of working more clearly:

Yeah, you're not doing it for fun, in the beginning, it was for fun. But if you are doing 250 events, you're not doing it for fun anymore. You're making the concept you thinking about what's going to happen on the party? Are a lot of people coming and if they are not coming then it will be really shit if they don't come as you will lose money.

In addition, Bart (23) mentioned that it started a little bit as a joke, but he found a gap in the market and therefore exploited the opportunity. Furthermore, Mary (26) started her clothing company just because she loves being creative. In the interview, she said “I just did it just because I love doing it. And new nothing about selling try to build a business I didn't have a clue”, after she got international calls that people were interested in her work, she was thinking why not? She created a business from it and now she is active on an international level with selling her African influenced clothes. More importantly, she stressed that “It was not about money. I just wanted to be creative.” Starting with something you like doing and turning it to a job seems common among Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. With Dyllan (23) for example, it was very spontaneous, he was just chilling with his best friend and then they decided to do something with a shared interest which was fashion, and out of this idea, they created their own brand.

Sharon, a 23-year-old photographer, established her company in a similar way as Mary (26). She started just by doing shoots because she likes photography and after a while, she got more and more assignments. At a certain point, even though pushed by her boyfriend to put her work out on social media, she went to the chamber of commerce and registered herself as a photography company. Sharon (23) also mentioned that for smaller business it is more important to share your passion, and then along the way learning how you are going to do it business wise. She addressed multiple times that sharing her passion is important, and it only stimulates her more if she can make some money with it as well. That would be the best of both worlds (Sharon, 23).

Nonetheless, Stijn (33) criticizes the word passion since he thinks that “passion is very a difficult, tricky and overweighed word.”, he would rather replace it by the word enthusiasm. He claims that one can find a passion for everything, namely, the more you do something the more fun it becomes. He elaborates on this argumentation as follow:

You know, if you go for something you get better and you should not wait for like other people to reward it. But to really feel yourself like, Hey, this drives me. It gives me energy. And then you get energetic about it. You get driven. So, um, you just, you don't start out with passion. It's like you develop something.

He claims that passion comes into action whenever someone is doing something for around than years (Stijn, 33). Then you are not only driven and enthusiastic about a hobby for example, but also evolving passion around it.

Next, the analysis shows that all the people are in the process of developing from their hobby towards a job. This is the hallmark of lifestyle entrepreneurs, since the literature explains lifestyle entrepreneur as offering a service or product which is aligned with their personal values, interest and passion in order to maintain a certain lifestyle instead of creating an innovative lifestyle product or service (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007; Marcketti, et al., 2006). To elaborate, the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs all create a product or service which is closely aligned with their personal interest and are not inherently focusing on creating an innovative lifestyle product or service, since photography, organizing events, and a clothing company isn't really innovative products/services.

However, Nana (24) addressed a possible obstacle of working in a team consisting of lifestyle entrepreneurs. When your hobby turned into a business, it doesn't mean that the core activity isn't your hobby anymore. Hence, people have different views on the things what they are doing. Different perceptions of the work the team is doing can cause friction.

One sees this as a hobby for priority level seven. Yeah. One sees, as, as, as, as something extra for him, it's a level twelve, one takes it very seriously. Uh, it's his work fights at level one and there's this guy that's me that's on like level three.

The friction expresses itself that some people find little things more important because his priority level is higher than the others. According to Nana (24), a way to solve these issues are “easy tasks for easy people.”

4.1.3 Liking the style of life

Besides, not only doing something which is closely aligned to your personal interests and values makes someone a lifestyle entrepreneur, but also liking the style of life is part of this concept (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006). The style of life that comes by a lifestyle entrepreneur causes freedom and happiness in the work one is doing. The style is life is more important than making a lot of money. Sharon (23) mentioned that she just liked the style of life, the freedom that she can do an assignment whenever she wants really satisfies her. Further, it is also important to note that lifestyle entrepreneurs have their own view of what being rich contains (Aylano, 22). This is explained by Aylano (22) where he assumes that “how rich you are doesn't really measure how rich really are.”, he supports this by saying that if you are making enough money to live a certain lifestyle that you opt for and if you are happy then “I guess that you know, makes you richer than the richest millionaire that hates his life because he has to go through the office every day and get yelled at because he didn't turn in document X.” Only making a lot of money doesn't make you happy (Joel, 45). Joel, a 45-year-old

founder of his own denim store called Denoism, finds it important that you have to make money in a way that makes you happy. For the African fashion designer Mary (26), the most important aspect of being a lifestyle entrepreneur is to be able to express her creativity. The fact that is busy with creating something is more important than making money, even if she sells nothing. It is not about making all your money, “You can make all the money, but lose touch with what matters in the first place. Then you lose yourself. You’re no longer an entrepreneur, you are a business mogul now just looking for money (Mary, 26).”

Subsequently, there is a certain way of living that you choose for as a lifestyle entrepreneur. This certain way of living contains being independent since you are working without a boss. This is shown by “you don’t want to work for a boss or something”, but you are being independent (Aylano, 22). This independence and doing something that makes you happy resonates with the definition of lifestyle entrepreneurs by Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles (2007). They claim that lifestyle entrepreneurs want to merge job and passion together and they are looking for independence and control (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). To add, Moreno (23) says that only working for the money is not going to make him happy, he wants to do something what he really likes. He never thought from a perspective that focuses on finding ways of making money. Or how can I think of something that is going to generate me money? Far from it, he really wants to do something that makes him happy.

It was not like that because this was just something we thought this may be fun to do and now I’m realizing like, oh, you can really turn this into a real business and really maybe get some money out of it where we’re as we can grow (Moreno, 23).

Even though lifestyle entrepreneurs like the style of life and wants to be happy with this certain lifestyle, another interesting finding is that they are eager to grow in the field that they are in and develop themselves. Sharon (23) for example wants to grow as a photographer in her profession, and Nana (24) feels that it is more than just liking the style of life, he claims that it is about growth. He loves when other people see his growth. Not inherently for the feeling of gaining validation, but more in a way that he experiences growth differently when you are growing. When Nana (24) feels like he is growing and getting recognition from others he seems very subtle about it, “if I can do this, I can do more. And I’m like, I want to go back to finance.”, since he wants to succeed in that area as well.

However, it seems that growth and liking the style of life doesn’t need to be mutually exclusive. Peter (21) feels fulfilled when he has a responsibility and is able to do something. As a consequence of having responsibility, Peter (21) likes the style of life and because he can take responsibility and initiative within this lifestyle, he is able to grow and learn more and better.

Furthermore, one of the most prevailing definitions of lifestyle entrepreneurs is that they want to earn just enough to make a living out of the job they do (Bhide, 1996). This is important because, at

the end of the line, people need to make money to survive (Mary, 26). Especially for the entrepreneurs who are in the early stages of setting up their company like Moreno (23), Pernille (23), and Carlijn (21), it is their goal and ambition to make a living out of the company. Pernille (23) doesn't want it to be only as her hobby, she wants it to be her life. She wants it to be her life because she wants the freedom to travel whenever she wants, to work from every place she wants, and to live wherever she feels like. This prospect is very convenient for her (Pernille, 23). Carlijn (21) also wants to make a living out of it but from a different angle. She is more focused on the products itself "So, you know, also more collections because now our second collection is coming, but we want it like faster, more and faster.", she would really like to continue with this since she is getting a lot of positive feedback from girls on Instagram, feedback examples are "Like, Oh my God, I love your band. And I love that you embrace diversity and women and all kinds of that stuff." Hence, she wants to continue doing this and experience growth in order to make more girls happy with the value and products that she is offering.

Lastly, Moreno's (23) entrepreneurial goal is to make a living out of it. He would be completely fine if he reaches that point: "I found that this is something good and that could make me happy. So, and that it is also a business, that is extra for me (Moreno, 23)." Even for lifestyle entrepreneurs who are in the business a little longer still aim to make a living out of it. However, when aiming for this goal one has to take his work more seriously. Bart (23) emphasise that one has to become more serious when striving to make a living out of it, but also "like making a living out of it is like the win-win situation that everybody wants to anyway (Aylano, 23)."

This kind of developments has a strong connection with how entrepreneurs use social media in order to grow their company. The new set of communication tools made exchanging information both easier and faster, and companies needed to rethink their communication strategies in order to stay relevant (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Jagongo & Kinyua (2013) claim that in order to gain success with social media, entrepreneurs need to have a presence in the environment where the customers reside. In addition, Jagongo & Kinyua (2013) argue that relationships which are built over the internet can increase sales and create opportunities for novel products and services.

4.2 Role of social media for Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs

4.2.1 Showing activity

Social media is of high importance for entrepreneurs. It is most commonly used to show your activity. As we know already, digital media are 'tools, channels, platforms and strategies which we can obtain, produce, and share knowledge about the world around us, through communication and interaction', Lindgren (2017, p. 5). These new set of communication tools made exchanging information both easier and faster, hence, companies needed to rethink their communication strategies in order to stay relevant (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). A great way to introduce this topic is shown by

Joel (45), who uses social media to inspire, inform, and activate people. He explains it like this: “Inform about everything we do. Inspire about a certain type of lifestyle and ways you can wear your clothes. And activate of course sometimes to get them here.”

Social media is so important that even most of the lifestyle entrepreneurs don't even have a physical store anymore. 11 out of the 15 interviewed entrepreneurs don't have a physical store anymore. The effect of this is shown by Aylano (22): “if Facebook and Instagram die today, we would suffer like at least 90%.”

The most used social media platforms are Facebook and Instagram. All of the lifestyle entrepreneurs use these platforms. Only a few are using a third platform, this can either be, LinkedIn, Pinterest, or Snapchat. The lifestyle entrepreneurs who don't have a physical store are only active on social media. Bart (23) mentioned that he has to fix everything on social media. Companies need to rethink their strategies, because according to Bart (23) “back in the days. You used hard copy flyers or pamphlets, the things you are not doing that anymore”, therefore it is key to be active on social media. For organizing club events for instance social media is very important because “You have to be seen. If nobody knows about your product, nobody will come, will buy it (Nana, 24).” A way to let people come to your club event is making people feel intrigued by what you are doing. That is exactly why you need social media because in this way it is possible to expose your product (Aylano, 22). For organizing club events, Facebook is in particular very relevant. This is the only platform where one is able to show to the online public that you are hosting an event (Bart, 23). Moreno (23) even thinks that with parties, social media might be the most important aspect: if there is no social media, the bigger public won't know about your party. In addition, he also claims that everyone who likes to go out to parties, for instance, is able on social media. Which means that your target group is found there, hence, this is the way to find them (Moreno, 23).

Even in other industries, for instance, the clothing branch. Social media is used by clothing companies to create brand awareness, distribution, and reach. To add, also to show the lifestyle so people come to understand what the work is about (Dyllan, 23). Pernille (23) with her female football clothing line mentions that social media is basically “where everything is happening. I don't have my website yet. So now in this stage, it's really like everything because it's you don't have to pay anything.” She enjoys the fact that social media usage is free for everyone and that with a single post you are able to reach a lot of people. This can be done in less than 10 minutes (Pernille, 23). All the eyeballs are on social media is how Peter (21) puts it. It is also important to gain trust by your customer and that by being regularly on social media, people can get to know the company and the face behind the company better, and “it's a very good way to visualize your products or your idea (Tsehai, 43).” For the jewellery company of Carlijn (21), it is important to post constantly as a role of social media. Via this way, the followers will see you over and over again. She calls the relevance of being active on social media like this:

Because sometimes people want to buy something because they see it and then after hmm. I dunno. I dunno. And if you post every day, they will get a reminder and then they will see a lot of different pictures. And when a picture looks good when the content is really nice to see, then they will buy quicker and you can post quotes and like that (Carlijn, 21).

Besides, the independent business owner & real estate owner Dani (29), claims that social media is important to show the world that you are real, also on his personal page. He likes all sorts of social media because he can actually show what he is doing. He phrases it as follow “People buy into people before they buy into business.”, hereby he shows the world what kind of person he is before people are going into business with him. He criticizes people who act fake on Instagram with the following quote: “time will promote you; time will expose you.” Time will tell if you are real, and your personality will eventually come out. People like to see real people (Dani, 29). He mentioned that there are a lot of fake people on Instagram and he wants to be real. In order to show the world that he is the same person as in real life. He wants to give value to people and a connection to do something good “I enjoy life and I want to show people and which vehicle I actually use, you know, to do the things that we want in life.”

Jagongo & Kinyua (2013) claim that in order to gain success with social media, entrepreneurs need to have a presence in the environment where the customers reside. A way to have a presence in the online environment of customers is by the frequency of uploading posts. The interviewees showed a very big difference in the number of posts per week. The most prevailing answer was every other day with some exceptions. It is important to post at least every other day to generate more traffic to your page. Bassourama (23) for example, posts every other day for his company, mostly to generate more traffic. Also, Stijn, Bart, and Joel post around every other day on Instagram. Joel (45) posts every other day because he doesn’t “just want to talk just for talking. When I say something, I want to contribute.” On one side, Stijn (33) claims that every other day suits him the most because he noticed “that the content quality really drops because it gets in your head like, oh, I need to post tonight and need to post tomorrow.” On the other side, if you have enough good content, one is able to post like 4 times a day (Mary, 26). She mostly uploads pictures of her clothes, photo-shoots, and events which she attended (Mary, 26).

Moreover, what also helps is posting at a certain time frame. Sharon (23) for instance mostly posts around 5:00 to 8:00 pm since via the Instagram business page, one is able to see around which times most of your followers are online, then, she tries to experiment which days work the best (Sharon, 23). Wesley, a 32-year-old Calisthenics SMI, used to go a bit further than looking at which times most of his followers are online. He posted around 4 times per day because if you post more content on Instagram, you will get more engagement.

I posted at nine o'clock in the morning, but I posted something with calisthenics, calisthenics, the old guy doing calisthenics a baby doing calisthenics, something people in wheelchairs. It is really thought through. It's really sneaky actually, but still because in the morning when you wake up, you're at most emotional because your brain isn't working fully. So you're most in contact with your feelings. If you see this baby doing push-ups or whatever, you're more likely to do ah. It's cute and you give the like (Wesley, 32).

He applied this strategy for every post he posted during the day. Another reason why he posted this many times per day is as follow “So if you have like 10,000 people that will follow you when you post something online, maybe a thousand, will see it. Even if they all follow you.” Linda, a 29-year-old lifestyle/make-up SMI, nevertheless, posts every other day as well. The reason for this is as follow: “I know I should leave for a day in between because I noticed that when you post every day, the engagement on the post is actually lower (Linda, 29).”

4.2.2 Positioning on social media

Besides, another change in the social web is that the customer becomes an integral part of the sales process (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Which means that customer reputation management (CRM) needs to be changed accordingly. Four interviews indirectly mentioned CRM and how it had an impact on their sales. However, three of them only spoke about CRM when a negative occurrence happened within their company. Just Pernille (23) mentioned CRM in a positive way because she is still testing her products, she gave out free samples to people in return for constructive feedback. She asks them what they like and what not “So I can change it because I can try everything and I can be happy with it, but it doesn't matter if it's not looking good on other people. So right now, my audience is like my test persons in a way.” Hence, her audience is currently playing a big role, they play an integral part of the sales process. An example of how social CRM had a negative impact on sales is provided by Bart (23). When Bart (23) organized a New Year's Eve party which in the end turned out bad, Bart (23) sold too many tickets, the bouncers weren't nice towards people and where sending people home who didn't even enter the club, even though some of these people traveled for two hours and already bought a ticket. They got a lot of negative publicity from their customers the day after. Luckily, they refunded the people who were victims of this and together with the feedback, Bart (23) improved his service. Bart was aware that this could damage his reputation, hence, he took immediate action. However, even though he knows that it is bad for the reputation he claims that it heals by time. He made a comparison to the festival Valhalla which also threw an unsuccessful event “I think it heals by time of course, but I think people will recognize when they see there's a new Valhalla Festival launched on Facebook and be like fuck that shit and we're not going there because it was so shitty last year.”

Besides, the other interviewees mentioned that they were always open for feedback from the audience, but they prefer sticking to their own vision (Sharon, 23). What they do make use of is collective intelligence. They are using information from the social media audience to improve their products or service (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Joel (45) gives a great example of this:

Well, sometimes we ask people what they like and what they want what they prefer and there are moments we need that information to make the plan for the next season. So, I used their polls to get information (Joel, 45).

Here we see the importance of customer intelligence by Joel (45) asking questions through Instagram to gain information from the audience. Based on the information provided by this, it gives an indication the products he needs to buy for next year.

Furthermore, another important social media strategy is to react to all the comments you got on Instagram. This should be one of your basic principles (Peter, 21). This is important because you must appreciate the comments that you get (Stijn, 33). However, Stijn mentioned that he only appreciates the comments which are genuine. There are also people who comment stuff just to get your attention. He calls this fake and, therefore, doesn't even check their account "So if people respond, genuinely I will check their account too." Overall, lifestyle entrepreneurs agree that communication through social media has to be done in a polite way. Since you don't know if the person would be a future client (Mary, 26). Even when people react in a negative way, you still have to be polite or ignore the comment (Mary, 26). Reacting in a humorous way on negative problems is also an option (Tsehai, 43; Bassourama, 23).

However, lifestyle entrepreneurs also experience a lot of competition on social media. Sharon (23) mentioned this like:

"What's also difficult as a photographer slash creative on Instagram, like there are like so many people now doing that. Like you get like, you can open your Instagram and you already see like five photographers. So, it's also difficult to distinguish yourself and get clients (Sharon, 23)."

Sharon (23) briefly mentions it here, is that you have to distinguish yourself from the online competition. On social media, there are a lot of people who are copying each other (Stijn, 33). Sharon (23) adds to this that you can get easily influenced by a lot of other photographers on Instagram. To elaborate, you have to be conscious that you are not doing the same and create your own style. Stijn (33), for example, looks at Instagram as a tool to figure out how he can tweak his showcasing a little bit in order that his page works better. Bassourama (23) also mentions the relevance of staying true to your own core and how you bring value and help people. The consequence of this is that as an outcome you might not be posting flashy content all the time: "but you still get remarks from people

that are heartwarming that already really helped (Bassourama, 23).” Staying true to yourself to differentiate the company from others is also shown by Dyllan (23): “We are just us, nobody can be us. That's just the thing. I just think that aspect just with us anyway. And the way we do it. I think that will just take us further.”

4.2.3 Role of Instagram

As already have been mentioned, Instagram plays an important role in this research. Therefore, it is important how both lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMI's perceive Instagram as a platform. Literature positions Instagram as a mobile photo and video capturing and sharing service (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). It provides consumers with an immediate way to capture and share their life moments through pictures and videos. These pictures and videos can be manipulated by filters (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Instagram is predominantly perceived as a negative influence on mental health conditions, whereas it still functions as a handy tool for business. Wesley (32) compares Instagram with a drug dealer: “I see Instagram, like a drug dealer and the more you will use it, the more you get hooked to it, the more you will receive. So if you post more content on Instagram, you will get more engagement.” Additionally, you will get hooked by it once you use it consistently. You will get hooked to receiving likes (Wesley, 32). Even though Wesley (32) was conscious that it is a business tool, it felt that Instagram consumed him. He stresses the downsides of Instagram very much that it is not good for your mental health because:

And it's really hard to like if you are working with your phone for three hours, four hours a day. Yeah. And people like you, and make comments and everything that it does something with your, with your mind, you get your acknowledgment from who you are through those photos (Wesley, 32).

Wesley (32) continues with addressing the downsides and claims that Instagram has a fake effect. It causes that people are going to compare their lives with famous people who are posting about their luxurious lifestyle (Wesley, 32). Angel, a 20-year-old fashion SMI, adds to this that a lot of people are indeed focused on getting validation through Instagram. People are starting to depend on the validation of others, whereas one is also able to give this validation to yourself by yourself (Angel, 20). Moreover, people will not only have a negative self-image as a consequence of comparing your own life to others but also when you see that your account is not working (Stijn, 33). However, people aren't realizing that there are 800 million users so the chance that your account will explode is very limited (Stijn, 33). Wesley (32) talks out of experience since he explained that “I drifted from myself, my own purpose.” He acknowledges that it is easy to fall in the trap of getting hooked to the likes and comments you gain. He claims that receiving likes and comments through Instagram triggers dopamine in your brain. Therefore, he warns people to not get addicted to this and even connects

symptoms of a gambling machine to Instagram (Wesley, 32). Therefore, he stimulates people to think about the following question “you can ask yourself; do you want to sit in front of a gambling machine all day? That's the thing. That's the question (Wesley, 32).” However, it is not only getting hooked to the likes you get, but Instagram is also built to make sure you come back in order that you don't lose your engagement. The reason that we are all so active on social media is how Stijn (32) “calls it because our world is so developed around performing, but status, especially here in the Western world.”, and finds this a sad thing.

However, it is important to keep using Instagram as a tool and not as a way to live “And it's really important that if you post a picture and it doesn't get that many likes that you think are shit, make maybe the sponsors won't like me because this photo isn't that well”, a tip Wesley (23) gave is to post less and care less about the likes you get. Next, Instagram is a reality and it can help you with your business. Even Stijn (32) and Wesley (32) still get assignments out of Instagram too. Wesley portrays Instagram also as a website. Instead of scrolling down a few text blocks to get to know the company or person, you just have to scroll down through some pictures to get a grasp about a person or company (Wesley, 32). Nevertheless, Carlijn (21) finds Instagram nowadays even more important than having a website, she refers to Instagram as your business card.

Furthermore, Instagram is mostly being referred to as a marketing tool where you can promote your online visibility (Pernille, 23; Wesley, 32). Frank, a 30-year-old Radio DJ, and SMI, he says that Instagram is a very useful tool for him because, with this platform, he can reach other people and attract them to his radio station. For a company, Pernille (23) got advice to use start using Instagram as early as possible because people want to see the process and feel part of your process. Despite that, it is important to mention that the Instagram crowd is different (Stijn, 33). Even though people would like to be a part of your process, Stijn (32) criticizes the Instagram crowd “It's just different and they don't pay as quickly for your business.”

Moreover, with Instagram, you are also able to use captions below posting a picture or a video. Sharon (23) calls this a love and hate relationship. She found it difficult because a caption can influence a post. She doesn't like to put interesting sentences or quotes below pictures. To attract more attention to the picture itself she tends to put more informative captions: “this was the brands, this was the model. Like something like that, blah, blah. For this and this brand. I think that works best.” Cheyenne, a 23-year-old SMI, also doesn't like to put quotes and sentences, she finds it corny and rather put an emoji below a post which resonates with the content of the post. Linda (29), as an SMI, uses captions more to interact with her audience. Photos which has a caption which engages people usually perform better. Especially when it is a more personal caption since “Everyone loves to answer questions that apply to them.”

Besides, Bassourama (23) claims that social media isn't the real world, you still need a true tactic and true value to develop your page. A true tactic is offered by Linda who wants to try to keep it real. She tries to be personal. However, she found out a true difference between the usage of

Instagram stories and Instagram posts “the posts that I post on my Instagram needs to be more professional than in stories show the more real me (Linda, 29).”

4.2.4 Differences in platforms

The most common platforms which are being used by lifestyle entrepreneurs are Facebook and Instagram, but Facebook and Instagram are used differently. For SMIs, Instagram is the most used platform, since Facebook is for the people you know quite well, and Instagram is very accessible to a wide community. Bart, a 21-year-old SMI and model, also mentions that Facebook is really for the people close which is close to him and Instagram is for everyone who wants to follow him. Via Facebook, it is also not easy to reach a lot of people compared to Instagram (Linda, 29).

Nonetheless, Facebook is widely used by lifestyle entrepreneurs. For an event, Facebook is vital since the event is easier to find and it is more promoted on Facebook compared to Instagram. Once you want to attend an event it is very easy to keep it in your Facebook calendar, Instagram doesn't have this option (Moreno, 23). Moreno calls the difference in platform usage as “I think you can use them for different purposes. I think Instagram is more for photos, maybe, videos and I think Facebook is, yeah, it's more for the event, like to know when it is where it is.”

Besides, Aylano (23) noticed that there has been going on a shift from Facebook to Instagram “Facebook used to be like a major part of what we did. We basically, the main thing we did, and now with the urge of Instagram in the last year, we've had to adjust our strategies (Aylano, 23)”. Bart (23) also sees this happening, he mentioned that a lot of people aren't using Facebook anymore like before.

People are using Instagram more often. To be more specific, according to Cheyenne (23) younger people are using Instagram more often compared to Facebook “Facebook is also for the older ones, Instagram is still quite young. For example, if you hear when I tell people that my mother has Instagram, they say why she has Instagram.” However, Stijn (32) also mentioned that even if the age on Facebook is a bit higher “But Facebook on that gives me still business on that, for that audience.”

Some entrepreneurs leave Facebook more on the side, when Pernille (23) posts something, the post automatically uploads on Facebook as well. Mainly because her target group is more active on Instagram than on Facebook (Pernille, 23). Besides, she uses Instagram more than Facebook because “I also think it's just because like in normally I'm also more active on Instagram than Facebook. It's more normal for me to be on Instagram than Facebook. I don't really so I guess that's why.”, so it is also perceived out of the personal experience.

Next, there is also a difference in the usage of chatbots and robots on both platforms. For Facebook, lifestyle entrepreneurs make use of chatbots in order to help and funnel their audience to the products/service (Bassourama, 23). On Instagram there is no usage of chatbots, but some lifestyle entrepreneurs use robots. Robots are being used for likes and reactions under other peoples' accounts. In order to get a lot of viewers to your page (Bart, 23).

Lastly, there is also a relevant difference in advertisements between Facebook and Instagram, where Instagram advertisements are perceived to be more difficult than Facebook advertisements. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs assume advertisements on Facebook is cheaper and more effective than Instagram. Facebook namely works more with interaction whereas Instagram works more with views, especially with the Instagram story (Nana, 24). Facebook is perceived cheaper because you pay beforehand, whereas Instagram charges you by click per view (Mary, 26). Bassourama (23) also mentions working more with Facebook ads instead of Instagram ads “we have a bigger community on Facebook and through time we noticed that it works better (Bassourama, 23).” Stijn used advertisements on both Facebook and Instagram but he came to the conclusion that “It doesn't work. No Instagram, so it's a bit of fucked up, to be honest”, since people randomly like your post. Therefore, he uses Facebook advertisements now and sees that it works better: “And I also noticed that actually if you target well you really get followers, which like your brand (Stijn, 32).” Hence that Facebook is preferred over Instagram “Because you need this interaction on your event. And on Facebook you can get more information, on Instagram, you just can get the ticket link (Nana, 23).”

4.2.5 Algorithm

A year ago, Facebook bought Instagram, as of that moment Facebook implemented a new algorithm for Instagram. This new algorithm has multiple effects on both lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMIs. They both didn't uncover how this new algorithm works and they lost engagement because of it. It used to be so easy to get a lot of likes and new followers (Angel, 20). Wesley (32) said that it wasn't hard to cheat back in the days “just to post a lot of feed.” Linda (29), who has around 180,00 followers now explains the effect of the new algorithm as “I had a, a much larger follower account, back then it was around like 200,000 so I lost quite a few followers due to the new algorithm changes.” Nowadays, due to the new algorithm, the posts don't get as much exposure anymore (Linda, 29). The new algorithm Instagram uses confuses people: “with all the new changes, I don't actually understand it, you know, it keeps changing and so I don't really know how to adjust my posting schedule or type of posts. Yeah. so please Instagram (Linda, 29).”

Consequently, Linda (29) wants to understand the new algorithm first, before she is going to focus on growth again. A way to understand the new algorithm is to figure out which kind of posts performs well and what creates the most engagement (Linda, 29). Wesley (32) adds to this that it is really hard to attract a new audience, it is feasible “but you really need to be listening to the new algorithm and really be up to date about everything (Wesley, 32).” Sharon (23), Stijn (32) & Linda (29) explained that once you post something, the algorithm of the business page only shows your post to 10% of your followers. Moreover, when this post within one hour doesn't score high in engagement (comments + likes), it will be shown to fewer people (Sharon, 23). Hence, the post visibility really depends on how much engagement the post receives within one hour (Linda, 29). Via

this way, Instagram forces you to use advertisements in order to expose your post to a larger public (Sharon, 23).

However, even in the new algorithm, there is a way to beat it. This has to be done to create high engagement within the first hour so that the post will be exposed to more followers. Sharon (23) explains how this is done. Influencers or lifestyle entrepreneurs such as photographers are currently using an app called Telegram. On this app, they are active in group chats, Sharon (23) explains what they do in these group chats as follow:

And whenever someone would post something, the other ones had to like their post, then you would get that in return whenever, so you would say like, okay, posted a new picture and then you'll say, okay, I've liked everything of the previous 24 hours what was posted in the app.

Via this way, both SMIs and lifestyle entrepreneurs support each other in terms of engagement. It is like a trick which is being used to go against the algorithm (Sharon, 23).

4.3 Social media marketing strategies

4.3.1 Advertising

The rise of digital media has influenced the mindset of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs have to come up with new marketing strategies and need to act differently which include strategies on social media (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). One of these social media marketing strategies contains advertising. Companies use advertising for persuasive purposes, altering consumers tastes, reducing the cost of information acquisition by consumers and advertising can also be informative (Goldfarb, 2014). Although, a relatively new trend is online advertising. This is understandable because the costs of targeting by online advertising are lower than offline advertising (Goldfarb, 2014). Online advertisement is being seen as a way to attract new followers, viewers, to create awareness but also to obtain sales and clients. Aylano (23) describes advertising as a part of adapting to new environments. He also sees a potential threat of online advertising because he acknowledges a mass shift towards online advertising nowadays, therefore, it is important to get ahead of the advertisement. He asks the following question to remind the importance of this “how many times can you watch movies before it starts to get old? So, I guess, yeah, like what you're saying on social media advertising is very important and learning how to do that.” Mary (26) explains advertisement as the hope to attract new viewers and legit followers who are sincerely interested in the product. Reasons to advertise is when an event is happening, or when the lifestyle entrepreneurs are launching a new product (Nana, 26). For example, Nana (24) posts around 6 advertised posts when an event is coming up. Bassourama (23) can post like two advertisements for an event, but he also places advertisements for different programs he offers that he wants to give a boost. However, it can also be more than this, Aylano (22)

is with his company always advertising because he has multiple weekly club events. He continues by saying that at the end of this year he will reach five figures which he has paid for advertising (Aylano, 22). With these advertisements, companies want to attract new followers who might be new customers (Peter, 21).

Besides, in order to advertise a post, one must design the post first. It is vital for a successful post that the picture has to be self-made, the product needs to be clearly visible, and you shouldn't put too much text since this will disturb people. Even though there are not a set of rules to do this, there are some basic principles where you should conform to (Carlijn, 21). One is to be sure that the pictures you use must be made by yourself. Next, Carlijn (21) explains that "with your own products, you really have to see the product really well, and not too much text. Not too much text", when people put too much text, they are not going to read it. Furthermore, the interviewees' platforms of advertising are mostly through Instagram stories since that is where the most attention lies. Since people use stories more, they will see your ad faster.

What already has been mentioned is that Facebook is used more often for advertisement than Instagram. Therefore, companies also have to adjust their advertisement strategy accordingly. Instead of assigning €300 on Facebook ads, one splits this amount of money in €200 to Facebook and €100 to Instagram (Aylano, 22). This is necessary in order to keep up with the competition "Stay ahead. And if that's cost money, well, that's like, that's an investment you have as a company (Aylano, 22)." Even though Instagram ads are more difficult than Facebook ads, Stijn (32) sees the importance of figuring out how Instagram advertisement works as well "because you can grow your company with it. It's not only bad, but you need to know, uh, how are you going to use it and how it's adding value to your company, but also to your life."

Most of the advertisements which come across doesn't feel real (Linda, 29). However, once an advertisement adds value, like a tutorial, which can support people in growing their business it helps people and, therefore, is more sincere (Stijn, 32). Furthermore, Tsehai(43) refers to online advertising as something you not just do, it needs to be handled carefully. Therefore, Dyllan (23) doesn't want to spend too much attention on advertisement since he doesn't feel capable enough of handling this and rather let it be done by someone who is more knowledgeable about this topic. Besides, the words which are being used in advertisement can make a difference: "it's not like you just make an ad and then, and then wait. Yeah, because it's going really, if you change maybe one word, it can really give you more follow up."

Moreover, Carlijn (21) offers a strategy for advertisement. It is not the case that for every advertisement you publish it is going to generate followers. The first advertisement should be focused on engagement, whereas the second advertisement has to be put on conversion. The engagement advertisement needs to be online for around three days, if it gets an X amount of clicks, then the next step is to put it on conversion (Carlijn, 21). If you realize that the ad works, you create the same ad but then with a focus on conversion. However, if it doesn't reach an X amount of clicks, one should

remove the ad because then it isn't beneficial for your company considering the payoff. Out of this strategy, the Instagram business pages will gain followers out of itself (Carlijn, 21). A little downside on the Instagram advertisement tool is that it is unclear to see if the converted sales are caused by the ad or not since Instagram doesn't offer this tool. It isn't possible to look into the characteristics (Carlijn, 21).

4.3.2 Storytelling

Marketing has a positive impact on the overall performance of a company. Additionally, marketing procedures are effective instruments (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). Another effective marketing instrument to strengthen the overall positive impact on a company's performance is by the use of storytelling. Storytelling revolves around creating valuable, relevant and compelling content by the brand itself on a consistent basis (Pulizzi, 2012). Six lifestyle entrepreneurs are making use of storytelling as a marketing strategy. Pernille (23) tries to exploit this strategy since she is well aware of the consequences it might have on her audience. She calls:

Storytelling is very important; I think because like I'm so little. It's me and we're like just in the beginning and people want to know the story behind it and that will give them like more ownership to it as well (Pernille, 23).

She explains that if a brand only sells clothes with not a real story behind it, customers feel indifferent about it. Whereas, if people feel the reason behind it and develop a connection with a brand because they know what and why the owner of the brand is establishing the brand that would change the whole relation (Pernille, 23). Now, the audience is able to relate to the problem which the brand describes, which gives the audience more ownership too. This results in a feeling that the audience feels that they are part of something bigger (Pernille, 23).

Furthermore, Bassourama (23) is working a lot with incentive stories. Hereby, he uses incentive stories at his audience in order to "working a lot on your understanding. Truly understanding of a target audience in the way that you can really help them.", his aim is to provide value to his audience in order to influence them. Influencing them to participate in a certain program which would suit their needs to become a healthier person for instance (Bassourama, 23). This is a good example of why brands make use of storytelling as a marketing strategy since telling a compelling and incentive story is one of the best ways to persuade someone (Woodside, 2010).

Yet, this incentive story can be both flashy or educational, more importantly, it has to be really personal. He continues by saying that if you are really good at it "you can truly engage people and give them the idea that they already know you (Bassourama, 23)." Hence, by integrating incentive stories, creating a video which adds value, with an incentive in it and a call to action, one is able to improve their conversion out of this storytelling strategy (Bassourama, 23). In addition, Dyllan (23)

claims that storytelling is the most important thing for his business since this refers to their identity. In almost everything they do around social media they try to incorporate a story, from collaborations to single posts. He approaches storytelling as a way to distinguish their company from the rest (Dyllan, 23).

However, Nana (24) mentions that storytelling isn't of importance by organizing club events. He assumes that people don't care that much about the story since people just want to enjoy the party. He refers to this kind of business as a fun business. However, not all of the other club events lifestyle entrepreneurs would agree on that. Moreno (23), for instance, does try to convey a story to his audience to give the party an extra swing. He even implements his audience in his story "using audience in our content. I think that's gonna help telling the story (Moreno, 23)." In addition, Aylano (22) also uses a story to influence his audience. He applies storytelling in a short statement that describes a lot "it has a very loaded message." The message is aimed to play into the feelings of the audience, since he would like people to feel proud on their city (Amsterdam), therefore, by expressing this pride people should come to enjoy the party. Since a lot of people are proud of their city they would like to attend this feeling with like-minded people and celebrate (Aylano, 23).

Besides, Peter (21) shows storytelling in a way that people are able to see his journey towards launching a product in his vlogs. Hereby he creates a more personal relationship with his audience as well. Tsehai (43) also made use of vlogs to tell her story and educated people via this way. As a result, people showed a lot of interest and wanted to know more. This all adds to creating value to the audience, interaction and make them feel part of wherever the brand is working on.

Nevertheless, Stijn (32) has a more negative view on storytelling and positions this phenomenon as the new Coca-Cola, since everybody uses this strategy now. He doesn't completely agree that telling a story needs to be a verbal story. As a photographer, Stijn (32) doesn't feel the urge to tell a verbal story "But you can also tell people you are creating efficient by delivering high quality work constantly. And then with, by showing that they will see or they can interpret the story." This quotation shows that he would rather have people interpreting his story than him telling the verbal story to his audience (Stijn, 32).

4.3.3 Ways to attract new followers

Within this section, multiple marketing strategies will be addressed within Instagram which in the end leads to attracting followers. A surprising marketing strategy was introduced by Bart (23), who lied to their followers that Justin Bieber, a worldwide famous singer, was present at his party. They were using the name of a celebrity which came to the party, therefore, people who missed out want to be at the next party to see if other celebrities are present. How this played out, in the end, is fascinating because even the public played a role in spreading this fake news:

“The day after we walked down the street Willem and I, we hear three girls behind us saying yeah, I saw Justin Bieber at club Nova yesterday blah blah blah blah blah. Even though he wasn't even there. So there was a great thing to see and hear about from all the people.”

Bart (23) mentioned that it was a great thing to hear, for him it looked like a successful strategy. He does the same thing with giving away free VIP tables. Sometimes he just posts this message to generate more traffic and more engagement around the party even when the VIP tables are already sold out. However, he was the only lifestyle entrepreneur using this strategy.

What lifestyle entrepreneurs do have in common as a strategy is that posting consistently is an important way to get more followers. It is even better if certain days are attached to a certain subject where you are going to post about (Bassourama, 23). When posting consistently “I hope eventually it's going to be seen, and hopefully it attracts the right people (Moreno, 23).” Peter (21) and Stijn (32) reaffirms that posting consistently is number one to attract new followers because it really works, but also “people like other people see that other people liked it (Peter, 21).”

Others, aren't looking at a specific way to attract followers and looks at this as a more natural process (Joel, 45).

Furthermore, Stijn (32) explains the easiest strategy to attract followers. He wouldn't recommend it because then “you're a slave of the content system.” In order to do this strategy, one has to be on Instagram many hours per day. Stijn (32) adds that you have to brownnose a lot “You have to give comments, look for hashtags and make sure that your work is tailored towards what people like get on the feature accounts and then you grow.”, this will make your account grow big in numbers. He finishes this strategy by saying that if you do it for the likes only, you will become unhappy, and the ventures that are going to collaborate with you are also only looking at your statistics and don't really appreciate the rest of your work (Stijn, 32).

Besides, Stijn (32) briefly stressed the use of hashtags. Linda (29) goes more in-depth about it. A way to attract new followers is to figure out what the most popular hashtags are and what kind of hashtags your audience is currently attracted to (Linda, 29). Yet, you shouldn't utilize the same hashtag for several times otherwise Instagram will ghost your account. This means that for a short period of time people won't see your posts (Sharon, 23). Subsequently, Carlijn (21) figured out a hashtag strategy. In the beginning, she used generic hashtags, such as #jewellery, but this didn't add to the number of likes she received on a picture. She found out that you can use a maximum of 30 hashtags, so did this. It is important to start using hashtags which aren't searched for that much, like 10.000 times.

“if they search on hashtag jewellery then I think maybe 3 million people are searching for that. You won't get high because you don't have a lot of likes, but if you use like, silver

gemstone or something. Then people search for it like 10,000 times and then because it's a nice picture, mostly you will get higher and then people will see it more often.”

When people click on your hashtag and are being referred to your page, your page will be pushed higher on the Instagram explore page. If this happens consistently for the next 10 posts or so, you can put hashtags which are searched for at a bigger audience, so you can grow.

Moreover, a good-looking feed will also attract new followers, because your Instagram page is your online business card. Another way to attract new followers is provided by Nana (24) who explains a very simplistic approach. He says that “mostly I'm getting just friends to ask friends to follow your page, but you can also just, send people messages (Nana, 24).” Besides, you can also invite all the people who like your posts from your page to like your page if they aren't already doing that (Nana, 24).

In addition, another fascinating finding is derived from the interview with Mary (26). She claims not doing much of attracting followers, her clients do that for her:

No clients that I work with, they do that for me. I can just sit on my lap. This lady, I told her she about you as she's come in and then she comes and she's happy. She goes tells her friends (Mary, 26).

This is the outcome of always satisfying your clients she mentions. An example of word of mouth and satisfying the clients is combined in the following quote: “had one chick that I worked with, and she came with like six girls.” If people are happy with the product, they might post it on Instagram, whereby other people also got exposed to it, out of that someone else sometimes contact her via the DM that she saw her company by a friend of her for instance, and she has a new customer.

Next, to grow your Instagram page as an SMI it can really help to join a TV program. Both Frank (30) and Bart (21) has done this with significant results. With Frank (30) for example, he participated in the glass house, which is a Dutch TV program for Serious Request, in one week he grew from 10k followers to 25k followers. This is really a blast since this TV program reaches 12 million people. Fortunately, he was able to hold it and at his peak, Frank (30) had 33k followers. He held his followers because he stayed posting even after the program has finished. Hence, he is looking to participate in another TV program which has another target group so he can boost himself once more.

Lastly, another marketing strategy to gain more followers is through buying followers for your Instagram page in the first place. Some people don't see the opposition against it (Angel, 20). Since once a page has under 1.000 followers it comes across as more personal and you aren't likely to follow that page. Whereas, if a page has 10.000 followers, people tend to think that the page has to be inspirational in a sense and are more likely to follow (Angel, 20). Hence, it can serve as a good view,

an eye catcher is how Bart (23) calls it. Moreno (23) understands that people are doing it because of the same reason Angel described it. People feel more comfortable following a bigger page and to follow a page with a small number of followers can come across as uncool (Moreno, 23). However, 11 interviewees criticized buying followers on your Instagram. It comes across as fake when someone has 10.000 followers and three likes (Wesley, 32). Moreno (23) thinks that a page which buys followers will eventually get exposed. Moreover, Bassourama (23) criticizes this since “You have a lot of followers, but they don't see your content. And it might have, it might even happen that the right people don't see your content because you have a lot of followers.”, therefore, it is perceived as useless and fake (Bart, 23; Stijn, 33). Pernille (21) rather has 200 loyal followers than many fake followers (23). Additionally, they don't bring value and aren't contributing to the engagement (Peter, 21). A healthy engagement rate is around 10%, but with fake followers, you can't reach this (Linda, 29). When the engagement rate is very low, people are less likely to perceive you as credible. To add, when looking at reasons to collaborate, more value is being placed on engagement instead of the number of likes or number of followers (Stijn, 33; Wesley, 32).

4.3.4 Brand collaboration

The literature discusses the phenomena of co-creation as a consequence of consumers who are now able to react and share their opinions about everything that is related to a brand (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). Brands need to be able to communicate with their customers to improve the brands' online reputation (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). The increase in customer power has led to co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). However, in the interviews, no such thing as co-creation was discovered. The lifestyle entrepreneurs mentioned that they are always open for feedback but prefer sticking to their own vision. Lifestyle entrepreneurs who come close to co-creation are Tsehai (43) and Joel (45). Tsehai (43) changed the offered products to the needs of the customers when they told her which products they would rather see. After she listened to them in the first place, she concluded that this isn't what she wanted and decided to stick to her own vision (Tsehai, 43). Joel (45) used the input of his followers via social media to decide which products he will stock for the next season, based on what his followers like the most.

Instead of co-creation, the analysis revealed co-creation in another form. The lifestyle entrepreneurs aren't necessarily looking to co-create with their audience, but rather co-create with other companies. Therefore, it is more about brand collaborations instead of co-creation since co-creation is focused on the relationship between brand and customer and not between brands (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). 11 out of the 15 lifestyle entrepreneurs has done a collaboration with another company. Collaborations with other brands are an opportunity to grow and to get featured to another audience. To start with, Bart (23) started with collaborations at the beginning of his career, he used this as an opportunity to grow. Nowadays, he uses collaborations differently. His current party on Tuesday, which is every Tuesday already for two years, has lost its exclusivity. Hence, he uses

collaborations to attract a different audience, he also knows that he is kind of dependent of this strategy because “I see when I don't have a collaboration now it will be a miserable night because a lot of people don't come for us anymore (Bart, 23).” Mary adds (26) that collaborations with other brands are the second most important aspect of social media marketing. She calls this important because:

It's is beneficial to get some lingo with different people. That is not in your main system that you are in your country. In that way you also gain international views and collaboration is possible from international artists or different companies out there (Mary, 26).

However, she doesn't want to jump into new collaborations because of a negative previous experience (Mary, 26). The original deal was that Mary would make clothes from the fabric provided by the other company and that both of the companies would get exposure on their social media channels, yet this never happened “I posted mine on Facebook. I tagged them in everything. And let's say they never reacted. And also, never tagged me about both the post or whatsoever.” This can be the result of not having established an official contract. This was based on mutual trust. Nonetheless, Tsehai (43) also did a collaboration based on trust which was successful, she calls it beautiful “that people trust you enough to sell their, send their stuff to you to try it out, you know, no formal contracts to be honest (Tsehai, 43).” In other words, it is possible to have a collaboration based on trust without a formal contract, but you have to be careful who you collaborate with. Aylano (22), uses collaborations as well but he stresses that the collaboration needs to be established in an organic way. Mostly with people who stood beside him from the beginning he started his company. It also has to be beneficial for both parties (22). It is very useful to get featured on the others account, especially if they are bigger “And they mentioned you and I mentioned them and it's a little bit of win-win” that leads to generating traffic to your account (Stijn, 32).

A result of having a collaboration is getting more followers out of it. Pernille (23) had a collaboration with a Norwegian football club where people could attend a competition to win a shirt. This resulted in a lot of new followers for her brand (Pernille, 23). For Tsehai (43), doing a collaboration is a way to sell and promote her products. Since the people she is collaborating with are mostly designer from Africa, she provides them a platform to the Western world which can lead to several business opportunities (Tsehai, 43). In conclusion, Dyllan (22) did so far only one collaboration with a guy who is from the same neighbourhood. The reason he collaborated with him is that “we thought he was dope, he found us dope, and we also liked the idea behind it. For example, if we just see a vision behind it. Then we are open to it.” The idea behind the collaboration fell in line with the beliefs Dyllan (22) has, therefore, he wanted to start a collaboration.

4.4 Influencer marketing usage

4.4.1 View on SMIs

How people describe SMIs and how they are perceived varies immensely among lifestyle entrepreneurs. Answers can be found on both sides of the spectrum. Literature defines SMIs as people who are working to acquire a kind of celebrity capital by developing as much attention on social media platforms as possible to craft an authentic brand (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). This authentic brand can be used by business and advertisers for consumer outreach (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). The latter is used multiple times in the interviews why lifestyle entrepreneurs work with SMIs. SMIs are mostly perceived as someone who has a lot of followers, where their social media channels are their work, who inspires other people and someone you slightly look up to. Yet, what people define as a lot of followers varies, for some people this starts at 50.000 followers for others above the 100.000.

Both Angel (20) and Linda (29) argued that this concept is very new because a couple a years ago people would have just called themselves blogger or vlogger etc. However, the SMIs in this research don't inherently call themselves social media influencers. They rather call themselves a source of inspiration or a content creator, mainly because SMI doesn't have a positive connotation (Linda, 29). Nevertheless, Angel (20) finds that everyone is an influencer in a sense, only it differs how big your influencer reach is. Instagram adds to this that the influence is captured in a post "So you have like, high engagement, etc. So, you might reach more people than you would normally when you're just walking on the street, you know? So, in that sense, social media influencer", this is done by means of creating content (Angel, 20). In addition, Linda (29) would call an SMI as "someone that you slightly look up to but also feels like someone you can actually talk to him and have a connection with like a friend, sort of like a distant friend, uh, where you get makeup tips (Linda, 29)." In addition, Frank (30) sees an influencer as someone who can encourage others to take action. An example is the Iceland hype where an airplane company used SMI's to inspire their audience to visit Iceland "At one point you had a whole Icelandic hype that everyone went to Iceland. That was simply driven by social influence. Just send people through Iceland Air who said just come here if you just post (Frank, 30)".

Moreover, there are also different types of influencers. There are SMIs who are very much involved with their audience, but then there are also SMIs who aren't really involved with their audience. A reason for this can be that these type of SMIs have such a big following base that they are unable to interact with them (Linda, 29). Sharon's (23) view on SMIs pretty much resonates with Angel's and Linda's definition of it. She defines them as "it could be either a girl or a boy of course, in sharing their lifestyle, having this big reach and I think they really engage with our audience think." They present themselves as in doing collaborations with brands (Sharon, 23).

However, not everyone perceives an SMI in the same way. Linda (29) feels that people who aren't in the same business underestimate the work she does. Even while Instagram only allows

people to upload a video of one minute, it can take a whole day to edit one video. Mary (26) is an example who in Linda's (29) eyes underestimate her work since Mary (26) thinks that "They don't really do much." According to Mary (26), SMIs literally use their followers to make money. Bart (23) feels that SMIs feel high of themselves. Although, he acknowledges that they probably worked hard for it. Nana (24) is also on the slightly negative side and looks against SMIs with scepticism. He calls them disloyal because: "Like they switch up real quick. So, if this party is now popping, they will promote that one. But if it's, if it's not there, we'll never promote it because it will ruin the image (Nana, 24)." SMIs only want to do things which favours them the most, Nana (24) argued this "with people don't want to do things but they want to get things."

Furthermore, Korotina and Jargalsaikhan (2016) refer to micro-celebrities as SMIs who are not famous in a common way. They are being referred to as a promise of 'authenticity' (Khamis, et al., 2017). They can come across as more trustworthy than the bigger SMIs since they give more of an insight into the practitioners' private lives. However, Sharon (23) argues that the definition of a micro-influencer is really in flux, "It's not really like, a definition that's like, okay, micro influencers from these and this number of followers. Same goes for macro think. That really depends." Since once you have an account of for example 300 followers, and not an account of 10.000, this is a macro account. Yet, if you have an account of 1.000.000 followers, an account of 20.000 followers would be considered micro account. Hence, it is difficult to say between which number of followers one is a micro-influencer and from which amount of followers one is a macro-influencer (Sharon, 23).

4.4.2 Impact SMI

Next, the impact SMIs have on a business is that they are closer to their followers than a brand. People want to compare themselves with them and sometimes do the same things they do. The impact of SMIs on a business is shown by the following statement:

But if they see an influencer that they love and want to be like posts like this amazing sandwich or like, oh my God, she ate there so it must be like real, even though they don't know she's getting paid to do it paid or whatever (Aylano, 22).

The reason behind the impact of SMIs on their audience is argued by Korotina and Jargalsaikhan (2016) who claim that through the alliance with an SMI, a business tries to build a more direct relationship with consumers in their daily life. In other words, SMIs have a more personal relationship with their followers than a brand, hence, the impact is bigger. Pernille (23) adds to this that people slightly look up to an SMI because they think he/she is cool and see them wearing a clothing piece. They will copy them because they also want to be as cool as them. Besides, SMIs also have an impact where they add credibility to a brand "Because if, uh, for example, influencer likes your brand, it makes sure brand all of a sudden more credible (Moreno, 23)." Even when it is just a

random normal t-shirt, when an SMI wears this t-shirt, it suddenly becomes cool and everyone wants to wear it as well, just because this SMI is wearing it (Moreno, 23). For Frank (30), credibility is the most important aspect as an SMI. He understands with his specific personal brand; he will only have an impact on his audience if he stays true to this personal brand. This empowers his credibility as an SMI towards his followers. Staying true to your personal brand also includes not jumping on an internet hype because everyone is doing it, he prefers staying true to himself and not participating in his hype if this would damage his credibility (Frank, 30). Moreover, to make sure that one comes across as credible, a product needs to fit with the style of the SMI. If an SMI normally doesn't care about women football clothes and all of a sudden an SMI wears women football clothes, it doesn't come across as sincere and credible so the impact will be limited because you never stood up for it or always walked in men's football clothes (Pernille, 23).

Carlijn (21) mentions that SMIs can help to boost your visibility, they help with sales, and SMIs lead their followers to the company's platforms. There is only one side note here, Carlijn (21) noticed a difference in impact among different kind of influencers. According to Carlijn (21), on one side, there are the aesthetically pretty looking SMIs on Instagram. The number of followers is not really of importance here, but more importantly, the followers from these SMIs don't really want to buy clothes that they are wearing (Carlijn, 21). On the other side, there are SMIs who function as a role model. These people have a huge impact; "So when people are seeing that she's wearing something, they are directly like, oh my God, where is it from? And they're going to buy it instantly. We had so many sales out of that (Carlijn, 21)." Additionally, Carlijn (21) also claims that the moment that SMIs post something of your brand, it is possible to get a lot of sales out of it. For instance, when Cheyenne (23) did a collaboration with a tooth whitening company, the company got 20 customers out of Cheyenne posting a post on Instagram. However, after a while, people aren't seeing this post anymore because SMIs will also post other stuff afterwards whereby people aren't seeing your product anymore "So it would give you a boost, but it's not for long-term I think (Carlijn, 21)." Or one must have a collaboration where an SMI is posting more pictures over a longer time period of your brand.

In order to have a bigger impact, it is important that the SMIs have real followers, that they engage with their followers and that people also like you as a person (Wesley, 32). According to Wesley (32), it is important these days to keep it real and honest, to tell the truth because people are done with SMIs who show off "People are done with flexing and if you're like Lil Kleine or whatever, then sure there are enough people who will like it, but this is another thing (Wesley, 32)." He warns for people who are unreal because they will get exposed "if you're flexing too much, they just want to hope that you fall as hard as you can." People are done with SMIs who are only showing the nice stuff and all the fashion the 'look how cool I am' people, there are probably still a lot of people who like this but for Stijn (33) this is not the way anymore. For Wesley (32), people don't have to show their new car or what else, it is about who you are as a person.

Further, the impact of an influencer is also limited according to Bart (23). He talks about sub or category B influencers with a range between 50k and 100k followers who think they can fix a lot because of their followers. Bart (23) gives the example that SMIs say “We can fix a lot of guest list, but people on the guest list are probably coming from Maastricht or Groningen and the party's every Thursday in Amsterdam.”, so the SMIs target a whole different target group which has no value for the event itself (Bart, 23). Hence, it is important for SMIs to know the demographics of their audience since this determines if a collaboration would benefit a brand or not, based upon similarities in the target audiences.

Besides, an important finding in order that SMIs have more impact when the values and the core of a brand and an SMI aligns with each other. Almost every interviewee finds this important. The brand has to pick the right influencer (Carlijn, 21). Finding the right SMIs depends on the kind of company. In order to increase the impact, the SMI has to fit the vision and the idea of the brand (Pernille, 23). Pernille (23) looks for people who really like what she stands for and not just collaborating because a person is an SMI. Bassourama (23) for example mentions that he couldn't work with someone who is out to hurt someone else. The SMI needs to have “an open mind, a friendly and trustworthy character.” In addition, the SMI doesn't even have to be present in the same field, it is more important for Bassourama (23) that “But next to that, if you have an open mind, the willing to spot the willingness of inspire others and truly lift them up and help them to get further or to grow, there's a lot possible.” Dani (29) and Peter (21) find it important that the SMI shares the same affection as they have. Via this way, Peter (21) plays in on the emotion of the SMIs and try to give the product to SMIs without paying them. Since he sees this as a win-win situation for both parties. He gets exposure and the SMI creates a good reputation of himself since he promotes something which he personally feels connected to (Peter, 21). If there is no affection towards the brand, the SMI will probably only do it for the money, but according to Angel (20), if the brand doesn't fit her, that wouldn't make any sense. If an SMI doesn't like a brand, he/she will charge more money for a collaboration, whereas when an SMI does like the brand, he/she will charge less or sometimes almost nothing (Bart, 21). Next, brands also find it important that the influencer has an image which suits the brand (Carlijn, 21). If the SMI doesn't care about the meaning behind jewellery there is no point of collaborating, SMIs need to believe in it “because otherwise, people will get the wrong ideas about your brands (Carlijn, 21).” Additionally, Linda (29) mentioned that the size of the brand doesn't really matter, she works with both big and smaller brands “it really comes down to if I like the products or not.”

Yet, as has been seen, alignment between a brand and an SMI is very important in order to have an impact on the audience since they will feel if it is sincere or not. Yet, one also has to be aware that influencer marketing is also a numbers game “you try and 100 people, 50 react, 20 are interested, and 10 are really doing it. So, it's also a numbers game man on that side (Peter, 21).”

4.4.3 Collaboration with SMI

Influencer marketing consists of collaborations between SMIs and companies. Research shows that there is currently a lack of studies addressing the phenomenon between SMIs and lifestyle entrepreneurs (Booth & Matic, 2011). Firstly, brands and SMIs don't just collaborate with each other. There are certain criteria which have to be met in order to have a collaboration. One is mentioned above that both brands and SMIs need to have an alignment with each other. Secondly, certain requirements have to be met before entering a collaboration. An SMI needs to like the brand as well. When Linda (29) receives a message from a brand she first looks at the brand's reviews. Hereby, she tries to see if she can get a good sense of how and what the quality of the products are like. She has to personally feel that she would be likely to recommend it "if they feel like I can stand behind the brand, then sure that's a collab (Linda, 29)." Yet, if it is in her opinion, not a great product or something that she doesn't personally use and don't feel comfortable about it, she wouldn't do it (Linda, 29).

From the lifestyle entrepreneurial side, lifestyle entrepreneurs are always giving a free product to the SMI, with the prospect of getting something in return as well to cover these costs. The interviewed lifestyle entrepreneurs are only giving away a product to the SMIs, they don't give extra money on top of that to the SMIs. In order to have a kind of certainty to get the back, Mary (26) set a criteria list which an SMI should meet before entering a collaboration. Firstly, the SMI needs to have at least 5.000 followers "You can't have less than that. Because the product I am gonna give you gonna cost like 200/300 euros so I can't be like, okay, take it to show your ten followers (Mary, 26)." Secondly, the SMI needs to fit with her target audience, she can't give it to a 14-year-old, because these people can't afford it for example. Thirdly, Mary (26) needs to see the engagement on the SMI's page. She has a set of questions which needs to be answered for this topic: how many likes the SMI gets in the picture? How often does she post, per day or per week? What did she post? Do you have genuine comments? She has to be sure that the SMI didn't buy followers, for instance, if the number of followers doesn't match with the likes and comments. Regarding the post engagement, Mary (26) is satisfied when an SMI has a minimum of 200 likes and 50 comments, with an engagement rate like this and higher she is open for a collaboration.

When the criteria are met, it is possible to negotiate on how the collaboration will look like. Most of the collaborations are based upon trust and goes without a contract. Even with companies out of the USA, it is solely based on trust (Linda, 29). Only with big companies like L'Oreal and KIA, SMIs deal with contracts (Linda, 29; Frank, 30). In a contract, it usually also states that an SMI is not able to work with competitors during the time of a collaboration (Wesley, 32). Although having a contract gives the company more stability, it is important that the company gives the SMI the freedom they need to have. Once an SMI feels this freedom they are able to create better content; "that if you work with the influencer, you as the company gives the influencer the freedom to do what they want because their audience will feel that (Wesley, 32)." SMIs usually get free PR packages which they

will promote (Angel, 20). The amount of posts and stories really differs per collaboration. The average is between 1 to 3 posts with some stories included (Linda, 29). Yet, when the content and quality is good, the SMI might upload more since it is always good to have good content (Wesley, 32).

Besides, either the company tells their budget, but normally SMIs must come up with their own prices. This can be perceived as difficult because you don't know what the other SMIs are asking. It comes down to how much an SMI feels the collaboration is worth. When SMIs ask for a price and the brand directly accept, SMIs know that they could demand a higher price (Linda, 29). Bart (21), usually talks with other SMIs who have more experience in influencer marketing to discuss a price for a specific collaboration. Currently, SMIs sometimes even have a manager. Cheyenne (23) talks with her manager about how the collaboration will look like and the price. Therefore, in the beginning, it is kind of experimenting. According to Linda, the prices between micro and macro influencers vary. Mostly, micro influencers only get free stuff. When an account is growing towards the 100.000 followers, SMIs can ask between €300 and €800 per post, but when you go over that number of followers it starts from asking €1.000 per post. Cheyenne (23) is a good example of a micro-influencer since she mostly just gets free stuff and isn't asking money for the PR packages, but if she asks money it is €50 for one post on, (all) her social media platforms. She thinks that €50 is a good start and can always build up from there (Cheyenne, 21). Yet, Bart (21) has 15k followers but already get over €1.000 for a collaboration with a fashion brand. Although, it varies a lot because sometimes he only gets around €100. To add, Frank (30) price also depend if he likes a collaboration or not. Mostly he just gets free PR packages, but for instance when he doesn't inherently like a company but they would really like to collaborate with him, he would propose a 5 post deal for €5.000, because he doesn't feel like doing it but if the money is nice, it would be very nice to do this as well. However, Wesley (32) doesn't find it a stable income, it is good and quick money but not worth it to focus everything on Instagram. Linda (29) adds to this that it sometimes happens that companies don't pay the invoice for a few months, but luckily it always ended up well.

Furthermore, using influencers is being considered as a very good way to get the message out. Companies work with influencers in order to get more exposure, more brand awareness, more sales, and to get featured on the SMI's account. In particular, when someone is starting a company which has a good potential but not well-known among the public, then it is "really wise to get, you know, your social media influencers to actually brand your business in order for you to grow your own business (Dani, 29)." Mainly, because SMIs know their audience and who they are reaching, so this would be worth investing in them to get more brand awareness (Linda, 29). Pernille (23) calls multiple things why using SMIs is beneficial for companies "like exposure, sales, everything. Like positive feedback, Word of Mouth. I guess." Next, it is good for publication and to gain more followers (Peter, 21; Sharon, 23). Sharon (23) explains gaining more followers in a way that "And they would really like expand your followers in the beginning because then I would do a shoot and

they would post them on their account, which is then way bigger and then a lot of people transfer.” For Tsehai (43), it is a way to sell and promote a product “Because I think they can really give you a lot of exposure”, if the person fits the brand.

SIMs also function as an intermediary to get offer and demand together. Mary (26) claims that “if they have the crowd that you need. You need to get the products to them so they can show it to the crowd.” Mary (26) mentioned that the outcome of the collaboration should be that people buy the product the SIM is advertising. Within a week, one sale must be generated from the SIM, if not Mary (26) finds the collaboration pointless. If the collaboration gives like 5 sales, Mary (26) wants to proceed working with the SIM and will give the girl a discount code. The SIM will also post a link from the webpage and post another product. From every product she sells using that discount code, the SIM gets a percentage of that product (Mary, 26).

The findings show indeed that brands want to collaborate with SIMs in order to capitalize on the wide social networks of the SIMs and their intimate, more credible relationships between their followers (Khamis, et al., 2017). However, the expectation of generating sales as an only measure to assess a collaboration is tricky. Most of the times brands see straightaway how their sales are doing. If an SIM is promoting a product that is expensive, the audience will just look at it. Then questions arise, how many people saw this? So, with more expensive products, the outcome is more about awareness “And, you know, who is aware that this new product is out and maybe they can become customers later on in the journey, you know (Linda, 29).” For cheaper products, it is more focused on sales than on awareness.

Yet, lifestyle entrepreneurs find it difficult to determine how the return on influence expresses itself. Lifestyle entrepreneurs find it difficult to measure the success of a collaboration with an SIM. Aylano (22) finds it difficult to measure the effect of social media influencer marketing “It's really difficult to like you're getting the exposure that people are seeing. But what are you getting?” Once Aylano (22) gave away a hoodie to a famous Dutch artist, but it wasn't like he got 30 DM's out of it. He didn't use a promo code so then it is more difficult to measure the results. From the perspective of SIMs, they look at how many engagements the posts get. If this was relatively high and the company comes back again it was a successful collaboration (Linda, 29; Angel, 20; Bart, 21). When advertising a product, they sometimes use a tailored discount code. So that both the company and the SIM know how many people have bought a product via them, using that discount code (Cheyenne, 20). Additionally, Linda (29) mentioned that it is more common to share the statistics with the company “share the statistics, you know, the views, likes, saves, stuff like that.”

Next, Peter (21), looks at it more in a rational and logical way. He expresses this as when someone is having “10k followers and if just hundred, go to your website. I think that's a really good performance.” Additionally, Sharon (23) also keeps an eye out if she gets new followers and where they originate from. An interesting finding is how Stijn (32) measures a successful collaboration. For him, it is based on creative quality: “How much I like the work we produced that day. How much I

feel inspired by the result. And by creative vibes who were there that day.” According to Stijn (32), if the creative quality was present, then the rest will follow.

Finally, there are some critics that have been found on the long-term results which SMIs offer because the attention a collaboration gets is very briefly. Mary (26) criticizes the long-term results which SMIs offer as “So let's say I give up my top, she posts it and I get like 2.000 likes and next you post a bag from Louis V, she gets 5.000 likes. In the long term, I'm losing.” Since her products are getting no more attention after that single post. So, the attention is very swiftly. Even for club events, SMIs aren't successful in the long term. Nana (24) criticizes them “Because you asked him once, they do it. You asked twice they do it and then they switched for lifestyle, that they don't go out anymore and then they stop.”, so after this, you need to look for a whole group of new SMIs again.

4.4.4 Sustainability SMI

The sustainability of SMIs was discussed with the interviewee's as well. Ten interviewees were uncertain if SMIs and influencer marketing is a sustainable strategy for the long term. This thought emerged since most of them aren't sure how fast everything will evolve. For instance, suddenly, the concept social media influencer arose, therefore, SMIs can suddenly disappear again (Aylano, 22). Both Bart (23) and Moreno (23) think that it depends on the kind of influencer. SMIs with a reach over a million followers will probably stay, but for the people who have less than that they foresee hard times because there are currently so many people who aim to be an influencer, it is really hard to break through (Bart 23; Moreno 23). According to Wesley (32), Instagram is kind of saturated and people don't want to follow more people, only people you meet in person. In addition, Pernille (23) is uncertain about the sustainability of SMIs since she is uncertain how long social media will work. Maybe Instagram will die out within a few years, no one knows (Stijn, 33). This is due to, in particular the worry of Stijn (33), regarding the direction that the world is going in terms of social media. There is not enough meaning in social media “I think it is poisoning the world and poisoning the view of people. Because you know, and mine.” That is why Pernille (23) advice entrepreneurs to look for new trends, to be open for something else. Even the SMI with the most followers within this research, Linda (29), with almost 200.000 followers, has a side job in marketing since she doesn't know if the job of an SMI is sustainable for the long term “Because you know, you can't really depend on it (Linda, 29).”

Nevertheless, a more positive view on SMIs is that because all the attention is focused on them, they will probably exist for many more years. Peter (21) looks at these phenomena from an optimistic standpoint. He says that SMIs are undoubtedly sustainable for the long term:

And no question about it because there's all the attention. People still promote on TV, on the radio, but when there's commercial on TV, people go to, to the, to the smartphones. If you

walk in the train, you walk by, everybody's on the smartphone. It's this logic shares where there's attention (Peter, 21).

As an entrepreneur, you must be up to date what is going on and where the attention is (Peter, 21). Even though one must be active on other platforms as well, so if Instagram eventually will be gone, entrepreneurs and SMIs don't lose everything because they were only on Instagram but have other useful platforms where they can continue working on (Peter, 21).

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical implications

The aim of this paper has been to further our understanding of how Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media influencers, specifically SMIs, to develop their brand on Instagram. Towards this aim, I have conducted a qualitative content analysis in the form of interviews. For this interview, 21 semi-structured interviews have been conducted. On this basis, this study offers multiple contributions, which I proceed to discuss. In the following section, I present the contributions in relation to existing theory and findings originating from the analysis.

To begin, the first contribution supports the definitions of the concepts entrepreneurship and lifestyle entrepreneur. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) define entrepreneurship as an examination of how, by whom and with what effects opportunities to create future goods, and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Additionally, the interviewee's provided a more nuanced definition of entrepreneurship, defining it as a way to create your own job, forge your own path and strive to realize your dreams. Literature also cited that entrepreneurs differentiate themselves from others, corporate manager for example, by having certain personality traits that empower entrepreneurial activity (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). These entrepreneurial traits are the insatiable desire for achievement, locus of control, risk-taking, self-confidence, innovativeness, tolerance for ambiguity, and propensity (Gürol & Atsan, 2006). To add, the lifestyle entrepreneurs complement this list of traits with ambition, commitment, independence, flexibility, open-mindedness, a desire for self-development and solution orientation. Moreover, both literature and the interviewee's prioritised the role of risk-taking above all others. Many consider that it is this this characteristic that, above all, is the determining factor in a business's success or failure (Gürol & Atsan, 2006).

Nonetheless, lifestyle entrepreneurs failed to mention innovation as an entrepreneurial characteristic. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact the interviewees are categorised as lifestyle entrepreneurs and not as regular entrepreneurs. Lifestyle entrepreneurs differ from regular entrepreneurs as they focus on offering a service or product which is closely aligned with their personal values, interests and passions, in order to maintain a certain lifestyle, instead of simply creating an innovative lifestyle product or service (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007; Marcketti, et al., 2006). With regular entrepreneurs, this doesn't seem to be the case. Lifestyle entrepreneurs don't feel such a pressing urge to expand the business but instead prioritise enjoying the lifestyle over the financial benefits (Bhide, 1996). Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs define this concept the same way as the scholars did. Although, they put more emphasis on how they became a lifestyle entrepreneur. Most of the lifestyle entrepreneurs entered the profession by turning their hobby into a job. Additionally, they also stressed that happiness stemming from the work they are doing is worth more than making money. Yet, they are striving to make this their main source of income so they can live the lifestyle they desire. Even though the study was initially intended to focus on constraint entrepreneurs, after

interviewing the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, it can be concluded that this study focuses on both constraint and non-constrained entrepreneurs. On one side, for example, Carlijn (21) can be categorised as a constraint entrepreneur. Constraint entrepreneurs are constrained by the desire to gain financial growth while simultaneously wanting to maintain a certain lifestyle (Marchant & Mottiar, 2011). Carlijn (21) would like to expand the business and influence more people with the values the business tries to convey, but she also has the urge to maintain a certain lifestyle. On the other side, there is Pernille (23), who is rather driven to live and work in another area wherever and whenever she wants to, instead of merely focusing on becoming an entrepreneur and financial growth. Thus, we must conclude she is a non-constraint lifestyle entrepreneur (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006).

In addition, the rise of social media usage by companies is partially due to the relation between low cost and the wide reach of people (Khajeheian, 2011). For a relatively small amount of money, a company is able to reach a large number of people (Khajeheian, 2013). Hence, companies, including Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, exploit the use of social media (Mortleman, 2011). Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs also acknowledge that with considerably lower costs it is possible to reach far more people. Via social media, a company is able to acquire information and know what people are thinking about a brand (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). When an online dialogue takes place, companies can improve the quality of the products and services they are offering. This online dialogue refers to CRM. Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) show that CRM has shifted towards social CRM. In other words, consumers have become an integral part of the sales process; however, the findings reveal that consumers aren't integrated into every part of this process. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs prefer sticking to their own vision and ideas. However, when their reputation is potentially being damaged due to a fault made by a company, they do listen to the audience and try to, with the support of the audience, better their product or service for future usage. Instead of social CRM, companies put more attention on customer intelligence (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Since companies have a big reach on social media, by posting a survey, poll or question on your account, one is able to acquire information and data about their customers, to be used at a later date.

Next, alongside scholarship outlining of the tangible shift from CRM to social CRM, scholars also allude to a shift from WOM to EWOM, coinciding with the unprecedented rise of social media. EWOM is defined as 'any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (Chu & Kim; 2003, p. 48).' As the literature outlines, people consult EWOM more often than WOM (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowbury; 2009). EWOM is being used in forms of online reviews for instance (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowbury; 2009). Yet, findings reveal that people aren't necessarily looking at online reviews. EWOM takes place in the form of SMIs, who are regarded as fellow consumers. Since they have the tendency to look cool and profile themselves as a role model, people want to be like them and as a result, purchase the same products the SMIs display. Via this way, SMIs act as EWOM as well since SMIs have the capability to influence the

public's online purchasing behaviour, just like EWOM. However, findings also show that WOM is still very important. Mary (26) for instance noticed that happy customers remain at the bottom of generating more clients. People talk with their friends about your brand, they get inspired, and with the use of social media, via Instagram DM, they text Mary (26) to arrange an appointment because a friend was so positive about their interaction with Mary. Hence, I conclude that a real shift from WOM to EWOM hasn't inherently taken place. Although EWOM definitely influences consumer purchase behaviour and reaches more people at once, WOM is still very much present and companies continue to use this strategy to acquire new and loyal clients.

Furthermore, findings show that out of co-creation, storytelling and online advertising, only storytelling and online advertising are being used. Even though co-creation is being referred to as a marketing strategy which increases the power of consumers and causing a closer connection to the brand, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs are not making use of this marketing strategy (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Not a single Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur has used co-creation or feel the desire to make use of it in the future. They have put their focus on other marketing activities. Nakara, Benmoussa, and Jaouen (2012) claim that marketing has an overall positive impact on companies performance, and marketing procedures are effective instruments (Nakara, Benmoussa & Jaouen, 2012). A marketing strategy which is being used by Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs and has an overall positive impact on companies is online advertising. Companies use advertising for persuasive purposes, altering consumers tastes, reducing the cost of information acquisition by consumers and advertising can also be informative (Goldfarb, 2014). Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs are also making use of online advertising to influence their audience. They make use of ads for various outcomes. They want to generate more traffic to their social media platforms, create brand awareness and engagement, but above all their aim is to acquire sales out of it. Goldfarb (2014) distinguished three types of advertisements search advertising, classified advertising, and display advertising. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs make use of display advertising the most, like banner text ads, plain text ads, and media-rich video ads. To stress the mass use of advertisement, Wright et al. (2010) claim that in 2006, Americans were exposed to around 5.000 ads per day. Since so many companies make use of online advertising, it is important to segment the market by defining customers which share similar values (Wright, et al., 2010). This allows companies to make a more tailored advertisement instead of the mass advertisement which is too general (Wright, et al., 2010). Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs support this theory by making use of funnels for instance. Where tailored ads are being shown to people who share similar values as the brand. Furthermore, tailored ads are also being used in the form of SMI advertisement. Frank (30) claims this to be a good strategy because, with an advertised SMI post, the product which is being advertised does not have the 'in your face' message. It is more subtle, first, you see the SMI, second, you notice the product which is shown in the post. It operates more like a second layer.

As Pulizzi (2012) states, the opposite of advertising is storytelling. Over the last years, companies are using it a lot more. Since human memory is story-based, it is easier to persuade someone by telling a story than with facts (Pulizzi, 2012). Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs support the theory that it is good to influence people by telling stories. To add, they find this a good strategy to make the consumers feel like they have more ownership too. When someone is telling a story people resonate to, they feel a more personal attached to the brand and gives them more ownership (Pernille, 23). However, findings on storytelling have shown a gap in the literature. Literature doesn't mention that storytelling conveys the identity of a company to its audience. On top of that, a brand uses storytelling as a way to distinguish itself from the competition. People get a closer connection with the brand. Dyllan (23) reemphasizes that by telling your story you make yourself unique because nobody can be like you since everyone has a different story. Hence, storytelling is also used to distinguish yourself from the competition.

In addition, as has been mentioned before SMIs are being used as a way of EWOM and advertising, but they also serve for other purposes. Firstly, SMIs are working to acquire a kind of celebrity capital by developing as much attention on social media platforms as possible to craft an authentic brand (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). With this attention, brands want to capitalize on these wide networks and collaborate with them to spread a brands message (Khamis, et al., 2017). The literature claims that SMIs are serving as a similar way as traditional media because they can reach millions of people at the same time (Abidin & Ots, 2016). However, compared to traditional media, SMIs have a more specified target group. SMIs also have a deep, intimate, and credible relationship with their followers (Abidin & Ots, 2016; Khamis, et al., 2017). Even though Khames et al. (2017) explain why companies make use of SMIs, they don't explain on what basis a brand and SMI would like to collaborate with each other. The results reveal that in order to have a successful collaboration, there has to be an alignment between the brand and the SMI. Both of them need to have either similar, values, visions, or ideas. If an SMI can be seen as an extension of the brand's values, they agree on collaborating because then it would be seen as credible for the audience as well. If the SMI, likes and admires the brand as well, he will put more effort into the collaboration and is more likely to over deliver and ask for less money.

Next, literature shows that the return on investment by SMIs is measured in sales and engagement (Woods, 2016). However, findings show that the return on influence is based on more than sales and engagement. Return on investment is also measured in terms of brand awareness, to get featured on another page which potentially leads to more followers, and creative quality. Creative quality is how much good content is being produced out of the collaboration. If the day was a qualitative good day, the results will show accordingly (Stijn, 33).

Lastly, micro-celebrities, also known as micro-influencers, are being referred to as a promise of authenticity (Khamis, et al., 2017). They are known to be more credible since they give more insights into their private lives (Khamis, et al., 2017). However, after interviewing macro-influencers,

this doesn't seem the case. Even though micro-influencers can look more credible, however, this is not achieved because they give insights into their private life. Macro-influencers are also making use of giving insights into private lives and are well aware, that this is a strategy in order to grow your Instagram account. Macro-influencers namely noticed that people are more interested in more intimate content and would like to see more of this kind of content instead of only showing work-related content. Yet, the findings do agree that it is less likely that micro-influencers will achieve their dreams of financial success (Khamis, et al., 2017). For instance, Cheyenne (23), a micro-influencer, get €50 per collaboration. With this amount of money, she won't reach her dreams of financial success.

5.2 Practical implications

Next, this section will be devoted to the practical implications which are uncovered by the literature. To begin with, findings have revealed a difference in usage between Facebook and Instagram. The first finding isn't anything new, this is focused on the claims that the average age of people who are active on Facebook is higher than on Instagram. Younger people tend to be more active on Instagram instead of Facebook. Facebook also seems to be more for people you personally know like family and friends, whereas Instagram is more open for a wider public. Yet, for event organising companies, Facebook is very useful, since Facebook operates as a kind of calendar. Companies can post an event which can be seen more easily by others. Facebook creates an event overview which Instagram doesn't offer as an option. Moreover, Facebook is also perceived as easier to use for advertisement than on Instagram. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs find Facebook ads cheaper and more effective since Facebook charges you beforehand, but Instagram charges you by click per view (Mary, 26). Despite the results that Facebook ads are easier to use, companies are focusing more on Instagram because their target group is more active on this platform. Companies need to focus on the platform where the attention of their audience is.

Subsequently, the interviewee's mentioned an important aspect which hasn't been covered by the literature. The moment Facebook bought Instagram, the algorithm which is being used by Instagram heavily changed and people don't know how to react to this new algorithm. Apparently, the algorithm works as follow: within the first hour someone uploads a post, Instagram shows your post only to 10% of your followers, if it doesn't reach enough likes within this hour, Instagram will push down the photo, so fewer people will see your post. As a result, post visibility decreases, both SMIs and Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have experienced a decrease in engagement and some even lost thousands of followers because of the algorithm change. People have found short term solutions to beat the algorithm. They set up a group chat of people who are being notified when a post is being uploaded, so all the people in the group will engage with the post so that it reaches a lot of people in the first hour, which results to higher exposure to other followers in the end. Nevertheless, people are still trying to figure out what kind of content works well for the new algorithm.

Besides, this study also contributes to various ways of attracting followers. The current ways which are known to attract new followers are storytelling, advertising, social CRM, collaborations, and co-creation. This study found novel ways to attract new followers which aren't mentioned in the literature. Firstly, lying about a happening at an event. For instance, a famous person was present at an event while he wasn't even there. This strategy is not recommended because if it turns out that you have been lying, the credibility of a brand can be severely damaged. Secondly, the interviewees make use of hashtags. People who search for specific hashtags can find your picture and like it. Thirdly, post consistency is also mentioned as a vital component of attracting new followers. When you post consistently people know that you are still active. A brand or SMI can influence people with the content you consistently post if you add value to someone's life. This goes in line with a good looking feed. If someone ends up at your Instagram page, and it looks good, you have a higher chance that someone will follow you. Fourthly, an option which finds itself in a grey area is buying followers. Most of the interviewees don't agree with buying followers on Instagram, some others tried it and understand the reason why someone would do this. Sometimes people don't feel comfortable by following someone which has below 1.000 followers, because it comes across as more personal. However, if you bought followers and you end up with 10.000 followers, the intimateness disappears and makes it easier for someone to follow a certain Instagram page. Yet, there is a high chance that people recognise that you bought followers if the relation between the number of followers and the amount of likes someone receives is incoherent. This would lead up to a loss in credibility as well. Finally, if SMIs or Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs participate in a nationwide TV program, this really boosts your Instagram page. Since all of a sudden, you get exposed by such a big public who might be interested in following you more closely now, since you are participating in a TV program they already like.

Furthermore, another contribution is that Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs prefer collaborations with other brands instead of co-creation. They prefer creating a new collection with other businesses who have like-minded visions and brand values and hoping to get featured on the other brand's Instagram page. So they can reach an audience which is likely to be interested in your brand since both of the brand's share like-minded visions and brand values.

Subsequently, another form of collaborating is done via influencer marketing, where brands use SMIs to influence potential buyers, and orient marketing activities around these SMIs (Woods, 2016). In exchange for a free product and, if agreed upon, money, an SMI offers their social network to advertise a product from a company on their Instagram page. Most of the collaborations are based upon trust and are executed without contracts. Only big corporate companies operate with contracts. A collaboration mostly contains 1 to 3 posts and a couple of Instagram stories. Prices per post vary from €50 as a micro influencer, to €300 and €800 once you have up to 100.000 followers. Sometimes an SMI which has around 20k followers receives more than €1.000 for a collaboration, although, this is exceptional. Most of the SMIs who have above 100.000 followers earn more than €1.000 per post.

Companies are willing to pay such an amount to SMIs because they have a more personal relationship with their followers than a brand has, hence, their impact is bigger (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). The main impact SMIs have is creating brand exposure. Brand exposure leads to an increase in product visibility, which increases brand awareness, new followers, and a boost in sales.

However, an important finding is being made by Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs that they are cautious in collaborating with SMIs. They aren't actively making use of SMIs, this can be partially explained since they focus more on doing the job they are passionate and interested about and they only want to collaborate with people who are sharing the same passion and interest as them. SMIs reveal that they work more often with bigger companies who are actively making use of SMIs. Next, they claim that SMIs are only useful for short term goals. SMIs usually post one to three posts regarding the collaboration with a company, this might boost your Instagram page, but for the long term, it doesn't help to develop a brand a lot. Therefore, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs rather first build on their own brand and make sure that it is a stable, relatively well-known brand before it uses SMIs. In order to prevent that SMIs define the brand before a company is able to define its brand themselves first. Most of the Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs who used SMIs didn't see a huge development of their brand. Some of them indeed grow in followers and got sales out of the collaboration, but in other instances, the collaboration failed and there was no return on investment. Conclusively, influencer marketing really works as a boost for a company, because the public's attention on the collaboration is so swiftly. Influencer marketing causes brand exposure for a short term, therefore, it should be regarded as a handy marketing strategy, but priorities should be focused on marketing strategies like storytelling and online advertising since this has the possibility to have a long term impact. Nevertheless, influencer marketing can be regarded as a risk-taking enterprise since the outcome is uncertain. Hence, it really functions as an entrepreneurial activity since one of the main characteristics of entrepreneurs is risk-taking (Gürol & Atsan, 2006).

5.3 Relevance to societal and social aspects

Furthermore, there is a scarcity of studies on digital media and start-ups (Bresciani & Eppler, 2010; Shen, et al., 2018). We also know very little about how lifestyle entrepreneurs in specific, develop their brands and how digital media supports these processes because it has received scarce attention in the entrepreneurship literature (Gomez-Velasco & Saleilles, 2007). Therefore, it is vital to get more insights into this topic. Moreover, SMIs tear up traditional marketing strategies because they have a more intimate, personal relationship with their audience (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). Subsequently, previous research aimed at social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, however, despite its popularity little research has been focused on Instagram (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010; Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Therefore it has been relevant to study the relationship between Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMIs on Instagram.

The social relevance of this study is connected to create a better understanding actions, routines, and practices of (often) young entrepreneurs, and in turn, enabling them to develop in a more coherent and sustainable manner. Young entrepreneurs can benefit from this study since they often find themselves in an early stage of developing a brand. Therefore, this research provides strategies and tactics on how they can develop their brand on social media. Moreover, young entrepreneurs would be able to acquire a better understanding of how to work with SMI, how SMIs operate, the impact of SMIs, and what the effects are on working with an SMI. After reading this study, both lifestyle entrepreneurs and SMIs are well-aware how a process of collaboration between a brand and an SMI looks like. They also get to know which requirements have to be met before starting a collaboration in the first place.

Moreover, since Instagram is a platform which is being used around the globe, this study isn't restricted to the Netherlands only. Every other lifestyle entrepreneur who engages with Instagram can learn from this study. Not only on how to collaborate with SMIs but also how they should position themselves on social media and which marketing strategies are beneficial for brands. Besides, this study revealed that Dutch SMIs are already working with American brands, hence, Instagram's exposure is to everyone who has an Instagram account. It brings people together all over the globe. Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy which is being applied across the world, therefore, other companies and SMIs can also learn from this study and apply it in their own context. Lastly, entrepreneurial practices are universally bound, therefore, it is not only limited to Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs but lifestyle entrepreneurs who live in western countries. I can only extend this study to Western cultures since non-western cultures follow other values and norms, which might influence the relationship between SMIs and their followers. For example, this might result in a different basis to start a collaboration, which might impact the relationship between brands and SMIs.

5.4 Limitations and further research

Next, this research does also have some limitations. Firstly, most of the companies Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs established aren't older than three years. This study mainly focuses on people in their twenties. Therefore, some of them have a lack of experience in their field. Secondly, not every industry of lifestyle entrepreneurs has been covered, the tourism industry and food industry are missing. Hence, this results in a less representative sample of lifestyle entrepreneurs. Thirdly, only one of the SMIs has over 100.000 followers. SMIs with more than 200.000 followers are missing. For further research, it would be interesting to interview SMIs who have around 200.000 followers and higher. These SMIs probably have more experience with collaborations which leads to a more data-rich outcome. In addition, an examination of how the algorithm works is also interesting. Consequently, with the knowledge of Instagram's algorithm, one can enable to grow faster on Instagram, which improves the visibility and engagement on a brand.

Further, this study shows that influencer marketing functions as a boost for a company since it only covers a short time period, which is one to three posts. Hence, my recommendation would be to find out what the impact would be if a collaboration is long term based. For instance, spread out over a year and find out the differences between short term collaborations and long term collaborations. My final recommendation is to compare influencer marketing among different cultures. For example, it might be relevant to compare Western influencer marketing with the Asian influencer marketing, in order to find out the differences but also how one is able to improve their own practices by implementing strategies from other cultures.

6.0 Conclusion

Ultimately, to get back to the research question: *'How do Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media influencers to develop their brand on Instagram?'*, my answer goes as follows. To develop a brand of a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur on Instagram through social media influencers, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs use influencer marketing. With influencer marketing, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs capitalize on the wide social networks of SMIs (Khamis, et al., 2017). Influencer marketing expresses itself in forms of collaborations between brands and SMIs. This is mostly happening without signing any formal contracts. Yet, an SMI only helps to develop a brand on Instagram as long as the SMI shares similar values, ideas, and visions as the brand. Findings didn't reveal a distinction in impact between micro- and macro-influencers. Furthermore, a collaboration can be focused on either brand awareness or sales, this has to do with the fact if a product/service is either expensive or cheap. To measure the outcome of a collaboration one has to look at the statistics: sales, engagement on a post, and increase in followers ((Woods, 2016). However, SMIs should be looked at as a short term goal, since they are only able to boost a brand for a short term. This has to do with SMIs posting other content as well, therefore, the attention on the posts which refers to the collaboration is very briefly. Influencer marketing serves as a good way to boost brand exposure. Brand exposure leads to more brand visibility, which increases brand awareness, growth of followers, and an increase in sales.

To conclude, it is important to note that Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur shouldn't put their only focus on Instagram since there is a possibility that Instagram will extinct as a social media platform. In regard to SMIs, they will most probably continue to exist since the attention is focused on them. For micro-influencers, it will be more and more difficult to break through since the influencer market is already saturated.

7.0 References

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8.0 Appendices

A. Coding tree Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs

<u>Selective Codes</u>	<u>Axial Codes</u>	<u>First order observations</u>
What makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur	Entrepreneurship interpretation	Characteristics of entrepreneurs, encountered problems, contribution to other people's lives, building a personal brand & realizing a dream.
	From hobby to work	Expressing passion, developing to a more serious way of working, enjoyment out of the work you do,
	Liking the style of life	Personal growth, making a living, happiness over generating money, acquiring freedom & in touch with what matters.
Role of social media for Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs	Showing activity	Attention is focused on social media, people need to be intrigued by what one does, visibility, post frequency, personification, showcasing product/service.
	Positioning on social media	Communication strategies, CRM, staying true to core values & distinguish by showing that one is real,
	Role of Instagram	Social media is a tool, metaphors, getting validation out of Instagram, role of captions, Instagram has its own crowd & stories versus posts.
	Social media platform difference	Facebook and Instagram, a shift in usage, each platform have a difference in reach, the difference in advertisement, chatbots, interactions versus views, posts.
	Algorithm	Post visibility decreases, new algorithm asks for new methods, losing followers/engagement & tricks to beat the algorithm.
Social media marketing strategies	Advertising	Facebook & Instagram difference, advertisement frequency, advertisement design, gaining clients, company growth, ads don't feel real, measured by the amount of clicks/views/sales, advertise valuable ads.
	Storytelling	Inceptive stories, a mix of education and flashy stories, storytelling creates ownership by the public, relationship building, compared to the new Coca-Cola, loaded message, vlog the launch process to get people engaged.
	Ways to attract new followers	Buying followers is fake/unreal, using hashtags to gain followers, engagement, post consistency, word of mouth in relation to social media, asking direct circle to follow, good looking feed & lying to the audience.
	Brand collaborations	Spreading your word, the importance of contracts, featured to a different audience, brand awareness, increase in sales, publication on other accounts.
Influencer marketing usage	View on SMI's	Work of SMI's is underrated, SMI's feel high of themselves, a flux in micro & macro influencers, SMI's are disloyal, concept SMI has the wrong connotation rather content creator or source of inspiration, influencer types.
	Impact SMI	Being a role model for followers leads to more impact, SMI has a more intimate relationship with the audience than a brand, targeting the right target group, short term boost & Alignment between SMI and brand.
	Collaboration with	Criteria to collaborate, work with/without contracts, pricing, more brand exposure, assessing outcomes, creative quality, discount code,

	SMI	amount of sales & long term SMIs are unsuccessful.
	Sustainability SMI	The creativity of people that gives rise to a new type of influencer, the attention and eyeballs are focused on the SMI's, uncertainty because of development of the world and it is poisoning the world & not enough meaning in social media.

B. Data supporting interpretations of axial codes

<u>Selective Codes</u>	<u>Axial Codes</u>	<u>Representative quotes</u>
What makes a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur	Entrepreneurship interpretation	<p>"I think is willing to, um, really willing to pursue, uh, your dream or, yeah. If, if, if your business is your dream."</p> <p>"If you take initiative to do extra that you are described to do more or help the company grow bigger, even if it's not your responsibility, you're taking initiative and you being entrepreneurship"</p>
	From hobby to work	<p>"I just did it just because I love doing it. And new nothing about selling try to build a business I didn't have a clue."</p> <p>"So, in the beginning, was more friendly. Then, and then it became like, okay, maybe we can make money is serious now let's do it."</p>
	Liking the style of life	<p>"So I don't want to just have it as a hobby. I want this to be like my life and in that way, I can also because the reason I also want to work like this is that I want to be able to travel I want to be able to live different places."</p> <p>"I think I just liked the style of life. Like whenever I think like, okay, I really need to save up some money, I can like actively go out and look for assignments in contact my regular clients, yes. To get assignments. So I like that about it."</p>
Role of social media for Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs	Showing activity	<p>"People have to be intrigued by what you're doing and be willing to come. And that's why you need social media because you know you have to be able to expose your product."</p> <p>"It is the key to an event. Yeah, you need to you need you need to have it."</p>
	Positioning on social media	<p>"I guess because people complain about like, uh, like how we structured it like music wise, like you should play less trap music, for example, less RnB and we should, they, uh, earlier stage more African house music and more, more tropical music as well. That's what we, that's what a lot of people said to us. And so then they listen to them as well."</p> <p>"you really have to create your own style with that. Because if you, of course, you know, like when your feed, you need to have some consistency. So that looks good."</p>
	Role of Instagram	"It has to be a tool, not a way to live."

		<p>“I see Instagram, like a drug dealer and the more you will, uh, the more you get hooked to it, the more you will receive.”</p>
	Social media platform difference	<p>“Facebook, it's not as easy to reach more people. Facebook, as it is on Instagram, is much more open, uh, place, you know, where people can really explore and find new pages.”</p>
	Algorithm	<p>“it was easier to reach a far larger amount of people back in the day. But right now, yeah, with all the new changes, I don't actually understand it, you know, it keeps changing and so I don't really know how to adjust my posting schedule or type of posts. Yeah, so please Instagram.”</p> <p>“Even when you post like the algorithm of the business page is made in a certain way that only likes a really small percentage of the people that liked your page gets to see it.”</p>
Social media marketing strategies	Advertising	<p>“Facebook you first have to do the ads on Engagement. And after that on conversion.”</p> <p>“it's not like you just make an ad and then uh, and then wait. Yeah, because it's going really, if you change maybe one word, it can really give you more follow up.”</p>
	Storytelling	<p>“Storytelling is very important, I think because like I'm so little. It's me and we're like just in the beginning and people want to know the story behind it and that will give them like more ownership to it as well.”</p> <p>“Post more pictures and tell a story about it, yeah. You'll get more, more likes, especially when I'm involved with other people.”</p>
	Ways to attract new followers	<p>“I think if you post content consistently, I hope eventually it's gone. It's going to be seen and it, and hopefully, it attracts the right people. I guess.”</p> <p>“And then I read on the Internet that you can add 30 hashtags. Okay. And did you have to use all of them 30 hashtags.”</p>
	Brand collaborations	<p>“Secondly, also to exposure, so collaboration with a different company. For example, fabric companies”</p> <p>“It's is really beneficial to get some lingo with different people. That is not in your main system that you are in your country in that way you also gain international views and also collaboration is possible from international artists or different companies out there.”</p>
Influencer marketing usage	View on SMI's	<p>“it's someone that you slightly look up to but also feels like someone you can actually talk to him and have a connection with like a friend, sort of like a distant friend, uh, where you get makeup tips.”</p> <p>“They are they're really high of themselves.”</p>
	Impact SMI	<p>“We had an influencer and she, she, she has a lot of more followers, but she also really is a role model. So when people</p>

		<p>are seeing that she's wearing something, they are directly like, oh my God, where is it from?"</p> <p>"if I see that are aligned with my vision, they, they would love to do it. Great personality. I don't exclude anyone."</p>
	Collaboration with SMI	<p>"micro influencers usually don't really get paid to just get free stuff. Yeah. But then, uh, when you have around, I guess 100,000 or more, then you can start asking around maybe from 300 to 800 or a thousand per post. And then when you get even larger than of course it goes into the thousands of euros per post."</p> <p>"So if they have the crowd that you need so if they have the crowd that you need. You need to get the products to them so they can show it to the crowd."</p>
	Sustainability SMI	<p>"I am also sometimes a little busy, about where the world is going. So if you look at the macro level, I'm not sure if social media will be sustainable the way it is at this moment."</p> <p>"I don't know because, um, that's why I also have a job on the side. Yeah. Because you know, you can't really depend on it."</p>

C. Interview questions: Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs

Introduction questions

- What is your age?
- What is your highest level of education?
- When did you establish your company?
- What is your company about?
- What is the mission of your company?
- How would you describe a normal workday?
- How did you become an entrepreneur?
 - Did you always want to become an entrepreneur?
- On which social media platforms is your company active?
 - Can you explain that?

Lifestyle entrepreneur

- How would you describe entrepreneurship?
- How would you describe yourself as an entrepreneur?
- What should be some main characteristics for entrepreneurs according to you?
- What is the most important aspect of being an entrepreneur for you?

- What has more value to you: making a living out of it, making a lot of money or do you just like that style of life?
- What drives you to establish this company?
 - Is it your passion?
- Which problems do you encounter as an entrepreneur?
 - How did you cope with these problems?
- What is your entrepreneurial goal?
 - Is it to grow your company or is that not that important to you?
- Where do you see your company in 5 years?

Instagram

- What is the relevance of being active on social media for you and your company?
- On which social media platform do you have the most followers?
 - Do you think you know why?
- How many followers do you have on Instagram?
- For what purpose are you active on Instagram?
- Do you have a public or closed account?
- What kind of content do you upload on Instagram?
- How often do you upload pictures on Instagram?
- What kind of opportunities are you not making use of right now on Instagram?
 - What can you improve?
- What kind of content on social media works the best for your company?
 - Is this the same for Instagram?
- How do you look against buying followers on Instagram?
- Have you ever bought followers?
 - Why?
- Would you consider trying buying followers?

Social media marketing

- Do you make the most out of every social media platform?
 - On which platform do you underperform?
 - Why?
- Is social media marketing beneficial for your company?
 - If so, how and why?
- Which social media platform is the most valuable for you?
 - Can you explain why this particular platform so valuable for your company?
- How important is marketing for you as an entrepreneur?

- What about social media marketing?
- Are you still making use of traditional marketing? (offline marketing, TV, email, telephone)
- What do you think is the power of social media marketing?
- Is storytelling an important strategy that you use for your company?
 - If so, why? Can you give an example?
- What is your online communication strategy?
 - How do you communicate with your audience?
- How do you react to negative comments?
- What is the position of the audience for your company? Is it difficult to create a strong brand image on Instagram?
 - Why?
- Did you ever change something in your products from the comments that you got?
- Do you have people you share your ideas with in order to receive feedback?
 - What is the form of the feedback?
 - Do you use it immediately to change something?
 - Do you have a strong fan-base that always react directly?
- How do you get your audience engaged on social media?
- How do you attract new followers?
- How would you advertise a post?
 - On which platforms do you advertise? On which platform the most? Why?
 - How often do you advertise your posts?
 - On what basis do you decide on which platform you advertise more posts?

Collaborations

- Do you use collaborations on social media? Why?
- What kind of collaborations do you do?
- How would you describe social media influencers?
- Do you also work with social media influencers?
 - Why?
 - If not, why aren't you?
 - Would you want to use social media influencers in the future?
- Why do entrepreneurs work with SMIs?
- How do you use SMI to develop your brand on Instagram?
- What are you trying to get out of it?
- How do you get in contact with the social media influencers?
- What kind of influencers are you looking for to collaborate with?
 - Amount of followers, alignment with your company beliefs?

- Do you pay for them?
 - If so, how much?
- How important are social media influencers nowadays for entrepreneurs?
 - How important is it for your company?
- Do you rather work with micro or macro influencers?
 - Why would you rather work with this specific group?
 - Is it better for business? How can you see that?
- On which platform are you using SMIs the most?
 - Why here?
- Do you use SMIs on your Instagram?
- What is the impact of using SMIs on Instagram for your brand?
- How do you measure success after working with an SMI?
 - Where do you focus on?
- Do you think the use of SMIs is a sustainable strategy for the long-term?

D. Interview questions: SMIs

Introduction questions

- What is your age?
- What do you do in daily life?
- What is your highest level of education?
- How would you describe a normal workday?
- When did you start using Instagram?
- How many followers do you have now?
- Do you have a public or closed account?
- What kind of content do you upload on Instagram?
- How often do you upload pictures on Instagram?
- Do you earn money from your Instagram account?
- Is this your only source of income?
- Is your aim to make this your only source of income?
 - Why?

Social Media Influencer

- How would you describe an SMI?
- Do you see yourself as an SMI?
 - How come?
- How would you describe yourself as a brand?
- Is there something characteristic about you?

- Do you see yourself as a brand?
- Did you want to become an influencer from the moment you started your Instagram account, or did you turn into an influencer gradually?
 - If yes, can you explain the process of making that decision?
- What problems do you encounter as a social media influencer?
- What kind of benefits do you experience being a social media influencer?

Instagram

- On which platforms are you active as a social media influencer?
- On what basis do you upload your content?
 - Are your posts spontaneous or do you think it through before you upload something?
- Can you describe how you design your posts, images, text?
- What is the most personal thing that you have shared up until now with your followers?
- What are the benefits for you while being a social media influencer?
- Does your Instagram account reflect who you really are?
- Is social media an important asset of your life, how?
- Do you want to grow your Instagram page?
 - To what extent?
- What is your aim in followers?
- How do you look against buying followers on Instagram?
- Have you ever bought followers?
 - Why?
- Would you consider trying buying followers?

Collaborations

- Have you ever collaborated with companies?
 - Why did you do it?
- What did you get out of it?
- How do you earn money from your Instagram account?
 - Do companies pay you, are you getting free stuff or is it a combination of both?
 - Where do they pay for?
 - How do you decide the amount of money you want for a collaboration?
- Why do companies work with Social media influencers according to you?
 - Why would they work with you?
- Do you want to be a social media influencer as a profession?
- How do you pick with which companies you want to collaborate with?
- With what kind of companies would you not collaborate with?

- Which company would you love to collaborate with?
- How does the process of a collaboration look like?
- How do you advertise their product on your posts?
 - What kind of options do you use?
- On what basis do companies decide that they want to work for you?
- How do the companies know that the collaboration with you is successful?
- Is the job of a social media influencer sustainable for the long-term?