Dutch Media Lifestyle Entrepreneurs Social Media Branding & Interactions

How do Dutch media lifestyle entrepreneurs use social media to develop brands and interactions?

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Date: June 2019

1. Introduction

Research topic & relevance

Advancement of digital media technology has influenced the dynamic of media culture and modern-day business. For startups, digital media have become a central part of their branding activities, such as sharing branded contents on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Youtube to generate networks, relations and interactions (Abidin & Ots, 2016; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016). This creates significant changes for startups, because social media shift some control over branding process from brands to the consumers, resulting in the process of co-creation (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012).

Today, entrepreneurs are generally using social media in two ways. Firstly, digital media enables entrepreneurs to communicate ideas and develop brands through media technologies that allow them to respond to stakeholder's demand, create value and deal with technological change, and build entrepreneurial opportunities (Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters, 2018). Digital media serve as tools, channels and platforms where media entrepreneurs can discover, create and share knowledge about our society and culture (Lindgren, 2017). Digital media, essentially, become a tool media entrepreneurs use in their communication of brand identity and development of the brand idea (Centeno, Hart, & Dinnie, 2013; Voyer, Kastanakis, & Rhode, 2017). Secondly, with the advancement in corporate technologies, workplace media can assist entrepreneurial business by governing the mode of internal teamwork, organizing and structuring the daily business activities (Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters, 2018; Deuze 2012).

The heavy use of media in the context of entrepreneurship shows the importance of understanding the strategy underlying the success in building a startup brand. However, we currently know very little about how brands are developing over social media platforms (Horst, Pérez-Latre & Hitters, 2018), in particular, in the lifestyle industry. The lifestyle industry includes brands that generally active in retail, apparel, interiors, food, and hospitality goods and services (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006).

Hence, this study discovers and analyzes the strategies implemented by media entrepreneurs across the Dutch lifestyle industry, capturing the different insights of various media entrepreneurs' business strategies implemented via the use of media platforms. The idea is to explore how startups use digital media for their entrepreneurial strategy. The research conducted 15 interviews with Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs to discover the strategic process for social media development of brand and interaction with the consumers. Various literature was used to compare the findings to the different underlying elements of branding and interaction concepts. This research subjected these elements to social media practices of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. The results were mainly approving of the connections between entrepreneurial social media practices and the crucial variables that influence brand performance. Further analysis of these connections has also shown certain elements that could be added to the existing literature and theories to expand their coverage of branding and interactive strategies.

Relevant theory & existing knowledge

Despite some research on the topic of strategic media management, the field and its underlying phenomenon are continually changing. Traditional strategic management methods would not work for startups as these methods are designed for a static business environment rather than the evolving environment these startups operate in (Ries, 2011). As a result, it is crucial to address the difference in strategic management between conventional brands and media startups brands.

This is theoretically relevant because digitization of media is affecting the development of strategies in organizations, challenging their boundaries, choices and controls (Plesner & Gulbrandsen, 2015). As digital media bring about a loss of strategic predictability, entrepreneurs should treat their media strategies differently from the conventional organization because their field of business is dynamically and unpredictably driven by advancing media technology (Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters, 2018). An entrepreneurial strategy is less rational and coherent due to the varying circumstances of entrepreneurial states, such as the founder's identity and capital capacity (Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters, 2018).

Furthermore, it is crucial to address entrepreneurial values because of the differences in the strategic management of conventional brands and media startups. According to research on the meaning of success for entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs focus more on relationships, integrity and lifestyle than economic returns, which is different from conventional organizational ordeal (Claire, 2012). According to Claire's (2012) data, entrepreneurs define success as enjoying what they do, building a harmonious relationship with business partners, and developing employees. However, the research further suggested that conventional ordeal of economic return is not entirely obliterated but rather a consequence of implementing the new definitions of entrepreneurial successes. These results also support how different strategic management should be viewed concerning entrepreneurial brands.

At the same time, the increasing usage and reliance of startups on digital media technology detach media entrepreneurs from having control over their brand identity. The research by Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters (2018) asserted three insights for this particular topic. Firstly, they suggested that the formation of strategies for entrepreneurs is done through a communicative interaction with its consumers. Entrepreneurs who are reliant on digital media are bound to incorporate a joint process of involving consumers into their content creating and branding process. Secondly, entrepreneurs have included a process of mediated co-branding into their strategies. Their method of branding has become more reactive to the consumers' perception of and interaction with their brands, taking into consideration what the consumer think of their products, services and identities. Ultimately, the branding process is done through content creation in media channels, which provides them with a possibility to "write themselves into being". Lastly, the development of entrepreneur, startup, and the brand with the media tools it utilizes pose effects on one another. The development of self for the entrepreneur has an unavoidable impact on the startups brand development. The startup identity is also under constant judgement from its consumers. As a result, the interactions between these stakeholders become a continuous adjustment of the development of each respective stakeholders (Horst, Perez-Latre & Hitters, 2018).

Knowledge gap

The rapid change in culture, media usage and trends revolving the lifestyle industry make media entrepreneurs consistently have to devise their media strategies accordingly. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs face not only the challenge to keep up with the changes but also how could they evolve as a startup brand while remaining relevant to the changing business setting and their core beliefs. Therefore, to find out how lifestyle entrepreneurs cope with such challenges, the research question is: How do Dutch media entrepreneurs use social media to develop lifestyle brands and interaction with their consumers?

Filling the gap

This research question will be answered by analyzing related literature and conducting 15 interviews with Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs. This research was structured as follows. Firstly, I defined the core concepts of media entrepreneurship in the lifestyle industry. Secondly, I reviewed relevant literature looking for related concepts regarding the development of brand development through social media for startup brands. Also, the research drew on applicable theories for conventional brand development through social media to support the analysis of this research on startup brand building and consumer interaction. Then the research presented the analysis of the qualitative empirical data and end with a discussion of all findings and addressed the theoretical, practical and international implication of the study.

2. Theoretical Framework

This research focuses on media entrepreneurs within the lifestyle industry, who are entrepreneurs who exploit digital media functionalities to develop their brands and interaction in fashion, designed products, restaurants, and hospitality products and services (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006). The medium that entrepreneurs exploit their ventures in must be defined. This definition of the medium should cover the emerging business activities found in culturally active social media platforms. For the definition of entrepreneurship, I take into consideration the different interpretations of entrepreneurs that govern the varying business models that entrepreneurs use to exploit opportunities. This definition of entrepreneurship should be an inclusive meaning of all monetization strategies used by media entrepreneurs. In this case, lifestyle dictates the field of products and or services the media entrepreneurs operate in. This includes creative innovation diverse fields, such as design, science, technology and arts (Ünay & Zehir, 2012). To define the term media entrepreneur, the process in which Khajeheian (2017) used to describe the term is chosen because it includes different constructs essential to the term media entrepreneurs, including entrepreneurship and media.

In the following section, the relevant concepts regarding social media entrepreneurship are described more in details.

2.1 Entrepreneurship

There is a myriad of definitions for entrepreneurship. Even though the term is widely used across the media fields, the term's meaning remains unclear and undecided (Khajeheian, 2017). I have chosen from several characteristics of the term entrepreneurship presented by Khajeheian (2017). These characteristics include: invoking of business ventures (Carland, Carland & Stewart, 1996), the founding of new enterprises and making it viable (Vivarelli, 2013), developing the opportunity to introduce new product and services (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), and taking risk (Wu and Knott, 2006). However, the characteristic most relevant to this research is that entrepreneurship is associated with smaller companies and its possibility of having lower capital than the amount associated with more giant corporations.

To narrow the field of business in focus, I have chosen to draw from the concept of a lifestyle entrepreneur — multiple works of literature related to lifestyle entrepreneurs with their definitions of success. To clarify, lifestyle entrepreneurs have been observed to associate the idea of success with other types of rewards, such as "the opportunity of a better life" rather than economic rewards (Markantoni, Koster & Strijker, 2014). As a result, lifestyle entrepreneurs sometimes sacrifice growth to seek a different opportunity to provide family income or to support a particular lifestyle, which allows them to have independence and control over their life schedule (Henderson, 2002). Nonetheless, lifestyle entrepreneurs do not entirely ignore economic rewards. Their lifestyle orientation does not value financial suicide or business stagnation, but instead an opportunity to do something they enjoy (Markantoni, Koster & Strijker, 2014). The definitions of lifestyle entrepreneurs are drawn out to help conceptualize the term; however, the research will not place the focus on the full extent of industries included in the definition. Instead, the research uses

4

this definition because lifestyle entrepreneurs are active in the fields of fashion, interiors, food and hospitality goods and services (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006), which makes up the lifestyle industry this research focus on.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs within the lifestyle industries have expanded to include social media influencers. Influencers are everyday Internet users who turn themselves into a new form of social media micro-celebrity (Senft 2008). These social media micro-celebrities become well-known personas as a result of their marketing communication efforts, which transform them into what is referred to as a human brand (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Consequentially, success in doing so has allowed them to achieve the following qualities. They have a prominent presence in the lifestyle industry of fashion, beauty, and electronic goods (Abidin & Ots, 2016). Their sharing of commercialized contents on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Facebook have become a growing global phenomenon (Abidin & Ots, 2016; Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016). This phenomenon takes place when brands have shifted from using traditional advertising to paying influencers to be new carriers of their branded messages (Abidin & Ots, 2016). Brands start to incorporate such a shift because of the success of social media influencers in the management and growth of their personal brands (Abidin & Ots, 2016). Central to that success is the influencers' aims to build awareness and audience growth (Marlow 2006), and the complex relationship that is formed between their personal brands and their followers (Abidin & Thompson, 2012). As a result, I include social media influencers as a part of the media entrepreneur because of their monetization strategy through their brand development.Brand development for social media influencers within the media entrepreneur realm lends another concept to be considered by this research, which is self-branding. Self-branding is when an individual develops a unique selling point or a desirable public identity that reciprocates with the needs and interests of the target audiences, for benefits similar to that of commercially branded products (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017).

To sum up, based on the defined constructs and the consulted definition with the thesis supervisor, the definition of media entrepreneurs will be defined as follows. Media entrepreneurship is traditionally defined as entrepreneurship within the media industry (Achtenhagen, 2017; Hang, 2016; Khajeheian, 2017). Because this narrow definition is industry-focused, it does not regard current changes taking place in the media industry that widen our understanding of "media". Here, media are not only the traditional media organizations, but increasingly providers of digital media platforms (Rohn, 2018), which enable producing, sharing, and storing content for others, as well as communicating with audiences and stakeholders. Hence, a broader definition of media entrepreneurship includes entrepreneurs that are not only active in the media industry but also in other sectors, as far as their business activities, such as branding, strategy and communication with stakeholders is primarily driven by digital media platforms (Lindgren, 2017; Plesner & Gulbrandsen, 2015; Shen, Lindsay, & Xu, 2018), such as for example Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. Hence, media entrepreneurship includes entrepreneurs that are shaped and enabled by digital media. This is the definition I will use.

2.2 Social media and entrepreneurship

The term media has two implications regarding entrepreneurship. The first implication refers to traditional mass communication tools such as conventional publishing, traditional electronic media, motion pictures, video gaming, recorded music, and advertising (Hoag, 2008). The second implication refers to media as the industries that produce and sell content, products and services (Hang & Weezel, 2007).

Besides, media entrepreneurs have been seen to exploit various functionality of existing social media such as Youtube, Instagram and Facebook. The advancement of these social media increases the volume of contents that are being created and shared (Yang, 2017). These social media applications combine the abilities to present contents verbally, visually and textually to engage with social media users (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). This notion dictates the research to expand the definition of media and focus on that definition for the research. Therefore, the research takes on the definition of media that allows media entrepreneurs to market its brand by stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, generating traffic to online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on platforms by stimulating users to post or share content (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017). Consequently, such media technology should also offer a way for media entrepreneurs to reflect upon the interactions between consumers' feedback to startups activities (Schweidel & Moe, 2014). Hence, the branch of media that follows such definition is that of social media. It is important to keep in mind that while many traditional media may have an ambiguous relationship with the definition of social media. The difference was that traditional media deliver contents through the network while social media allow for a responsive interaction between the content creators and social media users (Shabbir, Ghazi & Mehmood, 2016).

For media entrepreneurs, social media have become a crucial point for market access that enables entrepreneurs to obtain information about current market needs and obtainable resources (Harun, Daud & Rajoo, 2018). Furthermore, social media provide media entrepreneurs with ways to develop brand values, increase customer and supplier communication, and facilitate strategic partnership among brands (Jang ongo & Kinyua, 2013). With such coverage, the concept of market access has been argued as one of the major factors contributing to the success of smaller businesses, or startups for this research (Bates, 2011; Bates, Jackson III & Johnson, 2007). In essence, market access refers to the opportunities to buy, sell or exchange products and services among a collective of customers and vendors who are shapers the market structure (Shelton, 2010). Hence, media entrepreneurs with greater market access would benefit from the widened horizon of opportunities (Shelton & Minniti, 2018). In comparison, this research chooses to explain such market access interaction as an equivalent of media entrepreneurs deciding which industry to enter based on the different aspects of the physical and online market landscapes such as location, social media platforms, market regulation, neighboring businesses and consumer behavior.

As social media become a major part of the general public's lives, the general public has begun moving their interaction into the virtual platforms (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat,

2017). A range of literature has agreed that social media has become the most efficient and impactful tools for engaging with the public's social life, commercial life, business life, education life and political life(Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). Therefore, companies have turned to promote their brands through social media marketing in order to directly connect to customers and eliminate the opportunity cost of the standard middleman (Sajid, 2016). Social media marketing utilizes the different capabilities that community social media have enabled through internet forums, weblogs, podcasts, pictures and videos, which concentrates on contents such as news and features specific to different social media channels (Sajid, 2016).

By including social media marketing under this section, I recognize that the implications of social media marketing for Dutch media entrepreneurs will yield insights into how they establish their brand and interaction with customers. Ultimately, the research will attempt to address how entrepreneurs utilize social media marketing as a strategic process of establishing impacts and reputation within their market of potential customers, visitors and supporters.

The application of social media for brands branches out into various aspects of marketing aiming to improve customer involvement, customer relationship management (CRM) and multi-directional communication between the brands, customers, and involving stakeholders. (Filo, Lock & Karg, 2015 ; Saxena & Khanna, 2013). The brands' marketing efforts are documented as ways of facilitating information search, interaction, promotion and customers purchase behavior to enhance brand identity (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). The social media's impact on marketing allows social media users (consumers, audiences and brands) to communicate about topics in relation to the brands' products, promotions, consumers and related stakeholders — this allows the users to learn from one another's use and experiences and eventually to benefit all involved parties (Dwivedi, Kapoor & Chen, 2015). The different aspects in which these instances take place is vast; therefore, this research will address the following aspects mentioned in various literature of social media and advertising, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), customer relationship management (CRM) and brand (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). These aspects are chosen because they are essential for media entrepreneurs to use social media in developing brands and interaction.

Social media advertising

According to Alalwan's, Rana's, Dwivedi's and Algharabat's (2017) reviews on various social media marketing literature, social media advertising has a significant impact on customer perception and awareness of brands. By delivering promotional contents through various features of social media, brands have been able to expand the marketing capabilities of the contents themselves to enhance customer experience, perception, awareness, knowledge, preferences, intention to buy, and actual purchasing (Duffett, 2015). Social media like Facebook allows brands to take advantage of the community effects and influence social media user's attitude towards a brand and its product and service in accordance to the tri-component attitude model presented by Belch and Belch (2014). The three attitudinal stages consist of cognitive (individual's belief regarding the object), affective (individual's feelings towards the object) and behavioral (individual's readiness to take action on an object) (Belch & Belch, 2014).

To further illustrate how these attitudinal stages are affected by social media, I draw from research about how social media users are motivated to participate in crowdfunding campaigns via Facebook. The community where individual social media users are active is made up of their peers. These users are motivated to participate based on the actions of their peers in terms of the motivation to establish a relationship, seek validation and replicate desirable experiences of their peers (Gerber, Hui & Kuo, 2012). Based on these notions, an Instagram user has exposed to the community that existed within the application. Depending on how the branded content is received by the user, he or she develops cognitive, affective and behavioral responses accordingly. That attitude is then reinforced based on the reactions of other users in a combined verbal, visual and textual form made visible by likes, comments and other Instagram features. This leads to the next aspect of social media marketing — eWOM.

Electronic word of mouth

Various researches have considered eWOM as an influential marketing instrument (Erkan & Evans, 2016). By incorporating strategies that promote eWOM, brands benefit from improved customer perception as reviews from users who previously interacted with the brand or experienced a product could make it more comfortable for other users to make a purchase decision (Erkan & Evans, 2016). With the advancement of social media platforms and the formation of more interactive social media community at an individualistic level, users are now exchanging experiences and opinions with their friends and acquaintances within an existing network (Chu & Kim, 2011; Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010). Brands further benefit from this reduction in anonymity as eWOM becomes more trustworthy on social media where contents frequently refer to brands (Chu & Choi, 2011; Wallace, Walker, Lopez & Jones, 2009; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). As a result, when UGC is created by general consumers and not brands, the user becomes more certain about his or her choice (Wunsch-Vincent & Vickery, 2006; Buhalis & Law, 2008).

With the extended reach and influence of eWOM through social media, it overtakes traditional word of mouth in its level of impact through customer interaction (Hudson, Huang, Roth & Madden, 2016). Larger social media platforms then become attractive to brands as eWOM about their brand could reach a larger number of audiences (Hudson, Huang, Roth & Madden, 2016). For instance, in the context of tourism, customers with higher willingness to interact with other social media users have been found to exhibit higher intention to spread positive eWOM and make recommendations to other users about brands (Hudson, Huang, Roth & Madden, 2016). Combined with more visual-oriented social media, like Instagram, aesthetically pleasing visuals makes eWOM more enjoyable and appealing, which contributes to consumers choosing social media as their platform for brands information (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

Another instance where eWOM has applicable influence can be observed from the restaurant industry. The restaurant industry is able to thrive on eWOM through a form of user-generated content (UGC) on review websites, discussion forums, personal blogs and etc., such as Trip Advisor, Yelp and Instagram (Yang, 2017). These become a prominent source of restaurant information that users consult before dining out and contributing their reviews afterwards. Therefore, restaurant operators need to come up with an effective strategy to maintain the dynamic

sharing of information and user participation by ensuring that users develop positive attitudes towards their willingness to contribute (Yang, 2017). To successfully do so, consistent social media interaction is key for restaurant operators to maintain customer loyalty. Cooperation with a suitable social media platform becomes crucial for enhancing the credibility of the source and consistency of information quality, ranking and reputation assignment for contributing users to make them feel recognized and motivated to participate continually, and the introduction of incentives for UGC to enhance awareness and participation (Yang, 2017).

Social media customer relationship management

As social media became a part of average consumers' daily lives, there's constant interaction within the virtual realm, which leads marketers in their attempt to generate a return on investment of their social media presence. As a result, consumers engage more actively in the co-creation of their experiences with one another and brands (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010). Marketers then begin to incorporate social media into their CRM strategies as an attempt to improve customer experience and satisfaction so they could obtain financial rewards (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Empirical studies have shown that by having the appropriate level of social media activities, brands could enhance the CRM capabilities in affecting brand performance (Wang & Kim, 2017).

Traditionally, various literature refers to CRM as a systematic and proactive management of brand-customer relationship from initiation to termination with different activities across their points of contact (Wang, & Kim, 2017). CRM for brands includes executing strategy, managing dual creation of value, using of data and technological resources, building customer database and making use of the database for stakeholders, developing appropriate relationship with target customers, and integrating processes across the brand's divisions and network to generate customer value (Boulding, Staelin, Ehret, & Johnston, 2005). In essence, information communication is crucial when dealing with customer relationship (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu & Krush, 2016). In a more modern sense, social media CRM integrates traditional CRM practices with the emerging social media functionalities and cultures to engage customers in collaborative communications (Trainor, 2012).

A number of researches argued that CRM technologies alone have a lower possibility of affecting customer value unless combined with other brands' resources (Wang, & Kim, 2017). Nonetheless, as customers become more active on social media, they become more involved in the co-creation of their experiences with brands. At the same time, social media can serve another change in customer behavior. It has been recognized by scholars and brands that customers have higher expectation from brands' ability to provide timely response to their sensitive needs (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu & Krush, 2016). Brands that could communicate vital information needed by the customers in a timely manner will benefit from higher customer satisfaction (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu & Krush, 2016). These shift in customer behavior creates opportunities for brands to implement interactive technologies, encouraging customers to produce value-adding contents on social media (Berthon, Pitt, Plunger & Shapiro, 2012; Greenberg 2010; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014). Therefore, marketers begin to realize that social media CRM is not a replacement of

9

traditional CRM but is an effective extension that incorporates the social functions, processes, and capabilities that address brand-customer interaction as well as customer–customer interaction (Greenberg, 2010).

Social media and branding

One challenge that brands face is persuading customers to follower their social media accounts. As social media can provide a brand with an opportunity to attach itself to the customers, a study done by Muk and Chung (2014) suggests that hedonic motivation is the main factors that motivate the customer to become a follower of the brand's social media presence. Hedonic motivation refers to the perceived cheerfulness, joy and enjoyment of using technology, which is suggested to be responsible for shaping customer's intention to adopt new technological system (Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2012). Such perceptive phenomenon is elaborated through a study conducted on customer's intention to adopt internet banking in Jordan. Alalwan, Dwivedi., Rana, Lal and Williams (2015) discovered in their research the correlation between customers' perceived enjoyment of internet banking and customers' trust. For their research, trust refers to the individual's willingness to depend on the belief in ability, benevolence and integrity of a brand (Alalwan, Dwivedi., Rana, Lal and Williams, 2015).

For a brand, customer trust is a reflection of the brand characteristic, corporate characteristic and customer characteristic (Christou, 2015). These aspects of trust form a foundation for brand loyalty, which is influenced by brand predictability and reputation (Christou, 2015). One contributing aspect of brand predictability is consistency. Changes to the brand's product and service must not be too drastic or frequent and must be communicated carefully through social media to let customers know what to expect (Christou, 2015). Brand communication should also have a consistent message across all channels, both online and offline (Christou, 2015). Customer predictability can build up from repeated interaction with the brand; therefore, brands have the opportunity to utilized social media technology to provide as many touch point with the customer as possible (Christou, 2015).

Brand competence is also reflected in trust, and its development is often domain specific (Christou, 2015). The brand should seek to develop in certain areas based on what concerns their target customers (Christou, 2015). Utilizing social media influencers who are specialized in those specific areas has also shown to be a useful strategy for the brand to communicate itself (Christou, 2015).

Brand reputation is reflected in the brand's ability to deliver on its product quality and promise (Christou, 2015). EWOM becomes applicable in building brand reputation, as the brand should provide as many interactive opportunities as possible to encourage participation and positive feedback while also managing negative ones (Christou, 2015).

2.3 Entrepreneurial opportunity

The central concept of entrepreneurship has been opportunity, which is divided into three aspects for media entrepreneurship including identification, evaluation and exploitation (Khajeheian, 2017). These aspects are essential for entrepreneurs to recombine resources to create benefits for their startups (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Once an opportunity has been identified and evaluated positively, the exploitation can be done by entrepreneurs investing time, money and other resources to launch their startups, which results in the market selection, product and service offering, customer served, and business growth (Shelton & Minniti, 2018).

This process is elaborated further using Fuduric's (2008) assertion where opportunity allows for recombining external changes in the business environment and in internal creation or recombination of resources within the startups. Media entrepreneurs benefit from this process through the concepts of opportunity creation by introducing innovations that disrupt the market through new demands and opportunity discovery by finding out existing needs and demands where certain products or services can satisfy (Khajeheian, 2017).

Opportunity creation and discovery are two opposing perspectives. The creation perspective suggests that opportunity does not exist without entrepreneurs seeking to exploit it while the discovery perspective assumes that opportunities pre-exist and is independent of the entrepreneur (Will, Brüntje & Gossel, 2016). Khajeheian (2013) supported the discovery perspective and argued that an opportunity in the field of media means that entrepreneurs have to identify the needs within a niche market that hasn't been met. Consequently, unmet needs to allow media entrepreneurs to react through the recognition of opportunities to satisfy the need by delivering values through media contents (Lumpkin & Lichtenstein, 2005). Nonetheless, Vaguely and Julien (2010) argued that the process of identifying opportunities for media entrepreneurs incorporates both perspectives; thus opportunities are created and discovered based on the business environment.

2.4 Entrepreneurial innovation

Innovation is a crucial part of the concept of entrepreneurship as the startup's introduction of new and relevant contents, products and services are the main objectives of entrepreneurs (Hisrich & Ramadani, 2017). Innovation, in this sense, takes the forms of characteristics, process, distribution channels and usage (Khajeheian, 2014). This assertion implies how media entrepreneurs may utilize the different forms of innovation to create value for their content, product, and service. Of which, such innovation may deliver either an incremental change by exploiting on existing content, product and service capabilities or disruptive change by producing a revolutionary change in the market (Khajeheian, 2017).

Nonetheless, a majority of the startups lack the necessary assets to sustain the creation and the promulgation of their innovations, and entrepreneurs are constantly overcoming resource dependency (Hallen & Eisenhardt, 2012; Ozcan & Eisenhardt, 2009). According to Cox Pahnke, McDonald, Wang and Hallen (2015), by establishing relationships with other companies, entrepreneurs could overcome their initial lack of resources. Such relationships also enable

entrepreneurs to utilize the characteristics of other companies to enhance social positioning and gain access to different audiences and investors for their startups (Hallen, 2008; Vissa, 2011).

Various researches suggest that this form of relationship is a strategy critical to the wellbeing and success of the startups. Therefore, entrepreneurial innovation is particularly associated with the network of relationships among businesses possessing complementary knowledge (Cox Pahnke, McDonald, Wang & Hallen 2015). Entrepreneurs, utilizing this network of relationships, could benefit from the network's resources in the forms of tangible financial resources and intangible resources such as social status, technical knowledge, and expert advice (Cox Pahnke, McDonald, Wang & Hallen 2015).

Entrepreneurial startups are observed to develop such relationships with knowledge-intensive businesses (KIB) in order to obtain external knowledge to facilitate their innovations. The knowledge is specifically referred to as the knowledge of people, or professional knowledge (Miles, 2005). KIB is defined as the type of business that provides solutions based on the for carrying out various tasks that are essential to the production processes of private businesses such as startups (Mas-Tur & Soriano, 2014). A combination of researches suggests that KIB accumulates, create and diffuse knowledge according to the needs of clients via consultancy, advisory service, engineering and technical analysis (Bettencourt, Ostrom, Brown & Roundtree, 2002; Mas-Verdú, Wensley, Alba & Álvarez-Coque, 2011). Ultimately, KIB plays a role in enabling and facilitating innovation for startups as well as developing innovation via knowledge transfer activities (Mas-Tur & Soriano, 2014). In their research, Mas-Tur and Soriano (2014) conclude a relationship model that binds entrepreneurial startups with KIB to facilitate innovativeness, which suggests that entrepreneurs who utilize KIB were able to increase their innovative capacities.

2.5 Brand co-creation

The emergence of social media has influenced the process of brand development among media entrepreneurs in the lifestyle industry. In its essence, co-creation is referred to as a process of dynamic interaction and involvement of customers with the brand to facilitate value-creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2014). Fargo & Lusch (2014) have also suggested the undeniable reasoning that in the value-creation processes of brands, the customers are always the co-creator of value. Within the scope of this research for social media usage for branding and interaction, the research includes two types of co-creation: consumer-initiated co-creation, such as consumers being self-motivated to generate UGC and firm-sponsored co-creation, where consumers are paid to generate UGC (Hsieh & Chang, 2016). While taking into consideration the co-creation process and the emergence of social media technology, it is possible to observe how brands have implemented social media co-creation, and this research addresses how it is achieved in entrepreneurship.

Many works of literature have addressed the concept of storytelling in branding through social media, which allows brands to enhance the relationship with the consumers (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). This enhancement is done through brand stories that provide a theme for interactions between brand and consumers and among consumers themselves that allow consumers to relate their experiences to the brand story (Escalas, 2004). As a result, storytelling

becomes a way that a brand can use to build awareness, comprehension, empathy, recognition, recall, and provide meaning to the brand (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012).

Brand owners used to have dominance in the process of brand storytelling through story content, production and distribution (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry Jr, 2003) but the emergence of social media has allowed consumers to produce their own stories in relevance to the brands in the form of user-generated brand content (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). The emergence of social media also popularizes the use of discussion forums, blogs, social platforms, and video, photo, and news sharing sites that provide networks, relations, and interactions — the three parts that facilitate co-creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2014). With the ability for consumers to co-create brand stories, brand owners lose some control of their brands (Hennig-Thurau, Malthouse, Friege, Gensler, Lobschat, Rangaswamy & Skiera, 2010) as social media allow user-generated brand stories to spread as quickly as the brands own contents. Social media have transformed the way consumers interact with brands. Therefore, companies have to develop their brands according to user-generated brand stories while also remaining true to their intended brand stories (Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012). As media entrepreneurs are also actively building their brands by reacting to the consumers' perception of and interaction, it is important to address the concept of co-creation in branding.

The emergence of social media technology and the growing trend of brand co-creation with consumers, in conjunction, becomes particularly useful for brands to facilitate their innovations. Essentially, when equipped with the new social media channels, consumers possess a way and a desire to voice their dissatisfaction with the available market choices (Hsieh & Chang, 2016). In reciprocity, brands utilize this scenario to enhance their innovative process.

The implication of online co-creation activities enables brands to improve their competitiveness within the market (Hsieh & Chang, 2016). Brands realize the usefulness of consumers contribution for innovation (Ernst, Hoyer, Kraft & Soll, 2010). Brands have made considerable effort to include co-creation in their strategies. For instance, Procter & Gamble, through the brand's co-creation strategy, reports an increase in R&D productivity by about 60% (Hsieh & Chang, 2016). Aside from that, co-creation experiences become a viable consumer relationship builder, which contributes to customer loyalty (Füller, 2010; Appelbaum, 2001).

3. Methodology

Research design

The study employed qualitative methodology, including semi-structured in-depth interviews with Dutch media entrepreneurs in the lifestyle industry. This research topic calls for an exploratory qualitative study on the individual experiences of startups, their founders, and practitioners performing the processes of media management strategy in developing brand and brand-consumer interactions through the use of social media. According to Daymond and Holloway (2011), qualitative research helps to discover views and meanings held by the respondents, "to understand the world in their terms". Qualitative research further analyzes the meaning attached to certain phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values, etc.)(Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.7). This research methodology can draw out more details from the data (Gummesson, 1999) about media entrepreneur strategies. A qualitative methodology is argued to cover various implications for different research objectives such as obtaining phenomenological insight, understanding social reality creation, understanding patterns of symbolic discourse and mapping contexts (Morgan and Smircich, 1980)

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted on entrepreneurial media respondents. This type of interview is chosen as it allows improvisation when needed, even with a predefined set of interview questions (Myers & Newman, 2007). This type of interview ensures that probing questions may be asked if the researcher requires a more detailed answer from the respondents (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). As a result, the interview was prepared with a topics list created from the predefined theoretical concepts.

Data sampling

This research conducted semi-structured interviews with media entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. Due to the focus on media entrepreneurs of this research, I conducted criterion sampling. More specifically, this research chose to employ the method of the criterion of inclusion, which is defined as the process of identifying and selecting variables that meet the predefined qualities that are important to the research (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). The criterion for selecting media entrepreneurs was as follow: (1) any media entrepreneurs that fall under the encompassing definition given by Khajeheian (2017). Therefore, the sample covered any potential types of entrepreneurs from various types of business. (2) The sample included all the media entrepreneurs whose business falls under Lewis's and Churchill's (1983) five stages of start-ups. These stages start from existence, survival, success, take-off and until resource maturity (Lewis & Churchill, 1983). Although the research was focusing on the entrepreneurs within the first three phases, entrepreneurs within the last two phases were included as they can offer hindsight information based on their experience. (3) The sample also considered social media influencers. (4) International operating in the Netherlands were also taken into consideration. (5) The startups must be doing businesses in the lifestyle industry, which include retail apparel, interiors, food, service, and hospitality goods and services (Marketti, Niehm & Fuloria, 2006).

For the interviews, the amount chosen relied on the concept of saturation. When the data gathered from the different interviews ceased to provide any new concept or theme, the data was said to have come to the point of saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The data collection was often found to come to a saturation point after 11 to 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Therefore, this research conducted 15 semi-structured interviews of 45 to 60 minutes with media entrepreneurs. These interviews were conducted in person or through the use of video call application in the case that interview scheduling could not be decided on. A set of audio recording devices were used to ensure accurate transcribing of the data, which will be done verbatim. The audio recordings were imported into transcribing software, namely: Descript and Temi. At the beginning of the interviews, the respondents' consent to the research were asked verbally and recorded in the audio recordings.

Overall, I have conducted 15 interviews with lifestyle entrepreneurs operating within the Netherlands with the exception of one entrepreneur who started the business in the Netherlands and relocated to Germany. The following table gives an overview of my data.

Company	Respondent	Duration	Industry	Position
AerVideo	Hedda	72 min	Tech (GoPro Equipment)	Social media manager
Bike & Bite Tour	Paul	61 min	Tourism	Founder
Denoism	Joël	56 min	Apparel and Merchandize	Founder
Gardien Sports	Pernille	48 min	Apparel and Merchandize	Founder
Hops & Grains	Yorick	51 min	Food & Beverage	Founder
Online Jungle	Vyella	65 min	Marketing (Social Media)	Founder/Influencer
Pachamamis	Salem	32 min	Food & Beverage	Founder
Rook	Rokus	58 min	Design (Bicycle)	Founder
Rotterday	Geert	65 min	Tourism	Founder
Stroop	Zsuzsi	51 min	Food & Beverage	Manager
Toet Toet Food	Mieke	46 min	Food & Beverage	Social media manager
The Interlude	Moreno	67 min	Art (Music)	Founder/DJ
Vico Movement	Kevin	29 min	Apparel and Merchandize	Founder
Visual by Sharon	Sharon	60 min	Art (Photography)	Founder/ Photographer
Voorlopig	Adriana	57 min	Apparel and Merchandize	Founder

Table 1: Data overview

Operationalization

To answer the research question effective, the research question has been broken down into sub-questions. The research drew from the mentioned theoretical concepts guide the formulation of the sub-questions. Four different concepts were addressed and included in the interview questions as guiding topics, which were: entrepreneurial opportunities, entrepreneurial innovation, media branding strategy and media interaction strategy. Of the four concepts, the latter two are considered as the core concepts of this research. Entrepreneurial opportunities and innovations were selected as part of the topic list to help the researcher learn about entrepreneurial startups and how they started. The media strategies for branding and interaction are the core concepts that were selected to help the research identify the different activities that have been done by media entrepreneurs and media startups to brand themselves and foster a relationship with consumers through media. Therefore, the two core concepts were used to formulate the two sub-questions.

The first core concept is media branding strategy. This core concept guided the sub-question to uncover the different tactics and activities in which media entrepreneurs use to develop their brand. The sub-question is formulated as follows: 'how is the utilized media strategy affecting the brand?'. This concept is used to identify how media entrepreneurs utilized social media to achieve their brand objectives. The second core concept is a media interaction strategy. The sub-question intended to analyze this core concept is formulated as follows: 'how do media entrepreneurs strategize brand interaction in order to shape their brand?'. This sub-question allowed the research to view the co-creation process, which was prominent in media entrepreneurship. The interview questions are listed in Appendix A.

Validity

The validity of the research refers to the accuracy of the interpretation of research findings and whether or not the observation accurately presents the social phenomenon in which it refers to (Silverman, 2011). Silverman (2011) also suggested the use of respondent validation to improve the validity of the research result. This simply means that the researcher should reconfirm with the respondents about the interpretation by sending the results back to the respondents. Furthermore, the research could use constant comparison by cross-referencing the different results yielded from different cases. As this research takes into consideration the different strategic cases from a number of media entrepreneurs, this validation method has been carried out.

Reliability

The reliability of the research refers to the stability of the findings (Silverman, 2011), which is used to address the concern for replicability of research findings and whether another research using the same questions will yield the same results (Silverman, 2010; Ritchie, 2013). Unlike quantitative research, replicating research that will yield the same results is almost impossible. Nonetheless, reliability of qualitative research can be improved when the research ensures research transparency by describing research strategy and data analysis method sufficiently and ensures

theoretical transparency by explicitly stating from which stance the interpretation was made (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Furthermore, it is also important that the interviewees understand the questions the same way (Silverman, 2011).

Data Analysis

This research primarily used qualitative content analysis to process the gathered data. More specifically, the research processed the data inductively. Inductive analysis is defined as the process of grouping specific observations deriving from the data into more general categories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Inductive analysis was chosen for the method of analysis as this research aims to produce observations of lifestyle entrepreneurial practices. The type of data gathered from a semi-structured interview yielded a large sum of raw data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The gathered data were in the form of textual data, which qualitative content analysis was suitable to be used as a method of analysis (Matthews & Ross, 2010). As content analysis aimed to discover the meanings and relations between words within the textual data, the methodology was helpful in identifying the patterns presented within the data (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

The process of qualitative content analysis required successive rounds of coding, developing open, axial and selective codes. Firstly, from the textual data, open codes were created in order to assign suitable names for the identified phenomena (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Secondly, the process of creating axial codes requires analyzing the open codes to identify the relationships among each of them (Bryman, 2016). Thirdly, selective codes were created based on the predefined axial codes to identify the central category where related codes, themes, and categories are linked (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This process of coding utilized a data collection tool called Atlas.ti. This computer application enabled me to manage the collected data and use its functionalities to assign open codes and group axial and selective codes.

This research may face certain sensitivity issues regarding the company's information. Entrepreneurs may refrain from sharing their brand strategies and personal data, as the information may assist in the formation of their competitors. Measures have to be taken to ensure that the responses from the interviews will not affect the companies' competitive position (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, a consent form will be issued for signing at the beginning of every interview to ensure the respondent's anonymity and to inform them of their rights.

The analysis progressed through 3 stages.

First, from re-reading the 15 interviews, it became clear that the types of entrepreneurs vary from one another in terms of product category, business stage and customer base. There are four lifestyle brands operating in the food and beverage, four in apparel and merchandize, two in tourism, two in art, one in technology, one in design, and one in marketing. All of which are along the different stages of their respective business-to-business, business-to-customer and business-to-business-to-customer entrepreneurial endeavors.

Second, the coding produced a total of 439 first-order observations. Of which, 311 codes were selected as they are relevant to the research topic being discussed. Then, the first-order

observations were categorized into 19 second-order themes. Then these themes were further categorized into five different aggregated practices of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, which included their creation of lifestyle business, exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity, selection of social media, collaboration strategy and utilization of social media. The screenshots of Atlas.ti showing some of the coding processes are included in Appendix B.

Third, the analysis yielded detailed insights into the different practices of lifestyle entrepreneurs; however, for the purpose of addressing how social media are being used to develop brand and interaction, the following section emphasizes these three aggregate practices: the selection of social media, collaboration strategy and utilization of social media.

The coding frame for the aggregate practices are illustrated below:

Aggregate practices	Second order themes	First order observations
Creation of Lifestyle Business	Business inspiration	- Actively connect with other lifestyle entrepreneurs in related fields to expand business opportunities - Actively looking for inspiration for business ideas from social media influencers - Actively looking for inspiration for business ideas from various offline and online sources - Adapting other businesses' practices to own brand - Adjust business based on what publication feature the brand - Business starts from class project, Customer base influence business model - Desire to make a difference - Drawing inspiration for business ideas from stakeholders social media contents - Exploit opportunity based on personal experience - More receptive to offline feedback in store - Using offline and online opportunities to create new brand ideas
	Entrepreneurial traits	- Ability to combine online and offline business practice is important - Ability to perform multiple task is valued - Adapting to changes in the market - Changing business model to improve brand - Communication is an important part of risk management - Dedicate time to improve business and not just working for clients - Delegating business aspects to different experts - Entrepreneurial business with more than one people working on it - Entrepreneurial work require odd work hours - Entrepreneurs have to keep an open mind - Networking is important for facilitating business practice - Patience - Personal Liking is an important motivation for work loads - Recognizing the risk of being an entrepreneur - Sacrificing personal preference for business performance - Strategy to manage financial risk for starting entrepreneurial business - Utilizing personal quality as a key selling point for clients - Values ability to differentiate brand from other brands - Values the ability to execute idea - Willing to take risk is important for exploiting business idea - Work-life balance is important for becoming an entrepreneurs
	Entrepreneurial motivation	- Conducting business for lifestyle benefits - Exploiting a business opportunity that has financial and lifestyle benefits - Exploiting business opportunities based on personal goal - Flexible work hours for lifestyle - Social media business requires low financial investment - Social media marketing is easy to self implement - Support from acquaintances helps motivate entrepreneurial endeavor - Unhappy with regular job - Using audience interaction to motivate entrepreneurial endeavor - Using entrepreneurial business as a way to earn capital for next investment project

	Working in Team	• Delegating social media responsibility to specialists • Invest time in team building • Keeping human resource motivated to work for startups is important • Using workplace social media platform to develop brand executions • Utilizing tumblr to manage visual consistency with content producer
Social media Selection	Choice of social media	• Choice of social media platform is based on customer's behavior • Choice of social media platform is based on other businesses • Choice of social media platform is based on personal use and preference • Choice of social media platform is based on the demographic of that platform users • Rely on social media to grow customer base • Using cross-platform social media • Using Pinterest to share content • Using social media is helpful for business but is a burden to personal preference • Using TripAdvisor because the platform's purpose • Utilizing trending social media platform • Utilizing different social media platforms based on their key features
	Reason to use Facebook	• Exploiting target audience information accessible through Facebook to promote business • Facebook Events function is aligned with brand product/service • Providing information through Facebook to facilitate business activities • Using Facebook to build brand community
	Reason to use Instagram	• Instagram has a simpler interactivity aspect • Instagram is perceived to have better engagement than Facebook • Instagram visual and textual is useful for entrepreneurial business • Prefer Instagram because of UGC • Preferring Instagram over Facebook • Using Instagram ad is cost efficient to generate purchase • Utilizing Instagram story to enhance brand storytelling
Collaborative social media strategy	Co-storytelling via collaboration	• Align influencer to brand for credibility • Brand providing influencer with criteria to ensure consistent co-storytelling • Collaborate with influencers to portray different customer experience with the product • Diversity of collaborations is important for quality of product being offered • Ensuring diversity in brands collaborated with • Giving Influencer the freedom to contribute to brand • Having a personal connection with influencers will enhance business practice • Manage larger influencer differently • Reaching out to work for influencers for free to utilize their popularity to create engaging content • Select influencers based on brand alignment • Selecting what brand to collaborate with based on personal connection • Selecting what brand to collaborate with based on personal liking • Send products to social media users with influence within the field • Utilizing influencers from various field to shape brand idea development • Utilizing Instagram as a tool to manage influencer collaboration • Utilizing youtube as a tool for influencer relationship management
	Collaboration and exposure	• Attracting micro influencers using big influencers • Collaborate with another business to expand each other's customer base • Collaborate with influencer to build network and produce WOM and eWOM • Collaborate with influencers to expand social media reach and followers • Collaborating with popular social media influencers increases interaction • Cross-platform search for influencers • Directly speak to influencers to find collaboration opportunity • Selecting who to collaborate with based on other brands' popularity online and offline • Collaborative Social Media Strategy • Social media connects entrepreneurs with other businesses to enhance business opportunity • Utilizing questions for social media audience to search for collaboration opportunity

	Local community building	• Collaborate with local business to enhance benefits for all stakeholders • Collaborate with local business to improve business process for one another • Collaborate with local business to redirect customers to each other's businesses • Using social media to eliminate competition among local business and promote co-branding for specific location • Utilizing Instagram to foster community based on geolocation
Social media Strategy	Progress tracking via social media	• # and likes does not measure success of the business but measures how popular • Acknowledging the source of follower increase • Business is improved by social media following • Career opportunities posts generate large amount of positive response • Client use of offline media does not provide measurement of success • Expanding network through word of mouth is more useful for getting clients than followers count • Getting more followers does not translate to more purchase • Measuring UGC creation as success • Observe social media interaction to determine relevance of the brand content to audience • People like post without actually hitting the like button sometime • Perceive social media audience to not follow brand if the brand has few followers • struggle to measure revenue generated through Instagram • Sudden rise in interaction on Instagram post is a good indicator of success • Use engagement on collaborated content from Influencer's Instagram to measure success • Using audience interaction to measure progress • Using Instagram insight statistic to measure reachability of content • Using social media interactive features to measure success of brand practice • Using social media success as a reason to expand business into another market • Utilizing social media community interaction as a measure of success • Utilizing social media tool to gauge offline interaction • Word of mouth outweighs Instagram followers

Social media and CRM	• Appealing to hedonic motivation to sustain CRM
	• Asking question on social media to encourage interaction
	• Being on social media requires that you have to do something the society is expected from you
	• combining offline and online interaction to understand customer perception of the brand
	• Communicate incentive through Instagram to encourage interaction
	• Does not initiate interaction with audience/customer because it will drive them away
	• Does not rely on interaction with B2C customer/audience
	• Dutch entrepreneur social media accounts do not receive as many interactions as the Entrepreneurs from New York
	• Engage in less formal and more personal conversation with audience and customers
	• Generating positive WOM through offline and online interaction with customers
	• Implementing Instagram interaction in brand development
	• Improving product quality to ensure that customer expectation will be met before starting social media ads
	• Instagram stories is useful for generating interaction than regular post
	• Interact only with B2B client to facilitate the B2B2C business
	• Interacting with followers through comments and DMs to build relationship
	• Interaction with audience through social media
	• Not receptive to influences from social media interactive features
	• Perceive low social media followings to not interact with brand
	• Post purchase interaction
	• Providing information through social media for CRM initiation
	• Providing information through social media improve customer/audience perception
	• Providing information through social media in a timely matter
	• Providing informational content that enhance experience of offline brand activities for audience
	• Providing themed interaction to enhance brand story
	• Representing a modern view on societal perception of body image
	• Social media may grow your audience or customer uncontrollably and you cannot manage to deliver on all their expectations
	• Using Instagram Story polls to Include followers opinion into brand content
	• Using Instagram Story polls to Include followers opinion into brand product
	• Using Instagram story to communicate appreciation to followers interaction
	• Using Instagram story to encourage followers to give input
	• Using Interaction with followers to redirect them to another social media platform
	• Using social media communication to limit interaction to a manageable amount
	• Using Youtube to communicate product related information
	• Utilizing social media interactive features to diversify content
	• Utilizing social media to interact with customer/audience personal experience
	• Utilizing social media to initiate a conversation with customer/audience
	• Utilizing social media to learn about audience and for audience to learn about brand
	• Utilizing social media to provide enjoyment for audience
	• Utilizing social media to shape customer/audience expectation of the brand
	• Value utilization of social media plans that can convert interaction into purchase

Social media and Exposure	• Aligning product with Facebook event to generate exposure • Alternating between Dutch and English text on posts to reach more follower • Consistently producing new content is a way to expand following • EWOM is important for growing customer base • experimenting with Instagram algorithm to increase exposure • exploiting Instagram feature to increase exposure of content • Focusing on niche audience and customer • Having social media presence can reach younger audience • Pay to be featured in a social media platform to enhance exposure • Posting lifestyle content to share attention to branded content • producing value adding content through social media to satisfy B2B client relationship • Providing information through social media to gain exposure • Rely on organic social media following and not strategic one • Repeated exposure influence customer/audience interest in the brand/ product • Schedule social media post to improve engagement • Sharing business account with personal contact to get exposure • Social media increase exposure • Social media is important for new business exposure • Taking advantage of extended network through followers • Utilizing Instagram promotional posts to get new followers • Utilizing Instagram tool to find best time to post for the best engagement • Utilizing personal Instagram to grow business Instagram • Utilizing social media # and follow function to gain exposure • Utilizing social media attract customer to business location • Utilizing social media functionality to redirect audience to business page • Utilizing social media to reach audience/customer at no cost • Utilizing social media tools to reach audience and customers • Would utilize social media content promotion tools to gain more clients
Social media and personal experience	• Documenting the process of building the business as a content to engage with audience/customer • Including personal experience in content to make brand more relatable • incorporating cultural aspects into social media execution • Incorporating customer's purchase experience into brand content to influence audience perception • Personal Instagram account is better at growing business than business account • Portraying experience that customer and audience could have with product through social media content • Posting content about people within the brand earn more engagement than product post • Using Instagram story to show who is behind the business could increase engagement • Utilizing Instagram to show followers what the entrepreneurial is doing regarding the business • utilizing Reddit to show what the entrepreneur is doing
Social media brand community	• Community building helps with counteracting competition • Creating fun activities for customer to engage within the brand community • Customer interacts with one another within the provided community platform • Design brand content in a way that invites audience to become a part of the community • Engage in less formal and more personal conversation with stakeholders • Established community help with raising social media engagement • Focused on building an organic community • Foster a community through social media commenting and following • Having a strong social media community enhance business performance • Having a strong social media community facilitate idea and content development • Readjusting target customer through community influence • Use Instagram as a hub for content posting and re-posting • Using Instagram to promote other stakeholders' businesses to promote own business • Utilizing personal experiences of stakeholders to offer added value to customers • Utilizing social media to foster interaction among community members

	Social media content design	• Aligning brand identity across audience touch points • Communicating consistent message across social media platforms • Consistently producing new content is a way to provide storytelling content • Consistently producing new content to sustain engagement • Creating a consistent brand experience offline and online • Creating a consistent brand experience through social media content plan • Creating visually consistent posts to develop brand on Instagram • Diversifying content from one Instagram to Facebook creates more engagement • Diversifying social media content to keep followers interested • Having people manage social media in different region • Instagram visual is used to attract customer and followers attention • Intentionally post content that will not generate as many engagement • Managing visual consistency within social media post • Presenting quality visual post is crucial to modern social media practice • Producing value-adding content through social media visual and textual feature • Providing information through Instagram caption increases engagement • Relies on social media brand content creation to convince customer to choose brand • Social media presence must be seamless across devices • Syncing Instagram and Facebook post does enhance engagement • Understanding of visuals help with Instagram application • Using Instagram visual and textual aspect in a way that limits interaction • Using Instagram visually oriented aspect for promotional communication • Using social media content visuals and text in relation to what's happening in the surrounding • Utilizing certain Instagram visual style that appeal to a lot of followers to gain exposure and interaction • Utilizing Instagram story to share contents that are not consistent to the intended style of the feed • Utilizing Instagram visual element to show what audience/customer can expect from the brand • Utilizing visual and textual social media content to initiate a relationship with the customer/audience • Utilizing visual and textual social media content to provide value adding information about the product • Utilizing visual and textual social media content to provide value adding information about what the audience is interested in • Utilizing visual content to communicate a different perspective on an existing product • Utilizing Instagram visual elements to make the brand and product relevant to customer/audience lives
	UGC operationalization	• Acknowledging UGC to foster customer relationship • Becomes a hub to disperse UGC for other businesses • Becoming a hub for EWOM • Converting customer's business choice into UGC to enhance product/ service offering • Creating content that customers can use as UGC to spread eWOM • Cross platform UGC interactive event • Customer post UGC about their product usage becomes a form of advertisement • Drawing inspiration from different social media platform UGC to expand brand experience • Encouraging UGC to shape perception of the product • Engage with customers personal experience on Instagram to motivate UGC creation • Inviting customer to provide feedback • Limiting UGC influence on the brand through product/service design • Use ranking and reputation gamification for UGC to enhance CRM • Using UGC from B2B and B2C client to created posts • Using UGC to attract new followers • Utilized UGC as brand content • Utilizing # on Facebook to share UGC

| Entrepreneurial Opportunity | Reimagining existing business | • Discovering opportunity based on niche's insights
• Discovering opportunity to provide existing business at a more affordable price point
• Drawing from personal experience to discover entrepreneurial opportunity
• Engaged in entrepreneurial opportunity discovery
• Exploit opportunity by renewing an existing business
• Exploited an opportunity by introducing new product that induce new behavior
• exploiting a business opportunity by introducing a new product/service to the existing market
• Exploiting a business opportunity to provide solution to existing customer problems
• Exploiting a business to enhance experience for certain demographics
• Exploiting a niche in the market
• Exploiting business opportunities with a combination of different resource
• Exploiting opportunity based on cultural popularity
• Exploiting opportunity by introducing an alternative experience to existing product
• Exploiting opportunity by introducing an alternative product that enhance user experience
• Exploiting opportunity by introducing an alternative product that's affordable
• Exploiting opportunity from changes in economic surrounding
• Exploiting opportunity through the use of local recourse
• Exploiting opportunity with incremental
• Exploiting opportunity with incremental innovation
• Exploiting opportunities using incremental innovation
• Innovative business practice that add value for client business practice
• Providing a new perspective to popular practice
• Providing both disruptive and incremental change to consumers
• Readjusting the dynamic of existing business in a new way — entrepreneurial opportunity
• Readjusting the dynamic of existing business to expand customer base
• Readjusting the dynamic of existing business to provide new value to B2B clients
• Reimagining existing product/service
• Replicating business model in another location |
| | Resource combination | • Combining lifestyle resources to facilitate business
• Combining resources from different field of work to facilitate entrepreneurial business
• Combining new resources to sustain product and business
• Combining offline and online resources to develop brand idea
• drawing inspiration from surrounding business in the proximity
• Earn benefit from surrounding business Social media paid promotion
• Select target audience for content based on company resource
• Utilize university project to improve entrepreneurial business
• Utilizing crowdfunding campaign to obtain financial resource for the business
• Utilizing internal resource to come up with ideas
• Utilizing knowledge of personal interest to facilitate brand
• Utilizing offline and online method to discover new business opportunity
• Utilizing other businesses' brand content as own content to promote joint service
• Utilizing personal connection to promote product on social media
• Utilizing personal resource to facilitate business
• Utilizing social media resource to grow business
• Utilizing social media to enhance lifestyle with part-time business opportunity |

Table 2: Coding frame

4. Findings

This section shows the insights and observations derived from the analysis above.

4.1 Social Media Selection

Choice of Social Media

With an array of social media, entrepreneurs have multiple ways to utilize social media to conduct their businesses. The findings have suggested that different entrepreneurs conduct business differently, chase different goals and have different values, their choice of social media also varies. The sampled entrepreneurs have been observed to choose social media for their business based on target audience choice of social media, platform functionality and personal preference.

Entrepreneurs actively utilized social media to reach their target audience. Therefore, they took into consideration the demographics and behaviors of different platforms' users. Either entrepreneur have done extensive research on their target audience, or they already possessed the information, they understood the social media usage of their target audience. Therefore they have made an effort to be present on the platform that their target audience was in to have a better chance of reaching them. For instance, a tourism brand that offers food and beverage tours for corporate activities started using LinkedIn to be able to connect with corporate clients better. Another entrepreneur who has a beer brewery recognized that his business matches audiences who value hobbies. Therefore, he utilized Reddit because of the kind of contents that his target audience appealed to was often on Reddit. This is emphasized in the following quote:

> *You can't if you know, there's a ton of people trying to advertise their stuff on Reddit obviously but it does reach certain key audiences for us like the kind of geeky well-off middle-aged man. Young to middle-aged man. Those are pretty much our core customer base. I think so a lot of those guys are on Reddit so if you can get if you can get some genuine attention and genuine enthusiasm on there for your company then that's a good thing (Yorick)*

On a general level, this illustrates how entrepreneurs' understanding of social media characteristics enables them to foster positive interaction with their audience. Adapting their contents to the type of audience within a certain social media platform could make their contents more valuable for the audience.

Furthermore, the findings suggested that entrepreneurs that recognize the popularity of social media platforms could assist them in their choice of social media. It is recognizable from the findings that lifestyle entrepreneurs attempt to be present on trending social media to reach their audience. As a result, entrepreneurs have been keeping themselves updated to various social media trends. An entrepreneur explained how she decided to used TikTok because it was becoming popular among her target audience:

> *We see that social media, we focusing on Instagram and Facebook but now Tik Tok the app is coming up. So we have to switch and have like new ideas about*

how we could include Tik Tok. So changes that's happening outside you have to
put them in your daily work. (Hedda)

We learn that Instagram and Facebook have been important, but newer social media are coming up. This is important for entrepreneurs because different social media platforms offer different functionality and experience to the users. Therefore entrepreneurs choose which platform to use by aligning their business goals with the ability of the social media platform to achieve those goals. For instance, an entrepreneur operating in the field of tourism chooses to utilize TripAdvisor because of its purpose as a platform that combines information and reviews about tourism.

Another criterion that entrepreneurs use to choose a social media platform is personal preferences. For instance, an entrepreneur already has a social media presence on Instagram because she enjoys it. She decides, because of her liking, to prioritize Instagram in her social media marketing. This includes the decision to use and not use certain social media. An entrepreneur did not like using Facebook, so, therefore, he doesn't focus his attention onto building a presence on Facebook. We also learn from this that social media platforms offer various possibilities to achieve a certain goal, and there's no requirement to utilize a specific platform to reach a specific goal. Social media platforms can be implemented through different strategies to achieve any goal. Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that a certain platform may be easier to implement to achieve a particular goal.

Reason to choose Instagram

Among the sampled entrepreneurs, all of them are actively using Instagram. Their reason for choosing Instagram varies from entrepreneurs to entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, many of the entrepreneurs prefer Instagram over Facebook for its capabilities and functions.

Entrepreneurs have utilized Instagram visual-oriented nature to carry out different marketing practices. To many of the entrepreneurs, visual plays a major role in appealing to the audience. Many entrepreneurs have mentioned using Instagram as a form of a portfolio that can be used to convince other businesses and influencers to collaborate with them. The portfolio-like nature can also be used to convince investors in an attempt to expand the business further. Instagram also enabled entrepreneurs to utilize UGC as their content in a way that could reach a larger group of audience through social media tags and hashtags. Instagram also has been perceived to generate better engagement and interaction with the audience. Entrepreneurs recognized the level of engagement when they compare it to their Facebook profile. Instagram would be able to generate more interaction than Facebook, even for the exact same post due to Instagram's simpler interactivity aspect. More broadly, this suggests that the quality of startups' Instagram presence becomes a crucial touch point that represents the startups' value and desirability.

Reason to choose Facebook

Despite being perceived as less engaging by some of the entrepreneurs, others still perceive its relevance. Facebook has been utilized mainly for information exchange between entrepreneurs and the audience. Facebook is used more commonly to provide the audience with service-related

information such as opening hours, locations, events invitation and other related information. Another use for Facebook is for more serious interaction with audience and customers such as to make appointments for service and to answer product related questions. Facebook also provided entrepreneurs with access to audience and customer information and also provide their own information to the audience and customers. Facebook is also the platform that many entrepreneurs utilized for audience and customer to interact within the brand community. Using Facebook as the community platform enabled entrepreneurs to provide information to community members and for community members to provide information to other members. Despite being less popular among the entrepreneurs, we learn that   Facebook presence is useful for deepening the level of consumers relationship with the startup brands and the relationship among consumers themselves. In general, it suggests that the combination of Instagram and Facebook presence is useful for the facilitation of offline business practices.

4.2 Collaborative Social Media Strategy

Co-Storytelling via Collaboration

Collaboration is one of the practices that entrepreneurs can use to expand their brand stories and brands' experience. Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized collaboration with other businesses and influencers whose personalities are aligned with their startup brands. They have benefited from working with a variety of other businesses and influencers to offer better products and services as well as shaping their customers' brand experience. Collaborative practice has become an efficient way of improving entrepreneurial business. Hence entrepreneurs have engaged in multiple collaborations that require them to utilize social media functionalities to manage all collaborations simultaneously.

In their search for influencer collaboration, entrepreneurs have conducted research on the influencers they're interested in. Entrepreneurs have taken a look beyond the amount of followers influencers have. Entrepreneurs begin to observe influencers' social media if they are using their products, what kind of content they are producing and the characteristics and personalities they are portraying through their social media. These observations enabled the entrepreneurs to decide whether the influencers would be able to produce the contents that are aligned to the brand stories they are developing. Entrepreneurs have also recognized that aligning their brand to the influencer is important for credibility. The importance of this is expressed in the following excerpt where the entrepreneur explained why collaborating with influencers that do not match her brand could detract from her brand's credibility of her football apparel for women:

> It's important because if I were if I use some girls that like for example that don't
> care if they are wearing their shorts to their knees that wouldn't make a wouldn't
> be like. How do you say? Um, Credible. (Pernille)

This quote emphasizes the importance of collaboration choice. Because social media communication has a significant influence on the startup brands who often have limited reach,

choosing the right collaboration is crucial to portraying and staying true to the startup's intended identity.

Implementation of this influencer search allows the brand also to find different experiences that are aligned with their product capabilities. As a result, entrepreneurs are able to portray different experiences that customers could have with their entrepreneurial brands, diversifying their products' relevance. By diversifying the type of businesses and influencers, they collaborate with also benefit their products' quality. Entrepreneurs have ensured the diversity of their collaboration to provide customers with different product options that cater to customers' varying preferences for products. An entrepreneur mentioned her method of diversifying the collaborations that she had to enhance her store's performance:

> I try to have like max four or five different designers of the in the same in the same genre. Like jewelry, there are only four or five people if someone goes, there's one coming, but I don't have to shop full of baby stuff because if I look at my waiting list. People who want to rent it's only yeah, it's only it's only baby stuff and jewelry. That's the only thing there's a lot of people who make baby stuff and jewelry, so I have to watch out that it's not too much in my shop. So there needs to be balance. (Adriana)

As entrepreneurial brand becomes more popular, more influencers and business want to collaborate with them. We learn that entrepreneurs could utilize social media functionalities to facilitate this collaboration and allow entrepreneurs to become an active part of content creation — enhancing the quality of the content while guiding the portrayal in the desired direction. When managing their collaboration with social media influencer, one entrepreneur started a range of group chats containing different types of influencers. The entrepreneur uses these group chats to develop ideas together with influencers and also to show appreciations for the influencers' content creation. The entrepreneur also utilized social media content that she found to be inspiring for the brand as criteria for influencers to based their content production on. This way, the entrepreneur can ensure to a certain extent that the collaboration will produce an experience that is enhancing and aligning with her brand story. Youtube had also been utilized to distribute content to influencers to enhance co-storytelling.

Exposure and Collaboration

There are various benefits for entrepreneurs to collaborate with other brands via social media. One of those benefits is an increase in exposure through the extensive network that businesses possess on their social media accounts. It has become a widespread practice where entrepreneurs collaborate with other businesses and influencers to attract more of the same and more of a different audience. As a result, they've exploited collaboration as a way to expand their customer base. One of the ways this is accomplished is by entrepreneurs deciding which target audience they want to acquire in the form of social media followings. By targeting certain demographics of social media users, the entrepreneurs are capable of developing a new connection with those audiences if they could collaborate with other businesses or influencers that is appealing to the audience. One entrepreneur has talked about this process:

So right now I'm searching also for female content creators who fit with that GoPro audience and then I'm searching for more like the younger Target because right now our Target group here now, our customers are between 18 and 35. (Hedda)

This shows that social media also has an impact on the previously mentioned practice. With the interaction that entrepreneurs could observe on social media, they are able to identify the source of those interactions from their previous post. Doing so allows them to see which demographic of audience they are not attracting and which they are. As a result, they can cater to their next collaboration accordingly.

A way in which entrepreneurs have found influencers to collaborate with is through the use of direct communication. An entrepreneur explained her process of finding collaboration through Instagram is by directly messaging the influencers that she wanted to collaborate with. This allows her to work with the influencers of her choice and grow her audience based on the audience of those influencers. When the influencers post about their collaborative work on their social media, the entrepreneur benefits from the influencers' larger base audience.

Collaborating with influencers from different social media platform is also another way in which entrepreneurs expand their customer base. By collaborating with an influencer on a platform such as Youtube, an entrepreneur that has a strong presence on Instagram could also establish his or her brand presence on a different social media as well.

Another instance of entrepreneur finding a collaboration is when she utilized her own network of followers on Instagram. Since she was able to build an engaging follower base, she posted on Instagram Story to ask if her followers know any brand that does a specific thing that she is looking for. This process is described in the following excerpt:

I did a post last week because I was looking for a festival. I'm also doing a shop and I was looking for someone who sells makeup and I don't have someone here who sells makeup. So, I asked you to does someone know an artist or maker of makeup or temporary tattoos, and then I got tags and I found someone in five minutes. (Adriana)

Choice of collaboration also enhances entrepreneurs' engagement on social media. In general, by collaborating with popular influencers, the entrepreneurs are able to utilize the appeal that the influencers have on their audience. This has resulted in higher engagement as the audience has more chance of recognizing the influencers. Consequently, when entrepreneurs collaborate with larger influencers, they also gain interest from smaller influencers. This is elaborated as follows:

We're trying to get the best and what we also noticed is that if we have like one really big influencers by our side, there are so many smaller micro influencers with like 20k that are following them and seeing them as hero that they want to throw their GoPro as well and approaching me again. (Hedda)

For brands that have a strong presence on social media, influencers would also want to collaborate with them. As a result, entrepreneurs have developed different channels to obtain influencers and manage them. Other than the direct messaging through social media platforms,

entrepreneurs have built a channel on their website of social media platform where influencers can voice their interest in collaboration with the brand.

Local Community Building

As Rotterdam is becoming a more popular city for business and tourism, the entrepreneurs work together with other businesses and entrepreneurs within the proximity to enhance the appeal of Rotterdam. Many entrepreneurs have utilized a business plan that allows them to combine their brand offering with other local entrepreneurs' brand offering from a relevant field in a way that enhances one another's entrepreneurial businesses. Entrepreneurs have collaborated with other local businesses in a way that could be considered tourism marketing.

When entrepreneurs work with other local businesses, they build an experience that is enhanced by each others' businesses. A tourism entrepreneur collaborated with restaurants and bars in the area to bring a certain tourism experience to the customers. Their collaboration, in essence, allowed entrepreneurs to offer his tourist with promotions from the collaborating restaurants while the restaurants also benefit from enhanced exposure to a new group of audience and customers.

Entrepreneurs have also made an effort to conduct their businesses locally. This means that all assets of their businesses are coming from Rotterdam based businesses or from the Netherlands in general. By collaborating with local business, they are able to foster a community based on the personal relevance of their businesses. The collaborative aspect is designed based on brand alignment with other local businesses so that they enhance their brand in a direction they desire. One entrepreneur has described her collaboration with other local business as follows:

> *We're trying to work with people from around the area and from definitely from*
> *Rotterdam and small artisanal companies, we sell artisanal Kombucha at the*
> *booth. So we're always, uh, we're always really open to these. But yeah, it's*
> *about the personal connections. (Zsuzsi)*

The collaboration has also been done on a more proximate location. Entrepreneurs have formed a community of businesses working within the street of Rotterdam to enhance the customer experience of one specific location. This collaboration enabled entrepreneurs to give promotional offerings from their brand based on an activity that redirects customers from one store to another on one proximate street. This collaboration is evident from the following excerpt:

> *I'm in a commission group where we try to organize activities in the streets to*
> *make the street more popular to attract more visitors and also tourists because*
> *Rotterdam is pretty booming now (Adriana)*

To promote a certain area and the businesses within that area, brands have also collaborated to create new product together. Entrepreneurs with food products have been able to do this efficiently with other brands of food-related products. In a situation where they buy ingredients for their product, they decided to obtain those ingredients from other entrepreneurial brands that are aligned with their own in terms of brand personality. This is evident in the following quotation:

> *We have the popcorn collaboration. For them, they actually found us, um, on*
> *Instagram. I think it's an American company. They make StroopWaffle. I'm sorry.*

They make a popcorn and they have a Stroop popcorn for which they've been buying the Stroop. waffles crumbs from a factory, but they wanted to keep it completely artisanal. So they came to us and we arranged a meeting and we're always super eager to participate in these. So we were very happy about that. It's still ongoing. Um, it's delicious. It's addictive. It's a, it's a great product. It's a good collaboration. (Zsuzsi)

For them, their presence within the proximate area does not have to be in the form of competition. An entrepreneur noticed these possibilities and utilized the idea in his business where he curated a range of businesses that could be enjoyed in conjunction with one another. Doing so enhances the business process of those businesses an enabled his brand to benefit from such recommendations to his audience and customers in his tourism related publication.

So I always try to make combination of established places in town like Old town or Susan Bell that everybody knows of in combination with the newcomers, like people just open a restaurant or are still within the pop-up framework so that they can really profit from each other instead of being competition. (Geert)

Collaboration for entrepreneurs and other businesses has been done with the purpose of enhancing their business process. Collaboration is preferred to be initiated by businesses practitioners that the entrepreneurs have a personal connection with. One of the ways this takes place is through a form of recommendation or WOM. Entrepreneurs engaged in recommending other businesses they are personally connected with to enhance business practice for one another. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

I get an assignment from the brand and the look for a makeup artist, of course I have a certain amount of people that I've worked with. I mean I, my sister is also a makeup artist of course. So then a lot of the times I would suggest her at first because she's my sister and if she can't make it then I would suggest other makeup artists that I've worked with and that are really good so I can recommend them. And that's also how you build. Like for them, if they re makeup artists in there planning a shoot and they don't have a photographer yet, they would recommend me, you know, that's sort of how it works. (Sharon)

4.3 Social media Strategy

Social Media and Exposure

All of the entrepreneurs talked about benefits to the exposure of their businesses from using social media. Each of them has applied varying practices of social media to create exposure for their brands and products, sometime, similarly and differently. Most commonly, Instagram and Facebook have been used interchangeably to reap further the benefits of brand awareness, which are customer base expansion, perception influence and platform redirection. The entrepreneurs also have different opinions on whether to achieve these benefits organically or through social media promotion tools.

The entrepreneurs utilized the extensive network of social media like Instagram and Facebook not only to reinforce their brand to their audiences but also to attract a different niche of

the audience with unique demographics and behaviors. Also, as target customers of lifestyle products are younger, entrepreneurs have mentioned that social media should be implemented to reach this demographic of the younger audience. The practice that these entrepreneurs have utilized is by using the interactive functionality specific to the social media platform that they're using, such as Instagram hashtags, comments and followings, as was mentioned by three of the entrepreneurs

> *With drawing and more audiences, it really is trial and error. Um, we try different things, you know, a lot of different, uh, hashtags. We try to look up the most relevant, uh, Rotterdam Foodie Hashtag. (Zsuzsi)*

> *I'm starting to like and comment on other accounts and that's working. (Mieke)*

> *The people that I follow are the people that I represent or would like to represent or have represented in the past plus some other people with a strong opinion on Rotterdam, which are influencers, photographers, which have a lot of feed that I could make use of. (Geert)*

From this, we learn that the understanding of social media interactive functionality is important for lifestyle entrepreneurs because they could build their customer bases more proactively. Specifically, these entrepreneurs conduct hashtag research for the ones that are relative to their brand product. They find posts that they appeal to and give likes and comments to encourage other social media users to reciprocate. In further cases, the entrepreneurs will follow other users in the hope that they will do so in return. This dynamic interaction among Instagram accounts has been effective at earning entrepreneurs more interactions and also exposure.

One of the entrepreneurs has stressed the need to adapt to the different changes on social media platforms. For this entrepreneur's instance, her brand utilizes a recent feature of Instagram called Instagram TV. As Instagram wants to promote the use of this new feature, users who produce content for Instagram TV will gain better exposure for their account. As a result, she begins posting content on Instagram TV weekly and the algorithm makes her post more reachable to her followers.

> *I think that the rumor is going around if you do Instagram TV, the Instagram algorithm is pushing you and that what we are seeing in our views. With every video we're putting up, we're getting more and more views. I think it's not only natural that people want to see what we're doing and now our daily business or what videos we've captured, but also a little push from Instagram. So that's definitely a strategy we want to follow with the next week. (Hedda)*

This generally suggests that there are benefits to implementing new social media features, which is the accelerated exposure that social media platforms offer to users. In a way, Instagram TV serves as another way entrepreneurs can promote themselves and by doing so they are also promoting Instagram TV.

With the algorithm hindering exposure for Instagram posts, entrepreneurs have turned to another way to increase exposure, which is to post at the time where their target audience and followers are most active. Whether what the algorithm is exactly is obscuring; however, a few

entrepreneurs have mentioned that if they don't generate a certain amount of engagement within a certain time period, the Instagram algorithm will not show their post on their audience's feeds. The algorithm has been mentioned by one of the entrepreneurs as:

> *I think it was 10% or even less of your followers. And then if you don't get this amount of engagement and they would, um, calculate the engagement through the likes and the comments and then also how big the comment was and not only a smiley for example. And if it doesn't get that much engagement in this amount of time, the rest of the, of your followers won't see the post. (Sharon)*

To find the most engaging time during the day to post, entrepreneurs have to take into consideration their audience's social media behavior. Entrepreneurs have mentioned utilizing social media insight tools such as the one embed into the Instagram application to gauge their followers' activities. Nonetheless, the whole process requires experimenting with posting content during a different time of the day. Posting at a different time of the day has been shown to improve engagement for entrepreneur's Instagram post:

> *Because of the Algorithm, Oh yes. A lot of work doesn't show up in the, in the news feeds like in the home page, like what they did, like, I don't know if they still have it like that, but there was a few months ago the algorithm was made that whenever you post something, of course you have to also think about the time. I mean like I usually post between, uh, for four say five and 8:00 PM 8:00 PM. So you have to think about that. (Sharon)*

This quote can generally suggest the importance of consumer research for entrepreneurs. The target consumer behaviors for each brand varied, and there is no fixed period of time that guarantees exposure for entrepreneur's contents.

To facilitate post scheduling, entrepreneurs have mentioned using applications such as Buffer to help them. Applications such as Buffer, have the functionality that helps entrepreneurs to prepare posts and set the date and time for which their content will be posted online along with the ability to predefine the texts, tagging and hashtags that will be incorporated into the finished content. Broadly, this illustrates an emerging structure for social media operationalization among startup brands. Despite having no strict guidelines, entrepreneurs have been able to develop a structure that still retains the flexibility of social media posts.

Specifically, among entrepreneurs whose business takes the form of B2B2C, they use their social media to post content about businesses they are working with. It has been mentioned that uninterrupted posts of branded content reduce the engagement of the post over time. For entrepreneurs to sustain engagement with every repeated exposure, they have taken to introduce some diversity into their social media posts. For instance, one of the entrepreneur posts lifestyle-related content along with the other branded contents as a way to keep social media audience interested and not bombarded with just promotional contents:

> *I know that if I post a picture with a beautiful view of Rotterdam I get most likes and I think I use that in order to get their attention for the addresses that I represent, so that I that the ones that pay me to do what I do. So it's it's like finding the combination combination also to keep it interesting (Geert)*

This scenario is exhibited in all of the entrepreneurs working in the apparel and merchandize, tourism, technology, design and marketing sector. Broadly, we learn that social media for consumers remain a platform used for pleasure. The commercial aspect for consumers can be seen as more of passive interest. Therefore, it is important for entrepreneurs not to commercialize all their contents. Due to the low cost of using social media marketing, dedicating social media space to non-commercial posts does not increase opportunity cost and can facilitate the development of brand value as consumers can enjoy different kinds of content.

Another way for entrepreneurs to take advantage of the extensive network of social media is by creating a link between different social media platforms such as linking Instagram to Facebook and to the brand website. To do so, entrepreneurs incorporate a certain message to encourage the audience to view their other social media platforms through a URL that was also included in the message of the content. At the same time, entrepreneurs also tag their other social media accounts in order for audiences to easily redirect themselves to the intended social media page. This is commonly done by linking Instagram and Facebook to a website that allows the purchase of entrepreneur's products to be made easier. In addition, platform-specific functionality of Facebook Event has been utilized to generate exposure of brand activities. Entrepreneurs benefit from using Facebook Event in the way that if one Facebook user interacts with the activities by posting if he or she is either interested or going to the event, the Facebook user's network of connection will also be notified of the user's choice and of the actual activity as well. One instance that one of the sampled entrepreneurs have utilized Facebook event is for the activity she was hosting at her shop:

> The end of May we have a big event in the garden. I made an event on Facebook. And now I see it. A lot of people shared it. I have a lot of people say they come so now if people are coming they say they're coming. They're coming seven seven hundred people in one weekend. (Adriana)

Social Media and CRM

As modern social media becomes a platform where engagement and interaction take place among brands and customers in multiple directions, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized social media in various ways to manage those interactions to foster a certain kind of relationship with their customers. According to the data, social media have been utilized in various ways depending on the entrepreneurs' goals. Social media has been used both to generate more interactions in order to grow the entrepreneurial business and to limit interactions to a manageable amount for smaller entrepreneurial businesses. Ultimately, social media has been used by entrepreneurs to initiate a relationship, provide information, study customer to shape brands, diversify content and manage expectations.

Social media has been used to provide value-adding content to potential customers at no cost to them. With the sampled entrepreneurs, creating such content is a strategy for them to gain new customers and initiate relationships. They have done this using a certain technique of surprising potential customers with valuable information to the customers' lifestyle, such as

introducing customers on social media to a new restaurant close to them. In a more professional sense, one entrepreneur has incorporated marketing tips into her social media content. Doing so has been beneficial for her as various businesses on social media follower her contents to better her business. This initial relationship is taken further using social media content to redirect customers to a content or a platform that's designed to provide more information and convert purchase. More specifically to her business, she posts contents that show her followers techniques to grow their Facebook and Instagram for their respective businesses:

> *It will help you to grow on Instagram or Facebook or to connect make a connection between your social media and your web page and then people start following me because of the free tips. And yeah, how do I explain this? Because of all the free tips, they're like, oh is she really knows about social media, she really know about online digital marketing. So when we need someone we will contact her. (Vyella)*

Another type of information that entrepreneurs have used is communicating incentives of consuming entrepreneurs' content. Entrepreneurs have communicated to consumers that they could earn or win a particular prize for interacting with the brands. This has been done to foster a relationship between entrepreneurs and customers:

> *Every now and again, we have a winning campaign with festivals on our Instagram for example. Uh, you know, they will, you know, gather a lot of attention that works well. (Paul)*

This winnable social media content has spurred businesses to utilize it to build more engagement with customers. For instance, a social media marketing entrepreneur post on social media inviting audiences to take effort into winning a certain prize. For her, it has been very successful and has facilitated her to actually make it into a legitimate service that she could offer to customers at a price. She described the activity as:

> *I will have a coffee consultancy for free and I'll look at your company will have coffee.I will pay for the coffee and just write down your story of your company and why you will need it. Yeah, and then you can win it. So people are telling their story about their company and I gave them yeah consultancy for free. And I had a lot of reactions a lot of comments on it and they were starting to follow me because I'm the end of the message I said next week I will give a coffee consultancy for free as well again. So when you don't win this week, you can try it next week again. (Vyella)*

It can also be seen that she utilized customer's interest in the activity to create another interactive opportunity that can enhance her relationship with more of her customers. This suggests the implication of social media in communicating brand changes and product development. The use of social media has become important for entrepreneurs as it provides a direct channel to communicate brand activities to consumers.

Responsiveness, when providing information to the customer is also essential to entrepreneurial business. Social media have accelerated interaction time between users and customer expect brands to do as such. Entrepreneurs have mentioned that responding to customers' interactions in a timely manner have improved the way customer perceive their

business. The way that social media have shorten the interaction time has influenced entrepreneurs to either be proactive or reactive to customers' interactions. One of the entrepreneurs have added:

>*if people ask questions or we, we reply very fast within a few hours, that's the*
>*main thing. We are more reactive than proactive. (Kevin)*

This broadly signifies the different strategic possibilities that social media can be implemented for different lifestyle entrepreneurs. As many lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize social media based on their personal preferences, a certain objective can be achieved via different social media strategy.

The ability to initiate interaction with customers was also mentioned to be carefully done as it may discourage customers from retaining relationships with the brand:

>*I feel that brands are too pushy and that's pushes customers away. So we are*
>*in, it it for the, for the long run. (Kevin)*

Providing information on social media also lends the benefit of enhancing customer experience with the product offline. For one instance, a music event organizer utilizes his social media feed to posts about the type of music that will be played at the event. This has been useful for him to expose his audiences to the music so they could develop an initial perception of the music. Specifically for his business, when his customer experiences a glimpse of the product before usage, it enhances the user experiences:

>*it's also good for us because if they listened to it then and we then play to the*
>*parties than they know songs and that's even better. (Moreno)*

Another instance that has been observed is for an entrepreneur with a physical product, camera equipment. One of the ways they provide information to their customers is using Youtube video to educate customers about the product and how to use it safely and what customers can do with it to enhance their experience:

>*YouTube we are using for also for videos to explain how AER work and how to*
>*keep it safe. Each customer who has purchased our AER, we send like the link*
>*like "hey this is the safety video, please watch it before using using your AER".*
>*And then it is in Youtube. So this is really important for future. It Is really*
>*important for us to communicate what you can do with AER and to how careful*
>*you have to be in the beginnings.(Hedda)*

More broadly, this suggests that communicating product and service information through social media is important in the facilitation of CRM. Social media become a new medium for educating consumers about the product and services, which influence consumer experience with the brand.

Another application that social media is used for CRM is to shape the entrepreneurial brand. This is done by using social media connection to the customer to gauge what customers want. Social media, today, possess the functionality that enables entrepreneurs to learn about the customers directly and shape their brands and products accordingly. One common action that a number of entrepreneurs have implemented in their social media strategy is utilizing Instagram Poll. Instagram Poll is a feature with the application that allows the user to post a question on their Instagram story for their audience to answer. When entrepreneurs decide to launch new products or change a certain aspect about their brand, some entrepreneurs use Instagram to ask the audience to pick between several different options that the entrepreneurs were deciding to do. One

entrepreneur has posted on his Instagram Story a poll asking for his followers' input about the color of his new product:

> *We developed a tote that, for example, and then we ask customers to decide*
> *which one they liked the most. (Kevin)*

Asking for audience feedback may be even simpler than using Instagram Poll. Entrepreneurs have mentioned that they simply post a question on their Instagram feed or Story. Then they simply collected the response and reacted accordingly. Entrepreneurs value this feature of Instagram very much as it provided a direct learning platform for them and their followers:

> *So it's always a good thing to poll almost on Instagram. Sometimes I just post*
> *stories in like good ideas around know. It's like the most factual information you*
> *can get, you know. Do you like this? Yes or no and then. I guess anybody else*
> *because then you feel like oh, this is really working. I can make a series out of*
> *this or I can make another one or I can like change this and this and it works*
> *really well with the feedback. (Rokus)*

Some entrepreneurs view this as a better way to gain genuine response as followers feel a certain sense of anonymity:

> *This is, it's super direct because people in the store didn't they often don't really*
> *say what they are thinking maybe because they're not Anonymous and social*
> *media are much more anonymous. So you can just say whatever you want, you*
> *know, you can even just say it's super ugly and this happens to me, you know.*
> *It's amazing. (Rokus)*

In addition, Instagram Poll has more influence on the entrepreneurs than just on their products and services. The same questioning element has been applied in terms of entrepreneurial brand content as well. This scenario has been observed through one of the entrepreneur's uses of Instagram Poll to ask her follower to choose what they want to know about between two topics:

> *I'm confused to write a blog post about the new Instagram possibilities or should*
> *I write about the new Pinterest ads possibilities and then when people are*
> *saying like, oh, no, we want to know more about the Instagram possibilities and*
> *they vote for Instagram. Then I will write the blog about it and then when I wrote*
> *a Blog about it. (Vyella)*

Afterwards, she uses this as an opportunity to further strengthen her relationship with her followers by acknowledging customer responses on her Instagram Poll. She further uses this interaction to redirect her Instagram followers to her website, expanding reachability of her multi-platform business:

> *I'm just writing on my Instagram like, oh you all voted for the Instagram, the blog*
> *about Instagram. It's online and online now. Just go to my web page to read*
> *about it. (Vyella)*

More broadly, social media provide different ways for entrepreneurs to make sense of the consumers' interactions. The interaction becomes more elaborate and measurable quantitatively and qualitatively. This is important because consumers value personalized products and services.

Another aspect of social media and CRM is regarding the expectations that social media audience has for the brands and the entrepreneurs. With social media, engagement with audience and customers can be built quickly if done right; however, the amount of engagement and

interaction that follows may be too much if brands cannot reciprocate by growing their business capacity. Therefore, some of the entrepreneurs have utilized different ways to limit interactions to a manageable amount. More interactions are also a result of a larger customer base, which entrepreneurs have to manage their relationship with. The larger the customer base the less the brand can cater to it, which has resulted in having to increase the stock size and increase product option, which the entrepreneurs do not prefer. For this instance, the entrepreneur does not prefer to have a larger customer base because she wants to keep her brand focused on its initial purpose:

> *It's nice to have a broader choice, but it's also more if you have more Choice,*
> *sometimes it's also you really have to make choices to be clear what you want.*
> *Who You Are. So sometimes it's also more difficult because if you have a*
> *broader public, who see a lot of products on Instagram. It's also more difficult to*
> *be special because I'm intending to be special shop with special products.*
> *(Adriana)*

This has an impact on the brand and the entrepreneur. An instance where an entrepreneur deals with large interaction is by using social media communication. This instance has already been mentioned previously regarding the winnable social media content. In this instance, the entrepreneur introduced a social media consultancy service for free, which attract a lot of interest. The number of people who wants to use the service became too large. What she did was to communicate through social media the new service condition where interested customers need to generate content for her to explain why they deserve the service. This is one instance where social media communication is used to subvert disappointment and retain customer relationship while also limiting engagement and interaction to a manageable size. This analysis suggests that social media should be used to manage consumers' expectation. This becomes important when startups do not have the capacity to match supplies with demands.

Despite entrepreneurs having larger engagement than manageable, for the Dutch market, social media engagement is significantly lower than that of business in a larger landscape such as New York. Even though the quality of the social media presences between Dutch and American entrepreneur is rivaling, the amount of engagement remains unmatched:

> *they have a separate photographer and social media manager and they're,*
> *they're doing that very consciously and very well. So they do bring in a lot of*
> *their customers through that. But, uh, but even for them, it's far less Likes than it*
> *would be, of course in like somewhere like New York City. (Zsuzsi)*

This quote emphasizes the importance for entrepreneurs to manage the amount they invest in their social media practices because the number of followings and interactions are not a direct indicator of purchase.

Today, certain entrepreneurial brands have developed such an influence on social media that their followers expect them to be responsive in giving an opinion to worldly issues. Of which, is sometimes not what the entrepreneur wants as some of them have detached themselves from the entrepreneurial business almost completely. One of the entrepreneurs mentioned about this responsibility:

I often think about is for like even though I'm not a personality on Instagram. It just it does require that these people listen to my opinion. So something I often think about is what if like the terror attack that happened in Utrecht last week. What if that would happen in Rotterdam? I need to speak out about that where as my products or the intention that I initially had was to make a physical City Guides not something with statements, with voices, with opinions. So I think that creates challenges that I I feel that people probably don't want to don't feel that they necessarily need to hear from me. But I feel the obligation to respond in such a situation as somebody about something that's in terms of Rotterdam then. (Geert)

On a general level, this shows that entrepreneurs feel the obligation to have their voices in a number of worldly topics. Consumers develop a certain expectation for entrepreneurs as an individual. The use of social media has made this scenario more prominent for various startups.

Social Media Content Design

The quality of social media content is crucial to entrepreneurial businesses. The sampled entrepreneurs have stressed on a number of aspects that they considered when producing contents for their social media platforms. These considerations vary in application from one entrepreneur to the next, depending on their type of products, target audiences, and brands. These aspects are heavily influenced by the entrepreneurs' lifestyle and preferences, audiences' response, and external factors. The recurring themes regarding social media content design include the visual and textual elements that are used for brand consistency, content diversification and content distribution. Content design is heavily used for the purpose of providing a consistent alignment with the branding of each entrepreneurial businesses.

The ability to present quality visuals on social media is useful for lifestyle entrepreneurs as social media is very visually oriented. Some of the entrepreneurs have utilized their background in art and design to facilitate content creation. The ability to take into consideration the different artistic element is crucial to producing contents that are engaging on social media, specifically Instagram, which majority of the entrepreneur promote their business on.

So I have an education in architecture and civil engineering but many architecture helped me a lot with publishing the City Guides because it creates a sense of Aesthetics which I use both for the graphic design. But also in the Instagram, of course, I keep into consideration use of color and the beauty of images. They are never really, I don't know, some Instagram feed is very ugly with overuse of filters and I tend to filter that out. So yeah, I think mainly the aesthetic or Education of my architecture studies helped me in the work I do for the City Guides. (Geert)

For a visual-oriented business of photographers, one of the entrepreneurs has listed a number of elements that an image post on Instagram should have to increase the content's performance on social media. An Instagram post that presents a human subject in color has been observed to produce the most engagement, which lends itself to gaining more exposure when

combined with social media hashtags. She explained a visually engaging post for her photography business as follows:

> So portraits where people really can see the eyes like that also. Yeah, that
> really works. Yeah. And definitely more color versus black and white. Okay.
> (Sharon)

A female subject would also create more engagement, she added. Broadly, this shows that the inclusion of human in the content lends a certain psychological implication to the process of content creation.

Furthermore, a visually engaging social media post is essential for differentiation of the brand. By having an appealing visual in a less corporate style, lifestyle entrepreneurs are able to distinguish their brands from that of larger companies. Using such visuals can portray a certain character for the brand that can attract certain psychographics of social media audience. Entrepreneurs have used such visuals to make the brand more relatable to their social media followings. One entrepreneur addresses the importance of having an engaging brand visual:

> Photography is a big deal. We have to have like tasty images. You know, I like
> you can make people feel attracted to it and also the whole brand that you
> make you feel like some sort of a companion or a communal post, you know,
> and people want to be part of. It's really important to build because when you go
> to a normal bike shop, it's it's somewhat only business. (Rokus)

This quote emphasizes the importance of visual representation for the startups. The perception of the brand can be influenced based on the visual content, which consumers take into consideration when relating themselves to the entrepreneurial brands.

Visual quality has been addressed as crucial to countering competition within the market. Since smartphones have been acknowledged to produce professional level photographs, entrepreneurs need to be able to enhance the quality of the visuals that they used to represent their brands. Combining users' Instagram posts with that of brands', entrepreneurs need to produce a quality image that also stands out among the photographs that's shown on customers' Instagram feed. Furthermore, despite the small marketing budget of entrepreneurial businesses, one entrepreneur talks about his investment decision on social media marketing, which includes producing visually appealing photographs of the product he is selling:

> Given the small marketing budget we have, we spent quite a lot on social media
> and maybe, uh, yeah. Uh, Facebook ads, retargeting. So there we are quite.
> There was one guy who did an internship here. He stayed working here for two
> days and now he started his own company focused on social media advertising.
> So he's doing that for us and a and content creation. Those are the things
> because it's a shoe brand, so it needs to be visually appealing. (Kevin)

A certain kind of appealing visual is useful for a certain kind of business. A certain visual that appeals to the senses of social media audiences could be used to influence their perception and intention to purchase. For instance, two of the food-related entrepreneurs have address how important visual content is to promoting their food business on Instagram.

> With Instagram. It's more about it being enticing to draw you in for it to just look,
> you know, like that Lekker, visual. (Zsuzsi)

I think what I like about Instagram is it's very visually. So, If you like you can especially with this art style that you can draw people's attention pretty quick. (Salem)

Visuals on social media have also been used to manage customer expectation of the brand experience. One entrepreneur has used photographs of the customer's experience with the brand to target brand promotion to the right audience in order to build a unified community of brand users. Another entrepreneur had used a certain style of visuals to enhance the perceived value of the brand's product. This is especially crucial for his brand as it presents his products in a new light:

I tried to do it to photography to make them make it a sterile as possible to see that it's in the it is almost like a museum piece White Walls and like cool shots and like macro shots and details and almost like you're photographing like an expensive piece. How much you know from a museum if you like really extracted that piece and put it in in like isolated area where you can clearly see how cool of a bike it is. (Rokus)

Generally, this suggests that the inclusion of consumers into the brand content is important for strengthening customer base. The consumers exist in a social network of their own, using consumers as subjects of the contents becomes a way of attracting the consumer's network of peers.

Another benefit of portraying a certain style of visual is selecting what's in the photograph. Entrepreneurs have included certain subjects in their Instagram photo as a way to portray brand essence. Even when posting visual contents of a different subject, the entrepreneurs ensure that other visual elements are consistent with portraying the same aesthetic. In other word, the entrepreneurs use visual subject to inform their followers what their brand is about and often allow followers to recognize the brand. For instance, photography entrepreneurs include one type of subject across her feed to show the type of photographer she is:

I think like, because it started out really, um, always photographing women, I think my style is really like sort of like a feminist. So I think it's very like feminine and powerful and yeah, I think you can kind of like see my style or at least people tell me like, oh, I can definitely recognize your picture, like straight away. (Sharon)

This leads the research into another aspect of social media content design, visual consistency. Visual consistency has been implemented by the entrepreneurs to ensure that customer experience is consistent across all touch points for the brand and customers. One example is how entrepreneurs attempt to portray a consistent feeling online and offline. One instance is how an entrepreneur designs social media contents using the same design aesthetic as that is used in the entrepreneur's physical store. Furthermore, visual consistency is implemented across the social media platforms that the entrepreneurs are present. Facebook-Instagram linking functionality has been useful for entrepreneurs to carry out this visual consistency. Therefore, many entrepreneurs have also posted the exact same content on both Facebook and Instagram.

Another aspect of social media content design concerns a more holistic content consistency, which dictates that entrepreneurs maintain a strict rule of content posting in terms of timeliness. Depending on when works best for certain businesses, entrepreneurs utilized a schedule to post contents periodically. Many of the sampled entrepreneurs posts contents every day, every other day and once a week.

Overall, this shows that the combination of visual and time consistency is important for entrepreneurs' social media presence. Keeping contents coherent and consistent becomes important social media practices for entrepreneurs to reinforce brand identities and maintain the amount of exposure.

In contrast to designing contents that synchronize across the entrepreneurs' social media presence, entrepreneurs have also diversified their contents to maintain audiences' interest in the brand. Another way entrepreneurs diversify their content was by varying the type of content that they post on different social media platform based on which communication goal they want to achieve. This diversification of content on different social media platforms is based on the functionality of different platforms. Instagram and Facebook have been used for communicating the different type of content and information. Instagram, as previously illustrated, was used mostly for posting images that appeal to the senses of the audience. On the other hand, Facebook is more commonly used to communicate crucial business information with the audience such as opening hours, contact information, events information and career opportunities with the brand.

With specific regards to visual diversification on social media, entrepreneurs have utilized content diversification as a way to maintain audiences' interest. Entrepreneurs recognized that certain visual subjects attract more engagement than the other. Therefore they use a certain subject to draw an audience to their social media platform. Doing so allows them to expose visual subjects that are not as interesting to the audience, which is also a way of drawing audience attention to branded content that's crucial to the entrepreneur's business. This is a way that one entrepreneur has utilized content diversification:

> I post a picture of (location) or Erasmus bridge in a morning, then at the end of the day, I have a lot of likes. So the way I use it. I think likes very much influence influence that, the way I use it. So yeah, sure, but like I said, I don't want to only post pictures of Erasmus Bridge, so I need to get the attention with the picture of the Erasmus Bridge and then combine it with a post that I get usually less likes for which is maybe a plate of food. (Geert)

Furthermore, maintaining visual consistency all throughout the social media feed has been said not to portray the full extent of entrepreneurs' capabilities. Some of the entrepreneurs have utilized Instagram Story to include posts that appeal to them but not necessarily adhere to the visual aesthetic of previously posted visual contents. An entrepreneur mentioned this about content diversification:

> You don't want to show them photography the whole time. It's also like The Branding and the backstory and graphic design of events are also important. (Rokus)

More broadly, this shows that social media enable lifestyle entrepreneurs to include various types of content into their accounts. Social media secondary features, like Instagram Story, becomes a

tool to share contents that add value to the contents posted in the social media core features, like on the Instagram feed. This practice becomes important to the promotion of entrepreneurial brand story and influencing consumers' perception.

Social Media Progress Tracking

As social media becomes a popular platform for an entrepreneur to promote their businesses, a number of different interactive features have been utilized to measure the success of such promotions. Nonetheless, various entrepreneurs take different interactive measures into account to gauge their contents' success. These progress measurements enabled entrepreneurs to recognize the different aspects of their brand contents, whether it is successful or not. Entrepreneurs have used these progress measurement to create content that will be well received and use as proof of success to further expand the business.

As all entrepreneurs have made use of Instagram and Facebook to promote and facilitate their businesses, likes, comments and followers have been used to represent their successes on that platform. However, these measurements have been considered useful and not useful by entrepreneurs. Some entrepreneurs value these measurements, and some entrepreneurs do not see that these measurements translate to sales.

Social media interactive measurements such as likes and comments have been used to gauge whether a certain type of content is appealing to the audience or not. At the same time, it also lends to some of the entrepreneurs what type of products would be desirable for their audience. Especially prominent for Instagram, entrepreneurs take likes and comments into consideration to evaluate the attractiveness of their posts and what type of products they should promote. For instance, one entrepreneur uses the number of likes she receives on a post to determine what kind of post is better at creating engagement with her audience:

> I look at how many likes I get or what's you can see also it's really popular.
> What's a popular post or you see how many reach have like the the event post
> about the garden. It's really popular. For me, it's like a surprising. Probably they
> really like that I do something with green and garden and that I joined this
> activity. So then I know OK maybe I should do it more often or yeah more focus
> more on nature products this kind of yeah, so yeah it influences me. (Adriana)

Nonetheless, these likes are not perceived to translate to benefits for the brands. It simply measures how popular a certain type of post is on social media platforms and among the audience. Some entrepreneurs only take this into consideration as a way to improve their brand. It was mentioned by one of the entrepreneurs:

> I just I think that those are the only quantifiable things that highlight the success,
> but it's not that I can translate it to actual proof. It's just that I use it as such
> because that indeed Shows popularity. (Geert)

Contributing to the previous notion, likes is perceived as an inaccurate measurement of popularity as it does not show how it was given. Some social media users may like a post unconsciously and some may like it without actually taking action to like it on social media. One of

the entrepreneurs have used likes as a good indicator of post quality when combined with timeliness:

> *it is a good indicator when there's like a sudden jump. So if there is random*
> *posts where suddenly it goes from like, you know, zero to 45 in half an hour,*
> *then like, okay, there's something good about that post. (Zsuzsi)*

Another way in which social media interactive measurement have been useful to measure success for an entrepreneur is during collaboration with influencers. Entrepreneurs examine the amount of interaction and engagement the post that they've collaborated with an influencer on the influencer's post to gauge the quality of their business. For instance, a photographer has done the following:

> *I think whenever the influencer post the picture, I would look at the engagement*
> *that it would get on their posts on there. (Sharon)*

A similar scenario applies to entrepreneurs who rely on UGC as promotional materials have also utilized UGC as a measure of success. This is when product users use the product to create UGC or include the product within the UGC as their social media content. Then, entrepreneurs utilized tag and hashtags to measure the quality of engagement their brands have with customers and audiences. Doing so has also allowed the entrepreneur to acknowledge the source of their social media growth through the tagging of their account by influencers:

> *you would then keep an eye on how your followers are growing or where they're*
> *originating from. If they follow the same influencer. I mean like you can see that,*
> *so you know, like, okay, well this worked for me. (Sharon)*

Another way in which entrepreneurs measure success and progress is through the engagement they receive through comments and the reachability of the content by looking at social media insight tools. By posting a question together with their post, the number of comments posted by the audience to answer the question can be measured based on the number of answers and the quality of the answers. Or else, entrepreneurs look pass the number of likes, comments and followers as these measurements may be generated from non-genuine intentions:

> *It's better to have like a good and engagement than to have 10K followers and*
> *from that 10K followers. There're just 50 likes each picture. They know like*
> *that's just fake and no one will believe you (Vyella)*

Instead, the entrepreneurs take into consideration the reachability that's measure through social media insight tools:

> *For example this one it has only 84 likes, but 70 hundred 766 people have*
> *seen this post. It's yes, and it's more about the insights and it's as well for the*
> *other companies that work with. This post said 98 likes. But almost 6000*
> *people who saw the post and that's much more important than all the likes and*
> *the following. (Vyella)*

Ultimately, reachability of the content is valued over social media interactivity measures.

Surprisingly, posts about career opportunities could be used to gauge the reachability and quality of brand practices. An entrepreneur posted a job offer on her social media account and was met with a large number of interested response:

> *We posted it that we needed a, that we were hiring and that was the first time*
> *that we've ever done that basically. And we weren't sure if it was going to reach*
> *anyone or if there would be any responses. And actually we got back quite a*
> *surprisingly large amount of, uh, of, of emails and interest. (Zsuzsi)*

Overall, the analysis suggests that social media functionalities have different implications on startups based on the type of businesses they conduct. Developing suitable progress measures become important for lifestyle entrepreneurs because consumers have different patterns of reactions to interacting with different types of products and services.

UGC Operationalization

There are a number of ways in which UGC has been operationalized by the sampled entrepreneurs. UGC is considered valuable for many of the entrepreneurs to help with their brand, and there are many ways entrepreneurs have to interact with audience and customers based on their UGC creation. To sum up the operationalization, UGC has been used by entrepreneurs to enhance the brand experience, facilitate brand growth and foster relationship with audience and customers.

UGC has been used by lifestyle entrepreneurs as a source of inspiration to expand their business practices. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest are full of UGC, and entrepreneurs actively look through these channels to adapt different elements into their brand practices. For instance, an entrepreneur utilizes UGC that contains her product or UGC that's made by her product to repost on the brand social media. Doing so allows her to explore different ways the product has been used by users and reposting those UGC on the brand social media enabled her to show other audiences and customers of the brand what the product can achieve, ultimately expanding and enhancing the experiences that customers can have with the product. This is evident from a quote from the interview:

> *If somebody is coming from outside and taking a look at our brand and like*
> *creating content that we haven't thought about before, it's awesome because*
> *that's the only way we can improve over and over again…. For example, one of*
> *our customers just did a YouTube video last week where he put his AER on a*
> *parachute. So we haven't thought about that. (Hedda)*

This quote emphasizes the importance of UGC for lifestyle entrepreneurs. Social media expose lifestyle entrepreneurs to UGC where consumers make use of the products and services differently. Entrepreneurs can observe them for brand development ideas.

By entrepreneurs reposting UGC into their respective social media, they also reward the users. Some entrepreneurs have turned this practice into gamification of UGC by ranking UGC based on creativity. Doing so resulted in the form of enhancement for customer relationship and building a loyal customer base:

> *I think those who we are reposting they're feeling like super lucky and super*
> *special and that's the thing that we want to give people back because they are*
> *buying our products and we want to reward them if they upload stuff on*
> *Instagram for example, so it affects our brand in this sense that we have more*
> *loyal customers. (Hedda)*

This quote shows that recognition of UGC is important for lifestyle entrepreneurs. Facilitating the creation of UGC produce a touch point for both the brands and their consumers to foster relationships.

This acknowledgement of UGC is posted in various forms on the entrepreneurs' social media. Some of the forms that have been observed include entrepreneurs using UGC in their Instagram feed and story, and Facebook timeline.

Some entrepreneurs who have a B2B2C business have utilized UGC created by other businesses as their own content. In essence, they've utilized their social media account to disperse UGCs of those businesses and, in turn, promote themselves and other businesses. The entrepreneurs benefit from a range of content that could appeal to more audience and the businesses benefit from an expanded reach from the entrepreneur's audience base.

Social Media Brand Community

Social media allow lifestyle entrepreneurs to build extensive networks of audience and customer through the following functionality. Within these networks, entrepreneurs have utilized social media to foster communities and encourage audiences and customers to interact with one another in a way that enhances the brand. The sampled entrepreneurs have utilized various practices to reap the benefits of having a social media brand community. The benefits that can be achieved have been observed to include brand loyalty fostered through audience and customers interacting and sharing information with each other. Another benefit is that entrepreneurs were utilizing social media to share contents about stakeholders of the brand to foster a community of business owners, which also has many implications.

Within a social media community of brand audience and customers, entrepreneurs have utilized fun activities that encouraged members to share information about themselves or produce content about the brand's product. Doing so enabled a form of friendly competition among the members, which could be used to enhance their self-esteem as the winner will be made recognizable by the brand. Another interaction that has been observed exclude the brand from the interaction. This interaction between community members includes members asking and answering questions about the products.

To build such a community or a sense of belonging for the customer of the brands, entrepreneurs have utilized direct invitation via e-mails to invite customers to join a virtual platform that the entrepreneur creates such as a Facebook group. This allows customers to have a platform to voice their opinions and concerns which could be responded to by the brand or other members. Another practice that entrepreneurs utilized was converting customer's purchase into social media content. This has been used by an entrepreneur to influence the perception of the audience and customers that they are not the only one interested in the brand's product. This scenario is explained in a quote from one of the interviews:

> *Just give them the feeling that they're sort of not the only one who buy into it.*
> *You know what I mean? Like I post photos of people outside who buy a bike*
> *every time you know, so people see like, oh there's also just a normal person*
> *who buys a bike at a shop, you know I might give it a shot too. (Rokus)*

Building a strong social media community also facilitates entrepreneurial brand practice. By having a community, entrepreneurs can communicate with the members to gain insight into what they're interested in so the entrepreneurs can make the brand decision accordingly. Such a scenario can be observed from this excerpt:

> So that's for me like okay when I ask something they're always answering and
> they were helping me and when I put a poll or question online, they're always
> yeah looking at my story. (Vyella)

Having a brand community enabled entrepreneurs to learn about their audience and customers. With such knowledge, entrepreneurs can adjust their marketing and communication accordingly. This is evident in the way an entrepreneur redirect his business to another type of audience and customers:

> we've got a lot of, uh, corporate bookings from that. Uh, and that's actually
> become more focused. Yeah. I think that's probably our whole business by now,
> it's the corporates. I think probably about 70% of our revenue is corporate. So,
> uh, it's gone away from the initial idea of being a tourist company, which we still
> are as well. (Paul)

Overall, the different use of utilizing social media as a platform for community interactions have provided a direct channel for brands to learn about their consumers. Building a strong sense of community facilitates the flow of information within the community, allowing entrepreneurs to learn about the consumers' perception. In general, this analysis shows that brand community building on social media is important because it aligns the brand with the circumstances of the consumers.

Social Media and Personal Experience

Social media have allowed entrepreneurs to engage with audience and customers at a more personal level. This includes combining the personality of entrepreneurs and their audience and customer into the brand. Therefore, they also engage and communicate with the audience and customers in a less formal manner. The sampled entrepreneurs have exhibited different practices that engage more personally with the audience and customers in several different ways. The recurring practices are the portrayal customer's experience and entrepreneurial experience into the brand and producing contents that document the entrepreneurial progress with his or her own brand.

Social media connectivity means that entrepreneurs could obtain customer's experience from around the world. Entrepreneurs can utilize UGC of customers who are in a different country to portray the kind of experience that customers elsewhere can have. This scenario is described in this excerpt:

> The feeling that we want to give our customers or our followers is that just go
> out and have fun, be adventurous. Traveling is a big thing because we are
> always posting from different parts of the world. So followers can see or should
> get the feeling you get when you're all around the world. We're not missing out
> at something. We can see how it is in Bali if we haven't been there. (Hedda)

This excerpt generally describes how UGC connect consumers to other consumers' experiences. In this interpretation, lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize UGC to indirectly communicate brand stories through the consumers' experiences with the brand.

Entrepreneurial product is already designed to be a certain way and to do a certain thing. Entrepreneurs have utilized social media to convey these designed usages of the product to inform customers of the different experiences that customers could have with their product in an inspiring way. This is prominent in the field of apparel and merchandize where entrepreneurs can use social media contents to show audiences and customers of the ways the apparel and merchandize can be worn. In a similar way, entrepreneurs can shape the perception of the audience and customers about their products. For a second-hand bicycle shop, their bicycles may be perceived unfavorably by audiences. However, with social media, the entrepreneur can portray the product in a way that the entrepreneur perceives the product. As a result social media is used to shape audiences' perceptions by giving an example of how the product can have certain meanings to them. This is explained more precisely in this excerpt:

> It's just making showing people the way you know, it's like giving an example of
> what's possible and that's because people sort of know it in their head, but if he
> can make really clear examples like this could be your new bike. then you have
> to be really clear because because otherwise they don' get it, they won't get it
> and shove it in their face. (Rokus)

This quote emphasizes the capabilities of social media content in producing brand values that is perceived as desirable experiences. Having a visual representation of those values is important for lifestyle entrepreneurs because it influences the consumer's perception of the startup's product and service. Showing an experience that the consumers could have through the use of the product and service.

The same entrepreneur also creates contents about the product in different scenarios that it can be used and how it can be of value to the customers' when they're in a similar situation:

> You know, for instance. I put one. I put one in the snow, you know, and I was
> like see this not only for a sunny day. So let me just this is like your bike you can
> use every day. It's got the fenders to protect you against mud and it's like the
> stories about a you know, this one men good bike being really clear and making
> like a perfect example of how people should see the bike, you know, not like
> only a flashy bike which you can write on the Sundays but like every day perfect
> City bike. (Rokus)

Social media contents that have been able to generate engagement efficiently are the contents of brands that include the brand owners in them. One of the ways this is done is by entrepreneurs linking their personal social media accounts into the brand accounts. Doing so creates a certain level of personal connection between the audience and the entrepreneurs in a way that enhances the perception of the brand and generates more business opportunity. Instagram Story has exhibited to incorporate entrepreneurs into the brand effectively. One entrepreneur has utilized this practice, which is described as follows:

> To expand my business then I would share more on my stories I guess. I think
> that's very valuable to right now too, for your audience to really get to know the

photographer. Because as for me, I don't have like one picture of myself on the,
on my Instagram. I don't know. I think, I think I would do that maybe in my
stories and I did do that a couple of times and then you would get like, reactions
like, oh, I never knew that you look like that or I didn't expect you to be like that.
(Sharon)

Another way to incorporate entrepreneurs into the brand for the audience and customer to see is by documenting the processes that entrepreneurs go through to build the brands. It was mentioned that an entrepreneur realized that her audience would like to feel like a part of the brand process so she began including content that illustrates such a process. The engagement of such content has been received well by her audience. Another entrepreneur who starts building his own equipment and facility for his business posts a video content of that process on Reddit. However, the video was unbranded. Nonetheless, the audience shows interest in the content and have interacted with the entrepreneurs positively. Another instance is when the entrepreneur post a content documenting his achievement on LinkedIn. The content generates an amount of engagement where audience starts congratulating the entrepreneur.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implication

This research purposefully examines Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs' exploitation of social media capabilities for their brand and interaction development to fill the knowledge gap. Despite social media being a topic of interest for various scholars and businesses, conducting the study on a certain location such as the city of Rotterdam can provide illuminating insights to develop situation-specific contributions. Social media trends have altered the marketing communication for lifestyle entrepreneurs. Old and new social media functionalities, in combination, enable lifestyle entrepreneurs to exploit the growing dynamics of brand-consumer and consumer-consumer interactions. The growing capabilities of social media further readjust the dynamics of the startups, spawning a multitude of business plans. To answer the research question, this section will discuss the recurring themes of social media selection, collaborative social media strategy and social media strategy.

Surrounding the theme of social media selection, the findings show that lifestyle entrepreneurs have mainly utilized Instagram and Facebook to facilitate their startups. By focusing on the main platforms that they are using and disregarding their adoption of trending social media platforms for this particular analysis, we can see the practice connecting to Markantoni's, Koster's and Strijker's (2014) notion of business conduct for a better life. Their statement about lifestyle entrepreneurs sacrificing certain financial gains for business practices that suit their lifestyles can be observed from their choice of social media. Because lifestyle entrepreneurs choose social media platforms for their business based on their personal liking, we can see this as conducting businesses in a way that provide lifestyle benefits. Since choosing a social media platforms in this way can produce observable lifestyle and financial benefits at the same time, we could also see

how lifestyle entrepreneurs could implement the social media strategy that does not completely ignore financial gains.

The sampled lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize social media to conduct their business at a different level of reliance, which shows qualities that add to the proposed definition of media entrepreneurs, The initial definition of media entrepreneur that this research proposed that this type of entrepreneurs' businesses are primarily driven by social media (Lindgren, 2017; Plesner & Gulbrandsen, 2015; Shen, Lindsay, & Xu, 2018); however, after asking the entrepreneurs about their level of reliance on social media, three of the entrepreneurs have expressed that social media merely supplement their business. So this research would combine this particular practice into the broader definition of media entrepreneurs in the lifestyle context. This research will add this notion: lifestyle media entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs who rely on social media at a different level, from low to high, for the branding, strategy and communication with their stakeholders. This notion highlights a particular part of the finding that some lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize social media presence in a way that does not directly earn them revenues but in a way that eases their brand activities.

Additionally, many entrepreneurs do not utilize social media to generate revenue directly. However, this does not directly contradict Alalwan's, Rana's, Dwivedi's and Algharabat's (2017) notion about the high efficiency of social media in interacting with consumers. The findings neither prove or disprove the notion; rather the findings provided another perspective to modern startups that they do not need to invest in having a prominent social media presence to facilitate successful business.

Moreover, this notion connects media entrepreneurship with media definition proposed by Felix, Rauschnabel and Hirsch (2017). Their definition could be used to illuminate further the type of media practices lifestyle entrepreneurs have used to facilitate their brands. These practices include stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, generating traffic to online platforms, reducing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on platforms by stimulating users to post or share content.

The coverage of the definition of lifestyle media entrepreneurs may be vast, but this research would like to redirect more attention to how social media could be used to facilitate brand growth among a network of startups. From the sampled entrepreneurs, it has been observed that social media have been used to connect one entrepreneur to another. This has several implications on the concept of market access, according to Harun, Daud and Rajoo (2018). The different findings of lifestyle entrepreneurs strategic partnership further highlight the effectiveness of social media in increasing market access for lifestyle entrepreneurs by improving the buying, selling or exchanging of products and services among collective of consumers and vendors who are the shaper of the market (Shelton, 2010). Entrepreneurs have been observed to utilize a combination of UGC and collaboration with other entrepreneurs to increase entrepreneurial opportunities.

As mentioned by Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi and Algharabat (2017), brand's social media marketing effort begins to facilitate information search, interaction, promotion and customers purchase behavior to enhance brand identity. This notion connects with a number of practices

found during the research. Lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize social media to achieve those marketing objectives using a number of functionalities provided by various social media platforms.

They have described a number of practices that, after analysis, are ways of using Facebook and Instagram to facilitate the flow of information. By ensuring the flow of information, entrepreneurs are engaged in producing a consistent consumer expectation across their online and offline presence. Entrepreneurs actively align both Facebook's and Instagram's contents visually and textually. The use of the built-in link between the two platforms assisted the entrepreneurs in this practice. This finding connects to Christou's (2015) emphasis on the consistency of brand communication across offline and online touch points with consumers. Moreover, in terms of content, lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized visual and textual aspects of their content to ensure that they create a suitable consumers' expectation for their brands. Entrepreneurs create contents that are consistent in terms of visual aesthetic by including a particular subject in every social media post and developing a particular atmosphere in which they present their brands and products.

To further ensure consistent brand communication, lifestyle entrepreneurs have also devised direct messaging within Facebook and Instagram. The entrepreneurs primarily use this to communicate content creation ideas with consumers, influencers, local brands and stakeholders to manage the consistency of UGC. This is particularly done via Instagram and Facebook group chats, which allow entrepreneurs to manage this form of co-creation efficiently. Through UGC, entrepreneurs have been able to increase touch points with the customer base and also expand the customer base. From this, they are able to portray their brand and product experiences from the different perspectives of different social media users.

With the ability to present their brands from the different perspective of other social media users in the form of UGC, the entrepreneurs engaged in brand co-creation with the consumers through collaboration with their network of UGC partners, which include: consumers, influencers, local brands and stakeholders. The entrepreneurs benefit from reaching different audiences of their network of UGC partnership. This connects with Fargo's and Lusch's (2014) notion that brand value always has customers as co-creator. Other users can be seen as assisting entrepreneurs in expanding the opportunities for entrepreneurs to initiate the process of value co-creation. Therefore, UGC could allow entrepreneurs to create values using the different experiences of their UGC partners to reach audiences they could not reach or relate to initially. This entire process connects to Dwivedi's, Kapoor's and Chen's (2015) notion on the impact of social media on marketing. They've asserted that social media allowed users to communicate about topics relating to the brands' products, promotions, consumers and related stakeholders. This allows the users to learn from one another's experiences — eventually benefitting all involved parties

These practices for content creation allows entrepreneurs to formulate consumer's expectation of their brands. Doing so, entrepreneurs make their brands predictable and reputable, which influences trust and generate brand loyalty (Christou, 2015). The sampled entrepreneurs have been observed to post a particular style of images on Instagram continuously because it is a style of content that consumers prefer. This preference is observed through Instagram Likes and comments. Doing so, entrepreneurs have been able to generate their expected amount of

interactions, which connects to the notion that Christou (2015) made about predictability being built up from repeated interactions. Additionally, this interactivity also serves as a reference to the direction in which the entrepreneurs should pursue. This provides an explanation to Christou's (2015) notion for why entrepreneurs should develop in the areas that concern their target consumers.

Nonetheless, this form of collaboration using UGC could not ensure complete consistency. However, this inconsistency allows entrepreneurs to benefit from the diversification of their brand experiences through various UGC ideas. As a result, findings that show entrepreneurs intentionally breaking from the themes of their content creations do not show any drawbacks to their brands' performance. Although, this research view that this practice does not disprove the previous literature on consistent brand communication. Instead, this research would suggest the combined usage of content consistency and diversity because both types of contents have been observed to drive the brands' performance of Dutch lifestyle startups.

Surrounding the theme of social media collaborative strategy, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have been observed to not only collaborate with other businesses and influencers but also consumers. This particular instance connects to a number of notions regarding eWOM. Lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized social media features, most often Instagram Story, to encourage participation from consumers. Such features enabled entrepreneurs to showcase the interactions and opinions of consumers on their respective social media accounts. This has been done by asking questions to consumers. As doing so has been described as an effective strategy to involve consumers by the sampled entrepreneurs, we can see the connection to the notion made by various literature that social media increases a sense of anonymity for consumers and encouraging them to interact and produce more brand-related social media input (Chu & Choi, 2011; Wallace, Walker, Lopez & Jones, 2009; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). This also illustrated a connection between two literary assertions. As consumers become more comfortable at producing brand related contents, or UGC, their individual experiences and opinions are more exposed to their social media followings (Chu & Choi, 2011; Wallace, Walker, Lopez & Jones, 2009; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). This turns UGC into eWOM, which is more receptive to consumers because it comes from general users and not brands (Wunsch-Vincent & Vickery, 2006; Buhalis & Law, 2008).

In contrast to the notion that eWOM is outperforming traditional WOM in its level of impact on interactions (Hudson, Huang, Roth & Madden, 2016), which seem to have suggested an unequal reliance, the research findings have shown that Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have relied on both eWOM and WOM to facilitate their respective startups. In terms of eWOM, entrepreneurs have strategically converted UGC into a form of eWOM. The contents that users produce would not only be shown on the entrepreneurs' social media feed but also posted on the feed of the UGC's owner. This has impacted the ways in which entrepreneurs acquire new followers on their social media accounts and influence their purchase intention. On the other hand, WOM has been utilized by entrepreneurs who focus on providing services rather than products. Particularly when entrepreneurs collaborate with social media influencers, they benefit from positive WOM of social media influencers. Social media influencers who had positive experiences with the entrepreneurs would then recommend other influencers to collaborate with the entrepreneurs.

The findings have yielded various connections to the theoretical framework of this research; however, the findings presented the second-order theme of local community building, which was not initially included. To elaborate on this theme, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have been aware of the growing popularity of Rotterdam as a touristic destination. More literature could be taken into consideration to connect entrepreneurial social media practices in building a community of startups that impact the image and identity of Rotterdam as a city. This research draws from two sets of literature to connect to the theme of local community building.

This second-order theme could connect literature that addressed entrepreneurship in tourism with the role of co-creation. A connection between these two concepts has been described by McCamley, Claire, Gilmore and Audrey (2016). Entrepreneurs have been utilizing their network to broaden their entrepreneurial opportunities and facilitate innovations. They could use this network as a resource to co-create values. This practice foster a form of collaboration that creates values that benefit all stakeholders. Nonetheless, in terms of tourism marketing, a potential problem would be that a range of stakeholders is required to develop a touristic product (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman & Scott, 2009). McCamley, Claire, Gilmore and Audrey (2016) connect this notion to the debate that reconceptualized co-creation as "joint activities by parties involved in direct interactions, aiming at contributing to the value that emerges for one or both parties" (Grönroos, 2012).

Surrounding the theme of social media strategy, the findings of this research can be connected to Labrecqkue's (2014) research to explain the implication of social media for creating parasocial interaction (PSI).

The PSI theory is defined as an "illusionary experience" of mediated representation of a persona that consumers can interact with and feel as if they are engaged in a reciprocal relationship (Labrecqkue, 2014, p.135). In essence, consumers interacting with this experience would feel as if they are communicating with a person or even a real friend (Stern, Russell & Russell, 2007). Despite being deeply connected with traditional mass media, later researches showed that it might be applicable with modern media (Labrecqkue, 2014) since PSI could be designed to exclude the presence of the mediator such as the newscaster (Hoerner, 1999). As social media have been able to facilitate the dynamic communication between consumers and brands, bringing them closer, we learn that PSI theory can have social media implications. Labrecqkue (2014) have described PSI to be influenced by interactivity and openness, which also connects with these research findings.

Regarding interactivity, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have been utilizing various social media features and functionalities to interact with consumers, such as social media stories, likes and comments. Entrepreneurs have been taking advantage of social media interactive features to provide information. For instance, entrepreneurs have provided links from their Instagram to Facebook to facilitate the flow of information. Even though Instagram has been the more popular choice among the sampled entrepreneurs, they still retain their presence on Facebook as it is used more by their consumers for asking questions. Facebook's functions have enabled entrepreneurs to manage the questions and come up with responses almost instantaneously. This practice further illustrates the connection between interactivity and PSI through social media. As the perceived

interactivity of a brand by consumers is determined by the speedy and relevant response (Song & Zinkhan, 2008), social media becomes a viable option for entrepreneurs to achieve those objectives. In comparison, achieving perceived interactivity is said to improve the perception of site effectiveness in terms of consumers' satisfaction, loyalty, attitude toward the site, repurchase behavior and WOM (Labrecqkue, 2014). Therefore this research agrees that those aspects of social media accounts would be improved as well.

Furthermore, Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized Instagram posts and Story to ask consumers questions. This is done to include consumers ideas and preference into their brand contents. Entrepreneurs have utilized visual, textual and verbal elements of the social media applications to portray a sense of inclusion to their consumers. The practice connects to another notion regarding the PSI theory that attributes directly addressing consumers to the increasing feeling of PSI. Other practices that approved this notion include entrepreneurs presenting their products in a scenario that they could relate to and including themselves into the brand content to mediate the interaction. For instance,

The practice where entrepreneurs utilized UGC as their own brand contents could also show a connection to the PSI theory. Through ranking and gamification of UGC, entrepreneurs have devised a way to reward consumers for their interactions and participation with the brands. Doing so would make their consumers feel that awareness is mutual between them and the brands, therefore increasing the feeling of PSI (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011).

Regarding openness, social media plays a role in enabling entrepreneurs to expose their personal experience to consumers. Openness is crucial to increasing the feeling of PSI as with a regular relationship. Openness is a quality referring to revealing personal information, which is a way of building intimacy and trust (Meyrowitz, 1986; Horton & Wohl, 1956). This connects to how Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized mainly Instagram to include a portion of themselves and the people involved in their business into the brand story. Also, the inclusion of the entrepreneur's personal Instagram account has been able to increase engagement for the business account. The entrepreneurs who have utilized these practices have increased their brand engagement, according to the findings.

The findings of this research largely agree with Labrecqkue's (2014) take on the modern application of PSI theory. This research agrees that social media could facilitate interactivity and openness, which influence the build-up of PSI. The findings have shown multiple ways in which entrepreneurs have utilized social media to achieve both interactivity and openness. Nonetheless, the sense of urgency should also be considered as a part of perceived interactivity. Social media has been considered by various literature to have an impact on the consumers' social life, commercial life, business life, education life and political life (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). Also, entrepreneurial brands with social media presence have gained popularity and influence over the consumers. In combination, this creates a sense of responsibility for entrepreneurs to address social issues through their social media communication. Since social issues were increasing the relevance of social issues for consumers, it would be beneficial for entrepreneurs to include themselves as part of the issue by presenting their thoughts on the matter.

5.2 Practical Implication

The analysis of these research findings and existing literature show a number of practical implication of social media for lifestyle entrepreneurs and policymakers. These practical implications include the operationalization of different social media features and functions to develop brand and interactions. At the same time, the research also explains how the collaboration of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs could have an implication on stakeholders' performance and promotion of the city of Rotterdam.

Firstly, we learn that the entrepreneur's choice of social media has become more flexible due to the changing relevance of different social media platforms to the entrepreneurs themselves and their consumers. Social media most commonly used to enhance exposure, facilitate CRM and manage collaboration are Instagram and Facebook. Of which, Instagram is used as a visual representation of the brand and the entrepreneur behind it while Facebook is used as a platform for providing information and dealing with CRM. Often time, these platforms house different consumers with different backgrounds and intentions. Therefore, with consumer research, entrepreneurs could potentially utilize social media presence in different platforms to cater their brand to the different needs of their consumers. The findings have shown that Instagram and Facebook is a staple of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs, but new platforms are emerging. This is important not only because entrepreneurs could expand their customer base but also exploit other opportunities that trending social media could alter their brand content to be more relevant to the consumers. This lends the entrepreneur to repeatedly expose consumers to contents, which affects brand perception and purchase behavior.

From these insights, the research sees a practical implication that could potentially increase brand performance. As lifestyle entrepreneurs value lifestyle benefits more than financial benefit, expanding social media following to a number that exceeds their management capability would be undermining their purpose of becoming a lifestyle entrepreneur. Therefore the first implication would be to utilize Instagram as their main platform. Instagram posses the capabilities to reach multiple types of consumers via hashtags, tags, and other interactive functionalities. As consumers become more visually oriented in the type of content they consume, Instagram enables entrepreneurs to promote their brands in a visually consistent manner while also having the features to incorporate content diversity. Instagram has a number of interactive functionalities, such as likes, comments and follows that serve as a visible measurement of success. This visible measures could be used to attract new entrepreneurial opportunities including searching for new resources, attracting stakeholders and facilitating collaboration. Placing focus on establishing an Instagram presence also enables entrepreneurs to redirect consumers to Facebook via their built-in linkage. This allows entrepreneurs to expand the reach of their social media at low opportunity costs in time and finance. Moreover, it remains difficult to ensure return on investment for investing in Instagram presence. To facilitate purchase intention, entrepreneurs could incorporate a number of practices that enhance brand performance, including utilizing UGC to present the different experiences that consumers could have. The different perspectives of the brand's product would

be able to influence purchase intention of different types of consumers. Also, by documenting the development of the brand and the entrepreneur and using them as content enable consumers to increase their feeling of PSI, which means consumers would feel like a part of the brand growth and the brand would become more relevant and relatable. Utilizing Instagram Story to ask consumers questions also enable entrepreneurs to learn about the preferences and needs of their followers actively. Doing so, entrepreneurs could earn new product insights, collaboration opportunities and reach new stakeholders. All of which enhances the brand performance on social media, influencing consumers' purchase intention.

Secondly, the findings indicate that a number of entrepreneurs collaborate with other entrepreneurs in their proximity to redirect each other's consumers to each other's brands. The nature of their collaboration enabled them to improve their business process in terms of resource acquisition, creation of interactive campaigns and improvement of the proximate location. The collaboration among these startups bring up opportunities for entrepreneurs to have a collective impact on the creation of an experience that shapes Rotterdam as a product and a brand. So far, this has been done at a relatively small scale, including entrepreneurs along a particular street in Rotterdam jointly promote the street and a tourism publication that utilize Instagram to direct consumers attention to the different lifestyle businesses in Rotterdam. This develops a vast array of opportunities for policymakers amplify the effect of this city branding. The government could provide a platform for lifestyle entrepreneurs to facilitate the initiation of their relationship, helping them promote Rotterdam on a larger scale. The branding process for the city could develop specific strategies suitable for a particular area of the city. Doing so should make different areas of Rotterdam grow coherently with a theme. With the network of entrepreneurs working to improve the branding of the city could co-create certain values for locals, tourists and expats that could enhance the desirability of Rotterdam.

6. Conclusion

This research documented the different social media practices of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs to develop their brands and interactions, particularly in Rotterdam. This research was able to connect the different social media practices to the existing literature on the social media in entrepreneurship and contribute a number of variables to the selected theories and observations. The findings provided a number of insights for the impact of social media on entrepreneurs co-create values for their brands, stakeholders and the city of Rotterdam. The insights provided answers to the two sub-questions that were used to answer the main research question.

Firstly, answering 'how is the utilized media strategy affecting the brand?' social media enabled entrepreneurs to increase the relevance of their brands to the consumers. Social media has been largely adopted by the lifestyle entrepreneurs; however, the ability for social media to generate revenue was exploited at different levels depending on the startups' situation and personal preference. The vast amount of implications for social media branding have allowed lifestyle entrepreneurs to achieve certain brand qualities via any popular social media platforms. Social media also influenced entrepreneurs to become more aware of visual design as social media continue to sustain the visually oriented nature of consumers.

Secondly, answering 'how do media entrepreneurs strategize brand interaction in order to shape their brand?', Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs have utilized the interactions generated from social media collaboration with consumers, stakeholders and influencers to shape their brands. With these collaborations, social media enabled entrepreneurs to measure the engagement of the co-created contents using interactive features and functionalities of social media. The collaboration engaged the consumers in a number of ways, providing interactive data and insights that entrepreneurs have used to adjust their business models, brand identity and their respective products. Social media have truly made the interaction between entrepreneurs and consumers direct and insightful.

Additionally, this research provided insights with international implications. The amount of engagement generated from social media practices in different locations may vary regardless of the amount entrepreneurs invest in their social media marketing. This particular notion highlighted the importance of entrepreneurs to develop engagement measures specific to their own brands. Moreover, the collaborative strategy developed by a group of proximate startups could lay the foundation for other cities and countries to participate in similar practices, uniting entrepreneurs to co-create values that become a part of the city's and country's brand.

Limitation

The first flaw of this research was inconsistent interview questions. After the first interviews, the topic list has been adjusted to improve the flow of the subsequent interviews. After five interviews, a few questions have been added to the interviews. The new questions were not added to redirect the interviews completely but to put more focus on how Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs acquire new social media followers for more exposure. The new questions serve to acquire more information about the topic as the initial questions set could not do so sufficient.

This research collected its data from a sample of 15 lifestyle entrepreneurs who specialized in a multitude of professional backgrounds and produced products and services for different aspects of the lifestyle industry. Because the research was unable to divide entrepreneurs in terms of product and services specialization equally, the finding of the research cannot be considered a justified representation of how social media is used by lifestyle entrepreneurs specialized in a certain product category. Additionally, an unequal number of lifestyle entrepreneurs spanned the five growth stages of startups described by Churchill's and Lewis's (1983). Therefore, the social media practices found by this research is not used to determine which practices are effective for the different stages. The interpretation is more of a generalized social media practices of Dutch lifestyle entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the sampled lifestyle entrepreneurs do not rely on social media at the same level. Some entrepreneurs merely have a social media presence, while some invest more in their social media marketing.

Future Research

This research primarily focuses on the social media practices of a Dutch lifestyle entrepreneur. The research documented the recurring themes of social media selection, collaboration strategy and implementation of social media features and functionalities. All of which is in relation to building relationships with consumers. Future research would be recommended to focus on the influences of evolving consumers' social media behaviors on entrepreneurial social media presence within the lifestyle industry. Interesting would be, to conduct similar research on how lifestyle entrepreneurs in other locations utilize social media. Doing so should uncover the different cultural influences on how lifestyle entrepreneurs utilize social media to develop brands and interactions according to their surroundings.

Moreover, the research uncovered the theme co-creation of value among proximate stakeholders. Relationship building among physically proximate stakeholders via social media could be explored to further contribute to topics relating to city marketing. As the sampled entrepreneurs have exploited opportunities from Rotterdam's growing popularity among tourist, it would be interesting to conduct further research about the branding of the city in the context of social media. How various local entrepreneurs can work together to improve their respective businesses and how that impacts the city of Rotterdam could contribute to the existing literature about a place as a brand (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Braun, Eshuis, & Klijn, 2014). Conducting such research would filling up a knowledge gap as various literature addresses the characteristic and opportunity recognition aspect of entrepreneurs (Hulbert, Gilmore & Carson, 2015) but opportunities identification of entrepreneurial stakeholder networks may have been neglected (Burns, Barney, Angus & Herrick, 2016).

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview questions

Introduction question
1. How would you describe your entrepreneurial business? What is your product and/or service?
2. Could you describe your normal work day?
3. What background knowledge do you have?
4. How does that help you with your success as an entrepreneur?
5. What are the knowledge and skills that entrepreneurs need today?
6. In your opinion, how would you describe an entrepreneur?
   a. Do you see yourself following that definition?

Entrepreneurship Opportunity & Innovation
7. How did you come to starting this business?
8. What is your value proposition?
   a. How did you discover this opportunity?
   b. What opportunity did you exploit?
9. How do you develop new ideas for your work?
10. What do you do to ensure that you deliver new value to your customers?

Media Strategy
11. How much do you rely on social media to conduct your business?
12. On what platform do you promote your business? Why?
13. How do you use the different platforms for your business?
14. How do you look for new followers?
15. How do you collaborate with other brands ?

Connecting with customers through social media
16. Could you describe your interactions with your social media audience?
17. What is your audience role in forming new ideas and refining product and services?
18. How do you work together with your future audience to include their ideas?
19. What makes your communication with your customer successful?
20. How would you develop your brand with your customers/audience?

Co-creation and branding
21. What brand story are you telling through your social media?
22. How do you communicate your brand story through social media?
23. How do you include your interaction with audiences and customers in your brand story?
24. How do you feel about the effects that these interactions have on your brand story?
25. What roles do each of the social media platforms you used play on communicating your idea, products or brand development?
26. How has these channels help your brand development? Can you give one instance from your experience?
27. What challenges do these channels bring? Can you describe a situation that was challenging?

Appendix B: Atlas.ti