

IDENTITY FORMATION OF THE MODERN LIFESTYLE ENTREPRENEUR

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ABSTRACT

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Purpose- The purpose of this thesis is to explore the identity of lifestyle entrepreneurs in the Millennial demographic. Prior research is extensive on the construction of identity as well as lifestyle entrepreneurship as a discipline. However, there are gaps in research for the latest generation of entrepreneurs. Their approach to business, lifestyle, and work-life balance differs greatly from their predecessors.</p> <p>Aim- This thesis aims to capture the unique essence and identifying factors of lifestyle entrepreneurs who are in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. The goal of the researcher is to contribute to the understanding and acceptance of the new age of business owners through accounts in their own words.</p> <p>Approach- The study is comprised of semi-structured interviews with 12 lifestyle entrepreneurs in the Millennial age range. The researcher conducted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to interpret the informant's understanding of meaning and impact of their work.</p> <p>Research Question- The focal research question is: What composes the identity of a lifestyle entrepreneur?</p> <p>Findings- The researcher concluded that in the modern business climate the two main factors are 1) Identity is more strongly formed in the space of what the entrepreneur does not want to do or become, rather than in dreams of what they want. 2) Modern lifestyle entrepreneurs are integrating technology into their identity. The level of technology usage of the informant offers insight into how they identify as an entrepreneur.</p>	
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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present a cross-cultural perspective on the domain of lifestyle entrepreneurship. Qualitative research methods in the form of semi-structured interviews were utilized. The research is unique in that it addresses the identity formation of lifestyle entrepreneurs within a youthful age range in the modern day business climate. The focus of the study was to identify the factors that form identity in terms of both internal and external aspects. The intent of the researcher is that the reader is able to truly grasp the essence of the 12 entrepreneurs featured in this thesis. Their stories and narratives are a way to understand their hopes, dreams, and perception of identity. The focal research question is: What composes the identity of a lifestyle entrepreneur? Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was the main method of analysis utilized to understand the lived experience of the informants.

1.1 Background and Motivation

This thesis began forming in June of 2009 when I visited Greece with my father and sister. We traveled to the islands, soaked up the sun, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. About halfway through our journey we stumbled upon Palaiochora, a tiny town south of Chania on the coast of Crete. The pace of life was slow, the sky and sea were pristine, and the morning pastries were to die for. One evening we took our sun-kissed and sandaled selves to a local favorite for dinner. I still recall the restaurant as being a place of serenity when we arrived at the golden hour of dusk. The fusion curry fare was unbelievably fresh and flavorful. Yet, most impressive to me were the owners of the establishment and the fluidity of their business. It was a German husband and Dutch wife team. The lady was in control of the kitchen and all the deliciousness that it produced. Meanwhile, the gentleman was the face of the front of house. He casually spoke with each guest and made them feel at ease and welcome. We complimented him on his restaurant and marveled at the food. Then we asked him how he managed to create such an idyllic eatery in Greek paradise. His response was so succinct that it has stuck with me to this day. He simply said, "I have never worked a day in my life. Every morning I get up and swim in the sea, and spend the afternoon and evening with my wife here at the restaurant. If it is work, it does not feel like it."

I was dumbstruck by his comment. At this point, I was an undergraduate and had held many jobs typical to an American teenager. I had cleaned bathrooms at a waterpark, sat as a bored lifeguard in the blazing sun, taught hours of swim lessons to crying babies, and was a babysitter to defiant children. Every job I had held most certainly felt like work, or perhaps closer to torture. I believe that this is the point when I began my relentless pursuit of the above mentioned 'never working a day in my life'. Unfortunately, at this juncture it has not turned

out as such. The completion of my bachelor's degree threw me into the world during the USA Great Recession. Employment was few and far between, particularly for the overeducated and under qualified. I desperately took work as a means to merely support myself rather than a path to self-fulfillment.

I arrived in Finland to begin my Master's degree in summer of 2014. It was here that I began to further observe the phenomenon of lifestyle entrepreneurs. These business owners did not seem interested in relentlessly chasing growth, but rather were content with their mid-range size. This was contrary to the mindset that I had been exposed to during my time working in Corporate America. The idea there was that once you had money you could buy whatever you wanted, and voila your problems were solved. The attitude that work can also be combined with your hobby with the objective of personal happiness began to pique my interest. In this research study, I set out to understand the underlying identity of lifestyle entrepreneurs. Ultimately, the conversations I have had with these creative and passionate individuals have proven to be more meaningful than I imagined.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Field of Lifestyle Entrepreneurship

This section seeks to present a comprehensive overview of the subject area. The research question being addressed is: 'What composes the identity of a Lifestyle Entrepreneur?' The following paragraphs detail prior literature on entrepreneurial identity and construction of identity. Furthermore, the study focuses on an older youth age range of approximately 24-39 years of age in 2016. To address this demographic element of the study, the subject of Millennial (also known as Generation Y) Entrepreneurs are detailed below. The concept of Emerging Adulthood as presented by Jeffrey Arnett is included as it relates to exploration and the formation of the self for contemporary youth. In addition, an overview of the Attachment Theory is shared as a way to introduce the psychology behind attachment. The final section is on technology and the interlink with identity. This has been included due its importance in the modern age. The idea of identity is in some ways ambiguous and highly dependent on personal experiences. As a result, this study relies mainly on quotes and outlooks of the 12 individuals interviewed. The intent of the researcher of this thesis was to paint a comprehensive picture of the identity of the informants, and understand the meaning behind their work. The literature below addresses both internal and external elements of an individual's identity, providing an extensive analysis.

2.2. Topic Discussion

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial Identity

Identity is a complex concept, particularly in respect to lifestyle entrepreneurship. This study supports the perspective that the outlook of an individual is often malleable, based upon experiences and setting. Furthermore, there is a distinct correlation between one's personal perception, their intentions, and attitude. According to Sveningsson and Alvesson, identity is at the center of meaning and decision making, motivation, action and commitment, loyalty, stability, and change (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Identity research covers a wide spectrum which spans the fixed mindset of biological reductionism to the modern, and dynamic view based upon interaction with social environmental factors (Kasperova, 2014). The aim of this thesis is to touch upon several viewpoints within this range. Often the nature of lifestyle entrepreneurship is to link a person to their interests, or where they hold knowledge and experience. The educational and personal process of entrepreneurship forces one to construct, revise, and reconstruct their narrative identity (Harmeling, 2011). The process of personal narrative is highly emphasized in this research.

This thesis considers the critical nature of the community, networks, and environment of the informants. In addition, the study emphasizes the interaction of the individual's talents and their greater place in society. From a psychological perspective, Baumeister considers identity to be only in relation to other people and roles, as in one's place in a social system. He sees individual identity dependent on surrounding culture, through groups and systems. These external factors are represented through symbols, such as occupation, names, and residence (Baumeister, 2011). Along the same vein, Obrecht is of the view that entrepreneurs must have individual capabilities, such as identity and knowledge, that interact with networks, legitimacy, and localness (Obrecht, 2011). The influence of peer groups and socialization is emphasized by Falck, Heblich, and Luudemann. They hold the belief that the drive to be an entrepreneur cannot be taught, but rather derives from a combination of personal experience and background (Falck, 2012).

On the reverse of influence by belonging is when entrepreneurs rely on distinctness as part of their identity. Shepherd and Haynie employed the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory to further understand how entrepreneurs fulfill the balance between being unique and belonging. The main benefit discovered in negotiating this harmony is decreased loneliness and improved mental health (Shepherd, 2007). This study touches upon the importance of belonging in terms of family, and chosen community. Perhaps, finding the balance between being unique and belonging is particularly fundamental in lifestyle entrepreneurship. The informants of this study indicated the desire to stand out in their field, but also be a part of something greater than them.

The qualitative data for this study was gathered through semi-structured interviews that often took the form of a narrative. The stories that interviewees told about themselves gave great insight into their perception of their identity. This is supported by the fact that the totality of an entrepreneur's experience can offer significant insight into their concept of identity. A medium to convey this construction is through storytelling. Johansson is of the belief that storytelling is a way to uncover and form identities (Johansson, 2004). Craswell and Rae, conducted a study of semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs of 30-60 years of age. Their objective was to determine the speaker's sense making, and recollection in order to uncover what was most significant in forming their approaches to life and work. The themes that arose were: 1) Life stages 2) Personal values, self-efficacy, and goal-setting 3) Personal theory 4) Known capabilities 5) Active learning 6) Relationships: social learning. From the information gathered, they created a model of entrepreneurial learning which emphasizes the connection between the above mentioned determinants, confidence and self-belief, and ambitious goals (Rae, 2000).

The frameworks below include differing approaches to the time and realm in which identity is formed. These perspectives are quite applicable to this study because of the positioning of the personal nature of lifestyle entrepreneurship. Stryker and Serpe introduced the idea of Identity Salience. In essence, this is the theory that the identity of an individual can be organized according to a hierarchy that can be called to action, dependent upon the situation (Stryker, 1982).

Lacan and Spicer adopt a differing stance with their sense that entrepreneurship is not an identity in itself. Rather, the chasm between where one begins and one's objective is where entrepreneurial existence is formed. In their own words, entrepreneurship is 'a placeholder in the history of the political and economic struggle over valuation and the right to waste' (Jones, 2009). Mitchell echoes the sentiment of the out of proportion view of entrepreneurs with the following quote, 'as the stork-like deliver of a new business, the entrepreneur acts as a mythic character. Somehow s/he single-handedly creates new enterprises through the use of extraordinary powers. Mere mortals need not apply' (Mitchell, 1997). Following along the strategic positioning realm, Hytti is certain that the construction of identity is a development chiefly reliant on environmental and timing factors (Hytti, 2003).

Linstead and Thomas came to the conclusion, through their study on the identities of middle managers, that existence in relation to work is formed by the application of other identifications and positions (Linstead, 2002). Another example of conflicting identities was examined by Nadin in her study on female entrepreneurs in the care sector. She found that they often emphasized their female identity over their business ownership as a way to remain legitimate and relatable relative to their employees (Nadin, 2007). In addition, Madsen, Neergaard, and Ulhoi studied female entrepreneurship as under the control of institutionalized practices. They concluded that, in this instance, identity and role formation is heavily reliant on construction and reconstruction from within their social constraints (Madsen, 2008).

The concept of self-identity of entrepreneurs has extended to the way that they describe themselves through clichés, as determined by Down and Warren. They assert that through these clichés entrepreneurs are able to create a relevant and achievable self-identity (Down, 2008). Anderson and Warren studied the flamboyant head of Ryanair, Michael O'Leary, to understand how he established his recognizable entrepreneurial identity. They found that he was able to utilize the press for strategic advantage through cultural stereotypes, and rational as well as emotional appeals (Anderson, 2011). Through examination of Richard Branson and Bill Gates, Boje and Smith discovered that entrepreneurial identities shift greatly over the years, particularly those displayed to the public. This is especially pertinent with both of their recent forays into social entrepreneurship (Boje, 2010).

2.2.2 Construction of Identity

For this thesis, it is imperative to explore theories that construct particular elements of identity. Motivation is often studied in the context of entrepreneurship, as in which ambitions and view of success does the individual hold. Push and pull factors have been fundamental in understanding the circumstances surrounding motivation. Push factors are recognized as external and are often negatively associated. This includes being made redundant or undergoing divorce.

Pull factors are enticing in nature, otherwise known as opportunities that propel an individual to start a business. Typically, companies started based on pull factors are more successful than those by push. Additionally, it is more common for pull factors to prove as an incentive (Kirkwood, 2009). Kirkwood discovered that the reasons women start a company frequently revolve around the desire for independence and concern for their children. On the contrary, men are more prone to cite job dissatisfaction as a motivator (Kirkwood, 2009).

Sarasvathy's Effectuation Theory addresses the steps that entrepreneurs take in the face of uncertainty. The theory is based upon individual means, one of which is identity: 'Entrepreneurs begin with three categories of 'means': they know who they are, what they know, and whom they know- their own traits, tastes, and abilities; the knowledge corridor they are in; and the social networks they are a part of' (Sarasvathy, 2001). According to Nielsen and Lassen, she addresses identity as a fixed entity in the entrepreneurial process, rather than one that is susceptible to shifts and changes. The very active nature of identity is integral in understanding decisions made (Nielsen, 2011). Down and Warren confirm this theory with their belief that the identity is ever changing based upon interaction with resources and environment (Nielsen, 2011). Nielsen and Lassen propose a framework on identity sense-making that is comprised of the following components: 1) Entrepreneurial action 2) Question: Who am I as an entrepreneur, and is entrepreneurship really me? 3) Interaction with themselves, others, and enactment through others 4) Cues of meaning 5) Clarification (Nielsen, 2011).

A 2016 article by The Atlantic references Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (published 1847) as among the first novels to address the modern concept of self which proves an interesting complement to this study. "The novel seemed perfectly designed to tell Bronte's first-person narrative of a destitute orphan girl searching for a secure identity- first among an unloving family, then an austere charity school, and then finally with the wealthy and unattainable employer she loves. Unable to find her sense of self through others, Jane makes the surprising decision to turn inward" (Swallow Prior, 2016). Virginia Woolf explained Bronte's adeptness at capturing the voice of Jane, "[...] an overpowering personality, so that, we say in real life, they have only to open the door to make themselves felt. There is in them some untamed ferocity perpetually at war with the accepted order of things which makes them desire to create instantly rather than to observe patiently" (Swallow Prior, 2016). Furthermore, Rene Descartes was a pioneer in the concept of self. His enlightening phrase, "Cogito ergo sum (I think therefore I am)" demonstrates the conception of self-dating back to the 1600's. The premise of the Descartes theory is that doubt of existence in actuality proves reality of the mind of an individual and even greater, of the self (Cottingham, 2013).

When studying identity formation it is also important to consider loss of identity. Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly studied work-related loss in their 2014 article, "Letting Go and Moving On: Work-Related Identity Loss and Recovery". The view of work-related identity (WRI) is based on research by Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar (2010). The main ideal is that one's identity is tied to their work partici-

pation and activities (Conroy, 2014). Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly emphasize liminality as being between conditions, as presented by Garsten (1999). Their research states that, "the liminal period is defined by the dynamic process of self-construal, a time in which the sense of 'who I was' gives way to the sense of 'who I am becoming'." This approach is tied to rite of passage research which promote a period of upheaval to find one's true self. Identity instability and identity development are potential consequences of WRI loss. One's ability to move forward is hindered by identity instability whereas on the reverse a loss can prompt identity development, or finding one's true authentic self. Conroy and O'Leary devised 'A Model of WRI Loss and Recovery'. The main tenets were beneath Movement in the Liminal Interval- Negative Identity Discrepancy, Loss Orientation, and Restoration Orientation (Conroy, 2014).

2.2.3 Lifestyle Entrepreneurs

The complete concept of lifestyle entrepreneur is increasingly difficult to determine in the modern day business climate. For example, Entrepreneur magazine a contemporary United States publication succinctly sums up the definition of lifestyle entrepreneurship as it, "simply means you create a business around the kind of lifestyle that you want" (Constable, 2015). In a greater sense, it is viewed as freedom. Lifestyle entrepreneurship as a notion has undergone a restructuring as of late. This is in large part due to the flexibility afforded because of the internet. The premise has also been impacted by the advent of lifestyle entrepreneurship proponents, such as the legend Tim Ferriss of *The 4-Hour Workweek* (Ferris, 2009). The idea of constrained vs. non-constrained lifestyle entrepreneurs plays heavily into individual motivations and identity. Non-constrained entrepreneurs put their lifestyle before the business. Whereas, constrained entrepreneurs desire both the lifestyle and the business (Marchant, 2011). As a whole, the definition of lifestyle entrepreneurship continues to be a vague concept, particularly with the onset of the modern interpretation. This thesis will study individuals striking out in the areas of fitness, equestrian, jewelry design, pottery, and gaming; to name a few. The essence of and link between the entrepreneurs interviewed is that they cited a passion and deep love of their chosen field.

This study touches upon the tension that lifestyle entrepreneurs feel between their hobby or creative pursuit and the act of making money through it as a business. Eikhof and Haunschild aptly describe this pressure: "Creative work is reported to be spontaneous, unpredictable and following no strict rules, whereas interference with the market brings about the need to manage, plan and organize processes of creative production. Since creative industries depend on artistic motivation as their primary resource for economic production, these tensions have to be bridged at individual, organizational and field level. These tensions are mirrored in a more encompassing dichotomy, the antagonism between art and business" (Eikhof, 2006). A notable competence of lifestyle entrepreneurs

is their ability to balance their work and production while maintaining excitement for their passion.

Patagonia founder, Yvon Chouinard, is the shining example of a lifestyle entrepreneur. He has managed to combine his infatuation for the outdoors with his hugely successful company Patagonia, worth approximately \$575 million in 2014 (Baer, 2014). At his core he regards himself as a reluctant businessman. In his 2006 book, *Let my People go Surfing*, Chouinard states, "I've been a businessman for almost 50 years. It is as difficult for me to say those words as it is for someone to admit to being an alcoholic or a lawyer" (Barton, 2007). He further emphasizes his free-spiritedness with his observation, "If you want to understand the entrepreneur, study the juvenile delinquent. The delinquent is saying with his actions, 'This sucks. I am going to do my own thing'" (Chouinard, 2005). Chouinard regards rock climbing as the basis and teacher for his business. At the heart of it, his main objective has been to make useful and functional products to improve his personal climbing experience.

This study is centered on lifestyle entrepreneurship which at times shares commonalities with growth entrepreneurship. According to Cobb and Johnson, lifestyle entrepreneurship is distinct from growth entrepreneurs in the following ways: 1) Only one in charge as own boss 2) Hands on at the product level 3) Income generated is part of personal income 4) Funding is from personal savings and family 5) Maximize tax advantages 6) Active in the local community 7) No exit is planned until retirement because business is part of the identity of the entrepreneur (Cobb, 2012). In the modern age, the internet has allowed people to build businesses that permit them to work from anywhere in the world. Automation of certain tasks also affords entrepreneurs greater flexibility in pursuing what is most important to them such as travel, family, and friends. This thesis has many interviewees from the United States of America. Due to this, the following information is useful to understand the small business climate of the region. According to U.S. Census Bureau Data, in 2012 there were 5.73 million employer firms in the USA and 23 million non-employer businesses. In total, U.S. businesses with less than 20 workers totaled at 97.9%, due to the large number of self-employed individuals (SBE Council, 2016).

2.2.4 Millennials/Generation Y Entrepreneurs

This study is unique in that it is focused on young lifestyle entrepreneurs that fall within the Millennial age range. At the time of writing, this topic is recently emerging and as such there is a lack of scientific research. The Millennial Generation or Generation Y is the demographic born approximately between the years of 1980-2000. The generation is coming of age in the workforce with the oldest group in their mid-30's and youngest in their last years of high school. Market research by Goldman Sachs counts that there are 92 million U.S. Millennials, the largest generation in history. In 2010, 29.9% chose to live at home with their parents. They are delaying marriage, with the average age to walk down

the aisle being 30 years old in 2010 as compared to 23 years old in 1970. Gen Y is reluctant to buy homes, cars, and luxury goods. They prefer utilizing emerging services known as the sharing economy (Goldman Sachs, 2016).

The Millennial generation is well-educated and connected. They hold the viewpoint that it is cool to be smart (Sweeney, 2005). Furthermore, they score high on IQ tests and also display traits such as extraversion, self-esteem, self-liking, high expectations, and assertiveness (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016). It has been postulation that the Millennial generation is the smartest in history. Wai and Putallaz consider this in their study of the Flynn effect. This is the phenomena of the rise in IQ scores over approximately the last 80 years, with about a 10 point rise per 30 years. Wai and Putallaz focused on the upper 5% of test scores, and discovered that the entire curve is moving upward at a constant rate, this includes low, middle, and high ends of the distribution. Of course these findings can hold different meaning, but the main assumption is that the population is growing in intelligence, or at least in a specific knowledge base (Wai, 2011).

The Millennials have proven to be a conundrum in the typical 9-5 work setting. In 2013, Millennial Branding and Beyond.com came to the conclusion that 60% of U.S. Millennial workers leave their company within 3 years. The average cost to replace these workers is \$15,000-25,000 for 87% of companies (Millennial Branding, 2013). To complicate this matter is the fact that the younger Millennials entered the workforce during the Great Recession in the U.S. In 2012, unemployment rates for 20-24 year olds was around 13% (Taylor, 2013). This alone has had a significant impact on the approach Millennials take in the workforce and their view of employers. For the most part, Millennials desire flexibility, work with meaning, and financial security. According to the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, USA Millennials launched nearly 160,000 startups per month in 2011. In addition, 20-34 year olds made up 29% of all entrepreneurs (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2016).

Deloitte conducted a study in 2016 representing the views of 7,700 Millennials born after 1982 from 29 countries. All participants hold a college degree and were employed full-time. The researched discovered that 1 in 4, if given the choice, would quit their job in the next year. By the end of 2020, 2 of 3 have plans to move on, and in a decade only 16% see themselves staying with their current employer (Deloitte, 2016). The data was separated on a per country basis and the following percentages from high to low indicate who plans to leave their employer before the end of 2020: Peru (82%), South Africa (76%), India (76%), Columbia (75%), South Korea (74%), Chile (71%), United Kingdom (71%), Latin America (71%), Emerging markets (69%), Argentina (67%), China (65%), The Philippines (64%), United States (64%), Indonesia (62%), Canada (61%), Developed Markets (61%), Russia (61%), Western Europe (60%), Japan (52%), Spain (52%), Belgium (51%) (ibid).

The high number of Millennials desiring to make career changes shows disconnect between the expectations of the company and the employees. This is of

particular interest in terms of entrepreneurship. A 2014 study by Bentley University found that U.S. Millennials aspire to the following career goals: 1) 66%: start their own business 2) 37%: work on their own 3) 25%: owning their own company 4) 13%: position of CEO or company president (Bentley University, 2014). The interviews in this research study conducted with individuals who fall into the demographics of the Millennial generation offers an opportunity to further understand their entrepreneurial behavior patterns.

2.2.5 Emerging Adulthood and Attachment Theory

The concept of Emerging Adulthood goes hand and hand with the Millennial demographic. Emerging Adulthood came forth as a concept in 1995 through the work of Jeffrey Arnett. The premise of the research was based off of interviews in the United States with 300 participants between the ages of 18-29 over a period of 5 years. Arnett was surprised to find, that despite socioeconomic backgrounds, informants cited feelings of being in between. The meaning behind this is that they were feeling a struggle between beginning to take personal responsibility while maintaining their ties to their parents and family. Additionally, the young people referred to the search for their personal identity, which shocked Arnett as he assumed they would have established that in adolescence. The features of emerging adulthood are: 1) Age of identity exploration 2) Age of instability 3) Age of self-focus 4) Age of feeling in between 5) Age of possibilities (Arnett, 2000). Arnett believes that emerging adults have high expectations of their life and that, "If happiness is the difference between what you expect out of life and what you actually get, a lot of emerging adults are setting themselves up for unhappiness because they expect so much" (Munsey, 2006).

The Millennial generation is often criticized for over reliance on their parents and need for constant reassurance, otherwise known as helicopter parenting. In some regards, the psychology of this can be attributed to the Attachment Theory which originated in the 1950s through the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. The tenets of the theory are that early childhood attachments dictate later exploration and risk-taking in life. People who are securely attached to mentor figures such as parents and bosses are more capable and confident. The levels of attachment as studied in infants include 1) Securely attached 2) Insecure-avoidant 3) Insecure-ambivalent 3) Disorganized-disoriented (Winfried, 2013). This theory is relevant to the level of attachment young workers have to their families, workplace, and work in general. The more securely-attached an individual feels the more likely they will feel safe enough to branch out into new sectors and adventures. Moreover, the Attachment Theory is applicable to entrepreneurship and the driving force behind the choice to pursue it.

2.2.6 Technology and Identity

The Millennial generation is considered to be a group of digital natives. The Educause Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) conducts a yearly study on the usage of technology among undergraduates. In their 2014 report they stated that technology has become omnipresent in the lives of students (Dahlstrom, 2014). During their time studying at the university and beyond the informants of this research paper have had fluidly integrated technology into their daily life. In 2015 the Pew Research Center released a report that estimated 68% of American adults own a smartphone, 73% have a laptop or desktop computer, 92% have a cellphone, and 19% have an e-book reader (Pew Research Center, 2015). In addition, the Pew Research Center found that 87% of American adults use the internet which up from 14% in 1995 (Pew Research Center, 2014). Much of this usage is for social media with usage by nearly 65% of American adults in 2015. This is up from usage of only 7% usage in 2005 (Pew Research Center, 2015). The prevalence of technology has impacted how people conduct nearly every activity from work to education.

Technology has become a focal point of existence, particularly for the Millennial set. This provides interesting fodder for identity research. In 2010, Lin conducted a case study on the workplace that evaluated the social construction of technology through the lens of the social identity theory. The findings were that individual's identified with technology either through ascription, avowal, or identification. Ascription allows one to link technology to a certain identity, but distance from it personally. Avowal is when a person identifies with a certain technology fit and attaches it to their identity. Identification describes further highlights the interaction of an individual with technology. This can include classifying as having a technology fit, unfit, or incorporation of certain aspects (Lin, 2010).

Marc Prensky dissected the socialization impact of technology in his 2001 study, 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrant'. The report cited that prior to leaving their childhood home for college the Millennial generation played over 10,000 hours of video games, sent over 200,000 emails and instant messages, spoke for over 10,000 hours on cell phones, spent 20,000 hours in front of the TV, and watched 500,000 commercials. He estimated that they spent only 5,000 hours reading books. Due to this, Prensky believes that the brains of Millennials have physically responded to the technological stimulation in adaptation. This in turn has made their cognitive abilities differ greatly from previous generations. The positive side of this is that they are able to multi-task effectively and have high technical skills. However, the downside is that the constant stream of technology has resulted in the loss of capability for reflection or learning from experience (Prensky, 2001).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) presented by (Davis) is a theory as to why users choose to utilize technology. TAM proposes that the acceptance of technology has to do with the factors of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is the perception of the user that use of the technology will improve their job performance. Perceived ease of use is the

level of simplicity in adopting the new technology. Davis found that the link between perceived usefulness and intention to use was far stronger than perceived ease of use and intention to use. This finding demonstrates that the basis of utilization is mainly directed by the function that it can perform for an individual (Gong, 2004). This is relevant in terms of technology adoption for entrepreneurs. According to Davis in this context, the way that a business owner utilizes technology is mainly based on practical reasoning.

Technology has resulted in endless options and thus more authority in making choices. According to Sweeney, Millennials are natives of the Long Tail Phenomena and are unhappy with limited opportunities (Sweeney, 2006). Anderson sums this up in his book on the topic, "When the tools of production are available to everyone, everyone becomes a producer. [...] In a world of infinite choice, context-not content- is king" (Anderson, 2008). It can be interpreted that this has impacted the contemporary approach to work and life. The concept of settling for something less than ideal is not at all embraced. This in turn has given power to the individual entrepreneur because technology enables them to serve niche and far reaching markets.

2.3. Theoretical Framework Summary

Prior literature on the formation of identity touches upon many factors. These include personal experiences, biological makeup, socialization, and individual capabilities. Furthermore, the sense of belonging that comes with knowledge of self can be an individualistic process. Construction of identity is recognized as taking place inward. Previous studies conclude that one must look within to understand motivation, incentive, and perceptions. The buzzwords that follow lifestyle entrepreneurs include passion and hobby business. This type of entrepreneur is identifiable by their decision to base their business around what they love. The standard definition of lifestyle entrepreneurship is evolving with the surge of the Millennial generation on the workforce. They have an original approach to work-life balance and this is reflected in the way that they conduct business. In addition, the concept of Emerging Adulthood clarifies certain motivations based around the identity development of young entrepreneurs. This thesis seeks to comprehensively address the elements of the identity of young lifestyle entrepreneurs. Prior studies and theories were highly taken into account in relation to the findings and conclusion of this study.

The Key Themes presented in this section include: 1) Entrepreneurial Identity 2) Construction of Identity 3) Lifestyle Entrepreneurs 4) Millennials or Generation Y Entrepreneurs 5) Emerging Adulthood and Attachment Theory 6) Technology and Identity. Key Themes have defined below in layman's terms as based upon preceding literature.

- 1) **Entrepreneurial Identity:** Identity is sensitive to one's experience and settings, personal attitude, and perceptions. Identity is the basis for decision making and motivation, and determinants can be based upon many factors from biological to social. Narratives and semi-structured interviews can give an in-depth understanding of an individual's perception of their identity. This can be heavily influenced by their place in society and interaction with community and networks. Furthermore, entrepreneurial intentions are often based upon an entrepreneur's own capabilities and personal drive.
- 2) **Construction of Identity:** Push and pull factors as well as motivation are often cited as reasons for identity construction. There is some debate about whether identity is fixed or malleable in the entrepreneurial process. The perspective which one prescribes to greatly influences their viewpoint on autonomy and growth. The construction of self is an age old concept dating back to Descartes time period (1600's). He was of the belief that by attempting to understand human identity is evidence of the concept of self. Additionally, identity can be formed in the face of loss during the period between loss of previous identity and gaining of a new one.
- 3) **Lifestyle Entrepreneurs:** This form of entrepreneurship is based around a hobby or passion. Essentially, entrepreneurs in this discipline have created a business that promotes their chosen lifestyle. The traditional view of lifestyle entrepreneurship is that it can be split into constrained and non-constrained entrepreneurs. Those who are constrained desire the lifestyle and business growth. Conversely, non-constrained entrepreneurs are more interested in maintaining their lifestyle rather than business development. Ultimately, lifestyle entrepreneurship is marked by flexibility and personal motivation.
- 4) **Millennials/Generation Y Entrepreneurs:** As of 2016, this is the emerging demographic of the workforce and business owners. The generation is born between the years of 1980-2000, and are recognized by hyper-connectivity and their tech savvy. They are highly educated and prefer freedom and flexibility in their working lives. Millennials are entering into entrepreneurship at increasingly high rates, and reject the typical 9-5 workday as well as life-long employment at a single company.
- 5) **Emerging Adulthood and Attachment Theory:** These theories are worth studying due to their connection with the Millennial generation. Emerging Adulthood is based around the conception that young adults are increasingly feeling out of place between adolescence and adulthood. The idea is that the time period of self-identity and separation from parents has increased in the most recent generations. Furthermore, the Attachment Theory explores the connection between early childhood attachments and the impact on competencies later in life.
- 6) **Technology and Identity:** Technology has become prevalent in everyday life, and is in many ways a necessity for life as a modern citizen. Research on the connection between technology and identity has become increasingly commonplace. Constant connectedness, infinite choice, and tools of production is influencing the way an individual's brain processes their conception of identity.

3. DATA AND RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Data

This thesis has the implicit goal of understanding the experience of individual entrepreneurs as business owners. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was determined by the researcher to be most appropriate due to its consideration of the psychological, interpretative, and idiographic. The semi-structured interviews conducted resulted in a considerable number of transcribed pages (97 pages in total). The researcher manually coded the transcriptions to determine emergent themes. In addition, Atlas.ti software was utilized to find crucially repeated words. Prior findings on the subject, mentioned in the above section, were highly considered in the analysis of data and construction of findings.

The research study will take an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) stance. The IPA method incorporates psychology in the analysis of qualitative data. The aim is to delve into the insights that an individual holds in a specific context. The methodology merges psychological, interpretative, and idiographic elements. Studies utilizing IPA generally consist of less than five to over a dozen participants. The qualitative data is accumulated through open-ended interviews, personal writings, or focus groups. IPA is most beneficial when the research seeks to understand what and how of a particular experience. The researcher investigates codes within their data, and from there determines themes. At the heart of IPA is the hope of the researcher to unearth illuminating discoveries from their data, rather than through the application of theories. This is summarized appropriately by Neergaard and Ulhøi, "A thing in the phenomenological sense does not exist primarily in and of itself, but rather in the meaning that individuals attach to it. [...] The goal of phenomenological methods is to study the meanings of phenomena and human experiences in specific situations, and to try to capture and communicate these meanings in empathetic and lucid ways" (Neergaard, 2007).

Cope conducted a study in 2010 in which he used IPA to develop a deeper understanding of venture failure. The research consisted of interviews with eight entrepreneurs who had experienced failure in the business context. According to Cope, "The study draws on the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis developed by Jonathan Smith and colleagues to inform both research design and analysis. IPA sampling is 'purposive' and this methodology defends the use of small samples, enabling a competent theoretical perspective to be developed so long as adequate contextualization is preserved." Furthermore, the focus is on "each participant's unique lived experience. Six to eight is recommended as the appropriate number of participants for a typical IPA study. As Smith and Osborn emphasize, IPA researchers must be pragmatic in choosing participants, particularly where the topic under investigation is rare and issues of accessibility and willingness to participate are problematic" (Cope, 2011).

Cope and Kempster directed entrepreneurial research in 2009 utilizing IPA. The purpose of the study was to understand learning of leaders in an entrepreneurial context. They conducted nine phenomenological interviews with entrepreneurs to understand their lived experience of learning. The findings of the study were, "It is apparent that the participants have become leaders by virtue of their position, being encouraged to take on this role through organizational necessity. Returning to Nicholson's (1998) observations, it seems that the participants have changed their attitudes through re-socialization and adaptive learning to fit their implicit leadership role. Hence, they have 'come to acquire the qualities which fit them for the experience'" (Kempster, 2010). Tasnim, et al applied IPA in their study, "'I'm Loving It!' What makes the Successful Entrepreneur Affectively Committed to Entrepreneurial Performance?" The researchers held in-depth interviews with six entrepreneurs. Their findings were that, "affective commitment is the main component of commitment influencing entrepreneurial performance, and that passion, values and personality play significant roles in shaping this affective commitment" (Tasnim, 2014). The deep meaning of their research is reflected in their understanding of the mindset of the entrepreneurs involved.

In her 2014 article, Peltonen sought to understand 'How can Teachers' Entrepreneurial Competences be Developed'. The research consisted of a group of 17 informants, which is on the high end for an IPA study. Peltonen described the research as follows, "Atlas 6.2 software was used for coding and organizing the data. The whole process is characterized by a dual interpretation meaning that first the participants interpret their own experiences (learning diaries) and then a researcher explains and interprets the meaning of the participants' accounts by analyzing them" (Peltonen, 2015). Three themes emerged from the analysis of the data. They were 1) Building self-confidence 2) Applying knowledge and conceptual understanding 3) Identifying the deeper meaning of the work. The personal accounts of the informants provided a rich understanding of their individual and collaborative learning experiences, reflection, and meaning making (Peltonen, 2015).

The following section is an overview of the data and research method employed in this study. The analysis of data and the research method was largely dictated by the nature of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The interviews were diligently studied to identify themes and the direction that the study would take. Throughout the whole process, the central subject of entrepreneurial identity was closely considered and examined. Data for this research study was collected through semi-structured interviews. The goal was to encourage conversation between the interviewee and interviewer in an informal manner. The questions were structured around three main themes: 1) Background of Entrepreneur and Business 2) Passion and Business Reality 3) Growth and Networks (full question list included in the Appendix section). The interviews took place in February and March 2016 either via phone, Skype, or in-person. The decision to conduct via phone, Skype, or in-person was based upon the physical location of the interviewee and interviewer and coordination with time zones. Informants handled the interviews from the United States (California, Oregon, and Florida), England

(London), the Netherlands (Amsterdam), and Finland (Helsinki, and Jyväskylä). The researcher was based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and Jyväskylä, Finland throughout the interview period. Interviews were recorded with Audio Hijack and transcribed by the interviewer. The transcribed text totals at 97 pages single-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman. The table below lists specifics of the interviews.

3.1.1 Table 1

Informant Number	Length of Interview	Date	Time (Finland)	Interview Method
Informant 1	00:31:53	15/02/2016	17:54	Skype
Informant 2	00:28:35	11/02/2016	21:05	Phone
Informant 3	00:28:09	09/02/2016	19:46	Phone
Informant 4	00:38:16	02/02/2016	18:17	Phone
Informant 5	00:31:02	10/02/2016	21:32	Phone
Informant 6	01:02:00	28/02/2016	19:01	Phone
Informant 7	00:37:37	27/02/2016	19:02	Skype
Informant 8	00:37:49	12/02/2016	14:10	Phone
Informant 9	00:26:41	17/02/2016	14:00	in Person, the Netherlands
Informant 10	00:28:41	25/02/2016	13:00	in Person, Finland
Informant 11	00:40:30	02/03/2016	13:00	in Person, Finland
Informant 12	00:28:00	07/03/2016	21:00	Skype

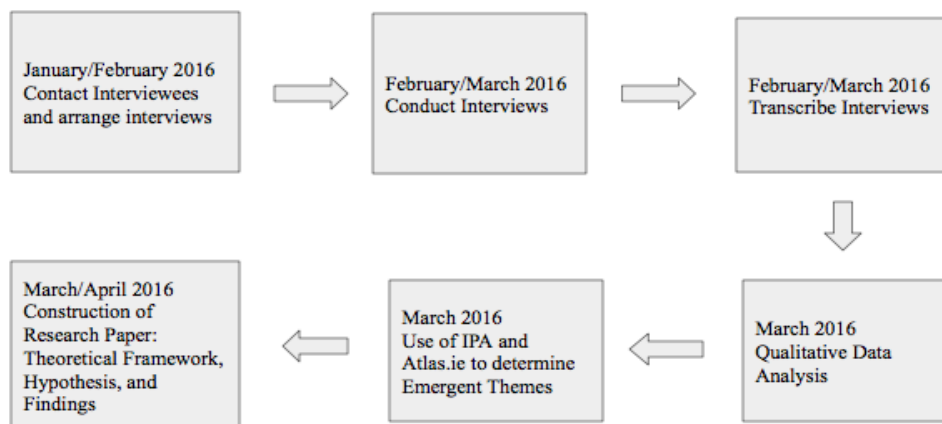
Interviewees were selected based upon company ownership in areas of self-proclaimed personal passions. The focus of these companies include: Paleo diet, interior design, equestrian, fitness, jewelry design, pottery, gaming, photography and web design, cosplay, and writing. The author identified and reached

out to interviewees through her personal network or the connections of contacts. Interviewees were in the 24-39 year old age range at the time of the interview. Due to this, the interviewees fall within the demographic of the Millennial or Generation Y, based upon approximate 1980-2000 birth years offered by researchers of the subject. Furthermore, the interview pool was narrow in ethnic background. All informants were either of Caucasian or Asian descent. Identities and companies of interviewees will remain anonymous in this study.

3.2. Method

The above mentioned qualitative analysis conducted through semi-structured interviews resulted in the emergence of themes pertaining to identity. The researcher of this thesis identified the most repeated words through the use of Atlas.ti Research Software. These reoccurring words led to the determination of crucial themes. The focus was on the composition of identity. The main components considered were chronological events, external influence, internal characteristics, and perceptions. The main sections addressed in this research study include: 1) Education and Prior Work Experience 2) Family Influence 3) Passion Formation 4) Environment, Community, Personal Network 5) Personality 6) Perception of Success 7) Motivation and Aspirations 8) Interaction with Technology. The data is displayed through direct quotes and compare and contrast tables and graphs. The method of analysis is displayed in the figure below. The subsequent table illustrates the details of informants.

3.2.1 Table 1



3.2.1 Table 2

Informant Number	Nationality	Resides in	Industry	Gender
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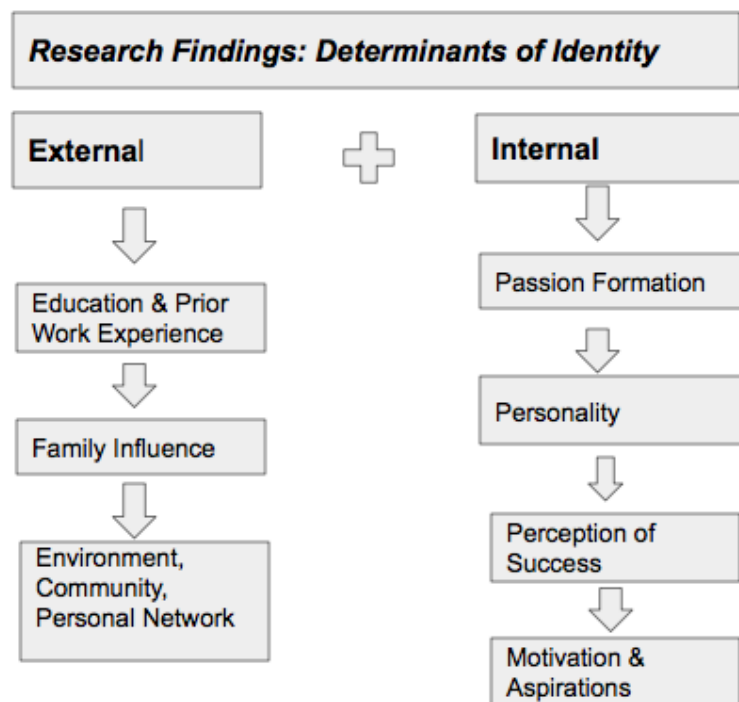
Informant 1	American	USA	Paleo Diet	M
Informant 2	American	USA	Interior Design	M
Informant 3	American	USA	Equestrian	F
Informant 4	American	USA	Fitness	F
Informant 5	American	USA	Jewelry Design	F
Informant 6	American	USA	Pottery	F
Informant 7	Finnish	Finland	Gaming	M
Informant 8	French	Britain	Jewelry Design	F
Informant 9	German, raised in France	the Neth- erlands	Photography and Web Design	F
Informant 10	Taiwanese, spent signif- icant time in Japan	Finland	Gaming	M
Informant 11	Finnish	Finland	Cosplay	M
Informant 12	American	USA	Writing	F

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. General Information

The findings of the research were based on the highly personal and practical nature of the study. The intent of the researcher is to display the views and experiences of informants as accurately as possible. The findings of this study were gathered in a narrative and qualitative form. It is the aim of the researcher that the information is absorbed in a story-like fashion. After all, the findings encompass the personal adventures of 12 interesting and highly driven individuals. The below figure depicts the themes that emerged in terms of determinants of entrepreneurial identity.

4.1.1 Table 1



4.2. Findings

This section displays findings of the research. There are 7 main themes addressed: 1) Education and Prior Work Experience 2) Family Influence 3) Passion Formation 4) Environment, Community, Personal Network 5) Personality 6) Perception of Success 7) Motivation and Aspirations 8) Interaction with Technology. The quotes that are included are directly from the interviewees, made accurate through transcription of interview recordings.

4.2.1 Education and Prior Work Experience of Informants

The researcher of this study conducted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) on the transcribed interviews and the theme of education and prior work experience emerged as critical. These elements explain a great deal about the background of the entrepreneurs included in the study. It is important to note that all interviewees hold a Bachelor's degree, but the steps to business ownership vary greatly after commencement. A few took the path of Graduate School while others held employment in various, and in some cases random fields. Atlas.ti software was utilized to determine word recurrence. The word education was repeated 21 times, educational 6, school 55, and job 85. This is relevant because the words used in the interview aid in painting a picture of theme. 4.2.1 Table 1 depicts the education and work experience of informants. Detailed graphs on the theme can be found in the Appendix.

4.2.1 Table 1

Informant #/ Industry	Bachelor's Subject	Master's Subject	Prior Work Experi- ence	Reason for Leaving	Current Work, in Addi- tion
Informant 1/ Paleo Diet	Business; USA	N/A	1) Investment Banker 2) Employee at Bay Area Internet Com- pany; USA	Started own company	Starting a Real Es- tate Com- pany
Informant 2/ Interior De- sign	Began Degree in Architecture, transferred af- ter 2 years to Fashion Design School; USA	N/A	1) Senior Project Manager at Interior Design Firm 2) Em- ployee at Architec- ture Firm; USA	Started own company	N/A

Informant 3/ Equestrian	Animal Science; USA	N/A	1) Employee at Horseback Riding School 2) 3-months abroad in Peace Corp; USA	Took over Horseback Riding School as own Business	N/A
Informant 4/ Fitness	Marketing; USA	MBA; USA	1) Employee in Corporate America Company; USA	Laid Off	N/A
Informant 5/ Jewelry Designer	Sociology; USA	N/A	1) Internship with jewelry maker 2) Work in Ski Towns; USA	Moved to new city	Bartender
Informant 6/ Pottery	Economics & East Asian Languages; USA	N/A	1) Chinese camp teacher in USA 2) All-Inclusive Resort employee in USA 3) Swim Coach in China 4) Exotic Animal Caretaker in USA	Started own company	N/A
Informant 7/ Gaming	Business & Technology; Finland	Completing Degree in Information System Science; Finland	N/A	N/A	N/A
Informant 8/ Jewelry Design	Jewelry Making; France	Design & Research; England	1) Various Positions in Jewelry Field; England	N/A	N/A
Informant 9/ Photography & Web Design	Fashion Design; Germany	N/A	1) Employee at Design House in France 2) Manager at E-commerce start-up in the Netherlands	Laid Off	N/A
Informant 10/ Gaming	Mechanical Engineering & Biology; Taiwan	Engineering; Japan/ International Business; Finland	1) Market & Product Manager; Japan	Further Education	N/A
Informant 11/ Cosplay	Japanology; Sweden	Completing Degree in International Business; Finland	1) Family Businesses in Funeral Industry and Taxi Driving; Finland	N/A	Taxi Driver

Informant 12/ Writing	Film Production; USA	N/A	1) Various aspects of Film Industry 2) Employee in Advertising Business; USA	Became disillusioned with Industries	Receptionist
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4.2.2 Family Influence

Within the realm of family, the researcher determined that interviewees had three major responses of the influence of their family: negative, positive, or not addressed. This section, centered on family, contains direct quotes from informants to create a rich picture of their personal experiences. The major sub-themes in this segment include: family background of entrepreneurship, support from family, family influence and values, and negative influence from family. Again Atlas.ti was utilized to determine repeated words pertinent to the theme. It was discovered that family was said 46 times, parents 12, mom 6, dad 12, sister 7, and partner 9. 4.2.2 Table 1 shows a recap of informant outlook of the influence of their family on their current business endeavors. Detailed graphs are found in the Appendix.

4.2.2 Table 1

Family Influence	Informant Number	Type of Influence
Did Not State	Informant 3	n/a
Did Not State	Informant 4	n/a
Negative	Informant 1	Driven to succeed because grew up poor
Negative	Informant 10	Father absent due to own business abroad
Positive	Informant 2	Encouragement
Positive	Informant 5	Family connections
Positive	Informant 6	Encouragement
Positive	Informant 7	Family history of entrepreneurship
Positive	Informant 8	Encouragement

Positive	Informant 9	Family history of entrepreneurship and discipline
Positive	Informant 11	Family Entrepreneurship
Positive	Informant 12	Encouragement

4.2.2-1 Family Background of Entrepreneurship

Informant 7 shared that his desire to be an entrepreneur came from observing his family, “Maybe there is something in my background that is related to that. Because my parents have been entrepreneurs for a long time. They own a gas station in a small town in a municipality near [town in Finland]. Since they have been working there for a long time as entrepreneurs and I have been helping them and seeing what kind of lifestyle they I have, I always wanted to try that myself. Or rather I have understood the limitations, well, when you are an entrepreneur you can’t have this kind of safe 9-5 work. You have to commit to it. As a passionate gamer, and a passionate creative person I want to really invest myself into what I am doing, and I feel like that’s kind of my driving force behind my entrepreneurial spirit.” Informant 9 also cited family history of entrepreneurship, “the motivation I think is that my parents are entrepreneurs and working for themselves, always did, it was always what I saw. For me is something I always wanted to do [...] I think so because that’s all I saw when I was growing up. So for me that’s my norm. And yeah that’s why, that’s just the norm for me. So I guess that it decided what I wanted to do, in a way.” Informant 11 has a very rich history of entrepreneurship in his family, “My dad is a taxi driver. But all my family and relatives are singers and artists, sculptors, opera singers, mostly. Kind of famous ones all over Europe. They like the stuff that you do with your hands, and they paint. I was also painting and doing everything like that. Music comes with the family. Nowadays we have a funeral office, and a taxi.”

4.2.2-2 Support from Family

Informant 5 cited a connection from her family gave her the opportunity to further study her craft, “There was a family friend of ours who had an amazing jewelry business, and I always admired her, and always kind of dabbled in it myself, but wasn’t really sure. I didn’t have the right tools, and she had gone to

school for it so she knew everything. She asked me to do an internship for her because she was blowing up and needed a lot of help. She taught me a lot and she told me all the tools that I needed to get. A lot about metals, different hammering techniques, and the drills that I needed. I worked with her for a couple of years." She additionally said that, "My family is really encouraging, my family is very artistic. Everyone in my family has their own sort of niche. I had enough support so that I could take a year off and move to the ski town, and figure out what my plan was. And there's talk of, I've always wanted to go to the Rhode Island School of Design, and try to see where that can take me."

Informant 6 shared that her father gave her the push that she needed to start her own company, "It was actually my dad who was like, the only thing that you have done consistently is pottery, so if you still like doing that why don't you give it a go. [...] It was pretty much my dad who said, you love doing this so why don't you just do it because you are really good at it. And I was like ok, alright [...] Yeah, so I would say it was really my dad who gave me the impetus to start doing it more seriously." Informant 2 referred to the support of his father in pursuing his passion of architecture, "Even when I was 9 years old or so, my dad saw how passionate I was and he got me at home a 3D house design software for my computer. He wouldn't complain that instead of doing homework at night I was designing houses. I think he knew it was something that was going to lead me to success. And it will lead me to success because I want to do it. I think that it has to do with me wanting to do it, and not wanting to stop." Furthermore, he shared the support of his family being something that allowed him to start his own company, "I owe a lot of that to my parents because they worked so hard to be able to give me the ability to be able to do this for myself. And you know whether it was them putting me through school, and then helping out until I was on my own feet. And then when I decided to take myself and put myself on my hands and start my own firm they have been helping me out a little bit. Keeping me upright and balanced. So, I think the stars were kind of aligned for me."

4.2.2-3 Family Influence and Values

Informant 9 credits her family for her great discipline. When asked how they passed along this trait she said, "I am German! [...] I have a very strict family, always very disciplined, you have to wake up early. You are always hearing the comments, people who wake up early are the ones who make the day happen [...] only this is my background, my education." Informant 8 stated that as a child she assumed that she would follow in the footsteps of her parents, occupation-wise, "When I was a kid I wanted to be a journalist. I always thought I would be in journalism, my family was very literate. My mother was a French teacher, so I thought that's what I would be doing and that was a proper job." However, when she discovered that she became interested in making the arts a career her parents were very supportive, "My parents said that I you can do whatever you want, but whatever you do you have to be the best at it. Well, thank god that I had very

supportive parents.” Informant 12 recounted her family life as a child as being a great influence on her outlook, “I was born in the Bay Area and grew up moving around a lot because my dad had trouble holding onto a job for more than two years. He is an amazing man, so honorable, and a great father in most ways, but I would say that he has some trouble communicating so that’s why. I feel like I am in therapy right now. [...] I think that moving around a lot it affected me in the way that I don’t feel particularly...I don’t feel like I owe anybody or anyplace anything. But I also, on the flip side of that. I feel like I can make any place or anybody my home.” Along the same vein she determined that her high level of drive was attributed to, “[...] being pushed so f*ing hard as a young person.” Yet, she credits them for being encouraging now as she is following her passions, “[they are] Definitely very supportive. I mean, when I was just trying to get published and I didn’t have this teaching thing on the horizon I think that my parents were a little more worried and they wanted me to have a little more grounded plan. I think that at the time I was so busy dealing with my agent and working on my re-writes that I didn’t have time to hear them.”

4.2.3-4 Negative Influence from Family

Informant 10 expressed that his father’s experience as an entrepreneur impacted him in a negative sense, “My father became an entrepreneur 25 years ago, or 30 years ago. He went to China during [...] in the beginning of the huge economic growth in China. However, he didn’t talk about his business a lot to me or our family members. After he went to China to start his business he only went back my home or Taiwan once a month or once every 3 months. So, we didn’t really have a lot of chance to talk to each other. I don’t think that my father’s career affected me a lot.” However, he disclosed that he was impacted by his father’s work-life balance and inability to return home often, “That affected me a lot. He is usually not at home. It’s only my sister and me and myself and my mother at home. I would like to have my own family where I can see my children at least once a week, or at better every day. If I work in a big company, it is of course possible. But your job position can be changed or you can be allocated to another place that you cannot decide. That would have some risk for my family life, and my time with my kids or family members. If I can work by myself I think that I have more control of this.” Informant 1 said the following in regards to lack of family influence, “The only family I have is my mom and we grew up pretty poor, um... so she’s not of very much help in the business setting.”

4.2.3 Passion Formation

Passion is central to the theme of lifestyle entrepreneurship. This passage identifies the time period in which informant fell in love with their hobby. Inter-

viewees either became passionate during childhood or adulthood, with one informant who was neutral. This section is bolstered by direct quotes from the informants to allow the reader to understand the subjects on a personal level, in their own words. According to Atlas.ti coding, the word passion was repeated 25 times, passionate 21, hobby 15, love 52, and lifestyle 24. The time period of passion formation is broken down by informant in 4.2.3 Table 1. The Appendix provides pertinent graphs on the theme.

4.2.3 Table 1

Informant Number	Time Passion Formed	Passion(s)	Profile
Informant 1	Adulthood	Cross-fit and Paleo Diet	Businessperson
Informant 2	Childhood	Designing houses and platform diving	Designer and athlete
Informant 3	Childhood	Horses	Naturalist
Informant 4	Childhood	Sports	Athlete
Informant 5	Childhood	Jewelry making	Artist
Informant 6	Childhood	Pottery	Artist
Informant 7	Childhood	Playing video games	Creative person
Informant 8	Childhood	Arts and crafts	Craftsperson
Informant 9	Adulthood	Photography	Photographer
Informant 10	Neutral	n/a	Businessperson
Informant 11	Childhood	Anime and cosplay	Creative person
Informant 12	Childhood	Writing and film	Writer

4.2.3-1 Passion Formed in Childhood

Informant 2 spoke of the dreams that he held as a child, “Well, I have always had two dreams in life. [...] I was a diver. I always wanted to go to the Olympics, but I have also always loved houses ever since I was a little kid. Ever since my mom taught me how to draw a 3D cube I would draw a house and then the floor plan inside. I’ve always wanted to be an architect, or go to the Olympics,

or both. The Olympics didn't pan out, but when I was at (University in the United States) I wasn't really majoring in anything that I was passionate about academically because diving was taking precedence. So, I switched that around and ended up realizing that maybe (University in the United States) wasn't the right place for me academically so I ended up studying interior design at (United States Fashion Design School). [...] If I had the answer to why I am so passionate and how to have passion I think that there would be a lot more happy people in this world. But, it's just something that I love to do. It's also something that I never stopped doing, which I think might also have a lot to do with it. You know, there were only two things I ever really did in my life and they were that I would go to diving practice, and then I'd come home and say screw I am not doing my homework, I am going to design houses."

Informant 7 cited childhood as the time when he became interested in his current area of business, "Funnily enough when I was in second grade or something we had this 'what do you want to grow up to be' kind of an exercise. I said that I said I want to make games, like Chip and Dale 3 or Duck Tales 3. So the games that I liked playing, I wanted to make those. I have always been fascinated by how games work and how people react to games and how they play. A lot of this kind of psychological point of view, so understanding like player behavior or user behavior. That is how I got into game design. So that was something I wanted to do as a kid, but I thought that was only something that people do only in America or Japan. It's not possible to do it in Finland, but nowadays things have become much easier. So I am glad that we can." Informant 5 referred to her small business as a hobby that has meant so much to her throughout her life, "But the fact that it is a hobby that can bring in some money for me, and I could make a business is really lucky in a way that it's what I am passionate about. I just tried to stay encouraged and it's like therapy for me, so the fact that it works out as being a business is awesome."

Informant 6 shared that her business started as a hobby that she had been doing for nearly a decade, "I started it probably about 4 years ago as a hobby. I was doing it on the side, I was working full-time, and at that point I had been doing pottery for almost 10 years, I think. It was just something that I always loved, but I didn't think that I would be able to make a living doing it." Informant 8 told a story from her childhood of when she had the epiphany that she could make a career out of her passion, "I just generally liked arts and crafts, and one day I was in... it's a bit of a silly story, but honestly this is how it happened. I was in my miniature workshop, and was the oldest of the group and I used to do really fancy miniatures, and the kids that were with me would do kid stuff. But I was enjoying it and the teacher was really nice. Then one of the days one of the kids crushed the other kid's elephant that he made the whole lesson. And the kid was crying, and took a bit of material and I made an elephant. It took me two seconds to make an elephant, it wasn't that big of a deal. And then the mum came and was so impressed, and the kid was happy. She told me that I was really good at it and I should consider making it my job. I never really thought that arts and crafts could be a job, it was never the education that I got."

Informant 12 confirmed that her love of writing and film began at a young age. When asked about having a passion for film she replied, “I wouldn’t say since infancy, but I have always loved stories so much. In high school, I got really interested in movies, and especially editing. I made some of my own projects. That was when I stopped eating, and stopped sleeping, and all I wanted to do was make movies, and that is why I went into the film school.” Furthermore, she stated that her commitment to writing started as a child, “Since I was in kindergarten. [...] I have pretty consistently kept a journal, and oh my god this pretty embarrassing. But recently I was cleaning out my old stuff, my old papers. I found my journal from 1st or 2nd grade, and I was looking at all the pages. It says the same 4 things, basically. My name is {}, I love my mom, I love mashed potatoes...”

Informant 11 explained how he became interested in cosplay, “[In] 2004, my cousin came to visit me. [...] He brought ‘Spirited Away’, and we were watching that one. I was like, this is some deep shit, but it was different. Like the drawing style and the music, it was something extraordinary that I had never seen. Somehow I got hooked, and I started looking at other movies by the same producer. Then I started watching the real anime series like [Japanese title], the really famous ones. And then I heard about this convention in 2006 in Helsinki. It was Animecon 2006. And my friend was also watching the anime stuff with me and we started to make costumes. Some really crappy ones, like some parts were bought from China, from Ebay, and then dyeing our own hair with a really flashy orange color. And then I met really really many future friends of mine. They have the same kind of thinking. Really friendly people. You can go and talk to anyone there, and they are really friendly and open.” Informant 4 explained how she has always been excited about fitness, “I have always been into sports as a kid and in high school. I never played anything super professional by any means, but you know I have always liked being active.” Informant 3 said that her love of horses has been with her since childhood, “I always wanted to work with horses. Basically, that was the only thing since I was a kid that really held my interest was horses.”

4.2.3-2 Passion Formed as an Adult

Informant 9 shared that her passion for photography developed as an adult, “I was living in Hong Kong I saw someone who was a photographer and I saw what he could do and what gear he was using. I had this shitty camera, and I thought oh this is miles better, and you can do so much more. Then I started to learn about it. I really stuck with it. I went on Google and learned everything I could because nowadays you have all those resources without even studying. Then through the job I had here I got slightly into web design and graphic design. I learned everything on the go. I never studied for it.” Informant 1 described how he became interested in Cross-fit and the Paleo diet directly after graduating from

college, “I was working so much... I didn’t get to be very healthy my first month or two while I was in investment banking. One of our other roommates, [...], was doing Cross-fit at that time. And he was telling me, ‘Hey, [...], you are getting kind of fat.’ I want you to join me for Cross-fit. I was like, bro, I go to work at 7am, I don’t come back until 10 or 11pm, and he’s like just come to Cross-fit once, and if you don’t like I will stop bothering you. I said, no I am not going to join you. He kept pestering me every day for 2 weeks, and would like knock on my door. I was like if I go with you once will you stop waking me up in the morning, and he was like yeah. Then I went to Cross-fit and I loved it. A lot of Cross-fitters... exercise is part of the equation, but you also need good fuel so a lot of Cross-fitters eat Paleo because it’s... they try to emphasize lean meats, healthy vegetables, low carbs, low sugar, no soda, none of the junk foods that normal Americans eat. Once I started eating the food in addition to doing Cross-fit I noticed how great I started to feel.”

4.2.3-3 Neutral Stance on Passion

Informant 10 showed ambivalence to his chosen field, though he did note that, “I was very enthusiastic to games for 3-5 years. When I was in Junior High School. Sometime I felt that I was wasting too much time there so I had to stop from then.

4.2.4 Personal Network, Community, Environment and Travel Experiences

This section looks at external influence and relationships of the informant. The main areas studied are personal networks, community, environment and travel experiences. Atlas.ti found that the word network was repeated 16 times, community 32, and environment 18. Informant views are shared through quotes directly from the semi-structured interviews. This allows the reader to establish a connection with the informant. The majority of informants spoke fondly about their networks, community, and environment. It was discovered that these themes were overlapping and held many commonalities. The researcher elected to share all three because it is critical to show the interaction between the themes and their intertwined nature.

The informants shared the following types of personal networks that have aided them in their entrepreneurial journey: game developers (informant 7), bosses and friends (5), Google and online team (9), artist community (6), trade workers (8), agent and professor (12), online and offline connections (11), business partner and mentor (10), social media, remote channels, masterminds group (4), co-workers at riding school (3), clients and friend’s parents (2), Cross-fit gyms

and friend group (1). The informants' responses demonstrated that the meaning of community differs depending on the individual. The informants cited the following communities as influencing their business endeavors: Finnish game industry (informant 7), Oregon DIY community (5), artist community she lives in (6), community of heiresses that she collaborates with (8), fellow writers (12), online Cosplay community (11), Finland gamers (10), fitness groups (4), horseback riders (3), community accessible through social media (2), Cross-fit community (1), online co-workers (9). Many of the informants identified with environment and travel experiences in the physical sense. Informants referred to the impact of an element of their environment: London architecture (8), Florida nature (6), travel in Central America, Thailand, San Francisco and physical nature of Colorado and Pacific Northwest (5), works of photography (9), study abroad in Japan (7), desire to escape toxic work environment (12), Japanology degree in Sweden and study abroad in Japan (11), contrast between Japan and Finland (10), exercise groups in Los Angeles, California (4), town of Los Altos Hills, California (3), travel experiences, particularly German architecture and entrepreneurial environment of generation (2), San Francisco Bay area start-up environment (1).

4.2.4-1 Personal Networks

Informant 7 spoke favorably of the community of game developers that he is a part of, "[I do] Not necessarily [have] a mentor, but as I mentioned the gaming hub in [Finnish gaming hub] has been really good starting point. Through that I have made a lot of contacts in and out of Finland, and in and out of the [particular Finnish] region, or the middle of Finland region." Informant 5 acknowledged the value of her personal network, "[I have] a really great support system, where all of my friends and my bosses really encourage me to continue this. And they kind of sell me too." Informant 9 shared that she mainly relied on Google in her business, "Yes, Google he taught me everything." Yet she also mentioned that, "But sometimes I have this period I was missing being able to speak to someone who is creative and who has the same background as me. [...] But now I am involved with this [online] team so that brought me that back, but if I wouldn't have that I would probably have that problem again."

Informant 6 has a unique situation in that she lives in, "[An artist community in Florida], which is a community where you can live there and also have your own business in the same, like in your house. There are not many places where it is legal to have retail space with foot traffic, and also have that be a dwelling. [...] I am in an artist community, and all of my neighbors are artists so I see my neighbors all the time like I have lots of people that will hang out and just sit here and talk to me while I am working. The community is actually pretty good in that everyone is very supportive, we get together, and we have meetings every week. We have coffee. I see a lot of people. Plus it's an open storefront so I get people walking in all the time, and talking to me and asking me questions. [...] So, I am surrounded by a lot of interesting people and other artists, but I am

not surrounded by other potters.” Informant 8 had a mixed response to the impact of her identity in her business, “The people in the trade know it’s me, but the people in the fashion world don’t. [...] I don’t care, but the day that I want to set up my own brand it will bother me a bit that I can’t go around and say you know all these things that you were flashing actually were my work. Because that is not how it goes. That will be frustrating because when I need the help of these people I am not going to get it because they do not know who I am. But if I need help from gallery owners, and makers, and other designers they know who I am.”

Informant 12 spoke about the impact of her personal network, “The way that I found my agent was that I asked one of my favorite professors from [USA University] how she became a writer. She said, you can just Google that, you know. [...] I made a spreadsheet of 200 agents, and I emailed every single one of them. I got 199 rejections.” One agent said yes, and according to Informant 12, “Yes, and the funny thing is that he is not only extremely well connected both in the literary world but in the entertainment industry in Hollywood. He took my sneeze on a 32,000 word manuscript, which is what I submitted to him. He worked with me very extensively, so much more I would have probably if I were in his shoes. And eventually it came to be 3 times the length. I feel like he taught me how to write books.” When asked why she thought her agent took a chance on her she responded, “Firstly, I think that he liked the subject matter which was backpacking on a shoestring budget. I ended up at 45 dollars a day, including the plane tickets to go around the world. [...] Secondly, I think that he saw some glimmers of language that he really connected with. Even though it was buried in a lot of shitty language also, I guess that he felt it was worth time to unearth it with me.”

Informant 11 explained the unique nature of his business and how personal connections play a part in it, “Basically, it is a hobby. There aren’t really any rules or anything, but when you watch all the anime or movies you think this guy is pretty cool. For me, I always select my costumes on the guy’s actual facial looks or also the height, and the size. The body also has to look the same. That’s why I am also going to the gym a lot. To fit the character. Then I do some background research, I think this is pretty cool. I look at all the pictures and of course I play the game a lot and take photo and stuffs. Then I start making the costume, so I order all the materials, like fabric and foam and all the stuff. And the plastics and paints, wigs, and make-up, and contact lenses. Then I start doing it and it has to be exactly the same. All the fabrics, all the paints, all the colors. They have to be fitting the character. Then you use the costumes in the conventions, of course. And it’s a really social hobby. And it’s online all time. When you are making something you can even have the video here when you are online with your friends. Then posting kind of all of work in progress photos. Then you go to the convention and have fun. Then you take some photos, like a photo shoot. Well, for me I do actually professional photo shoots. So, I have different weekends where I go somewhere, like in Germany, or somewhere to a castle or something and I have a photographer and group of friends and all the lights and

that sort of stuff. We wear our costumes all day. The other part is the competition part where you take part in the actual competition and have to make the actual stage show. That's a bit like a different scene again. Not everyone wants to take part in the competition. There are like 1,000 cosplayers in the convention, and only 20 of them are in the competition."

Informant 10 finds strength and advice from his mentor, "For a mentor... I think that my business partner is a good mentor because he is operating gaming idea two years earlier than my business so he is providing... I also looked at how he operating his gaming idea for 3 years. Even before he started. It is a good experience for me. I already saw him fail many times, and also accept a lot of risk. Got a lot to lose in his business. It's also a very good reference for me. [...]He had no experience in entrepreneurship or in what he is doing now, which is getting website. He knew nothing about getting traffic on search engine. He tried to learn everything by himself and I was watching this for 3 years. [...] Well, he knew something about business but not the technology industry. He failed many times. He failed by many people because trusted people sometimes, but people betrayed him." Informant 4 spoke about the use of social media and her reliance on her support network, "I would say 75% of my business is through remote channels, which is where social media like Facebook, Whatsapp is an app that we used. So those are just some things that we use as a form of communication to make sure that people are supported and getting results. It's actually really cool, we have a masterminds group between me and I think that there are 7 of us, and we meet every week and we talk about where our business is going, what the next year looks like, what the next 5 years look like, what is the next 10 years. Our businesses are always evolving."

Informant 3 explained how her personal network put her in the unique position to start her own business, "So when I graduated from college I started working for someone else at her riding school and she was pregnant at the time. So I took over a lot of the managerial responsibilities and was pseudo-running her business. Then I was like I don't know if I want to do this since it's such a huge time commitment and etcetera, etcetera, and then I decided to join the Peace Corp. Then after three months I decided that was a really bad idea so then I stopped doing that and came back to the States and I basically said to myself that I can't see myself doing anything else but working with horses, especially after taking that brief break from it and I was like I don't know why I did that. I really don't want to do anything else, and then I got a job when I came back working for someone else again. Then after that job I started working for this person who had an agreement with this guy. So he provided all the horses, and she provided the teaching as the work, you know. It's kind of a good deal because you are not taking any risk in the situation. I mean you don't having the risk of having all the capital of the equipment and horses. Like what if the equipment gets stolen, or one of the horses gets sick, that sort of thing. So the guy provided the capital and we were doing the work, and then she got pregnant so I ended up completely taking over the business from her. At that time is when I actually started my own

business. I took over for her. I just took her business, essentially, when she decided she didn't want to do it. So yeah, and then from there I did that for about three years, and then I got the opportunity to be where I am now. At that time I only had the riding school. At that time I still had my business, but it was bank-rolled by the other guy. What happened was he held the contract for the facility at that time. He was kind of in the position I am in now, and then he lost that contract and so I consequently was going to lose my job. So I took my riding school and applied for another job, and he wanted to be out of the picture. So I essentially bought everything from him and then managed to get this contract at another facility as the manager."

Informant 2 explained how he utilizes his personal network to find business, "So, at that point I knew it's time and only thing holding me back from my own firm are clients of my own and fortunately at that same breath when I quit the architecture firm, a friend from past that I met in Switzerland years ago messaged me asking if he could hire me. All those things kind of happened at the same time and I had a little epiphany that I don't want to live a comfortable life and lose my dreams. And then also a small little client where I am sure I will have to do a whole heck of a lot those types of projects in a year and really hustle in order to maintain my lifestyle. But at the end of the day, I would rather be working twice as long and doing it for myself knowing that being this young failure hurts less, and the rewards and flexibility are going to be so much more worth it in the long run. I am at the point now where I have another client in (city in California), the city that I grew up in. A friend's parents hired me to redecorate their house. So I'm just chugging along at one client at a time, having trouble with self-promotion just because it's never been anything that I ever had to learn before or do. Self-promote myself. That's where I am now."

Informant 1 explained how his company got started through his personal knowledge and connections, "So I got a job offer to work for [USA company], and I absolutely hated it. It was worse than investment banking, and you got paid less. You had to do more crap work. It just wasn't as fulfilling as I thought it would be. And when I moved up to the Bay, I noticed that there were no Paleo food companies around, and I was eating a lot of Paleo food. And I did a quick calculation on how much money I could earn, and the risk of the business was basically at zero. Right, it was something I was very passionate about. I knew the market. I knew the constituents. I know the owners of these Cross-fit gym, and I knew that even if I put in a \$5,000 investment there was almost zero chance that I would lose all of it. So, me and my fiancé decided to jump into that, and within a week we made all our money back. And so that's actually how [company name] started." Informant 1 also has the advantage of a close knit friend network that pushes him to succeed, "I have no definition of success. I think given my personality and the circle of friends I am around. All of us push each other, and all of us want to be the best in our friend group. There is no dollar goal or anything like that. We just want to make each other better. If we are not one... or if my friend is not number one we are going to push ourselves until we are number one in the group, or until somebody surpasses us again."

4.2.4-2 Community

Informant 7 reflected on the impact of the environment that he is in, "There has been a lot of support, and the Finnish game industry is phenomenal in that everyone is willing to share their success and their stories. [...] The Finnish IGDA gatherings are really open and people are willing to try out different prototypes and give advice on them. But I have heard that in other countries it is people are afraid of people stealing their ideas. I don't think that the Finnish people in the gaming industry are really afraid of that, well I think it is partially because everybody knows everybody. If you do that people will shun you forever." Informant 5 is aware that the region she operates in has a positive impact on her business, "Because I started in such a small town and had so much support because I knew so many people in this small town, they encouraged me to sell to a lot of stores. [...] I think that the fact, you know, [city in Oregon] is a very... well, I guess the type of town that really appreciates locally made art. There is a huge DIY center, and they really encourage creativity in the town. You know, being close to [city in Oregon], is huge with all the stores there. The fact that people kind of encourage creativity and appreciate it for what it is instead of going online and buying some similar looking but worse, not really well made product really encourages me. And I like that all the towns that I have lived in have been like that." Informant 6 spoke of her environment in a positive light, "[...] definitely my community as well because I do live in an artist community we share our work and see each other's stuff. So, I'll see my next door neighbor does metal art and he does this really cool color enameling process over it so I'll see the way his colors run, and I really like that effect, so I wonder if I can do something that gives you not something that looks like that, but gives you the same feeling when you see it that it gives to me.[...]So, I think that I have really heavily relied on my community as far as them being, the fact that it is here and there is a group of supportive people that want you to succeed, type of thing."

Informant 8 had an interesting reflection on the nature of communities in the high-end jewelry business, "Do you know if you've got the right funds, what I see in my business is a lot of heiresses who want to do shoes, handbags, and jewelry- because that's the nice stuff and they can keep it for themselves. They will come and hire the right people. A lot of it is being able to identify the right people who will be able to do the right job for you.[...]I think also if you are in that environment and your born in it, like a few of my heiresses, you know handbags and jewelry they swum in it when they were babies. They, it's not necessarily talent as deep understanding, so much that you understand how a wave works because you have surfed all your life. There is also this deep understanding of how things are and things work and being in the right environment."

When asked if she had a community that she relied on Informant 12 said, "No, actually the funny thing is... I have some other friends who are trying to

get published, and because they have met with so many established writers who told them reach out to one literary agent at a time, or just told them all these rules about what to do. I feel really lucky because I didn't get that. Because I reached out to 200 people at once and cast a wide net and found someone. [...] I have 2 other friends who are trying to get published and I feel like they are so paralyzed by what they should be doing that they are actually not doing very much at all."

Informant 11 shared that a large part of the community that he interacts with is online and that has had a huge impact on how he was able to gain fame across several platforms, "As a male it is a bit different because most of the cosplayers are actually girls. I made a research that in Finland it is 85-86% are girls, only 14% are boys. It is almost the same in every other country. [...] And then there are the boys. There are only like 5 of us really famous throughout the world. And we have only about 100,000 likes, something like that." When asked how people found him he responded, "I don't know because it is just the cosplay community, and on the internet everyone sees all this stuff. [...] I think that it has been evolving because of Facebook and everything, social media. 10 years when the first cosplayer was on cosplay.com and blah blah blah. But now for the past 3 years it has been going up like this (makes upward hand motion). [...] and now they have all these cosplay based sites. Like World Cosplay... like they are only for cosplayers. Like Facebook where you put your photos, but they are only for cosplayers." Informant 11 shared that he is noticeable in his community because, "Abroad I am actually the only Finnish cosplayer actually that people really know." Furthermore, he believes that his language abilities gave him a leg up, "That is how all the connections were made, based on the fact that I speak English, Finnish, and Japanese."

Informant 10 decided to go into his chosen industry due to the resources available to him, "I start my company in this industry because my business partner in Japan is operating a gaming idea and he has a successful thing there so it's one of my important resources. Also, since I moved to Finland the gaming industry in Finland is very well-developed because they are huge gaming... success from gaming industry here. So, I think that it would be a good thing to combine these two resources together." Informant 4 spoke favorably of the fitness community that she is involved with, "When I got signed up with the community it was a completely different experience. Here were these fit, active people, they are helping people get healthy, and they are using products to help them. I was like oh. And then they said you can help people while making money, and we will teach you and train you, and plug you into the system. And as long as you do the work you can be successful."

Informant 3 is aware of the huge role her community plays in her business, "So a big asset to me was that I had such a big client base. Basically, I didn't have to buy that client base like a lot of people do. That woman who got pregnant basically gave me her clients. She worked really hard for those clients, and I worked too. I worked for her for a year before I took the business over, and she basically she wasn't there and making a large percentage of the income for doing

nothing. If you look at it that way, I kind of bought the clients from her that way. The contract with the town of [city in California] gave me \$10,000 as a start up fee, and a few of my clients gave me loans. Then one of the things I had to purchase from that guy was all the horses, so a few of my clients helped me purchase the horses. It was in a way that they are not expecting money back, but they have the rights to ride that horse all the time.”

Informant 2 shared how he put himself in a vulnerable position by contacting his community, “I put myself into a vulnerable position, and you know wrote something that everyone on my Facebook could read about how this is something that is a big dream of mine. And I am putting in the time and effort towards and you know if you have someone to pass along to hire me be my guest. It’s kind of about learning how to embrace that vulnerability, and just trust in my ability and my work. Every project that I do, just do to the fullest of my ability to hopefully be able to get them as a client later on. Then have them refer me. Because in my industry so much of it is word of mouth. And being more or less a one man show, I will be able to survive if I constantly just have a client. If that word of mouth keeps trekking along, then hopefully it will lead from one thing to the next to make me successful.”

Informant 1 shared how his company operates within his community, “I have actually automated 99% of the business. The only thing that I do nowadays is collect money from my clients, and pay my employees. Everything else is pretty automated at this point. [...] When I moved up there was nobody doing what I was doing. We launched a business in two weeks. And over the past two years there have been companies that have popped up and are competing on our territory. But given I have exclusive rights to sell through any of my storefronts we have been able to hold off any competitors. Um... we did buy out one of our competitors two years ago, though.” He explained who is client base is, “I would say some of them are Cross-fitters. Some of them are super busy individuals who eat Paleo food. Some of them are just very fat who want to lose weight.”

4.2.4-3 Environment and Travel Experiences

Informant 8 reacted favorably when asked if the external environment around her had a positive impact on her work, “I think that there are great designers in London. At the moment it’s one of the cream of the crop. London design is all sold worldwide. I find that there is a good buzz to it. I find the exhibitions that happen in London are very interesting. But also I think that it has to do with English mentality, being less judgmental, being allowed to have your own star and stick out like a sore thumb if that’s what you want. And just... and that is also reflected in the inhibitions you have. Also the buildings... because London is basically just a patchwork of buildings. It’s very, very strange because you’ll go from Victorian buildings to a very contemporary building because half of London was bombed. Half of London was rebuilt, and what wasn’t rebuilt is under

conservation. They have very strict conservation rules here. You have a patchwork of these different styles, and all these different details and you will go from a Victorian house to a Georgian and this and that. And it gives a lot of inspiration. I'd say that contributes to the mentality also a lot."

Informant 6 acknowledged the influence of her environment, "My environment, I think, inspires me a lot, and other artists as well. A lot of my stuff has a very organic sort of feel as far as I do a lot of floral patterns because Florida has a lot of flowers. Bamboo, ferns, stuff like that. Definitely my environment influences that [...] so more so everyday life and nature." Informant 5 shared that her jewelry was impacted by her natural surroundings and travel experiences, "I think that the fact I have done a lot of traveling has really helped. I think because I want to make my jewelry less necessarily like jewelry and more like pieces of art. I think more of them like pictures in my head, and not whether or not they are wearable, but I think it's so much cooler to have them be so abstract. A lot of that comes from other types of art that inspire me rather than just jewelry. Traveling all over the world and seeing a lot from Thailand they do a lot of metal work. A lot of beaded stuff from Central America I have seen. Lots of stuff like that is where a lot of my inspiration comes from. From traveling, and from learning over time about having an eye for what is going to inspire me to try and copy. It's all sort of subjective, I have to get encouragement from other people and other places. You don't want to think of it as copying, but you replicate what you admire. I prefer to think of it like that. [...] A lot of the Colorado style which I have tried to bring out here to the Northwest is somewhat kind of Bohemian Santa Fe style, lots of turquoise, lots of metal work as well, like copper and certain combinations of colors that really represent the Colorado landscape. Like deep leads, in the mountains, natural stone. It has definitely been incorporated into my work, for sure. I can get inspiration from everything kind of around me. Whatever is local, you know. There are so many great stones local to the Colorado area which I would try and use. People appreciate that, I think. [...] Or I also look around for inspiration. Like, I just did a trip to San Francisco and saw a bunch of really cool, artsy stuff, and that made me come back and I am insanely eager to start making it."

Informant 9 finds inspiration for photography from within and from works around her, "It was just in me. Each time I saw works from others I got inspired by it, and thought I need to get better and push myself to get better, and I watched some tutorials and so on, and I improved bit by bit. [...] Very often work from other people where I think they are very talented and it pushes me to go further. I don't mean copy, but it inspires me. It inspires my work, and I want to improve it." Informant 7 spoke of the influence of the expansion of the gaming industry from a cultural perspective, "I think that it all happened so quickly that no one realized that it was going on as a mega trend. Especially, in Finland, but I think mobile gaming changed the game industry a lot. Not only the games we play, but also how we make games and what audience we make games for. There is a completely new player base, and also completely new way of making games with platforms such as Unity, which we have been using. And through that a lot

of new people have been able to get into the game industry.” His travel experiences also add an important element to his understanding of the industry, I was actually an exchange student in Japan before I entered the game industry. As a person who has been there I understand the cultural background of lots of the games that are popular around of Western countries. That’s really interesting how their design point of view is completely different from the American point of view basically on how they approach game design and how players... what kind of games the players appreciate. For example, a lot of the games in the States are essentially focused around weapons or guns. A lot of the games are ok you have a problem and you are just a vessel in order to solve the problem by force. The story is not about you as a person, it is more about your actions. Whereas, in Japan it is more of a personal thing. It is more about the interactions between characters, and not so much about the actions themselves. And that’s really interesting when I noticed this pattern, and I started thinking about my own game design and how it has been influenced by both medias from Japan and from the US.”

Informant 12 told a story about how her work environment adversely impacted her that she became determined to go against it, “So what happened was that I got really disillusioned with the film industry and quit everything and traveled the world for 6 months. When I came home I entered this Twitter contest for the advertising business and won a full-time job that way. After 6 months I became severely disillusioned with that and I quit also. Then during my job my co-workers coped with it by online shopping, one of my co-workers brought a flask of tequila to work every day and drank in the bathroom. The way I dealt with it was by writing my first manuscript. That’s what I am concentrating on right now and am trying to sell to a publisher. [...] It wasn’t only the stress of working late hours, or the stress of working with billion dollar companies, it was also the stress of a terrible, toxic work environment.”

Informant 11 was largely pushed by interest in Japan and was further inspired by the environment that he put himself in, “I was supposed to be playing clarinet at the [Academy in Finland] because I was in the military service for one year, and I was playing clarinet in the conscript band. So after that one, 2007. I had to choose between Japanology and clarinet. And somehow the anime stuff was much more interesting. So I started studying [University in Sweden] for 3 years. And then I did more of the cosplay because everyone was interested in that sort of stuff. And then I was on exchange when I came to this school [University in Finland] we went on exchange with [name of friend] to (Japanese city), Japan.”

Informant 10 recognized the difference in operating in Finland over Japan (the previous country he lived), “First, about the society. The Finnish people they are more tolerant to risk, to uncertainty. On the contrary, Japanese people are very difficult... they are not used to be tolerant to risk and uncertainty. Also about the public funding to entrepreneurs is much more generous in Finland

compared to Japan.” Informant 4 explained how she interacts with her environment and those involved in it, “Well, so when you do something that you are passionate about your work-life becomes kind of your life-life. It becomes a blend, like you know this morning I was out trail running, and I am getting in my personal passion. I like to run. I am getting ready for the LA Marathon, so I am getting in my own fitness, and I’m networking. I am always needing people that like the same things, who are looking to get faster, they want to recover faster, so it’s just a chance for me to network and meet new people at the same time. So even though it’s personal it’s work.”

Informant 3 recognizes the impact of the surrounding environment on her business and the passion and commitment of residents, “I think that the best thing that happened to me is that I have a really good support structure. Like, there is this guy from the town of Los Altos Hills who took me under his wing and meets with my every month. He is like some CFO of some company, or I don’t even know, he might be retired now. He’s really smart and really knowledgeable and he meets with me every month to help me with my taxes, and finances, and answers any questions that I have and gives me advice. He does it for free because he lives in the town of [city in California] and is invested in making sure that the barn is successful. Because when I went over the contracts they were considering getting rid of the barn all together. Because it caused a lot of problems and was losing a lot of money, etcetera, etcetera. You know, I’d say the best thing is having that support staff of my clients and other people who were really helpful because it is so much work and you really cannot do it by yourself. I luckily had a lot of people who were like, I’ll help you.”

Informant 2 shared how he was inspired by the physical world around him, “Every time I go back to Germany, I am just so in awe in how the old and the new come to mix. I think that is so important in design. I love mixing the old with the new, and sure I love modern clean lines. But it is so much better to include, whether it be a couple of vintage pieces of furniture, or have some modern furniture in a really, really old historic building or house or whatever it will be. I love mixing the old with the new, and you know in traveling you really see how different people live and what different people need to live. And that always, you know, I can take something back from that.” In addition, he spoke of the entrepreneurial environment that he operates in, “I think that our generation encourages it. I think I fall very much into... I think that our generation, really we just don’t want to work for other people, we want to work for ourselves and create what is in our head. I think that, you know, I think that my environment is permitting me to do that.”

Informant 1 explained about the entrepreneurial environment in which he lives, “In the Bay, yes. I have not lived anywhere else except for LA and the Bay, so I can’t say anything about the US. There is not a huge amount of support, but people don’t question you if you say you own a business. I would think that if you worked in other states or other countries. I have friends who live in Taiwan, or Hong Kong, or China and if you don’t have like a job as a lawyer, as a doctor,

or as an accountant or something, people are like, oh you are not really doing anything with your life. In California, it's more so like, hey, you have a thriving business, and it's ok. People don't question you on that aspect, and I think that it is really helpful because if you fail it's ok, try again. [Company Name] was not our first attempt at a business. We tried half a dozen times before we got to [company name], and then I tried half a dozen more times before I got the real estate company. [...] I don't think that it is an American mindset, I think that it is a Bay area mindset. A tech mindset. You can't fail in finance. When I was working in investment banking, there is no failure. It can't fail. So, it's so very specific to entrepreneurship and the circle that I am in. I wanted to find a group of people and an environment, whether that was location based or friend based. Whatever it was, that would foster entrepreneurship because that is what I wanted to do."

4.2.5 Personality and Perception of Success

This section identifies the intricate nature of the personality and perception of success of each informant. The descriptions in the table below were self-reported by each interviewee individually. The researcher of this study conducted a line by line analysis of the 97 pages of transcribed interviews to fully understand the character of the informants and their approach to business and life. Only keywords of significant characteristics are included, as stated by the interviewees. This self-analysis gives clues as to the basis of their entrepreneurial drive and business abilities.

The following paragraphs pertain to the personality element of the section. Informant 1 referred to his problems with authority, always wanted to be a business owner, desires control, does not do things for sake of doing things, wants control over schedule, type A, very competitive, driven by money. Informant 2 stated that he has high ambition, passion, and dreams, does not want to live a comfortable life and lose dreams, positive thinker, short and long term goal setter, accustomed to rigorous training and stamina from time as world rank diver, wants control over schedule, creative, passionate, loves design. Informant 3 is a people person, easy-going, disorganized but has good employees to help in this area, desires for operations to run smoothly, wants to be good to employees, struggles with managing employees due to language difficulties, age and gender gap, loves horses. Informant 4 has a good work ethic, likes being active, driven by challenges that allow her to push herself, believes she is a natural born leader but has a difficult time owning to that fact, likes building things, creating things, and challenges, desires self-development and learning about herself, big goals and dreams, fine tuning purpose in life, believes set on planet to help people, possesses future vision.

Informant 5 is very passionate, feels jewelry making heals and relaxes her, nervous about selling herself, continually is adapting work, proud and excited about her pieces, always loved art, artistic family, feels vulnerable selling jewelry

because she puts so much of herself into her work, creative, focuses on what inspires her and not on what is going to be popular, struggles with and worries about the authenticity and quality of jewelry if she becomes too busy running her business, unpretentious, against impersonal sales, wants to spread and encourage creativity in every way, feels lucky to do what she loves. Informant 6 does not feel very entrepreneurial, feels she does work for the selfish reason that she loves pottery, does not want to answer to someone else, does not have grand ambitions, not driven or competitive, intelligent, well-educated, understands how a business works, necessities like accounting are not an issue for her, customer service is easy, well-rounded to deal with all aspects of her company, does not enjoy teaching but can do it, considers herself an artist and does not want to mass produce her items, well-rounded and focused, not organized because relies so heavily on knowing things off top of head, perky personality, identifies as a potter.

Informant 7 is a passionate gamer, passionate creative person, entrepreneurial spirit, desires to make permanent cultural impact, out of box thinking combined with traditional thinking, interested in people and how they behave and what they are motivated by, Finnish 'sisu' mentality- once he starts something he does not give up, driven by people's reactions to his games and wanting them to be remembered, becoming more confident on what he is doing and talents, able to make self clearly understood, thinks carefully about how to express opinions, ideas, and way to say it. Informant 8 believes art is about brains over skill, very OCD which she considers both a weakness and a strength, loves talking but not to media, more humor than elegance, has trouble presenting herself as a wonderfully elegant lady, smart- able to look at an object and analyze why it works, organized. Informant 9 is not a team player, likes to work by herself, creative, disciplined, passionate, efficient but as a creative gets caught up in things that are not important, cannot sell self very well, not the best marketer.

Informant 10 wants to create value or contribute to society on own strengths, willing to challenge new things, stay away from stable life and into something unknown, somewhat reckless, high level of self-control, experienced in different cultures. Informant 11 is social and outgoing, in mindset of reading social media and people, gets along with a lot of people, a lot of people like him easily, open person (particularly from the Finnish view), culturally aware, likes risk, likes to use own force and mind to make something that no one else is doing, excitable, cannot concentrate on one thing, likes variety, thinks that he thought more highly of himself before he got famous and is not now not bothered by anything. Informant 12 needs to be creative, produce own work, and connect with people, astronomical level of self-discipline, writes every day because she loves it, ambitious, honest, forthcoming, disdain for authority, reacts when people tell her that she cannot do something, has strived to be unique throughout life.

The quotes below demonstrate the perception of success of the informants. Informant 1 stated, "I have no definition of success. I think given my personality

and the circle of friends I am around. All of us push each other, and all of us want to be the best in our friend group. There is no dollar goal or anything like that. We just want to make each other better. If we are not one... or if my friend is not number one we are going to push ourselves until we are number one in the group, or until somebody surpasses us again." Informant 2 believes, "Well, my success will be when I can build a house, design all the furniture inside of it, and not necessarily have to do it for a client. If I were able to design 100% in my tastes, that would be ideal. Unfortunately, I am not at that point yet. But that is the beauty of the world, people having to work for each other. But I do ultimately want to design every single piece of furniture in a house that I design from the ground up. That's my ultimate dream, and I want to be able to make that profitable. So, I guess I have to convince people that my internal aesthetic and internal style is something that they want." Informant 3 shared, "It is kind of tapped out at a maximum. I have the maximum amount of horses I can fit on the facility. So just making things run more smoothly, and being good to my employees is also really important. But I feel that in terms of growing my business there is not a lot of room for that because there are just so many places that you can keep your horses. As far as the riding school it's not really growth, but running business better. So that when people leave they are like, wow that was a really great experience. That is what I want to happen, but it doesn't happen all the time. I want it to happen as much as possible, but it doesn't always happen."

Informant 4 said, "You know, I want to live a good life, I want to travel, I want to have financial freedom I want to not look at the prices on the menu at a restaurant. This is an opportunity for me to make that kind of money. If I worked in corporate America I don't know how much money I would have eventually made without sacrificing my entire life and never being able to retire. My goal is to retire by 45, so we will see." Informant 5 feels success is, "Oh man, I mean being financially stable to be able to support your whole business and not have any out of pocket costs. I think that is huge. And be able to have any sort of type of profit after that. I think that is enough for me. Because it is something that I love doing. I wouldn't do it if I didn't love it. And then for it to be able to pay for itself is really the main thing I am trying to do. Obviously, having money coming in to have a pure profit is awesome, but really having an organized business that pays for itself is incredibly difficult to do on its own. So just having that... I'd be stoked."

Informant 6 stated that, "I've thought about this a few different ways. I would like to continue to grow. My biggest problem right now is that my shop is usually understocked. So I am actually generally selling faster than I can replace pieces which is a good problem to have. It also, you know I have also thought seriously in that regard because the natural response economic-wise is with supply and demand is that if it is going too fast raise prices. I feel like I have things right now fairly priced, and as far as, I have a lot of return customers and I don't want to alienate my existing customer base by drastically raising prices just because I can't keep up. But, that was also when I wasn't working at it full-time. You know? I feel my biggest problem up to now is not being able to keep up. But

I think that I am getting better at that and getting more efficient in my process. I also got rear-ended in October and was out for a couple of months. [...] so it was kind of scary in that I was like this is what I do, and if I am not physically healthy I can't do it, and then what. You know what I mean? [...] I am still going to physical therapy, but I am almost better now. [...] I have thought about in the future if I have the finances to make it happen, if I am successful enough to expand it into, kind of like I was discussing more, a more community studio where people if they want to rent studio space they can have somewhere work they can do that. Or I can teach some classes. I am kind of mixed about that. I don't really enjoy teaching. I can do it, but it's just it becomes very time consuming not just during the class time, but to deal with all their work."

Informant 7 is of the mindset of, "If I step back a moment and observe success I would say that as far as games themselves go, I think a successful game is one that people will remember and talk about. Even after it has long ceased to be a new thing. So, that's what I have been aiming for with my designs. For something that has a permanent cultural impact. And this is something that we tried to achieve with our first game [...] It has already made a huge impact on a certain generation of Finnish children. Hopefully, in 5-10 years they will go back and be like hey do you remember this game from our childhood? And discuss about and remember fondly. That in my opinion is success." Informant 8 believes, "Well, I am very blessed I've got a husband, so successful means not financial. I could get you to talk to someone else in the trade, if you want to, who would say actually for me success means paying my rent on time every month. That is a very different approach. For me success is having the right responsibilities. I like being involved in the marketing and help position the product. And seeing the brands because I design the pieces and put them out there under someone else's brand. I don't get any credit for it. People in the trade know who has done what. [...] But on the outside a lot a lot of it is that you don't get the credit for the work. [...] The success would be for me to do the work and give it to xy or z and xy or z to do the right thing with it. And for it to hit the market and do well."

Informant 9 shared, "am not someone who projects myself in time at all. In 5 years' time I would be happy to be where I am now, but earning more let's say. Because I love what I do and if it could increase my income that would be really cool. That would also mean that I did it right, and my business is stable. I think they something that if you make it through the 5th year you have a really good running business. Right now I am at my 2nd year, or almost 3rd. [...] ideally, if I could really earn money with creative photography, and have my own studio set up, that would be my dream. But I am not there yet [...] I think that it depends a lot on each person. But if you can make money out of your passion and creativity that's great. But sometimes you have to think the other way around. And first make a business. But if you make a business and it's 80% of what you like then you are already there. Or even 60%. That's enough."

Informant 10 said, "I think that I can separate into two parts. First one is the economic way. The economic part is to become rich. I don't mean that it is

important to become rich, but it is a good way for others to put value on your business. Value your effort. It is a very fair way. [...] For myself, I think one thing is to be totally freedom for what you want to do in your life. That's exactly what I am doing. I have my own business so that I have 100% free time for my everyday and my life. The other thing is to contribute to society. Do something to provide some value to people. Even if it is a very specific industry. [...] Ok, the vision for my business is to find values between different cultures. So, for what I am doing now is selling games from Europe to Japan, and Japan is a very different culture. People don't usually like a culture that they don't know because it means risk, in many ways. I believe that there are always some values between different cultures, and for example. Even Japanese people don't like foreign or Western games so much. But there are some very good games there. If I can deliver these kind of very good games to Japanese people they will love it very much. They will have more chances to enjoy a very creative and innovative games. I will add value there."

The words of Informant 11 were, "I don't have any at all. Just go with the flow. [...] I like to be open. If I stop cosplay I can stop cosplay and do something else. I like to go with the flow. I don't have decisions like I want to have a house at 35. I have a nice place [...]. I am happy with everything." Informant 12 succinctly shared, "To me success, at this point in my life, is being creative every day and eventually connecting with other people on a daily basis."

4.2.5 Motivation and Aspirations

This section addresses the motivation of the entrepreneurs interviewed on a deep level. Direct quotes from each entrepreneur are include. Their words allow the reader to understand their hopes and dreams, and also a modern approach to motivation. The goal of this section is to deeply understand what motivates entrepreneurs of the Millennial generation and lifestyle entrepreneurs in general.

Informant 1 said that he is motivated by the fact that his business, "Makes a lot of money. Yeah, well me and my fiancé are getting married next week and we are taking a year and 2 months off to travel the world [because the business has been almost entirely automated]." Informant 2 shared, "I love to learn, and even when I am working for myself I still like to see what else is out there. And I would like to be able to collaborate with others rather than have to work for others. I would rather find you know some sort of creative team to broaden my realm of vision. To kind of take me from being your typical interior designer to something bigger and more unique, and something that hasn't been out there yet in the world. Because that is the kind of something that will really make it soar."

Informant 3 said that her aspirations include, "I think that it would be giving back to the community more. Whether it be something like rescuing horses,

or having a business which was more philanthropic rather than just making money. At this point my business is very much profit based. I guess I would do something like make a program for kids who couldn't afford lessons to come and take classes one day a week. A program like that, or having a horse rescue side to it. Where a few of my horses were rescued or something like that." Informant 4 stated, "I have big goals and dreams, and think that you know I am fine tuning my purpose in life. I think that I was set on this planet to help people, and I think that this may be the way for me to help as many people as I can. I think that when you know what your purpose is it helps you to stay on course. And helps you to find ways to fulfill on your purpose so I think that Herbalife is a great way for me to take care of people and help people."

Informant 5 explained how she would like to give back, "There is a lot of interest for teaching, and if I was able to do that on the side it would be amazing. To be able to spread and encourage creativity, in every way. I think that would be amazing. That is a huge goal of mine to have everyone finding some kind of creative outlet. I think is really, really important." Informant 6 shared why she felt some aversion to rapid growth, "I think that my big resistance to [commercializing] is that I know how bigger operations have done it, and what I really love about it is that each piece is handmade and individual, sort of thing. But as you expand, and turn it into a production sort of thing, some of it is lost in that people start using molds rather than throwing everything individually. I guess I still consider myself an artist to a certain extent, and I guess that could be a product of where it is that I am because I am in an artist community. But I don't want to mass produce and kind of lose that."

Informant 7 is motivated by, "I want to create games that have a cultural impact, and that's what motivates me. Seeing how people react to the games that I have made, seeing how they have the potential to be something that people will remember, that is really strong intrinsic motivation. [...] Worldwide. So, everybody knows, for example, the character Mario, so that character itself has had a lot of cultural impact that people recognize the character, and talk about the character and fondly remember games. The first Mario game was released 30 years ago. So, 30 years after its release people still fondly remember not only the character, but also the first game and the whole cultural phenomenon it has created. Of course, there are other examples, such as Angry Birds is a big thing nowadays. It started as a single game, and then it evolved into a big entertainment franchise. That's one way to approach cultural impact. But I am not only talking about franchising. I am also talking about just having a good game. Something that is remembered in the sense that one can come to me and say have you played the game x, and it is awesome. Then it becomes important for us to share a connection about this game."

Informant 8 said, "It's what I was saying about talent and brains. A lot, a lot of people are actually fine good and they are not talented. They are smart. It's about identifying what's in the market, what's missing, what's new technology available that you can play on all the new materials. Because all of these make a

differences. If suddenly you can make something 0.5 of a mil thinner it's cheaper, and that's a huge difference. If suddenly you can plate flashing colors. Well, the new thing at the moment is nano-ceramic plating, and they come out with all these absolutely wacky colors. It's quite taking and it holds on a lot better than gold rouge and all that. And it's wonderful and that's what makes you different. You look at the product and say, I want to play with colors and what's the best way to use the technology. There is also something poetic about how the brand works. It's based mainly on method, and think I've learned a lot of those in my Master's. So it's about pictures, cutting out a hundred pictures of what you like at the moment. It can be a painting, a texture, all the pieces of jewelry that you find to hit a certain target and that's interesting. Then understanding how it works and what you want to do with it and then running with that. It's not, oh I've got an inspiration, but that's how you are going to market it."

Informant 9 was able to self-motivate herself, "It was just in me. Each time I saw works from others I got inspired by it, and thought I need to get better and push myself to get better, and I watched some tutorials and so on, and I improved bit by bit." Informant 10 has motivation beyond himself, "I think that I have very strong willing that I don't want to be regretful when I die in the future. If I don't try to do my own business I will be regretful at the end of my life for not doing this. For not trying to do this. So, I keep trying to do this." Informant 11 cited a lot of intrinsic motivation, "I don't know. It is something like, it is even when I am making the costumes I don't like reading manuals. I don't like reading tutorials from the internet. There are a lot of cosplay tutorials. I like to make everything by myself. Seeing the shapes and everything, like a 3D model like this in my head. I like to use my own force and mind and make something no one else is doing. Like you can use everything within this play to make a cosplay. Everything is inside the norm so people are like not seeing this. When you open like this you can use everything can make a costume. Everything can be used to make a costume. I also think that cosplay is healthier for me. Because of cosplay I started going to the gym. I was actually 60 kilos before and now I am like 85. [...] I just try it out and then I fail and then I fail and then I cry and then I shriek and then I do it again." Informant 12 shared a metaphorical response, "I think the main theme in my first manuscript was that happiness is a choice, and even when you chose it you have to keep choosing it. You can curate your life as you want."

4.2.6 Utilization of Technology

The research pool is unique in that they are a group of young entrepreneurs. This has a large impact on their relationship with technology. The quotes below illustrate the level in which the informants incorporate different forms of technology, and their views on remote work and online sales. The researcher broke their level of usage of technology into 3 Tiers: 1) Tier 1- aversion to tech-

nology due to the belief that they are artists and it takes away from the authenticity of their craft, or lack of use due to the nature of their business 2) Tier 2- understands the importance of technology and the potential it holds for their business. Currently, incorporates certain tools but could increase usage 3) Tier 3- their business is fully integrated with technology. This is through automation of business or nature of the industry, such as in video gaming. The theme was led by the relevant word count made by Atlas.ti. Technology appeared 6 times, social 18, media 12, Facebook 27, Etsy 8, Skype 12, and remote 5.

The below categorization and quotes are from Tier 1 informants who have an aversion to technology. Informant 3 fits into this category due to the in-person requirements of her horse stable business, "It's also really hard to leave, to go out of town, even for a few days because if something happens I need to deal with it." Informant 5 spoke of her difficulties with technology, "I think that the difficult thing with Facebook was payment... well I think now that there is a kind of Paypal thing you can do through it, but I also really like to see all my jewelry go out the door. Rather than just sending it off. It feels rather impersonal, you know? So I prefer not to do online sales, but I know that would be very profitable for me if I did. I am going to get on it. Actually, Etsy has this app which I downloaded this morning, and I have been putting a lot of stuff up. Also it's a main outlet. A lot of people know about Etsy, and everyone is always asking me for it. So I need to do it." Informant 6 has an aversion to using to technology because of perceived impact on her craft, "I think that my big resistance to that is that I know how bigger operations have done it, and what I really love about it is that each piece is handmade and individual, sort of thing. But as you expand, and turn it into a production sort of thing, some of it is lost in that people start using molds rather than throwing everything individually. I guess I still consider myself an artist to a certain extent, and I guess that could be a product of where it is that I am because I am in an artist community. But I don't want to mass produce and kind of lose that."

The following paragraphs outline details of the Tier 2 informants who see the potential of technology. Informant 2 understands the freedom technology offers, "I am based in LA, but I will go wherever need be. [...] So, I based in LA because I live in LA and my cats are here in my apartment in LA. Everything that I do, basically, I am able to remotely." Aspects of Informant 4's business can be done through technological platforms, "The cool thing is that if we were solely to be working out of that facility we would have a cap to our growth. Because you can only have so many people, you know in that space at one time. [...] I would say 75% of my business is through remote channels, which is where social media like Facebook, Whatsapp is an app that we used. So those are just some things that we use as a form of communication to make sure that people are supported and getting results."

Informant 8 shares her view of the possibilities in technology, "It's what I was saying about talent and brains. A lot, a lot of people are actually fine good and they are not talented. They are smart. It's about identifying what's in the

market, what's missing, what's new technology available that you can play on all the new materials. Because all of these make a differences. If suddenly you can make something 0.5 of a mil thinner it's cheaper, and that's a huge difference. If suddenly you can plate flashing colors. [...] You look at the product and say, I want to play with colors and what's the best way to use the technology." Informant 12 conducts most of her business communications online, "[My agent and I] have never met actually. We communicate by email. [...] I feel that we are both really honest and forthcoming people so I feel like I have really gotten to know him even if it's only by typing, or the occasional phone call."

Tier 3 informants are included in this final section. This group strives to utilize technology to fullest capacity available. Informant 1 shared, "I have actually automated 99% of the business. The only thing that I do nowadays is collect money from my clients, and pay my employees." Informant 7's involvement in the gaming industry forces him to constantly use technology, "That being said, a lot of my gaming habits have changed since I entered the game industry because I started playing games more as research material. I played a lot of games that I probably wouldn't have played otherwise." Informant 9 works almost entirely online, "Yes, with this company that has hired me full-time as a consultant, we are all remote so thanks to technology you can work like this nowadays. I think, 10, 5 whatever years ago this would have not been possible. On this team, there is someone in Dubai, there are some people in London, I am in Amsterdam, and we work every day together thanks to Skype and other tools. Yeah, that's amazing."

Informant 10 also operates in the gaming industry and this in turn impacts his business operations, "I start my company in this industry because my business partner in Japan is operating a gaming idea and he has a successful thing there so it's one of my important resources. Also, since I moved to Finland the gaming industry in Finland is very well-developed because they are huge gaming... success from gaming industry here. So, I think that it would be a good thing to combine these two resources together." Much of Informant 11's business activity is conducted online, "I think that it has been evolving because of Facebook and everything, social media. 10 years when the first cosplayer was on cosplay.com and blah blah blah. But now for the past 3 years it has been going up like this. [...] Now they have all these cosplay based sites. Like word cosplay... like they are only for cosplayers. Like Facebook where you put your photos, but they are only for cosplayers."

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the identity of young lifestyle entrepreneurs. Identity research has been conducted in depth, but there is a gap in terms of entrepreneurial research of young people in the modern business environment. This study seeks to contribute to this field by taking into account society, culture, and technology on an individual's identity. The traditional definition of lifestyle entrepreneur is that one owns a business that promotes their chosen lifestyle or passion with no real concern for profits. This study found that the ideal of the lifestyle entrepreneur has evolved. The informants interviewed were not only interested in following their passion, but in creating a business that allowed them to live the life that they wanted outside of working hours. For the most part, their life took precedence over their work. The informants were concerned with profits, perhaps more than the extent of the typical definition of a lifestyle entrepreneur. This is largely due to their belief that money creates the freedom to do as one wishes with their life, including the ability to travel and pursue extracurricular activities.

The informants spoke very little about being beholden to others. They do not have to send remittances home as for the most part they do not have a family to support (except one informant with a daughter). Due to this, Emerging Adulthood and the Attachment Theory are relevant. For the most part, the informants had the age of exploration and secure attachments to safely discover their own intricate nature. In addition, all are educated at minimum to the bachelor's level. This is an important factor in their ability to intelligently run a business. The feeling conveyed by the entrepreneurs was one of simply not wanting the typical 9-5 workday. This in part is influenced by the changing standards in the workforce and economy. The informants completed their Bachelor's degrees during a difficult economic time, particularly the Americans interviewed who graduated or lost work during the Great Recession. This shifted their perception of loyalty and commitment to a company, due to lack of benefits that may give incentive to remain with a single position for many years.

The Optimal Distinctiveness theory by Shepherd and Haynie is a solid benchmark for the level of uniqueness that the informants wish to maintain. The theory states that individuals want to remain at a certain status of distinctiveness within and between certain social groups and situations. On one hand their decision to be an entrepreneur was conveyed as the natural next step, but there was also the underlying desire to be different. For the most part, interviewees remarked on their aspiration to stand out, and also make an impact beyond themselves. The researcher found that the informants perfected their hobby or craft over several years without necessarily considering the creation of a business. Eventually, the mastering of their field allowed them to find success or the cata-

lyst to pursue it. The theory introduced by Lacan and Spicer provides an interesting contrast for this study. Their belief is that entrepreneurship is not solely an identity in itself. Rather, identity is found between entrepreneurial existence and objective.

Conclusion 1: Identity is more strongly formed in the space of what the entrepreneur does not want to do or become, rather than in dreams of what they want.

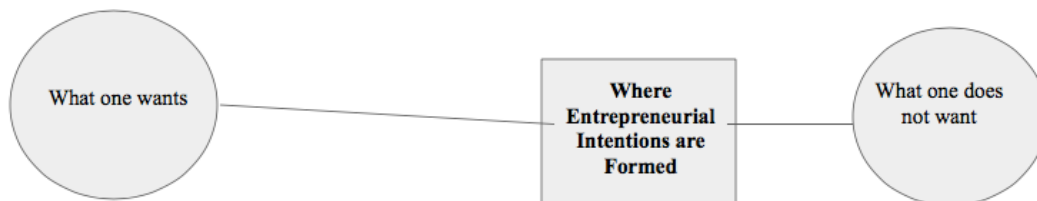
This study discovered that young lifestyle entrepreneurs strongly base their identity around what they do not want to be. For example, many informants expressed their desire not to work a 9-5, to not work for others, to not give up on their dreams, to not want to waste their time, and to not live a common life. Their identity is very much formed around going against what they consider to be constraining, such as working in an office. The informants all have varied background and their personal experience has made them aware of what they do not want for their life. For instance, Informant 1 worked as an Investment Banker and also for an Internet company. His employment there made him cognizant that this was not the identity he wanted for himself. Informant 6 spoke of her time interviewing for a consulting firm, and having the sinking feeling that she could never see herself at one of the desks at the company. Now she identifies as an artist partly because of what she knows she does not want to be. Nearly every informant had their own story of epiphany when they became aware that an identity they temporarily found themselves in was not what they envisioned. This in turn gave them the drive to push into their current roles.

The findings of this research can be influenced by the situation which applies to Stryker and Serpe's conception of Identity Salience. According to this theory, an individual forms their identity based on a hierarchy that can be organized depending on the situation. In the case of this study, the informants arrived at their conclusions based upon what they had experienced in their own lives, watched their families do, or from the impact of the economic or societal climate. This in turn gave them the catalyst to push forward with their entrepreneurial endeavors. Hytti also believes that entrepreneurship is highly influenced by environment and timing factors. The informants of this study emphasized that there was a strong link between what they observed during the Financial Crisis of 2008 and how they perceived employment, and their opportunities. They saw others lose their jobs, or not be able to secure work and this inspired them to become independent by starting their own businesses.

The finding of this research that a lifestyle entrepreneur forms identity in the space of what they do not want rather than what they do is related to liminal period as shared in Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly's work. The liminal period is the time period after a loss occurs. Individuals must assess who they will become, and this can be either a positive or negative formation. The informants of this thesis discovered what they did not agree with or subscribe to based upon lived experience. In a way this was a rite of passage in which they found the keys to their authentic entrepreneurial self. Eikhof and Haunschild studied the tension

between creative industries and business. This contradiction forces artists to navigate their place between the creative and business world. In a sense, they must negotiate between what they believe their identity as an artist should be and the need to financially survive through business. A similar strain was expressed by informants of this study who struggled between not having to follow a path they did not want, but while making enough money to sustain themselves.

In essence, the informants conveyed that they want to be in control of their lives, not report to a boss, and be able to contribute to society. They do not want their identity defined by a single role or company. This can be considered an identity complex, but also very useful in the discovery of self. The entrepreneurs featured in this thesis adopted their identity in spite of certain factors rather than because of them. An old adage is that fear is the greatest motivator, and it is clearly represented in this study. The researcher found that the informants were strongly motivated by anxiety over what would have happened if they did not follow their chosen path. Yet, they also demonstrated great optimism and enthusiasm for life. Furthermore, their idealism allows them to adapt to changing elements of their identity, and remain open to feedback from others. Ultimately, the informants want to be able to contribute or make decisions that have a direct effect on the policy or success of a project. Entrepreneurship allows them to escape from the average work-life of menial and repetitive tasks.



5.1 Table 1

Conclusion 2: Modern lifestyle entrepreneurs are integrating technology into their identity. The level of technology usage of the informant offers insight into how they identify as an entrepreneur.

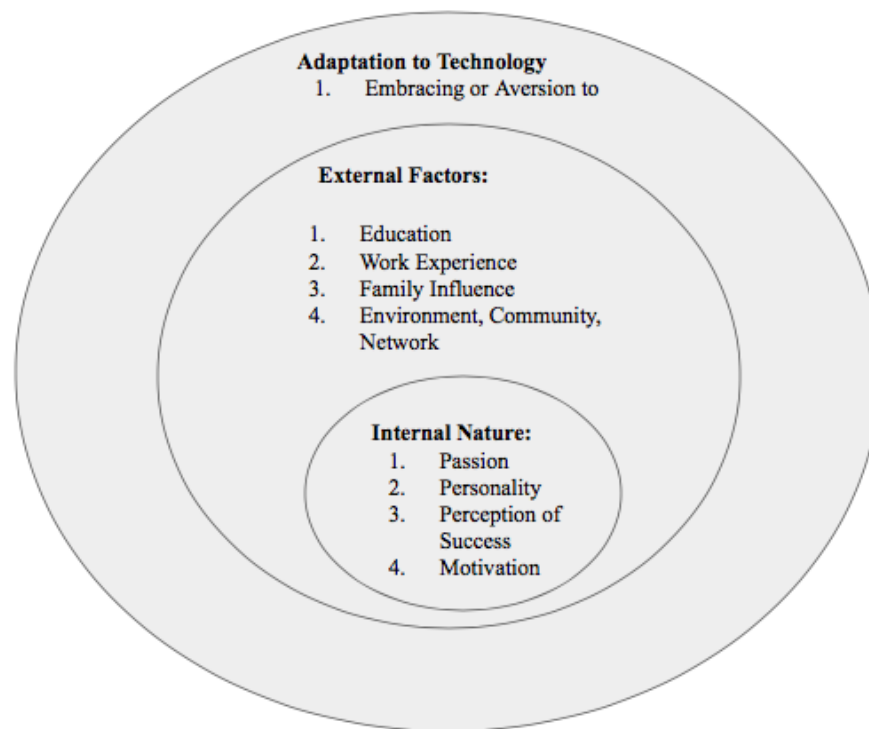
The interaction of technology with modern society has allowed many of the interviewees to succeed. They are able to remain autonomous in the creation and promotion of their company. Tools such as Etsy, Facebook, Email, and Skype grant the ability to cross-culturally operate their companies and have put the world at their fingertips. This research study discovered that interaction with technology or aversion to it had an impact on the formation of the identity of the entrepreneur. This relates to Lin's study which applied social identity theory to technology, and the found the categorizations of ascription, avowal, or identification. This produces a lens at which to explore a person's rejection or embracement of technology.

Furthermore, technology may have a serious physical impact on our brains as concluded by Prensky. This applies to this thesis because of the many references made by the informants to technological platforms. It has become so commonplace in daily life that in some ways the massive impact has become shrouded. As mentioned above, a few informants of the study wholeheartedly utilize technology while others actively reject it. This may be guided by the Technology Acceptance Model, and the perceived usefulness for oneself on a personal level. The Long Tail Phenomena has undoubtedly influenced informants of this study. They were raised in a hyper-connected world with endless options that has conclusively influenced the way they conduct their businesses.

In terms of identity, technology has squeezed itself into the realm of self. Sarasvathy's Effectuation Theory is based on the fixed means, which include social networks. In the modern day, social networks can extend to those that operate online and are becoming an extension of one's identity. Baumeister concluded that identity is in relation to one's place in a social system. This has now been spread to the systems one exists in on the internet. The same capacities of socialization as concluded by Falck, Hebllich, and Luudemann exist to an extent in the technological sphere. It is as if a parallel world of identity has been created. The level of interaction with technology gives solid clues to one's perception of themselves as a lifestyle entrepreneur.

The researcher identified three spheres of influence contributing to the entrepreneurial identity of young lifestyle entrepreneurs. The figure below depicts the elements, with each building on each other. The inner circle of internal nature is belied by external factors, which is fully encompassed by adaptation to technology. This study found that the three pillars must interact for the formation of lifestyle entrepreneur identity in the modern age. This conclusion is uncommon as it considers one's interaction with technology as an aspect of their identity. This study found that high level of technology integration was correlated to higher desire for profits and view of oneself as a businessman. Whereas, those that eschewed technology prefer to identify as artists rather than entrepreneurs.

5.1 Table 2



6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are significant on many levels. The changing identity of the modern lifestyle entrepreneur has an impact on consumers, business leaders, and company owners. The main reason is because the working world is extremely dynamic, and all levels of society must acclimate. Understanding the identities of the new era of lifestyle entrepreneurs gives evidence of the potential direction of the global economy as well as personal livelihood construction. As evidenced by this study, the days of life long employment at a single company is no longer attractive or feasible. Young workers are choosing to start their own companies for flexibility and fulfillment.

Perhaps, the psychology behind being more motivated by what one does not want to become rather than what they do is counterintuitive. However, it is a common thread in many narrative stories. There are tales of the successful professional who becomes wealthy because she watched her parents struggle with money her whole life, or the teetotaler who does not want to become like her alcoholic mother. Humans are often pushed by fears hidden in their mind, oftentimes sight unseen. Lifestyle entrepreneurship is no exception, as evidenced in this study of informants who do not want to be shackled to the drudgery of office life. They have decided that is not an element of their identity, and that in turn has propelled them into self-business ownership.

This is important for educators and employers to understand. The workers of the Millennial generation do not have a positive view of companies, mainly due to the lack of support and security they offer. Working for a corporation is seen as a stepping stone, but there is no loyalty or real desire to stay for long. Perhaps, this is rightfully so, because companies no longer offer the security that previous generations enjoyed. The lifestyle entrepreneurs of this era are taking time and room to try and fail, and explore their individuality. They are realizing what they do not want, and then identifying their dreams from there. It is critical that managers and teachers find inspiration for this demographic. The informants of this study were all highly motivated and driven, but with the caveat that they chose to only work at what was meaningful to them.

It is critical to take note of the massive impact of technology on lifestyle entrepreneurs. This study found that the ability to integrate different platforms into their work has a great repercussions on their identity. Technology does not change their identity, per say, but it does maximize it and make it more visible. Or on the reverse, the refusal to utilize it can cement ones stance as a creative or artist. The impact of technology in entrepreneurial world should be heavily considered. It is both a unifying and disconnecting force. Young students should consider limiting their usage due to studies that it damages the ability to reflect. This is also a topic that should be considered carefully by educators and policy

makers. The fact that individuals are intertwining their identity with technology has massive implications for society.

Overall, this study found that young people are searching for meaning and cultural impact in their work. Interestingly, many mentioned the desire to introduce an element of culture to a region that was outside of their place of birth. There was an understanding that borders are very fluid when it comes to culture. Based upon this research, it seems that lifestyle entrepreneurs are beginning to meld their desire for a certain lifestyle with meaning. Moreover, country boundaries are not seen as barriers, but rather as worldwide opportunity. This optimism and enthusiasm is refreshing, and should be encouraged in young and mature entrepreneurs alike.

7. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are notable limitations in this research. Yet, the narrowness of the sample pool allows conclusions and assumptions to be drawn for the particular research demographic. The researcher intended for some of the limits to keep the informants related. The informants fall into relatively the same age range as youthful entrepreneurs. They also are educated to at minimum a bachelor's degree. The informants are of either American, or European nationality with one Asian outlier. Furthermore, ethnically-speaking the interviewees are of either Caucasian or Asian descent. One interview was conducted with each informant. It is possible that the research could benefit from multiple interviews over a longer period of time. The industries that the informants operated in were, for the most part, unrelated. To further narrow the interview pool one could research entrepreneurs operating in a single field.

Future research could seek to expand the demographic background of informants for a more comprehensive picture. Alternatively, research could limit the study to informants from, for instance, a single nationality to discover very streamlined and defined results. The findings of this study could direct further research. For instance, research could be conducted with the question of 'How have lifestyle entrepreneurs formed their identity based around what they do not want to be or do?' Alternatively, a study could be based around, 'What impact has technology had on different types of lifestyle entrepreneurs?' The researcher believes that the findings of this paper could be built upon to additionally grasp meaning and commitment to lifestyle entrepreneurship. The connection that the informants had to their work could be studied in several other ways. This includes desire for an impact but culturally and beyond oneself.

Technology has introduced a new era of remote workers who desire to remain location independent and have control over their working hours. This is critical for employers and educators to understand so that they are properly handling the talent of this generation. Of course, there is much room for research on the Millennial demographic. This thesis found that they do not fully live up to their stereotype of being lazy and entitled. On the contrary, they are committed and highly focused. However, there seems to be a gap between where they are their most productive and what traditional companies expect. It is not being suggested that institutions simply accommodate the Millennial worker's needs, but rather take time to understand what environment would allow them to produce the best results.

The method used in this study, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, has its limitations. It is concerned with understanding meaning based on themes interpreted from the data. This produces results that are story-like with a narrative appeal. Reasonably, there is a place for quantitative data on a study of lifestyle entrepreneurs and identity. In some ways the study could be bolstered by

hard numbers combined with narrative interviews. This would produce a more comprehensive and detailed picture of the field.

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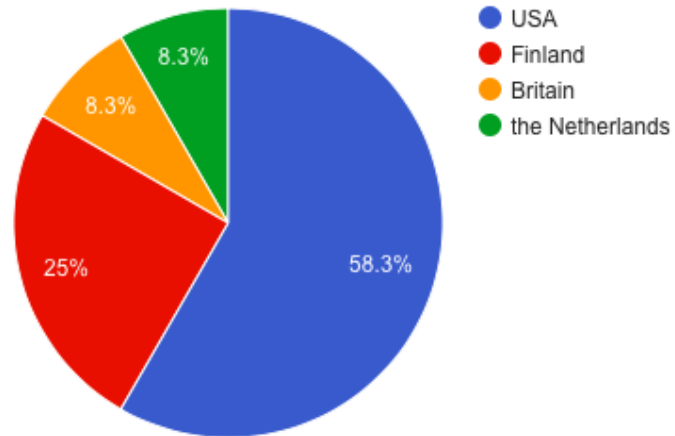
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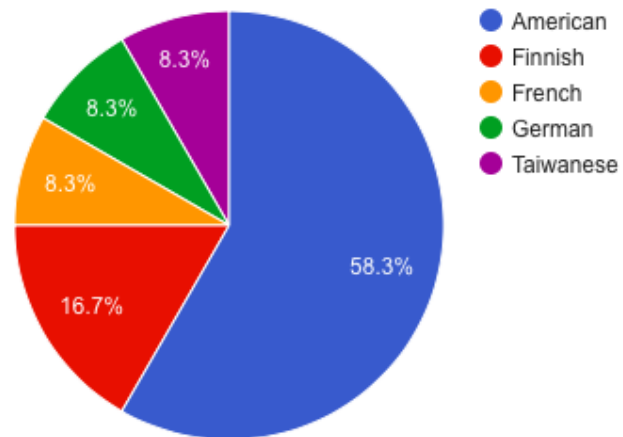
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10. APPENDIX

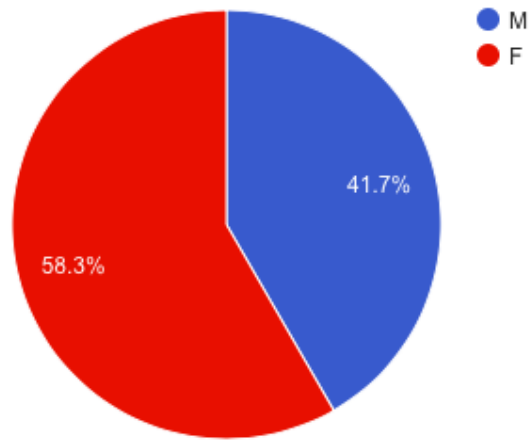
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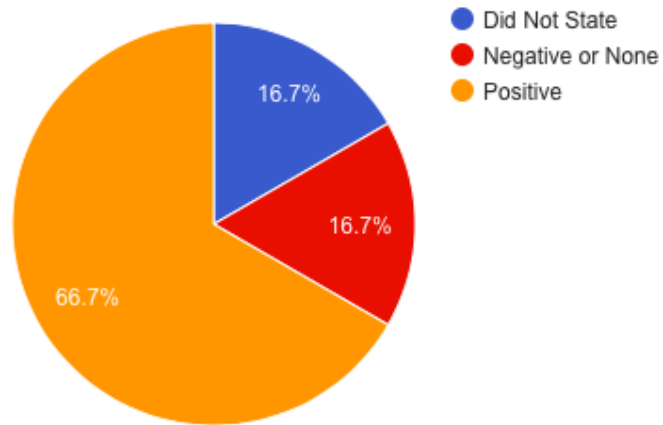
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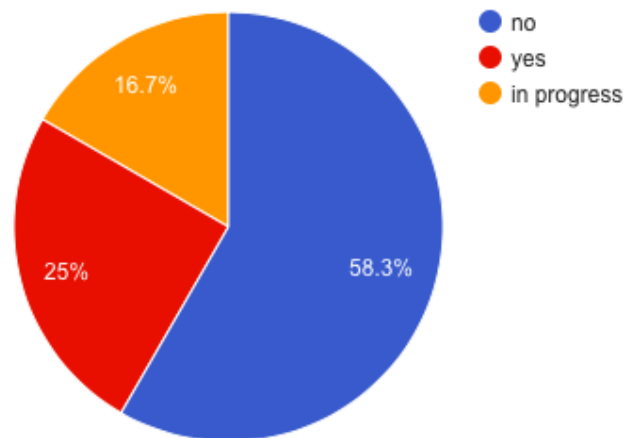
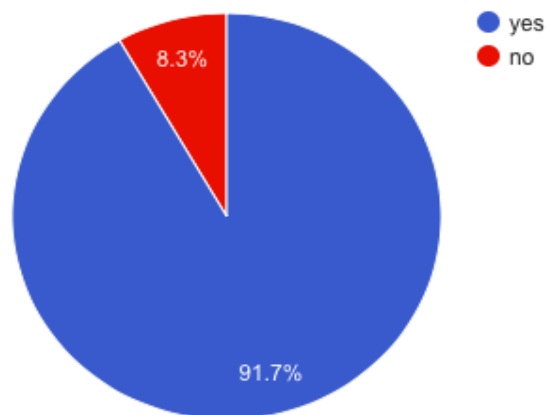


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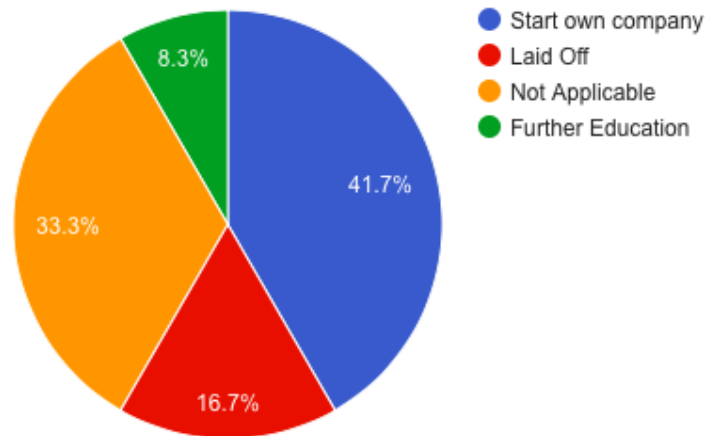


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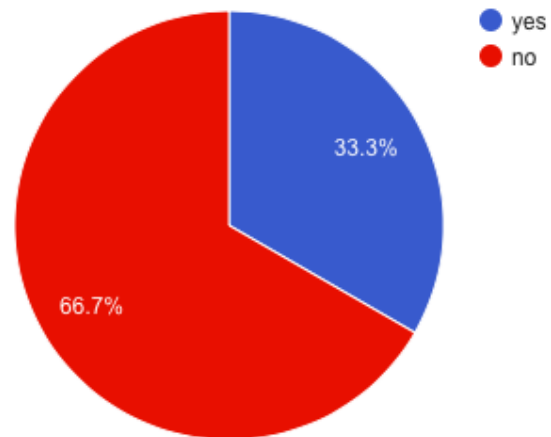


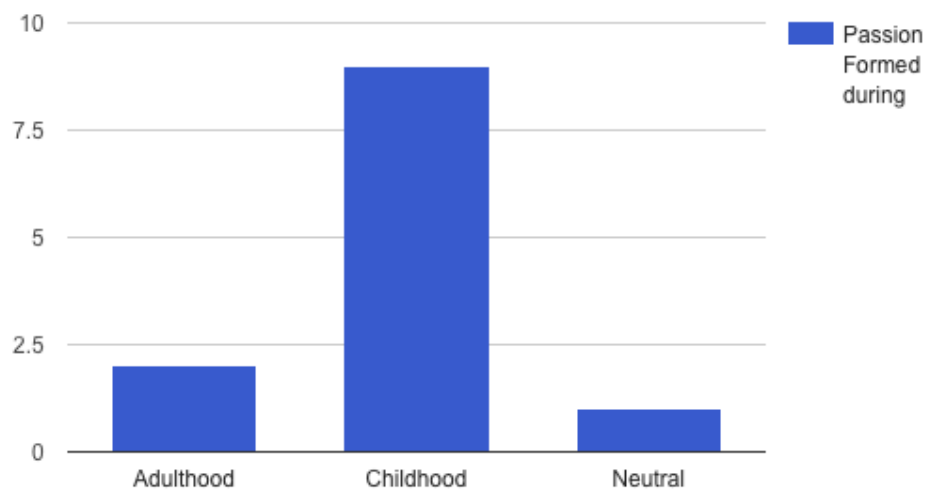
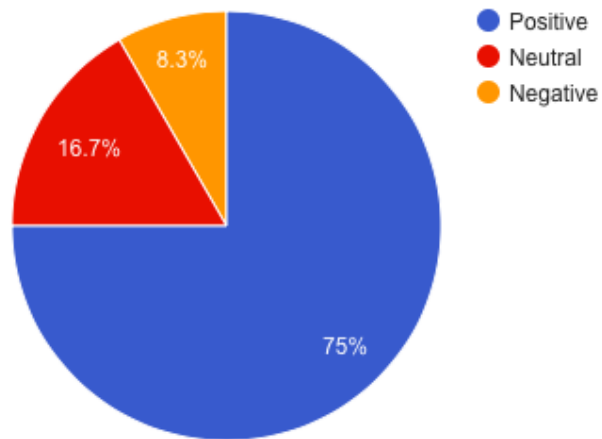
Count of Master Degree**Count of Prior Work Experience**

Count of Reason for Leaving Prior Job

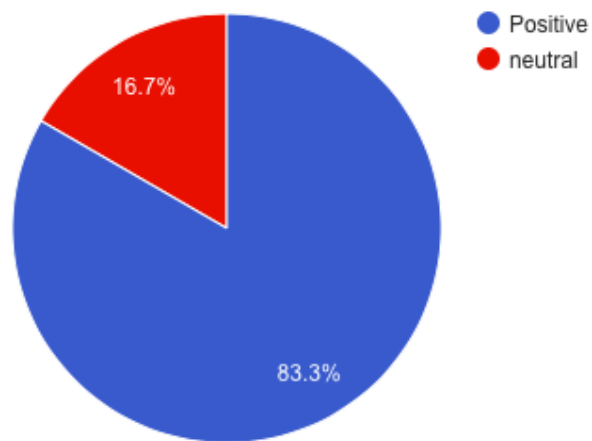


Count of Current Work, in Addition to own Business

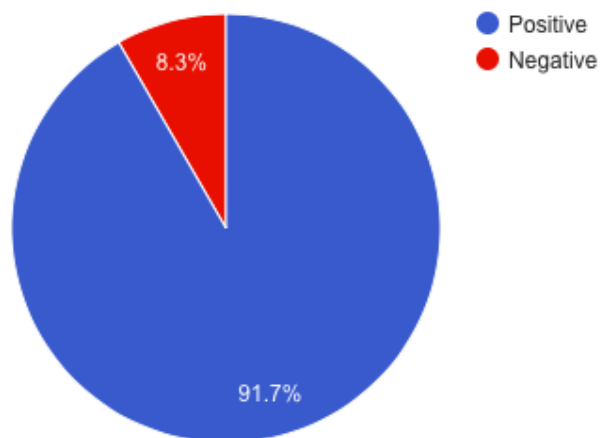


Count of Passion Formed during**Count of Influence of Community**

Count of Influence of Personal Network



Count of Influence of Environment



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THEME 1: Background of Entrepreneur & Business

1. Please tell a bit about your personal background: age, education level, single or married, with or without children, nationality, languages spoken?
2. Please give details on the background of your business: date established, location, type, size?
3. How would you describe your personality, strengths, and weaknesses?
4. What is your business mission statement?
5. What is the backstory on how you became an entrepreneur? Are you currently employed elsewhere in addition to your business?
6. Did you use a business plan or other planning technique while formulating your business?
7. Do you have a partner, employees, or do you work alone?
8. How did you initially finance your business and continue operations? What is your revenue logic?
9. Why did you go into this particular business area?

THEME 2: Passion & Business Reality

1. What motivates you in your venture?
2. Why do you do what you do? What inspires you? When do you get most excited?
3. What are you glad that you did? What do you wish you had done differently?
4. Did you have an 'a-ha' moment that made you decide to start your company?
5. What is your dream for your business?
6. What do you want out of the experience of owning your own company?
7. What are your ambitions for your company, and definition of success?
8. What would you do if you had unlimited resources for your business?
9. What is the greatest difficulty you have overcome with your business?
10. What does your average work-life balance look like? What does your ideal work-life balance look like?

THEME 3: Growth and Networks

1. What made the biggest difference when starting your company?
2. How has your company grown since you started? Have you grown, diversified, or stayed the same?
3. Where do you see your business in a year, 5 years, 10 years?

4. Which networks have you relied on? Do you have a mentor? Do you work closely with your local community?
5. How does your country of operation and external environment impact your business? Do you find support within them?