



Master Thesis

Human Resource Studies

The career development of solo self-employed workers

*A qualitative research on the career development of theoretically educated
freelancers in the creative industry in the Netherlands*

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Abstract

This study examines the career development of solo self-employed workers to gain more insight in how they develop and sustain their entrepreneurial career after the entrance to business ownership. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were held with theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry. The results reveal that previous experience as wage workers in the same industry helps freelancers in terms of clients and income generation directly after launching the venture. Furthermore, hybrid entrepreneurship, networking, seeking support and collaboration with co-freelancers are used as strategies across different career stages to overcome entrepreneurial challenges or pursue long-term employability. In later stages of the business, freelancers differ with regard to their future goals. Older freelancers are mainly concerned with seeking for opportunities to continue their entrepreneurial career by keeping their knowledge up-to-date, whereas younger freelancers are more concerned with business growth. Future research could examine the role of personality in the start-up motives of freelancers and the effects of hybrid entrepreneurship on career advancement.

Keywords: solo self-employment, creative industry, career development, career self-management behaviors, employability

1. Introduction

In the Western world, the number of individuals engaging in nonstandard employment such as part-time work, temporary employment and solo self-employment is increasing (Hipp, Bernhardt, & Allmendinger, 2015). More specifically, there is an upward trend in the number of solo self-employed workers (Jansen, 2017). According to research from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (2018a) the total amount of solo self-employed workers has increased with 85.021 in the first half year of 2018 in the Netherlands. Solo self-employment is a generic term, which refers to all individuals who own a business without having employees (De Vries, Liebrechts, & Van Stel, 2013). Within the group of the solo self-employed, a specific category called ‘freelancers’ can be identified (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015). Freelancers refer to own-account workers who predominantly sell high levels of professional labor and services, independently or in collaboration with other parties, but without employing other workers (Kitching & Smallbone, 2012). Currently, there are more than one million freelancers in the Netherlands and this number is still growing (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). This trend is particularly noticeable in the creative industry as this is the fastest growing sector with an average annual growth rate of 2,3% compared to a national average of 0,4% (Rutten & Koops, 2017).

Previous research has already focused on the intentions of entering solo self-employment (e.g. Bögenhold & Klinglmair, 2015; Jansen, 2017; Van Stel, Wennekers, & Scholman, 2014). However, much remains unclear on how freelancers develop and sustain their entrepreneurial career after the entrance to business ownership (Burton, Sørensen, & Dobrev, 2016; Dyer, 1994; Engel, Van Burg, Kleijn, & Khapova, 2017). Career development encompasses a lifelong process, which requires systematic and proactive actions (e.g. goal-setting and skill development) in order to advance one’s professional life, which is important for both vocationally and theoretically educated freelancers (White, Cox, & Cooper, 1992). Nevertheless, research on this topic might be even more important for theoretically educated freelancers since they offer knowledge-intensive services in dynamic environments, which requires both professional and business development to prevent the venture from failure (Burke & Cowling, 2015; Van den Groenendaal, Kooij, Freese, & Poell, 2018). Professional development is related to the expansion of human-, social- and psychological capital and business development is concerned with growth, profit and innovation of the venture (Gorgievski, Ascalon, & Stephan, 2011). Investing in professional and business development enables freelancers to increase their employability in the labor market (Süß & Becker, 2013). Employability encompasses the “continuous fulfilling, acquiring, or creating of work through

the optimal use of one's competences" (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005, p. 143). Hence, it is interesting to examine how theoretically educated freelancers remain employable in continuously changing work environments and how certain decisions affect their career development.

Within the group of theoretically educated freelancers, those operating in the creative industry are particularly interesting to examine. The creative industry is referred to as "those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (Townley, Beech, & McKinlay, 2009, p. 939). Moreover, it can be divided into four subsectors: art, media and entertainment industry, cultural heritage and creative business services (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). Currently, more than 40% of the jobs are executed by freelancers (Statistics Netherlands, 2018). Eikhof and Haunschild (2006) stated that creative freelancers struggle between art and business, since they have to integrate two identities: the identity of an artist which serves as an incentive to work and the identity of an entrepreneur which ensures that they can make a living from freelancing (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006). As a result of this dual identity, creative freelancers have difficulties setting boundaries to the obligations in their work and non-work domains and accordingly face issues in their work-life balance (King, 2004). Therefore, achieving lifestyle goals, such as better work-life balance, are generally more important than financial gain in the creative industry (Chaston, 2008). These personal characteristics might affect the career development of freelancers since decreased business performance by not investing in financial resources could lead to an entrepreneurial exit (Patel & Thatcher, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to advance knowledge on how theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry develop their entrepreneurial career. Hence, the research question central in this study is: "*How do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry develop their entrepreneurial career?*"

The research question is practically relevant since freelancers have a vulnerable status in the labor market (Jansen, 2017). For example, freelancers hardly receive benefits from insurance, retirement coverage and health protection (Jansen, 2017). Besides, the growing number of theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry results in a strong competition in the labor market (CBS, 2018a; Van den Born, n.d.). As a consequence, Carey and Naudin (2006) stated that it is necessary to obtain a diverse set of skills that is essential to manage an entrepreneurial career. However, educational programs in the creative industry are mainly focused on developing high-level creative and technical skills while entrepreneurial

capabilities are considered less relevant (Bridgstock, 2013). Hence, freelancers are expected to lack transferable skills, which are important to remain employable (Weber et al., 2018). This study is expected to advance the knowledge on how freelancers could be supported to establish a sustainable business. Accordingly, specific practical interventions could be organized, such as preparation for an entrepreneurial career in education or protection for unemployment by governments.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Freelancers in the creative industry

The main difference between the term freelancer and solo self-employed worker can be found in the nature of the work (Damman & Van Solinge, 2018). Freelancers are predominantly involved in offering labor and selling services such as high levels of professional knowledge, skills and experience whereas solo self-employment also encompasses the production and sales of goods (Damman & Van Solinge, 2018; De Vries et al., 2013; Kazi, Yusoff, Kahn, & Kazi, 2014). In other words, freelancers exclusively offer skilled labor in a knowledge-intensive environment (Boot, 2007). Moreover, freelancers mostly offer business-to-business services in which they cooperate with organizations for a fixed period of time and deliver short-term projects (Carey & Naudin, 2006). In contrast, according to research from De Vries, Liebrechts and Vroonhof (2012) one third of the solo self-employed primarily works for private individuals, which implies that services are not controlled by a formal organization or government. This paper will focus on freelancers since they fit with the image of a knowledge-based economy and flexible labor within the creative industry (Statistics Netherlands, 2014).

The creative industry is an interesting field of study since the number of freelancers is growing rapidly in this sector (Baines & Robson, 2001). It is argued that this results in a strong competition in which solely the fittest and best-adapted ventures will survive (Van den Born, n.d.). Besides, the creative industry is characterized by a winner-takes-it-all market and most freelancers struggle with making a living due to the low salaries (Van den Born, n.d.). It is impossible to survive if freelancers only produce art for art's sake (Van den Born, n.d.). Freelancers need to take into account the market demands to be able to sell their professional services (Banks & Hesmondhalgh, 2009). Hence, both creative capabilities and economic knowledge are necessary to survive in the creative industry (Van den Born, n.d.).

2.2 The career development of theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry

According to Janssen, Hermes and Zwaan (2012) the majority of workers in the creative industry enter solo self-employment since they value the notion of independently pursuing their passion. However, they are not primarily concerned with entrepreneurship and as a result lack a set of basic competences that are required for the establishment of the venture and achieving future growth (Aarssen, 2012; Janssen et al., 2012). This is partly on account of their previous education which mainly pays attention to creative attributes instead of entrepreneurial skills (Aarssen, 2012). In order to manage their entrepreneurial career successfully, freelancers need to invest in both professional and business development simultaneously (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Since previous education and experiences are important determinants of career prospects (Jansen, 2017), this raises the question whether theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry are aware of their career development and the opportunities and concerns they encounter while undertaking entrepreneurial activities.

Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) developed a theoretical model of solo self-employed career development (Appendix 1). This model is derived from traditional career models (Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Oplatka, 2004; Rennekamp & Nall, 1994; Rondeel & Wagenaar, 2002; Super & Hall, 1978; Weggeman, 2007) and organizational life cycle models (Hanks, 1990; Kimberly, Kimberly, & Miles, 1980) and represents an interdisciplinary framework (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Freelancers are expected to develop themselves and their business through the five stages of the model in a dynamic way since they might skip certain stages or revert to previous ones (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Each stage is characterized by specific opportunities and challenges (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Based on these stages we can distinguish three different processes, which will be discussed in more detail further on: the transition to solo self-employment, building the business and the future of the business. The model of Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) is used to structure the research by enabling identification and comparison of opportunities, challenges and behaviors among freelancers that might affect their career prospects.

The ability of freelancers to deal with these challenges, that are related to either investing in the professional development or the development of the business, is determined by their engagement in career self-management behaviors (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Career self-management behaviors provide individuals with personal agency, which enables them to actively manage their own career development (Lent, Ezeofor, Morrison, Penn, &

Ireland, 2015). Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) distinguish five career self-management behaviors. Career exploration is expected to help individuals making the transition toward freelance work by “providing access to new information about one’s own vocational characteristics” (Storme & Celik, 2018, p. 446). Moreover, engagement in career initiative is likely to determine the proficiency to launch the venture by active involvement in career planning (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Additionally, hybrid entrepreneurship implies working as a wage worker and business owner simultaneously, which might be used to decrease financial concerns (Folta, Delmar, & Wennberg, 2010). Besides, networking is aimed at building new (in)formal relationships, which might positively affect business performance (Turkina, 2018). Lastly, proactive skill and knowledge development refer to discovering opportunities with regard to new knowledge and technology (Kabir, 2016). Eventually, the engagement in career self-management behaviors is expected to promote sustained entrepreneurship (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Sustained entrepreneurship refers to the professional and financial advancements of freelancers that contribute to the maintenance of the venture (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018).

2.2.1 Transition toward freelance work

In the labor market, a heterogeneous group of people makes the transition toward freelance work (Bögenhold & Fachinger, 2010). They differ in terms of demographic characteristics (e.g. educational background and gender) and motives to launch the venture (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015). The start-up motivations of freelancers can be divided into two categories: necessity and opportunity (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015). Individuals who entered solo self-employment out of necessity were forced by a lack of employment alternatives, the threat of becoming unemployed or dissatisfaction with their current situation (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015). Individuals who became freelancers out of opportunity voluntarily launched the venture by seeing opportunities for a profitable business (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015). However, according to Jayawarna, Rouse and Kitching (2013) the push-pull dichotomy is too simplistic since individuals can have multiple motivations for making the transition toward freelancing. Hence, combinations of push and pull factors are possible (Jayawarna et al., 2013).

Individuals in the creative industry generally exhibit a combination of push and pull motives in the transition toward freelance work (Carey & Naudin, 2006). The need for autonomy and self-fulfillment are examples of pull factors whereas insufficient paid work was indicated as a push factor (Carey & Naudin, 2006). The majority of the individuals in the

creative industry initially did not want to become a freelancer (Van den Born, n.d.). Creative freelancers are commonly driven by their ambitions or creative vision and launching a venture might therefore be viewed as a means to reach the end (Van den Born, n.d.). Variation in the motivations to launch the venture is likely to affect a freelancer's decisions, which in turn determines how the career will be shaped (Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). According to Kirkwood (2009) freelancers that enter business ownership out of necessity are generally less successful in comparison with freelancers that are driven out of opportunity. They are less prepared when making the transition toward freelancing, since they have chosen the best remaining employment option, but not necessarily the one they prefer (De Silva, 2010). As a result, they lack relevant human capital, which is required to manage their entrepreneurial career (Van der Zwan, Thurik, Verheul, & Hessels, 2016). Since creative individuals might have different motives and experiences during their transition toward freelance work, the following sub research questions are formulated:

“What motives do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry have to make the transition toward freelance work?”

“How do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry experience the transition phase?”

2.2.2 Building the business

Freelancers implement different strategies in order to build their businesses (Poblete, 2018). The strategy freelancers will adopt highly depends on the support they receive from personal networks or (in)formal institutions (Sperber & Linder, 2018). One strategy freelancers might apply is related to time investment, since novice freelancers typically lack essential entrepreneurial knowledge and skills such as business planning and opportunity identification which require a lot of time to master (Sperber & Linder, 2018; Spigel & Harrison, 2018). Hence, freelancers are expected to proactively develop knowledge and skills to remain employable (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). This might enable them to become familiar with the general tasks with regard to entrepreneurship (e.g. administration and selling techniques) and the activities that are profession specific, which is important to the variety of tasks entrepreneurship entails (Stuetzer, Obschonka, Davidsson, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2013; Van den Born, n.d.). As a consequence, the levels of entrepreneurial and human capital

may increase which contributes to the freelancers' professional development (Hipp et al., 2015).

Another strategy freelancers might adopt is related to social support (Sperber & Linder, 2018). This strategy is aimed at overcoming the lack of resources by engaging in networking (Sperber & Linder, 2018). External networks enable freelancers to exchange information with other professionals in the field, which assists them in identifying potential opportunities (Sperber & Linder, 2018). It is an essential strategy to build and grow ventures since freelancers are better able to solve problems and save time on gathering information (Anderson, Dodd, & Jack, 2010; Florin, Lubatkin, & Schulze, 2003). Moreover, networking might be used to pursue organizational stability since knowledge sharing contributes to the development of a freelancer's expertise, which enables them to protect their professional services (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018).

Furthermore, freelancers could apply a strategy in terms of financial investment by engaging in hybrid entrepreneurship opportunities to gain an additional source of income (Folta et al., 2010; Sperber & Linder, 2018). This helps overcoming the concerns related to financial capital, which is important for everyday operations and long-term survival of the venture (Wallin, Still, & Komi, 2015). Besides, a supplementary fixed income enables them to make new investments with regard to organizational innovation in order to outperform competitors (Weggeman, 2007). Since start-up strategies of freelancers heavily rely on the availability of resources different strategies and equally important combinations are possible (Sperber & Linder, 2018).

Overall, strategies to build the business determine future career directions (Millar, 2016). However, little is known about the type of practices and strategies that are implemented by freelancers in the creative industry (Millar, 2016). Hence, in order to examine how theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry build their business after the transition toward freelance work, the following sub research question is formulated:

“What strategies do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry use to build their business after they entered solo self-employment?”

2.2.3 Goal setting and future prospects of the business

It is argued that individual's intentions direct their future behavior (Hanafiah, Yousaf, & Hashim, 2017). Since freelancers are responsible for their own career prospects goal setting might assist them in organizing and directing activities (Locke & Latham, 2002). According

to research from Gardner, Diesen, Hogg and Huerta (2016) the type of goal affects the motivation and commitment to reach the goal. The goal-setting theory states that specific and challenging goals will result in higher performance compared to vague and unchallenging goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). A challenging goal encourages individuals to perform better since the fear of failing is an incentive to work harder (Koch & Nafziger, 2011). In this theory, a distinction is made between proximal and distal goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). Proximal goals are short-term and specific whereas distal goals are focused on the long-term (Locke & Latham, 2002). Locke and Latham (2002) stated that proximal goals have a greater impact on performance compared to distal goals.

Moreover, freelancers differentiate between professional and business goals (Gorgievski et al., 2011). Professional goals might for example be related to personal growth, self-esteem, autonomy, family support, monetary rewards and high achievement whereas business goals are mostly related to growth and profit (Hanafiah et al., 2017; Hyrsky & Tuunanen, 1999). According to Wu, Matthews and Dagher (2007) professional and business goals should be aligned and meet the criteria of attainability and desirability in order to reach sustained entrepreneurship. It is argued that self-control might assist freelancers with their career planning by suppressing the tendency to set unattainable goals (Baron, Mueller, & Wolfe, 2016). Since goal setting is an important predictor of future behavior in the career decision-making and planning process (Dik, Sargent, & Steger, 2008), questions are raised on which goals theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry set and which behaviors they exhibit in order to reach these goals. Hence, the following sub research questions can be formulated:

“Which goals and career ambitions do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry have in terms of professional development and business development?”

“Which behaviors do theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry display to achieve these goals?”

3. Method

3.1 Research design

This research had a qualitative and explorative design. The open and generative nature of qualitative research allowed the researcher to acquire deeper insights into ill-defined and complex social phenomena (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014). This research aimed

to examine the process freelancers go through starting with the transition phase (including start-up motivations), building the business, goals and behaviors towards these goals. The dynamics of this process were difficult to examine by means of a questionnaire and the amount of research in this regard was relatively limited. Hence, the research had to be exploratory in nature.

In order to examine this topic, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were held. Before conducting the interviews, the researcher developed a set of open-ended questions. With the use of face-to-face interviews, the researcher was able to acquire in-depth information on the research topic since participants were encouraged to unrestrictedly express their views (Ritchie et al., 2014). Besides, face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to take nonverbal communication into account (Ritchie et al., 2014).

The data was gathered cross-sectional which implies that the information of the respondents was collected at one point in time (Mann, 2003). This research design was inexpensive, quick in use, and allowed the researcher to compare multiple outcomes at the same time (Mann, 2003). The interviews were recorded with the voice recorder on a mobile phone in order to assist with the transcription, analysis and interpretation of the data. Prior to the interviews, the researcher asked the participants for permission about the interview records.

3.2 Sample

For the interviews, theoretically educated freelancers were approached. Individuals were considered theoretically educated when they completed at least an HBO (university of applied sciences) bachelor's degree or a WO (academic university education) bachelor's degree. Besides, the respondents were all employed in the creative sector in the Netherlands. Focusing on this shared set of characteristics delineated the sample, which was convenient for the exploratory nature of the research. The respondents for the interviews were determined by means of convenience sampling. This sampling method enabled the researcher to approach participants that were easily accessible and met the research criteria (Palys, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2014). Moreover, snowball sampling was used to identify additional potential respondents that were more difficult to approach. In order to compose a balanced sample, respondents were also selected based on gender and business tenure applying the threshold of less and more than five years. According to statistics from the Dutch Chamber of Commerce (2018b) freelancers obtain stability after approximately five years. The moment of saturation was reached after conducting fifteen interviews, containing approximately eight interviews per

business tenure category, which is in line with the Comparative Method for Themes Saturation (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017). In sum, the sample consisted of theoretically educated freelancers employed in the creative sector who differed in terms of gender and tenure of the business. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographics of the respondents.

Table 1:
Demographics

Respondent	Profession	Education level	Age	Gender	Tenure of the business
ID 1	Digital content productions	WO	21	Male	3
ID 2	Marketing consultant	WO	55	Male	15
ID 3	Creative director	WO	42	Male	6
ID 4	Digital project manager & producer	HBO	34	Female	2,5
ID 5	Creative director / art director / visual producer	HBO	46	Male	12
ID 6	Copywriter	HBO	53	Male	6
ID 7	Art director	WO	30	Male	5
ID 8	Conductor	HBO	38	Male	14
ID 9	Stage & show design	WO	28	Male	4
ID 10	Copywriter / talent connector	WO	49	Male	15
ID 11	Copywriter	WO	36	Male	0,2
ID 12	Creative director	HBO	58	Male	20
ID 13	Graphic design & web design	HBO	20	Male	1
ID 14	Creative producer digital & innovative projects	HBO	48	Female	15
ID 15	Concept & graphic design	HBO	36	Male	1

3.3 Procedure

The respondents were approached by means of the researcher's network and Social Media (i.e. WhatsApp and LinkedIn). After the convenience sampling procedure was finished and agreement to cooperation was given, further contact was maintained via telephone or e-mail. Prior to the interviews, the respondents received a questionnaire via e-mail containing demographic characteristics (Appendix 3). Besides, a cover letter was sent with information on the research objective, the questionnaire, the interviews and the confidentiality of the data (Appendix 2). When scheduling the interviews the respondents were asked for a location of preference to ensure they felt at ease during the interview. Besides, a relatively quiet location was considered to minimize distractions and noises in the background. Since the interviews were recorded, sound interferences might have inhibited the transcription process of the interviews.

Preceding the interviews, the researcher attended a workshop organized by a more experienced academic researcher to become acquainted with the topic guide. Subsequently, the researcher conducted a pilot-interview with a freelancer that did not participate in this research. The pilot-interview was observed by the more experienced academic researcher and a fellow student in order to provide feedback during and after the interview. The purpose of this pilot-interview was to evaluate and practice with the topic guide and to develop sufficient interview skills that were required for optimal data collection.

The structure of the interviews corresponded with the model on solo self-employed career development (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018). Initially, the launch of the venture was discussed followed by subsequent stages in the career development process. Hence, the opportunities and challenges during the career development of the respondents were covered. At the end of the interview, the respondent was able to share additional information. The time required for each interview was approximately one hour. The respondents received a transcription of the interview via e-mail in order to check the accuracy of the data and to detect essential missing information. This decreased the risk of interviewer bias.

3.4 Instruments

A week before the interviews, the respondents were provided with a questionnaire including questions on demographic characteristics and employment history (Appendix 3). Example questions were: *“Do you own a business?”* and *“What was your work situation just before you started your own business?”*. Besides, the questionnaire contained several reasons to launch the venture: *“Think of the reason(s) you had for starting your own business. Which of the following reasons is most applicable to you? (It is allowed to tick multiple answers)”*. The questionnaire was intended to check whether the respondents met the research criteria, such as their highest completed education, discipline and business tenure. Moreover, the background information on the respondents assisted the researcher during the interviews when asking for additional information. The complete version of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 3.

For the initial interviews, a topic guide (Appendix 4) was used to structure the conversation with regard to the issues of interest. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher briefly commented on some practical information regarding the interview, such as the estimated duration and guarantee of data anonymity. At first, the respondents were asked for a concise description about themselves and their business to break the ice. Subsequently, the researcher asked the respondents about the motives for the transition toward freelance work. An example question was: *“You have started your own business. Can you tell*

something about the reasons?”. The next topic that was discussed is the establishment of the business, which encompassed the steps respondents have taken in order to achieve this. This part covered the topic building the business. This was examined with questions as: *“Can you explain how you started your business?”* or *“What challenges did you encounter on a business and personal level?”*. Furthermore, the researcher asked how the business currently stands. Examples of questions were: *“How is your company doing at the moment?”* and *“How do you ensure that you can continue to exist and thus have work?”*. Finally, the future of the business was covered by asking questions like: *“To what extent does what you do today with your current company fit in with your plans for the future?”*. This part of the interview also contained questions related to the personal and business goals of the respondents such as: *“What could you do even better in this point of your business and personal life?”*. Subsequently, the actions to achieve these goals were discussed. The researcher ended the interview by thanking the respondent for participating. A comprehensive version of the interview questions is presented in Appendix 4.

3.5 Analysis

The interviews were transcribed in ‘oTranscribe’ while listening to the recordings played in the same app. After finishing the transcripts, the documents were exported to Microsoft Word. Subsequently, the data was analyzed by applying the coding method from Corbin and Strauss (1990) with the use of the software ATLAS.ti. A combination between inductive and deductive reasoning was applied to code the data. Inductive approaches are bottom-up, which implies that the codes are directly derived from the data, also known as in-vivo codes (Benaquisto & Given, 2008). Deductive approaches take existing theories as a starting point (Tubbing, 2017). According to Tubbing (2017) a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning is most appropriate when there are already studies available on a research topic, but there is still room to add empirical evidence.

Three steps were differentiated in the coding process: open-, axial- and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). At first, open coding was conducted. The researcher carefully read the interview transcripts to determine the relevance of each paragraph for the research aim. Accordingly, similar actions or events were identified and labeled by using words reported by the respondents, which clearly described their content (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Labels were either assigned to single sentences, paragraphs or larger pieces of text. The next step was axial coding which included connecting the fragments that were labeled with similar codes (Walker & Myrick, 2006). This was executed by integrating specific codes

into more general categories. An example of an initial code was “website development”. This code was later merged into the code “marketing” since it turned out that freelancers engaged in various marketing activities. Hence, the data was delineated (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Open coding and axial coding were applied interchangeably. Additionally, during axial coding the researcher thought of a small number of themes that fit the sub research questions. After merging all codes into categories, they were grouped into the themes that were generated a priori. Finally, selective coding was applied. In this phase, the data was integrated into theoretical constructions by refining, selecting and comparing the core categories (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Pandit, 1996). The core categories include the subjects that were mentioned most often. After coding the data, the researcher was able to provide answers on the sub- and main research question(s). The code table that was used to analyze the results can be found in Appendix 5.

4. Results

4.1 Before launching the venture

Most respondents have chosen their profession in the creative industry out of a hobby or interest and followed one or multiple studies within the field. Several respondents became aware of their interest after completing a study in another field. The majority of the respondents became a salaried employee in the creative industry after graduation. Five respondents already launched their venture during or after their studies.

The motives that were most frequently mentioned in both the questionnaire and the interviews are the early desire to work as a freelancer and not having to work for a boss anymore. An example of a respondent is: *‘It has actually been a dream since I was very little. I always wanted to have my own company. My father and grandfather are also entrepreneurs, so I think it is in the genes’ (ID9)*. Besides, the ability to create a better work-life balance was reported multiple times. Furthermore, freelancers indicated that they had several reasons for launching the venture that were not part of the questionnaire. For example, the ability to expand variety in work activities, the desire to undertake work activities in their own way and avoiding internal politics in organizations. Internal politics are related to the issues respondents encountered during salaried employment that pushed them into business ownership, such as discussions with project stakeholders and power struggles: *‘I was employed at a company where I felt really comfortable, but I had a lot to do with the political games that were played there; co-workers that pursued promotion at the detriment of others*

and I did not like that at all. [...] At some point, this got so bad that I decided to leave. This was a good springboard for me to start my own business' (ID4). In addition, respondents are passionate about the creative part of their work, but they indicated that salaried employment also involves irrelevant activities. Hence, freelancing was viewed as a way to be more effectively involved in developing creative ideas. Noticeable is that only one respondent answered that his profession is generally executed as a freelancer. Moreover, none of the respondents stated that they had entered solo self-employment because of joining a family business, being unable to find another job or their employer demanding them to work as a freelancer. Additional quotes from respondents regarding the most striking findings are depicted in Appendix 6.

4.2 Transition toward freelance work

The first steps toward starting a business were registering at the Chamber of Commerce and arranging administrative requirements such as opening a business bank account, taxes, finances, VAT and insurances. Subsequently, the majority of the respondents invested in the promotion of their venture through marketing and branding. Branding techniques encompassed inventing a suitable company name and logo. Frequently mentioned marketing strategies were developing a website, activities on social media, distribution of business cards, advertisements and flyers. However, the first clients were primarily obtained by means of networking and acquisition. Many freelancers already obtained a large network by previous employment as wage worker, which enabled easy first contact with clients: *'We have worked at an advertising agency for six years of course, so there were a lot of old customers [...] with whom we stayed in touch' (ID3).* Noticeable was that only few respondents developed a business plan in which they outlined potential risks and objectives. Furthermore, respondents did not have major investments when entering business ownership. A laptop or computer were in most cases sufficient to perform the job. Only several invested in an office including basic furnishings like a table and chairs.

During the start of the business, challenges regarding inexperience in entrepreneurial capabilities emerged such as bookkeeping, having a professional attitude, determining the costs and time of projects and acquisition. An example of a respondent is: *'The most important thing which is quite basic is figuring out the tax department. It is just really disastrous, wooly and confusing. It was so hard and it still is' (ID5).* Several respondents indicated to have missed the entrepreneurial aspect in their academic programs. However, some freelancers did not find the entrepreneurial activities itself challenging, but the fact that

running a business took more time than expected while they just want to be entirely involved in creative tasks. The majority of the respondents dealt with these challenges by asking people for advice and seeking support. They approached their spouses, relatives, friends, other freelancers and stakeholder associations to help them out. Furthermore, hiring an accountant or bookkeeper were also considered approaches to overcome the aforementioned challenges. Additionally, challenges related to inexperience were mostly solved by time and learning from mistakes. Other challenges that were mentioned multiple times were income insecurity and time management: *'I really want my income to be more predictable which is currently not the case. It is all or nothing and it is never clear when returns will be generated or not'* (ID2). Apart from seeking support, freelancers dealt with these challenges by entering long-term projects as an interim professional in different organizations. In-depth understanding of the structures and processes within companies is essential to manage these projects, which requires longer working periods. For example, respondent ID14 entered a project for the upcoming nine months. Long-term partnerships with clients also offered income security and reduced the need for active acquisition. Moreover, the interviews showed that freelancers looked for solutions themselves by searching for tools on the internet. As a result, digital tools such as task organizers and financial management apps were used to overcome challenges related to time management and bookkeeping. Remarkable was that this strategy was generally used by younger respondents. Most respondents did not have any trouble affording digital tools since they utilized free or cheap versions. However, respondent ID13 uses a bookkeeping application with a free trial period, but due to the expenses for the off-trial version he must resort to an alternative for his bookkeeping.

For some respondents the transition phase was characterized by a time of uncertainty: *[...] 'Except that I felt the uncertainty at the beginning [...] that I was not sure if I would be successful, if there would be work for me or if I would be suitable for self-employment'* (ID4). To reduce the income insecurity multiple respondents were in salaried employment besides running their own business (hybrid employment) or their spouses had a fixed income. Noticeable is that several respondents work together in a creative team with another freelancer from the start of their business to expand their services. Consequently, they were able to share both business and creative responsibilities. Respondents previously employed as wage worker in the creative industry did not encounter considerable difficulties when starting their business, since they already obtained creative expertise before entering solo self-employment. Besides, respondents indicated that regular contact with co-freelancers helped them overcome part of the inexperience before entering business ownership: *'The advantage was of course*

that a lot of freelancers are employed in my profession. Hence, you often are confronted with freelancers which makes it is easy to ask how do you do it [i.e. entrepreneurial activities]?' (ID12). Furthermore, respondents emphasized the importance of saving money and having an emergency fund in case of unplanned expenses or when payments from customers were delayed to bridge periods without an income. Several respondents already built up a buffer during their paid employment.

With taking the first steps to launch the venture and adopting strategies to overcome initial challenges, respondents quickly obtained their first clients. This was mainly attributable to working as a salaried employee before entering business ownership. As a result, they gained experience and recognition by organizations and peers in the creative field which closed the gap for initial client contacts: *'The start went very smooth. I was lucky that I already had a good reputation, which ensured that people treated me and my business seriously. Hence, they immediately came to me with solid and pleasant assignments. So, I obtained my first assignments through my network' (ID14).* Respondents that started freelancing during or after finishing their studies generally had more trouble obtaining clients and generating sufficient income compared to those who first worked as a salaried employee. Most clients were obtained through personal networks such as family members or clients from previous internships. Hybrid entrepreneurship was used as a strategy to reduce their income insecurity. However, it involved much time and energy that could not be spent on the business, which negatively affected the business growth. Moreover, combining school with freelancing was also found to diminish business growth, since some respondents had to cut off the growth in terms of clients by being unable to spend more time on projects.

4.3 Building the business

Several activities are continued in further stages of the business. Respondents indicated that networking and acquisition remain important strategies to acquire additional clients or bigger projects. Respondents that engaged in hybrid entrepreneurship opportunities continued working as employee and business owner. All except for respondent ID8 worked as employees in the creative industry. This decision was based on the shortage of teachers which he considered a safe option to earn an additional income. Results revealed that hybrid entrepreneurship was mainly used as a financial safety net to ensure survival of the venture. Most respondents started freelancing fulltime when they became financially independent, which implies that they were able to finance the business without external resources. Financial independency was generally achieved a few years from the launch.

Respondents were able to reduce their initial income insecurity in several ways, for example by separating business and personal bank accounts to create a clear overview of their finances, increasing the rates of their services, signing membership contracts with clients to specify the mutual expectations regarding the payment period and acquiring additional clients through networking and acquisition. In order to increase the rates of services, respondents mainly talked with other freelancers to get a feel for the average rates in the creative industry. Moreover, they still put money aside in case of unforeseen expenses. Respondent ID8 decided to become a fulltime freelancer when his colleague announced that he was also planning on entering solo self-employment. At this point, they decided to work together as a creative team to reduce income insecurity. Other freelancers did not have a clear-cut tipping point of quitting hybrid entrepreneurship. Most respondents started their business as fulltime freelancer, but decided to work hybrid along the way since they received a job offer due to the large amount of hours spent freelancing in the same organization. However, hybrid entrepreneurship negatively affected the growth of the business: *‘So then the music stood still as I had only two or three orchestras which did not expand and I could not go any further with the creative activities I wanted to do. And at a certain point I decided to quit educating and started to make music fulltime’ (ID8)*. Respondent ID8 indicated that quitting his side job facilitated the growth of his business in terms of the range of activities, revenue and profit. This was recognized by other respondents, since they invested in broadening the scope of their activities or niche.

Multiple respondents struggle with the dilemma of choosing between specializing or broadening their knowledge and skills. It was mentioned that instead of broadening their work experience they would rather specialize if they had the opportunity to start from scratch again. This is because of the fragmentation of products and services which increased the demand for specialists in the market. Besides, respondents had to deal with a dynamic and constantly changing environment when building their businesses, especially in terms of technological developments. Many of the creative activities were digitalized which required new knowledge and skills. For some respondents this was experienced as a challenge: *‘I have acquired a lot of knowledge over the years which I was intending to harvest. However, the reality was disappointing since I knew how to play the game, but suddenly all the rules had changed (ID2)*. As a result, many respondents were engaged in their professional development by keeping up with technological developments to ensure their knowledge and services remain relevant to the market demands. Technological investments such as lightning sets or cameras

helped respondents in offering new services. Hence, they could outperform colleagues resulting in a return on investment due to the additional services created by the investment.

The changing market demands also resulted in difficulties with the positioning of the business: *'I would position myself more clearly. So then I would say I only focus on hospitals and become the king of the hospitals. And I have never done that, because I liked to do a hospital first and then a clothing store and so on. [...] But that is really bad for my own positioning. Distinctiveness is zero. So when you ask someone who do you need for a hospital they do not immediately think of me'* (ID2). Gaining self-knowledge on abilities and weaknesses was used as a strategy to cope with this challenge. As a result, respondents were able to specify their services to clients and what differentiates their business from competitors. This is important since the number of freelancers in the creative industry has increased considerably. Most respondents have chosen to broaden their work experience by engaging in new types of activities while taking into account the positioning of their business: *'Trying multiple things behind the scenes in order to figure out your capabilities and interests is fine, but at least keep in mind to present one thing to the outside world'* (ID9). This enables them to transfer knowledge and skills to other domains in the creative industry and thus serves as a strategy to remain employable. Insight in personal capabilities and business growth in terms of clients resulted in confidence to decline assignments or projects that do not fit with the image respondents want to display. It saves time and energy that can be invested in activities that matches their interests and contribute to the content of their portfolio.

When building the business several challenges remain the same in comparison with the start of the business such as income uncertainty, time management and inexperience in entrepreneurial capabilities. However, a remarkable challenge that was frequently mentioned throughout the interviews was the work-life balance of respondents. This challenge is attributable to numerous reasons: (1) the high work pressure and stress alongside the business growth, (2) the interconnection of work and private life due to the perception of respondents that they do not build an actual business, but being the business themselves as a person, and (3) the majority of the respondents in the creative sector is extremely passionate about their job which makes it hard to stop working.

The majority of the respondents indicated that regularly working with other freelancers or in a fixed creative team is a strategy to offer clients a broader range of services by combining different sources of knowledge and skills. However, two older respondents experienced teamwork as a challenge since younger freelancers lack content or business related experience, which was perceived a generation gap: *'I occasionally work for start-ups*

which are often very young people who apply a different working style. They work together and share knowledge for example. Sharing knowledge is rather difficult for me. I come from a generation in which knowledge is power. I can charge money for the things you do not know' (ID2). One way that was used to cope with this challenge was sharing knowledge.

4.4. Goal setting and future prospects of the business

Freelancers in the creative industry strive for different goals, which are mostly related to the growth of the business. Examples are broadening the scope of activities and services, acquiring more (international) clients and hiring personnel. Growth in terms of revenue and profit had no priority. Earning a living wage was often considered sufficient. However, respondents with shorter business tenure are more concerned with income generation to ensure survival of the venture. Additional business goals were investing in an office, working together with people, acquisition and arranging a disability insurance. Although the content of these goals differ, they have in common that they are directed to the stability and growth of the business. Respondents also reported business goals related to innovation, such as working for clients in another niche or giving lectures to help other freelancers. The interviews revealed that business and professional goals are highly interconnected, since broadening the scope of activities and services and working for clients in another nice also appeared as professional goals. These goals are business related since they are aimed at assuring employment in the future and professional since the interests of respondents shifted over the years: *'The total leisure industry [...] also seems very interesting to me. [...] And I am very much focused on festival stages. Therefore, I would like to go a little bit more to the other side. In order to be a bit broader and perhaps also future-oriented. If this market were to disappear then I will lose everything'* (ID 9). In order to achieve these goals, respondents expand their knowledge and skills to be future-proof. It became apparent that generalization assists them to flexibly and quickly respond to certain trends, which is important due to the dynamics in the creative industry.

Furthermore, respondents mentioned to have personal goals. The majority wanted to achieve a better work-life balance. As mentioned before, separating work and private life is experienced as a challenge by many respondents. This challenge became increasingly difficult as the venture grew older and expanded, which resulted in a higher workload. Besides, enjoyment in work, contributing to a better world, inventing artistic creations and acquiring more challenging projects were frequently mentioned personal goals. These goals were also connected with business and professional goals since respondents partly determine the scope

of their services and client bases on their personal interests: *'I especially prefer companies that add something valuable to society. For example, I received an offer to work for a law firm, but these people are on both sides of the spectrum; they do not take sides. However, I prefer companies that are explicit in their intentions and develop products that contribute to a better world. So that is an important argument for me to choose for a particular client or not'* (ID2). In most cases respondents did not differentiate between short- and long-term goals. This became apparent, since the timeframe in which these goals should be pursued was not specified and the plans on how to achieve these goals were ill-defined.

When considering the future prospects of the business, it appeared that the majority of the respondents does not have a disability insurance. However, multiple respondents are member of a so-called 'Broodfonds' which is an alternative for this. Hence, they are partly insured for the first two years of disability. The most frequently mentioned reasons for not arranging a disability insurance were its high costs, restrictions and the fact that most respondents are not concerned with long-term future-oriented plans: *'Well, because it is also very expensive. [...] And freelancers often live from day-to-day and do not look ahead for more than a few years. Pension and disability insurance are something for the long-term'* (ID14). This is in line with the finding that the majority of the respondents has no or little reserves for their pension.

If respondents were forced to terminate the venture it was frequently mentioned that they would like to continue with their activities in salaried employment, which is attributable to the enjoyment and passion associated with the content of the job. Besides, respondents indicated that they would like to continue as freelancers, but then they would look for possibilities to use their creative skills in other sectors or professions, since they enjoy the freedom that is involved with freelancing. Some respondents currently hold positions in the creative industry that require knowledge and skills that are more widely applicable, for example marketing consultant, project manager and creative producer. This enables them to apply their skills to a range of sectors. Through the years, they have started to acquire valuable transferable skills by taking on more executive positions, which resulted in efficient career progression. However, most respondents either offer their services to a specific niche or are specialized in a particular creative area, which reduces the potential to acquire generic skills. Few respondents would continue with their current services as freelancer even if they do not generate any revenue or profit anymore. This suggests that the passion in both freelancing and the content of the job overrule the importance of money. Other respondents have also finished studies in other areas of expertise, which is their back-up plan in case their

business fails: *'I have my teacher's qualification so I am always able to teach. So that would be my backup' (ID7).*

It was frequently mentioned that it is a challenge to remain employable in the future. Especially older respondents are concerned with remaining attractive in the future and distinguishing themselves from their competitors: *'I am turning 50 this year and my work as freelance copywriter is coming to an end. I still do have work, but it is diminishing and it is getting less enjoyable. That is attributable to the market demanding younger freelancers that are cheaper, more malleable and living in the present moment. That is very difficult. I noticed that many of my colleagues are also affected by this. I still need to work for 20 years, but how I am going to shape this is very challenging' (ID10).* Employability became increasingly important for respondents due to the rapid evolvments in the creative industry. There have been major technological developments that digitalized many of the creative activities, which required new knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, the number of freelancers has increased in recent years causing a decrease in the hourly rates due to the growth in competition. To cope with this challenge, respondents mentioned that it is extremely important to respond to market changes. One way to achieve this is by obtaining inspiration from others. Besides, from the interviews appeared that respondents engage in retraining and refinement courses in order to deepen or broaden their knowledge and skills. Most respondents indicated to have broaden the scope of their activities and niche. This was viewed as a method to remain employable since extensive work experience enabled respondents to quickly and flexibly adapt to certain trends. Furthermore, it was indicated that critical reflection on one's own work and doing research by reading or searching on the internet are ways to pursue professional development.

5. Discussion

This study provides insight into the career development of theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry. This has been examined by means of the model on solo self-employed career development by Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) and semi-structured interviews with practitioners that were exploratory in nature. According to the theoretical model from Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) freelancers develop themselves and their business through five stages in a dynamic way. Based on these stages, three different processes are distinguished: the transition to solo self-employment, building the business and the future of the business. The transition to solo self-employment is generally made voluntarily, since individuals were attracted to entrepreneurship by motives such as

autonomy, achieving work-life balance and expanding work activities. However, some individuals were pushed by internal factors in salaried employment, such as colleagues playing political games. Hence, the start-up motives can be divided into two categories: push and pull motives (Van Stel & De Vries, 2015).

According to Shane et al. (2003) start-up motives affect how freelancers shape their career. It was stated that freelancers with push motives are less successful compared to freelancers with pull motives, since they lack human capital (Van der Zwan et al., 2016). However, this was not recognized in practice. Freelancers with push motives were mostly even more concerned with their career development. They for example made a business plan to outline their objectives and developed themselves professionally through trainings. This remarkable finding could be explained by personality factors. Besselse (2016) argued that personality characteristics have a mediating effect on the relationship between start-up motives and career success.

Most respondents reported that an entrepreneurial career enabled them to pursue their ambitions and creative vision in their own way. Since salaried employment involved many side issues that were not considered important, freelancing was viewed as a way to avoid these issues and to become entirely involved with the creative part. This corresponds with previous research, which stated that creative freelancers are commonly driven by their passion for creative work to launch the venture (Van den Born, n.d.). However, this passion was also found to disrupt work-life balance. Research on this topic stated that freelancers value the activities in such way that it becomes part of their personal identity (Forest, Mageau, Sarrazin, & Morin, 2011). Hence, devoting extensive time and energy in work is legitimized, resulting in difficulties balancing family demands and leisure activities (Forest et al., 2011).

Furthermore, practice showed that respondents underestimated the amount of entrepreneurial activities that are involved with running a business. On the one hand, they just want to pursue their creative ideas, which was the reason for launching the venture, but on the other hand, they have to run their business. Other respondents found the inexperience in entrepreneurial activities personally challenging instead of the amount of work. Both research and practice showed that this is mainly a result of the absence of entrepreneurial courses in educational programs (Boogaert, 2016; Van den Born, n.d.). A strategy that was used to deal with this challenge is depicted in Table 2. This table provides an overview of the most relevant strategies to cope with challenges and remain employable by combining the findings of the results and literature with regard to entrepreneurship.

After freelancers gained their first assignments and built a financial safety net, they were better able to cope with their initial uncertainties and challenges. However, the results revealed that respondents who worked as a salaried employee before entering business ownership had less trouble obtaining clients and generating sufficient income compared to respondents that started freelancing during or after finishing their studies. Research from Merz and Paic (2006) acknowledges this finding by arguing that the years of work experience in salaried employment along with the specific knowledge about the industry positively affect the chances of business survival.

As depicted in Table 2, hybrid entrepreneurship served as a financial safety net. The transition to freelancing fulltime is generally made when income stability is achieved. However, the results revealed that hybrid entrepreneurship hindered the growth of the venture, since it involves time and energy that cannot be spend on business activities. Even though income insecurity in the short term is decreased, it might have an effect on the employability of freelancers in the long term. When freelancers quit working hybrid, they engaged in other strategies to cope with financial insecurity, such as increasing the rates of their services and signing membership contracts. Since these strategies were not found to inhibit their career development, it raises the question whether hybrid entrepreneurship is necessary for business survival. Since there is limited research on this particular topic, future research could examine to what extent hybrid entrepreneurship affects the career development of freelancers.

The dynamics in the creative industry (i.e. technological developments) require freelancers to flexibly and quickly adapt to market demands. This is considered a challenge, since freelancers are generally specialists due to their previous education, focus on a specific niche and fragmented services. Hence, it raises the question whether their skills are transferable to other domains. Previous research stated that freelancers in the creative industry are well educated in terms of subject specific skills, but often lack transferable skills (Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010). As a consequence, this might negatively affect their employment prospects since they are at risk of ending up in low-skilled jobs due to the high market competition (Bridgstock, 2011). The high market competition was recognized in practice, since it was reported that the increase in the number of freelancers resulted in a strong competition and a decrease in the hourly rates. As a result, they are required to invest in new technological equipment and develop themselves professionally to be able to sell their services and remain employable. This corresponds with research from Van den Born (n.d.) who argued that only the best adapted ventures manage to survive. However, since freelancers

need to adapt to the market, this raises the question whether the need for autonomy in choosing work activities is really a valid reason of entering an entrepreneurial career.

In the last stage of the theoretical model, freelancers reconsider their career orientation. It was found in both theory and practice that freelancers in the creative industry differentiate between business and professional goals (Gorgievski et al., 2011). Examples are developing knowledge and skills, broadening the scope of activities, acquiring more (international) clients and hiring personnel. Even though the content of these goals differ, most of them are related to business growth and long-term employability. Moreover, freelancers strived for personal goals, such as enjoyment in work, contributing to a better world and achieving work-life balance. It was noticeable that business, professional and personal goals are highly intertwined, since the content of the goals overlaps and is driven by personal interests. Besides, freelancers can be differentiated into two groups regarding their goals. On the one hand, older freelancers around their fifties are mainly concerned with remaining relevant as creative's and seek for opportunities to continue their entrepreneurial career. They also would like to pursue more challenging projects due to their knowledge and experience in the creative field. On the other hand, younger freelancers are more concerned with achieving business growth.

Although freelancers set goals for the future, they do not differentiate between short- and long-term goals. This contradicts with research from Locke and Latham (2002) in which was stated that freelancers differentiate between proximal (short-term) and distal (long-term) goals. The results revealed that freelancers did not specify the timeframe and plans on how to achieve these goals. This might negatively affect their career development, since their goals remain relatively vague and previous research indicated that specific, challenging and proximal goals have a greater impact on one's professional and business performance (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Table 2. *Strategies related to opportunities and challenges within an entrepreneurial career*

Strategy	Goal	How?
Seeking support	Reducing inexperience in entrepreneurial capabilities	Approaching spouse, relatives, friends, co-freelancers and stakeholder associations that could help them out.
Hybrid entrepreneurship	Reducing income insecurity	The additional income reduces financial concerns and allows making new investments to outperform competitors (Wallin et al., 2015).
Networking	Business growth / reducing income insecurity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It saves time on gathering information and solving problems which can be spend on the business (Anderson et al., 2010). 2. Large clients bases decrease financial risks when clients happen to drop out. 3. Interaction with other professionals enables freelancers to exchange valuable tacit knowledge (Jin et al., 2017). This is important since freelancers mainly focus on a specific niche, which restricts their knowledge and skills to a particular industry area.
Entering long-term projects as interim professional	Reducing income insecurity	Long-term partnerships offer income security and reduce the need for active acquisition.
Collaboration with another freelancer in a fixed creative team or with different freelancers on a regular basis	Employability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inspire each other with different ideas and insights (Boogaert, 2016). 2. Ability to broaden knowledge by working with other freelance specialists (Boogaert, 2016). 3. Provide more comprehensive services.

5.1 Limitations and future research

Several limitations and directions for future research should be considered. Firstly, a cross-sectional study design was used. The absence of multiple time dimensions implies that one should be careful interpreting the results, since career development involves a process over time (Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic, & Ammann, 2019). In addition, cross-sectional designs are susceptible to recall bias, which indicates that respondents might have suffered from distorted memory effects (Broekhuizen, Groenwold, & Verheij, 2012). Some respondents with longer tenure for example indicated to have trouble remembering activities they had undertaken when starting their entrepreneurial career while it was harder for

respondents with shorter tenure to specify their future career plans. A longitudinal study design might improve the accuracy of the results, since the repeated measures allow the researcher to monitor trends over time and respondents are only required to recall more recent events (Caruana, Roman, Hernandez-Sanchez, & Solli, 2015; Sedgwick, 2014).

Secondly, the sample was composed by means of convenience, which implies that respondents were included based on practical criteria such as their willingness to participate, accessibility to the researcher and availability at the given time (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). However, convenience sampling might be prone to certain biases. Since the sample is not chosen randomly it attenuates the ability to generalize the findings to the entire population (Etikan et al., 2016). Respondents were for example approached via LinkedIn. It could be possible that the freelancers active on this platform are more concerned with networking compared to freelancers who do not make use of social media. Hence, bias may have occurred against those who are not active in online networks. This group might have had different strategies to shape their career, such as word-of-mouth advertising. In addition, freelancers whose business is not doing well are less likely to respond on a message with regard to participation in a face-to-face interview, since they might feel embarrassed to speak about their (financial) situation.

Furthermore, the high self-selection has increased the presence of outliers which is visible when looking at the diversity of the sample (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012). There is an unequal distribution of men and women in the sample since men are overrepresented. However, this bias might be partly mitigated since recent statistics showed that approximately 75% of the creative industry in the Netherlands is comprised of men (Van der Meulen, 2018). Hence, the male-female ratio is well reflected in the sample. Nevertheless, no conclusions can be drawn on female freelancers in the creative industry since it is not clear whether the results are only applicable to freelance men. A higher proportion of women in the sample could have affected the results, since research has shown that female freelancers have less monetary related motives to enter business ownership and primarily work part-time due to family responsibilities compared to men (Bögenhold & Klinglmair, 2015). This might affect career related decisions. When sufficient time and resources are available probability sampling methods are most preferable since members of the target population have equal chances to be selected (Elfil & Negida, 2017). A more practicable alternative for future research is quota-sampling which reasonably represents the population in a fast and inexpensive way (Curtis & Curtis, 2011).

Thirdly, Van der Zwan et al. (2016) argue that freelancers with push motives to launch the venture are less successful compared to freelancers that exhibit pull motives. However, this was not recognized in practice. An explanation could be found in the mediating role of personality characteristics on the relationship between start-up motives and career decisions (Besselse, 2016). For example, an individual's need for achievement and locus of control affect entrepreneurial career success (Besselse, 2016). Since this study does not cover personality factors, one should be cautious interpreting the results. Therefore, future research could examine how personality characteristics affect the relationship between start-up motives and career success.

Finally, even though freelancers can be identified as a specific category in the group of solo self-employed, the differences in the nature of work might have an effect on their career development. With the focus on other market aspects and knowledge-intensive services, freelancers might pursue other business and professional goals compared to solo self-employed. Since goal setting determines how one's career will be shaped (Hanafiah et al., 2017), the question is raised to what extent the model on solo self-employed career development (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2018), used for this study, is applicable to freelancers.

5.2 Practical and theoretical implications

Regarding the practical relevance, this study could have significant value for policy makers. Both theory and practice have shown that freelancers lack entrepreneurial skills at the start of their business such as bookkeeping, professionalism, determining the costs and time of projects and acquisition. This is attributable to the absence of entrepreneurial courses in educational programs. Since many freelancers experienced this as a challenge, it was suggested in the interviews that universities (of applied science) could offer workshops, courses or internships (i.e. project-based assignments for organizations) to prepare students for a career as entrepreneur. Reorganizing educational programs is especially important for educations where progression into freelancing is common. Some universities already have a so-called 'Student Entrepreneur Policy' providing students flexibility in combining entrepreneurial work and study through a customized approach. Previous research stated that entrepreneurial education contributes to the employability of graduates, highlighting the importance for both freelancers and policy makers (Bell, 2016).

Moreover, theoretical implications can be drawn from the research findings. Hybrid entrepreneurship was found as a strategy to overcome financial insecurity. Raffiee and Feng

(2014) acknowledge the positive effects of hybrid entrepreneurship on business survival, since it increases freelancers' human capital and reduces financial risks. However, the results revealed that hybrid entrepreneurship hindered the growth of the venture since it involves time and energy that cannot be spend on business activities. Even though income insecurity in the short term is decreased, it might have an effect on the employability of freelancers in the long term. Since previous research mainly focused on the positive effects of hybrid entrepreneurship on business success (Folta et al., 2010; Raffiee & Feng, 2014; Wallin et al., 2015) and limited evidence is available on its negative implications, future research could examine to what extent hybrid entrepreneurship affects the career development of freelancers.

Finally, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing knowledge on a specific category in the group of solo self-employed workers, namely freelancers. The model from Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018) that was used to conduct this study focused on the career development of solo self-employed workers. This model distinguishes five behaviors that assist freelancers in overcoming certain challenges and managing their career: career exploration, career initiative, networking, proactive skill and knowledge development and engaging in hybrid entrepreneurship opportunities. These behaviors were recognized in practice, but the results also revealed some other interesting findings. In all career stages freelancers seek for support and collaborate with co-freelancers for several reasons (e.g. goal realization or expertise refinement). Since these behaviors were found to affect the career development of freelancers the results could lead to a refinement or expansion of the existing model by including seeking support and collaboration as career self-management behaviors.

6. Conclusion

In the Western world, there is an increase in the number of individuals that engage in nonstandard work (Hipp et al., 2015). Especially an upward trend in the number of freelancers has been observed (Jansen, 2017). However, limited empirical evidence was available on how freelancers develop and sustain their entrepreneurial career after the entrance to business ownership. Hence, this research examined the career development of theoretically educated freelancers in the creative industry in an explorative form to contribute to the existing literature. The results revealed that the start-up motives of freelancers can be differentiated into two groups: necessity (push) and opportunity (pull). These motives were not directly found to affect career related decisions. However, it became apparent that freelancers with experience in salaried employment before launching the venture were better able to obtain clients and generate sufficient income compared to freelancers that started during or after

finishing their studies. In order to deal with this, hybrid entrepreneurship and networking were used as strategies across different stages to manage their career. Moreover, proactive skill- and knowledge development, seeking support and collaboration with co-freelancers were commonly used strategies to overcome certain challenges and pursue long-term employability. In later stages of the business, freelancers were differentiated into two groups regarding their future goals. On the one hand, older freelancers were mainly concerned with developing their knowledge to remain relevant for the market, pursuing more challenging projects and seeking for opportunities to continue their entrepreneurial career. On the other hand, younger freelancers were more concerned with achieving business growth. This research is practically relevant since policy makers could include entrepreneurial courses in educations where progression into freelancing is common. Moreover, future research could examine the role of personality in the start-up motives of freelancers and the effects of hybrid entrepreneurship on career advancement.

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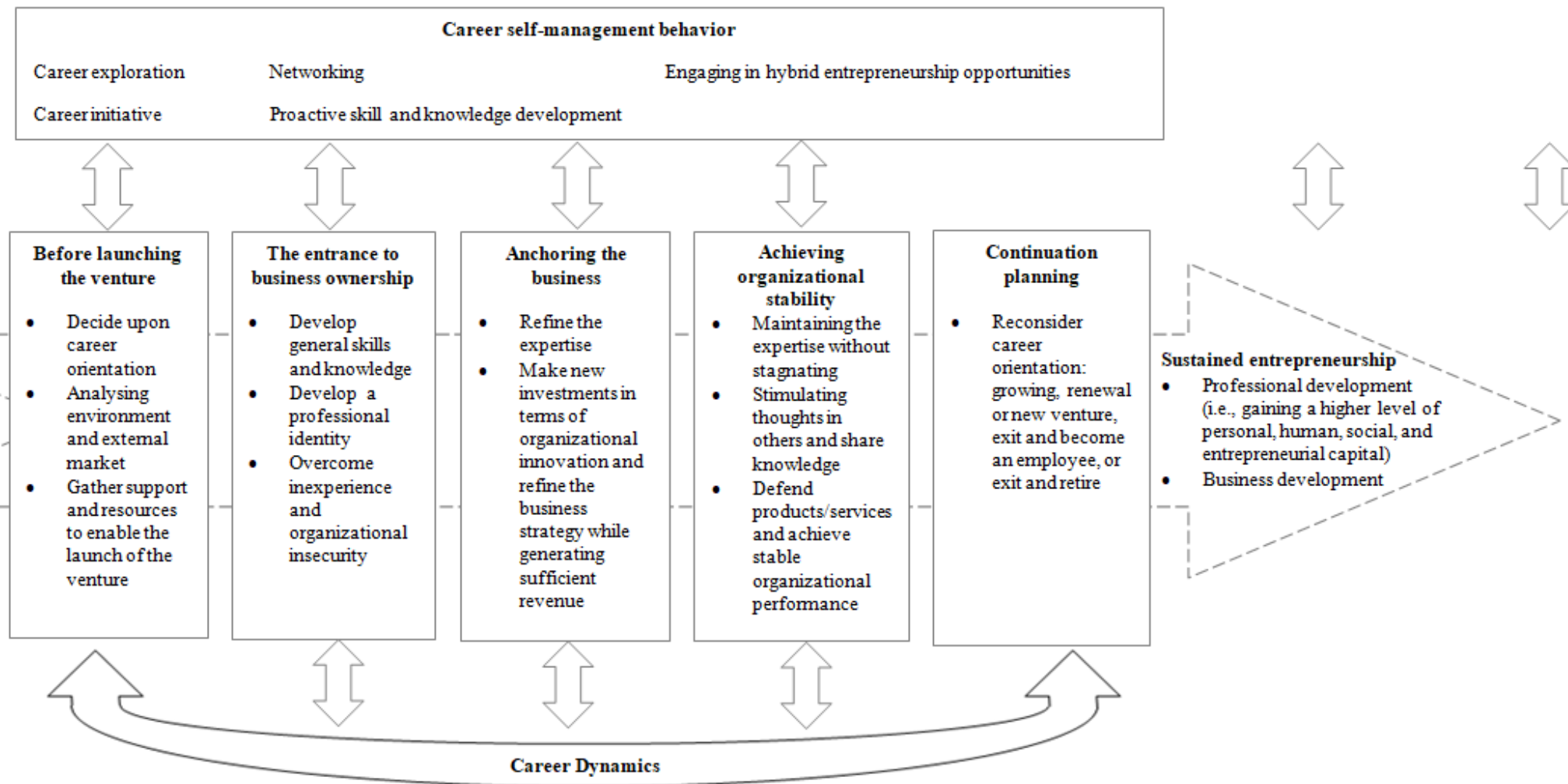
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Appendix 1: A model of solo self-employed career development by Van den Groenendaal et al. (2018)



Appendix 2: Cover letter



Onderwerp: Onderzoek naar loopbaanontwikkeling van zzp'ers

Beste ondernemer,

Aanleiding voor dit onderzoek

In het kader van de Master Personeelwetenschappen aan de Universiteit van Tilburg doen wij onderzoek naar de loopbaanontwikkeling van zzp'ers. Indien u bereid bent om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek, vragen wij u allereerst een korte vragenlijst in te vullen en nodigen wij u vervolgens uit voor een interview.

Informatie over de vragenlijst en het interview

De vragenlijst bestaat uit vragen over uw achtergrond. Het invullen van deze vragenlijst zal ongeveer 10 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. De antwoordmogelijkheden verschillen per vraag. Afname van de vragenlijst zal gebeuren via Typeform (een online applicatie). U krijgt toegang tot de vragenlijst via de link die u onderaan deze pagina kunt vinden.

Het doel van het interview is meer te weten te komen over uw bedrijf en persoonlijk loopbaanontwikkeling. Dit interview zal ongeveer één uur duren, met uitloop tot anderhalf uur. Dit is echter ook afhankelijk van uw beschikbaarheid.

Vertrouwelijkheid van de gegevens

De gegevens die wij van u verzamelen door middel van de vragenlijst en het interview worden enkel gebruikt voor ons wetenschappelijke onderzoek. Om de kwaliteit van het onderzoek te waarborgen, zal het geluid van het interview worden opgenomen (audio), indien u hiermee akkoord gaat. We willen benadrukken dat deelname aan het onderzoek volledig vrijwillig is en dat uw antwoorden vertrouwelijk behandeld zullen worden. In de onderzoeksverslagen van onderstaande onderzoekers worden geen bedrijfsnamen en/of personen genoemd.

U heeft het recht te weigeren deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek en u terug te trekken zodra de deelname begonnen is, zonder enige negatieve gevolgen.

Vragen/opmerkingen

Indien u vragen heeft over het onderzoek kunt u contact opnemen met Sjanne Marie van den Groenendaal. Voor eventuele opmerkingen of klachten betreffende dit onderzoek kunt u ook contact opnemen met de "Ethics Review Board" van Tilburg University.

Alvast hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking aan het onderzoek!

Link naar de vragenlijst:

https://tilburghumanities.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0pkS27g4vkj3vwN

Met vriendelijke groet,

Eleni Tzouvaras

Sjanne Marie van den Groenendaal (PhD onderzoeker en docent aan Tilburg University)

Appendix 3: Questionnaire



Onderzoek naar de loopbaanontwikkeling van zzp'ers

Beste ondernemer,

Graag nodig ik u uit om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek naar de loopbaanontwikkeling van zzp'ers. Dit afstudeeronderzoek is onderdeel van masteropleiding Personeelwetenschappen aan de Universiteit van Tilburg. Het doel van het invullen van deze vragenlijst is het verzamelen van persoonlijke demografische en algemene informatie over uw bedrijf. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt slechts 10 minuten. Er zal vertrouwelijk met uw gegevens worden omgegaan.

Door het onderstaande 'Ja'-vakje aan te vinken, geeft u aan dat u deel wilt nemen aan dit onderzoek. Dit betekent dat u de bijgevoegde informatie zorgvuldig heeft gelezen en dat u voldoende informatie van ons heeft gekregen om te overwegen of u aan dit onderzoek deel wilt nemen. U begrijpt dat er geen consequenties zijn voor deelname aan dit onderzoek en u begrijpt daarnaast dat u op elk moment kunt stoppen met deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Door het 'Ja'-vakje aan te vinken, stemt u ook in uw informatie te verlenen voor de beschreven doeleinden en geeft u toestemming om deze gegevens, zoals de vragenlijst en het audiomateriaal, voor een periode van minimaal 10 jaar na uw deelname aan het onderzoek te bewaren.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ja, ik wil deelnemen aan dit onderzoek
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nee, ik wil niet deelnemen aan dit onderzoek

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek!

1. **Wat is uw naam?**

.....

2. **Wat is uw leeftijd?** jaar

3. **Geslacht** Man Vrouw

4. **Hoogst afgeronde opleiding en richting?**

Middelbare school, niveau

MBO, namelijk.....

HBO, namelijk.....

Universitair, namelijk.....

Anders, namelijk

5. **Heeft u een eigen onderneming?** Ja Nee

6. **Heeft u personeel in dienst? (stagiaires niet meegerekend)** Ja Nee

7. **Hoe lang heeft u uw huidige onderneming? (indien u meerdere eigen ondernemingen heeft, beantwoord deze en onderstaande vragen dan voor de onderneming waar u het meeste tijd aan spendeert)** jaren maanden

8. **Bent u naast ondernemer ook werkzaam als werknemer?** Ja Nee

▪ **Zo ja, kunt u kort omschrijven wat voor werkzaamheden u uitvoert als werknemer?**

.....
.....

9. **Heeft u een partner met een vast inkomen?** Ja Nee

10. **Heeft u kinderen?** Ja Nee

11. **Kunt u kort omschrijven welk(e) product(en) of dienst(en) u aanbiedt met uw huidige onderneming?**

.....
.....

12. **Hoeveel jaar heeft u werkervaring sinds u bent afgestudeerd? (bijbanen niet meegeteld).....jaren Maanden**
13. **Welke functie(s) heeft u uitgevoerd voordat u uw eigen onderneming heeft opgestart? (bijbanen niet meegeteld)**

14. **Wat was uw werksituatie vlak voordat u uw eigen onderneming heeft opgestart?**
- Werknemer, gedurende jaren maanden
 - (Mede)eigenaar van een onderneming, gedurende jaren maanden
 - Werkloos, gedurende..... jaren maanden
 - Anders, namelijk gedurende jaren maanden
15. **Heeft u eerder een eigen onderneming gehad? Ja Nee**
- **Zo ja, kunt u kort omschrijven welk(e) product(en) of dienst(en) u aanbood met uw vorige onderneming?**

 - **Zo nee, kunt u kort omschrijven wat voor werkzaamheden u vlak voor de start van uw huidige onderneming heeft uitgevoerd?**

16. **Denk aan de reden(en) die u had voor het opstarten van een eigen onderneming. Welk van onderstaande redenen is het meest op uw van toepassing? (het is toegestaan meerdere antwoorden aan te kruisen)**
- Ik zocht een nieuwe uitdaging
 - Ik ben ingestapt in het familiebedrijf
 - Ik heb altijd al als zelfstandige willen werken
 - Ik wilde werk en privé beter kunnen combineren
 - Ik wilde zelf bepalen hoeveel en wanneer ik werk
 - Ik wilde niet (meer) voor een baas werken
 - Mijn beroep wordt meestal als zelfstandige uitgeoefend
 - Ik kon geen geschikte baan vinden als werknemer (in loondienst)
 - Ik kon meer verdienen als zelfstandige
 - Ik ben ontslagen of mijn vorige contract is niet verlengd
 - Mijn werkgever wilde dat ik als zelfstandige ging werken
 - In mijn vorige baan was de werksfeer niet goed
 - Anders, namelijk

Wilt u de resultaten van het onderzoek ontvangen? Vul dan hier uw e-mailadres in:

Heeft u andere suggesties, vragen of opmerkingen? Vul deze a.u.b. hier in:

Hartelijk dank voor het invullen van deze vragenlijst!

Appendix 4: Topic guide

Voorafgaand aan het interview

- a. Zorg ervoor dat je vóóordat het interview begint je de vragenlijst ingevuld hebt ontvangen en hebt bestudeerd zodat je er tijdens het interview op terug kunt komen.
- b. Bedank de respondent voor deelname en voor het invullen van de vragenlijst.
- c. Vertel kort iets over jezelf (wie je bent en wat je doet) en geef een korte intro over het interview (waar het over gaat, hoe lang het ongeveer zal duren en wat er met de data wordt gedaan).
- d. Recorder aanzetten en vraag of het interview mag worden opgenomen. Als je de recorder aanzet voordat je toestemming hebt gevraagd dan staat de toestemming ook meteen op tape. Als de respondent alsnog geen toestemming geeft dan zet je de recorder direct weer uit.
- e. Garandeer de anonimiteit van de respondent.
- f. Geef aan dat als de respondent een vraag liever niet beantwoordt dat hij/zij dit mag aangeven en dat dit geen negatieve gevolgen zal hebben.
- g. Geef aan dat het bij dit soort onderzoeken (kwalitatief) gebruikelijk is dat de respondent een aantal dagen na het interview (z.s.m.) een samenvatting van het interview doorleest en aangeeft of hij/zij akkoord gaat met de inhoud of dat er nog op- of aanmerkingen zijn.
- h. Vraag of de respondent bereid is een aantal extra vragen (telefonisch) te beantwoorden als je merkt dat je iets vergeten bent te vragen of als je graag iets meer verduidelijking op een antwoord wil hebben.
- i. Vraag tot hoe laat de respondent uiterlijk tijd heeft (is uitloop eventueel mogelijk?)

Algemene informatie en korte (arbeids)geschiedenis (ervaringen) (max. 5 min)

1. Kun je me **kort** iets over jezelf en je bedrijf vertellen?

Hieronder zie je de informatie die je graag wilt weten. Als de respondent dit niet uit zichzelf vertelt kun je ernaar vragen.

- 1a. Wat doe je vandaag de dag/dagelijkse bezigheden als beroep?
- 1b. Voor hoe lang doe je dit al? Heb je wat je vandaag de dag doet altijd al gedaan?
- 1c. Hoe ben je tot dit beroep gekomen? Wat heb je gestudeerd?
- 1d. Kun je iets vertellen over je werkervaring tot nu toe? Wat heb je hiervoor bijvoorbeeld gedaan?
- 1e. Wanneer ben je precies je eigen bedrijf gestart?

Motieven voor het starten van het eigen bedrijf (±. 15 min.)

2. Je hebt je je eigen bedrijf gestart. Kun je iets vertellen over de redenen?

In de vragenlijst die de respondent vooraf heeft ingevuld wordt ook gevraagd naar onderstaande motieven. De respondent heeft aangekruist wat op hem/haar van toepassing is. 'Confronteer' de respondent met zijn/haar antwoord. Noemt de respondent hetzelfde motief/motieven of komen er andere motieven naar boven? Vergelijk de antwoorden.

- Ik zocht een nieuwe uitdaging
- Ik ben ingestapt in het familiebedrijf
- Ik heb altijd al als zelfstandige willen werken
- Ik wilde werk en privé beter kunnen combineren
- Ik wilde zelf bepalen hoeveel en wanneer ik werk
- Ik wilde niet (meer) voor een baas werken
- Mijn beroep wordt meestal als zelfstandige uitgeoefend
- Ik kon geen geschikte baan vinden als werknemer (in loondienst)
- Ik kon meer verdienen als zelfstandige
- Ik ben ontslagen of mijn vorige contract is niet verlengd
- Mijn werkgever wilde dat ik als zelfstandige ging werken
- In mijn vorige baan was de werksfeer niet goed
- Anders, namelijk...

Samenvatten voordat je naar het volgende onderdeel gaat.

Het opzetten van het bedrijf (±. 15 min.)

3. Kun je me vertellen hoe je je bedrijf bent gestart? Welke stappen heb je genomen?

Denk bij het vragen naar de stappen aan de onderstaande elementen, maar let op dat je niet stuurt. Laat de respondent eerst zelf met stappen komen, daarna kun je eventueel gerichter vragen stellen over onderstaande stappen. Als de respondent bepaalde stappen niet benoemd, moet je er achter zien te komen of dat de stap volgens de respondent niet belangrijk is of dat het niet in zijn of haar geval speelt.

Als de respondent veel verschillende stappen heeft benoemd, vraag dan een top 5 te maken van de belangrijkste stappen. Op deze 5 stappen ga je dan verder door (anders kom je in tijdsnood).

- *Het financieren van het bedrijf*
- *Marketing/Branding (het bedrijf onder de aandacht brengen)*
- *Het binnenhalen van klanten*
- *Het maken/creëren van producten*
- *Administratieve zaken*
- *Operations / het managen van het bedrijf en omgaan met concurrentie*

De respondent heeft zijn bedrijf niet ineens opgezet, maar heeft verschillende stappen moeten ondernemen. Door onderstaande vragen te stellen probeer je career self-management behaviors in kaart te brengen die hebben geholpen/helpen om, om te gaan met moeilijkheden en uitdagingen. Bespreek elke stap en vraag per stap. Als de respondent eerder veel verschillende stappen heeft benoemd, ga dan verder op de top 5:

- 3a. welke uitdagingen/moeilijkheden de respondent hierbij is tegengekomen op **zakelijk** en op **persoonlijk** vlak. ***Probeer bij deze vragen duidelijk door te vragen op zakelijk en persoonlijk vlak. Het is interessant om te achterhalen in hoeverre persoonlijke en zakelijke uitdagingen in elkaar verweven zijn als dat het geval is.***
- 3b. Vraag hoe de respondent zich hierbij voelde
- 3c. Hoe hij/zij is omgegaan met deze uitdagingen/moeilijkheden
- 3d. Heeft hij/zij hier hulp bij heeft gekregen. Wat voor hulp en van wie?
4. Als je terug kijkt op de start van je eigen bedrijf, zou je dan iets anders doen?
5. Sluit wat je vandaag de dag doet aan bij hoe je het voor ogen had en/of de redenen die je had?
Is dit wat je ervan verwacht had?

Het bedrijf tegenwoordig (±. 15 min.)

6. Hoe gaat het op dit moment met je bedrijf?
7. Je bent nu x jaar bezig met je eigen bedrijf, heb je vandaag de dag dezelfde uitdagingen of moeilijkheden vergeleken met de periode waarin je je bedrijf bent gestart?
Zo ja, hoe ga je vandaag de dag met deze uitdagingen om en krijg je hier hulp bij?
Probeer bij deze vragen duidelijk door te vragen op zakelijk en persoonlijk vlak. Het is interessant om te achterhalen in hoeverre persoonlijke en zakelijke uitdagingen in elkaar verweven zijn als dat het geval is.

Pak bij deze vraag terug op de stappen die de respondent bij het vorige onderdeel heeft besproken. Bespreek eventueel per stap of de respondent hier vandaag de dag nog steeds mee bezig is (waarom wel, waarom niet, op welke manier is het verschillend etc.)

8. Zijn er ook uitdagingen die je nu tegenkomt, maar die je tijdens de startfase niet tegen bent gekomen? **Kun je deze uitdagingen opdelen in fases?**
Zo ja, hoe ga je om met deze uitdagingen en krijg je hier hulp bij?
9. In hoeverre is dit anders dan hoe je er eerst mee om zou zijn gegaan?
Wat is er in jouw ogen veranderd?
In hoeverre heeft dit invloed gehad op jouw persoonlijk? Wat heb jij als persoon hiervan geleerd of in hoeverre heeft het je veranderd?
10. In hoeverre helpt je opleiding of werkervaring bij je dagelijkse bezigheden?
En hoe helpt het bij het omgaan met de moeilijkheden en uitdagingen die je vandaag de dag tegenkomt?
11. **Hoe zorg je ervoor dat je kunt blijven bestaan en dus werk hebt?**

In kaart brengen van persoonlijke en business doelen (±. 15 min.)

12. Je bent nu x jaar bezig met je eigen bedrijf, wat geeft jou energie om te doen wat je doet?
13. Wat zou je op dit moment nog beter kunnen doen op zakelijk en persoonlijk vlak?
Is dat iets van dit moment of heb je daar altijd moeite mee gehad?
14. Zou je succesvoller willen worden of ben je blij met wat je vandaag de dag doet en bereikt hebt?
- Als de respondent succesvoller zou willen worden: Wat zou je in jouw ogen kunnen doen om succesvoller te worden? Wat of wie heb je daarbij nodig? Hoe helpt het hebben van dit bedrijf je om daar te komen?
 - Als de respondent niet de behoefte hebt om succesvoller te worden: Je geeft aan dat je niet de behoefte hebt om succesvoller te worden. Wat maakt dat je tevreden bent wat je nu doet?
15. Wat is in jouw ogen succesvol zijn in het algemeen?
Wat houdt succesvol zijn in jouw beroep volgens jou in?
Wat houdt succesvol zijn op persoonlijk vlak voor jou in?
16. Wondervraag: als je onbeperkt budget zou hebben en je met niets of niemand rekening zou moeten houden, wat zou je dan het liefste doen? En waarom?
17. Wat heb je in jouw ogen tot nu toe al bereikt?
Waar heb je dat aan te danken?
Wat gaat nu goed wat bijvoorbeeld eerst minder goed ging?
Is dat iets wat je altijd belangrijk hebt gevonden of is dat door de tijd heen veranderd?
Als het is veranderd, waar kwam dat dan door?

18. Heb je concrete doelen/ambities voor je bedrijf? Zo ja, welke? *(beperk dit tot maximaal 5 doelen)*
19. Heb je concrete doelen/ambities voor jezelf op persoonlijk vlak? Zo ja welke? *(beperk dit tot maximaal 5 doelen)*
Probeer hier heel duidelijk te achterhalen in hoeverre er onderscheid gemaakt kan worden tussen persoonlijke en zakelijke doelen.
20. Welke factoren of personen kunnen je hinderen bij het behalen van je doelen? Hoe zou je hier mee om kunnen gaan om toch je doelen te behalen?*(ga hier niet te lang op door, is vooral speculatief)*

Acties om doelen te bereiken (±. 15 min.)

Met onderstaande vragen probeer je de career self-management behaviors in kaart te brengen die hebben geholpen/helpen om persoonlijke en business doelen te behalen die de respondent eerder heeft benoemd. Als de respondent veel doelen noemde, focus dan alleen op de 5 belangrijkste doelen en vraag er met deze vragen op door.

Per doel dat de respondent noemt vragen:

- *Is dit doel al bereikt?*
 - **Zo ja:**
 - *Welke stappen heb je (al) ondernomen om dit doel te bereiken?*
 - *Wie of wat heeft je hierbij geholpen?*
 - **Zo nee:**
 - *Wat heb je tot nu toe gedaan om dit doel te bereiken?*
 - *Wat doe je vandaag de dag om dit doel te bereiken?*
 - *Wat moet er nog gebeuren om het doel te bereiken?*
 - *Welke stappen/acties zijn hiervoor nodig?*
 - *Denk je hier hulp bij nodig te hebben? Zo ja, wat voor hulp en van wie?*

De toekomst (±. 5 min.)

21. In hoeverre sluit wat je vandaag de dag doet met je huidig bedrijf aan bij jouw toekomstplannen?
22. Denk je dat je wat je vandaag de dag met je bedrijf doet tot het einde kunt blijven doen?
23. Stel je stop met je bedrijf om wat voor reden dan ook. Wat ga je dan doen?
 Hoe zorg je ervoor dat je toch een inkomen hebt? Wat moet je daarvoor doen?
24. **Heb je preventieve maatregelen getroffen betreffende je pensioen en arbeidsongeschiktheid? Zo ja, hoe? Zo niet, waarom niet?**

25. Waar zie je jezelf over 1 jaar, over 5 jaar en over 10 jaar?
26. Wat zou je een andere ondernemer adviseren op basis van jouw ervaringen?
27. Als je een maand op vakantie zou gaan en iemand anders gaat (tijdelijk) jouw zaak runnen.
Waar moet hij/zij dan op letten of prioriteit op leggen?
28. Wat wens je jezelf toe?

Afronden:(±. 5 min.)

- a. Bij het afronden van het interview de respondent vragen of hij/zij nog ergens op terug wil komen of wil aanvullen. En bedank de respondent.
- b. Spreek met de respondent een datum af wanneer hij/zij de samenvatting (in Word document) van het transcript zal ontvangen en spreek af wanneer je zijn/haar akkoord of aanvullingen/opmerkingen weer terug mag verwachten (indien nodig tussentijds een reminder sturen). Bespreek met de respondent of hij/zij met track changes zal werken in het Word document of dat hij/zij de aanvullingen/opmerkingen in een apart document/e-mail beschrijft. Eventueel aanvullingen/opmerkingen telefonisch bespreken indien nodig?!
- c. Vraag of de respondent bereid is een aantal extra vragen (telefonisch) te beantwoorden als je merkt dat je iets vergeten bent te vragen of als je graag iets meer verduidelijking op een antwoord wil hebben.

Appendix 5: Code table

Theme	Category	Code
Before launching the venture	Career history	Bijscholen
		Brede werkervaring
		Na studie eerst in loondienst
		Na studie meteen freelancen
		Combineren studie met freelancen
		Loopbaan - met de wind meegaan
		Studie(s) in lijn met huidige werkzaamheden
		Studie(s) niet in lijn met huidige werkzaamheden
	Career choice	(Bijna) geen andere constructie mogelijk
		Afwisseling
		Behoeft om het op de eigen manier te doen
		Beoordeeld worden op eigen kennis en kunde
		Erin gerold vanuit hobby
		Grote groepen mensen bereiken met creatief werk
		Ondernemersbloed
		Overtuigd door andere freelancers / omgeving
		Praktisch – factuur nodig
		Praktisch – partner met vast inkomen
		Samenloop van omstandigheden – erin gerold
		Vermijden bedrijfsconstructies / politiek
		Vrijheid
		Zelf iets opbouwen
		Transition toward freelance work
Administratieve verplichtingen uitzoeken / regelen		
Bedachtzaam zijn		
Bijscholen		
Branding		
Businessplan – niet opgesteld		
Businessplan – wel opgesteld		
Doelen opstellen		
Externe invloed – persoonlijkheid speelt rol in binnenslepen klussen		
Geen grote investeringskosten		
Geld sparen		
Hard werken		
Herscholen		
Hybrid entrepreneurship		
Inschrijven KvK		
Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt		
Investeringen – kantoor		
Investeringen – laptop / computer		
Investeringen – tekenscherf		
Je moet een drive / ambitie hebben		
Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen		

		Lange termijn opdrachten aangaan
		Leren van fouten
		Marketing
		Membership contract / retainer fee voor vastigheid
		Netwerken
		Niet bezig met lange termijn toekomstplannen
		Periode zonder inkomen overbruggen – buffer nodig
		Positionering
		Praten met anderen / advies vragen
		Reflecteren op je werk
		Samenwerken
		Steun / hulp van anderen
		Uitbesteden administratieve werkzaamheden
		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche
		Verwevenheid werk en privé
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – internet
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – lezen
		Zorg dat je klanten hebt om mee te starten
		Zwart werken
	Experience transition phase	Geluk gehad
	Experience transition phase	Niet moeilijk
	Experience transition phase	Onzekerheid / spanning
	Experience transition phase	Vallen en opstaan
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Acquisitie
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Administratieve werkzaamheden
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Concurrentie groeiend aantal freelancers – prijzen dalen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Doelen opstellen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Een merk / bedrijf opbouwen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Geen verplichte CAO
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Geld sparen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Jezelf aan klanten presenteren / verkopen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Marketing
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Meer bezig zijn met ondernemen dan creatief zijn
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Netwerken
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Omgaan met hoge werkdruk stress
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Onvoorspelbaar inkomen / klussen – hollen of stilstaan
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Partner begrijpt zzp leven niet
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Periode zonder inkomen overbruggen – buffer nodig
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Positionering
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Relatie beginnen met klanten zonder ze echt te kennen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Samenwerken
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Tarieven / tijd project bepalen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Tijdmanagement
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Verantwoordelijkheden bedrijfsverplichtingen delen met partner
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Verantwoordelijkheid nemen
	Uitdagingen transition phase	Werk privé balans

	Zakelijk zijn / meer geld vragen
CSM transition phase	Acquisitie plegen
	Administratieve verplichtingen uitzoeken / regelen
	Alleen werken op kantoor
	Bedachtzaam zijn
	Ben realistisch
	Bijscholen
	Businessplan opstellen
	Digitale tools / apps
	Dingen uitproberen
	Doelen opstellen
	Ervaring opdoen
	Ervaring opdoen – loondienst
	Flexibel zijn / kunnen schakelen
	Geen lange termijn doelen opstellen
	Hard werken
	Herscholen
	Hybrid entrepreneurship
	Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt
	Inspiratie opdoen
	Je moet een drive / ambitie hebben
	Kennis / vaardigheden vanuit opleiding
	Lange termijn opdrachten aangaan
	Leren van fouten
	Maak je niet druk
	Marketing
	Membership contract / retainer fee voor vastigheid
	Netwerken
	Oefenen om aan zwaktes te werken
	Ondernemersvaardigheden noodzakelijk
	Opstartgeld / buffer door vaste baan
	Positionering
	Praten met anderen / advies vragen
	Reputatie
	Rust nemen
	Samenwerken
	Specialiseren
	Steun / hulp van anderen
	Tijdmanagement
	Verbreden – activiteiten / niche
	Vooruit plannen
	Zakelijk zijn / meer geld vragen
Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen	
Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – internet	
Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – lezen	
Zoek alles van te voren goed uit	
Zorg dat je klanten hebt om mee te starten	
Beseffen dat het ook zwaar kan zijn voor een ander	

Building the business	Building the business	Acquisitie plegen	
		Administratieve verplichtingen uitzoeken / regelen	
		Bijscholen	
		Doelen opstellen	
		Externe invloed – persoonlijkheid speelt rol in binnenslepen klussen	
		Geld sparen	
		Groei – capaciteiten	
		Groei – omzet / winst	
		Hard werken	
		Herscholen	
		Hybrid entrepreneurship	
		Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt	
		Investeringen – kantoor	
		Investeringen – verlichting set	
		Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen	
		Kennis delen	
		Lange termijn opdrachten aangaan	
		Marketing	
		Membership contract / retainer fee voor vastigheid	
		Naamsbekendheid / top of mind zijn	
		Netwerken	
		Niet bezig zijn met lange termijn toekomstplannen	
		Persoonlijke ontwikkeling	
		Positionering	
		Praten met anderen / advies vragen	
		Reflecteren op je werk	
		Samenwerken	
		Uitbesteden administratieve werkzaamheden	
		Verbreden – aantal (internationale) klanten	
		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche	
		Verwevenheid werk en privé	
		Wel bezig zijn met lange termijn toekomstplannen	
		Zakelijk zijn / meer geld vragen	
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen	
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – lezen	
		Uitdagingen building the business	Aandacht verdelen over grote hoeveelheid activiteiten
			Acquisitie
			Administratieve werkzaamheden
			Baanzekerheid – hoe blijf je aantrekkelijk in de toekomst
			concurrentie / overleving
			Ervan leven
			Flexibel zijn / kunnen schakelen
Geen verplichtingen CAO			
Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt			
Kennis delen			
Klanten houden hand op de knip			
Klanten met een beperkt budget			

		Manusje-van-alles / generalist
		Marketing
		Meer bezig zijn met ondernemen dan creatief zijn
		Naamsbekendheid / top of mind zijn
		Omgaan met diversiteit klanten
		Omgaan met hoge werkdruk / stress
		Onvoorspelbaarheid inkomen / klussen – hollen of stilstaan
		Partner begrijpt zzp leven niet
		Positionering
		Samenwerken
		Scheve verdeling gezamenlijke inkomsten
		Tarieven / tijd project bepalen
		Tijdmanagement
		Verantwoordelijkheid nemen
		Werk privé balans
	CSM building the business	Achter facturen aanzitten
		Acquisitie plegen
		Alleen werken op kantoor
		Bedachtzaam zijn
		Ben realistisch
		Bijscholen
		Branding
		Digitale tools / apps
		Dingen uitproberen
		Doelen opstellen
		Duidelijke afspraken maken
		Een merk / bedrijf opbouwen
		Ervaring opdoen
		Financieel handiger worden
		Flexibel zijn / kunnen schakelen
		Geld sparen
		Hard werken
		Herscholen
		Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt
		Inspiratie opdoen
		Investerings
		Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen
		Kennis / vaardigheden vanuit opleiding
		Kennis delen
		Kijken naar wat ze zoeken in vacatures
		Kwalitatief goed werk leveren
		Lange termijn opdrachten aangaan
		Leren van fouten
		Marketing
		Membership contract / retainer fee voor vastigheid
		Naamsbekendheid / top of mind zijn
		Netwerken
	Positionering	

		Praten met anderen / advies vragen	
		Prioriteiten stellen	
		Reflecteren op je werk	
		Rust nemen	
		Samenwerken	
		Specialiseren	
		Steun / hulp van anderen	
		Tijdmanagement	
		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche	
		Vooruit plannen	
		Zakelijk zijn / meer geld vragen	
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen	
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – internet	
		Zelfstandig zaken uitpluizen – lezen	
		Beseffen dat het ook zwaar kan zijn voor een ander	
Goal setting and future prospects of the business	Toekomstdoelen		
	Business doelen	Acquisitie plegen	
		Bedachtzaam zijn op zakelijk niveau	
		Branding	
		Groei – meer (grote / internationale) klanten	
		Groei – omzet / winst	
		Groei – personeel	
		Jezelf aan klanten presenteren / verkopen	
		Kantoor	
		Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen	
		Lange termijn opdrachten aangaan	
		Naamsbekendheid / top of mind zijn	
		Netwerken	
		Pensioen opbouwen	
		Positionering	
		Product uitbrengen	
		Regelen AOV	
		Salaris om van te kunnen leven	
		Stabiliteit bedrijf	
		Uitbesteden administratieve werkzaamheden	
		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche	
		Verbreden – werken in teamverband	
		Verzekeringen regelen	
		Zakelijk zijn / meer geld vragen	
		Persoonlijke doelen	Dingen bedenken / creaties maken
			Kennis – vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen
			Plezier / passie in het werk
			Prijzen winnen met creaties
	Prioriteiten stellen		
	Reizen voor werk		
	Samenwerken		
	Stempel op de wereld drukken / bijdrage leveren		
	Uitbesteden administratieve werkzaamheden		

		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche
		Vrijheid
		Waardering voor je werk
		Werk privé balans
	Future of the business	Alternatief AOV – broodfonds
		Alternatief zoeken waarin creatieve vaardigheden van pas komen – freelance
		Externe invloed – persoonlijkheid speelt rol in binnenslepen klussen
		Geen AOV
		Geen zorgen – bekendheid in het vakgebied
		Hetzelfde blijven doen – freelancen
		Het zelfde blijven doen – loondienst
		Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt
		Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen
		Niet bezig met lange termijn toekomstplannen
		Pensioen – geen spaarpot
		Pensioen – wel spaarpot
		Verwevenheid werk en privé
		Wel AOV
	Uitdagingen future of the business	Baanzekerheid – hoe blijf je aantrekkelijk in de toekomst
		Concurrentie / overleving
		Doelen opstellen
		Geen sociale zekerheden
		Hoge kosten AOV / restricties
		Inspelen op veranderingen in de markt
	CSM future of the business	Bedachtzaam zijn
		Ben realistisch
		Doelen opstellen
		Geld sparen
		Investeringen – ontroerend goed
		Kennis / vaardigheden blijven ontwikkelen
		Netwerken
		Partner met vast inkomen – delen vaste lasten
		Positionering
		Praten met anderen / advies vragen
		Samenwerken – financieel vangnet
		Steun / hulp van anderen
		Verbreden – activiteiten / niche
	Overig	Geen aandacht aan ondernemersvaardigheden in opleidingen
		Plezier/ passie werk belangrijker dan geld

Appendix 6: Table including additional quotations from respondents

Respondent	Results section	Topic	Quote
ID1	4.1 Before launching the venture	Early desire to work as freelancer	<i>'I have always been independent in the way that I have never had any other job, so I really have an entrepreneurial spirit.'</i>
ID3			<i>'I always wanted to become a freelancer, not even necessarily in the creative industry.'</i>
ID6			<i>'I was really curious whether I was able to operate independently, how it works and if I could derive sufficient work from my network.'</i>
ID13			<i>'I always wanted to become a freelancer since I do not want to perform work that does not inspire me.'</i>
ID14			<i>'I was really stubborn and thought why not try it myself? I gave myself nine months and if it did not work out I would have looked for a job with the help of an employment agency. I did not put any pressure on myself, I just tried it for nine months to see whether I liked it. And I liked it so much that I never quit.'</i>
ID3		Not having to work for a boss	<i>'At the agencies you always have a boss that is constantly breathing in your neck and who thinks he knows everything better. We often experienced that when we nearly finished the presentation he wanted us to do adjustments again only because he thought he was better than us.'</i>
ID5			<i>'The most important reason for me was creative freedom. A boss always tries to leave his mark on you which was not suited for me.'</i>
ID9			<i>'I just wanted to be my own boss, freedom mainly determined my decision to become a freelancer.'</i>
ID10			<i>'The idea to be your own boss has mainly triggered me. When I had to work overtime in salaried employment it was always for my boss and I did not even receive money for it. Nowadays, if I have to work overtime I know it is for myself and my family. [...] This feeling gave me much more energy and changed my life completely.'</i>
ID3		Work-life balance	<i>'It is nice that we can do whatever we want. We can work until 3 p.m. or we can continue working at night or on the weekends.'</i>

ID6			<i>'I do not like waking up at 7 a.m. since I have been in a lot of traffic jams in the past and I do not want that anymore. So once in a while I think yes I am not going to wake up very early since I am able to work at home in the mornings. I can decide when I get on my bike and go to the office, so you have that flexibility.'</i>
ID7			<i>'Freelancing enables me to spend more time on other things. A nine-to-five job involves different responsibilities. When you have nothing to do for three hours you are obliged to spend these hours at the office, but now I can play drums between two and three if I would like to. That is very relaxed.'</i>
ID15			<i>'Work-life balance is important for me since I have two children and I want to be able to pick them up from school. Besides, if the school searches for parental assistance I am able to free up time instead of asking my boss for permission to take a day off which is nearly impossible to fit in the schedule.'</i>
ID4		Work variety	<i>'I like to undertake a lot of different activities.'</i>
ID6			<i>'I had the feeling that I was done with all those advertising agencies. I have never worked as wage worker at the same organization for more than 2,5 years. By that time I knew how the process was going with all the customers; it became really repetitive.'</i>
ID7			<i>'At some point you fall in a sort of routine regarding internal organizational politics. Colleagues are nice to have, but at some point it became boring hearing their stories all over again. And I can imagine they were tired watching my drum videos. I noticed that I was ready for something new.'</i>
ID10			<i>'Firstly, I became tired of my bosses and switched between companies every two years. At some point I thought this was unacceptable, so I decided to become a freelancer to look inside different companies with the purpose to find my 'dream wife'; the ideal company where I wanted to stay until I am 65 years old. Secondly, advertising agencies were fragmented. There were agencies that were only concerned with radio commercials or mailings. However, I wanted to do</i>

			<i>everything. Eventually, freelancing gave me that opportunity. After day one, I immediately dropped my initial dream of returning to wage work, since I realized that freelancing was much more enjoyable.'</i>
ID15			<i>'After spending a month with the real estate guys I am done with that type of work. It is not dull, I actually have a lot of space to make fun stuff. But after a month it becomes boring being solely involved with bricks and stones. Then I would like to do something different. That is what keeps it diverse.'</i>
ID2		Executing work activities in your own way	<i>'If someone instructed me to develop a business card and the briefing was not entirely right, it signified that the assignment was not well formulated. As a result, I was inclined to review and reconsider whether the assignment matched the customer's demand. [...] I found that so frustrating that I decided to start interfering with the way the assignment was developed. It was a little bit stubbornness, but I was convinced that I should advice people on how to make better briefings, so that is what I have done.'</i>
ID3			<i>'I saw so many crap on the streets such as bad billboards and advertisements. I thought goddamn this really should be better. Consequently, I started trying to improve this myself.'</i>
ID5			<i>'I had the desire to do things in my own way. In salaried employment I felt restricted in that regard.'</i>
ID6			<i>'I studied in the direction of Editing & Production. However, instead of editing I was actually rewriting entire texts which was clearly not the purpose of the assignments. [...] Then I started thinking of becoming a writer myself.'</i>
ID11			<i>'At some point you realize that you have a certain vision on creativity which you try to introduce at the company. This is only possible to a limited extent since companies have different views on creativity. However, at some point you just want to execute tasks in your own way. [...] The desire to become self-employed which I never had at the beginning of my career started to increase.'</i>
ID6		Avoiding politics in	<i>'I was done with all the nagging and performance appraisals. At a certain point I</i>

		organizations	<i>felt that these type of conversations within an agency of barely 20 people might as well be held at the coffee machine. That kind of bullshit belongs to a company with 4000 employees.'</i>
ID12			<i>'The advantage of freelancing is that you are only concerned with creative content without getting caught up in the internal organizational construct.'</i>
ID14			<i>'When the internal organizational politics become too much of a burden, freelancing assists me to decrease strain, since it are not my internal politics anymore. I am only temporary involved.'</i>
ID4	4.2 Transition toward freelance work	Network through previous wage work	<i>'I approached people performing similar work that I already knew from salaried employment.'</i>
ID5			<i>'It helps if you have experience as wage worker, since you encounter a lot of people.'</i>
ID11			<i>'We know advertising agencies by 10 years of work experience. [...] During that period we have worked at many agencies, which allowed us the build a large network.'</i>
ID12			<i>'At a certain point you are part of a kind of network were you are familiar with the creative director or general manager from the agencies. Hence, you stay in touch and talk with each other, which is extremely helpful to receive new clients.'</i>
ID8		Inexperience regarding entrepreneurial capabilities	<i>'Yes, that is really tough sometimes. Not inventing new content for projects or workshops, but the business side of freelancing. [...] We also report the VAT declaration ourselves every three months, which sometimes causes a lot of trouble in busy periods, since the pile of receipts keeps growing.'</i>
ID10			<i>'I am very bad with money. [...] When a client asked me if I could offer a 50% discount then I was quickly inclined to say you know what, I will do it for a crate of beer instead, that is fine.'</i>
ID12			<i>'I figured it out pretty soon. The VAT and taxes were not quite difficult, but the annual statements of earnings are. Especially when I started a private company (BV) then it got a lot more complicated.'</i>
ID11		Time management	<i>'What I find very difficult is to manage everything in such way that it fits in the right</i>

			<i>timeframe.'</i>
ID 15			<i>'I find time scheduling quite difficult; especially informing clients on how long certain projects are going to take.'</i>
ID9		Income insecurity	<i>'Sometimes there are periods with less work which I consider an obstacle. I find that annoying and I wonder how it is possible.'</i>
ID11			<i>'The phone rang by itself in the first few weeks, but after a while you notice that you are not 100% top of mind anymore and that the attention from clients drops. [...] There are always ups and downs, but it would be nice to have some kind of continuity.'</i>
ID1		Uncertainty during transition	<i>'There is a lot of uncertainty involved regarding a monthly living wage.'</i>
ID3			<i>'Sometimes you can only look a month ahead. That keeps it very tense.'</i>
ID5			<i>'The uncertainty associated with freelancing also demanded a lot from my spouse.'</i>
ID1		Help from co-freelancers	<i>'On a financial level I have asked other freelancers what elements are required, such as insurances and inventories.'</i>
ID4			<i>'I approached co-freelancers since I thought it could be useful to approach my network and learn from others. So, I asked everyone how they deal with their administration and bookkeeping.'</i>
ID15			<i>'Taxes remain relatively vague when you are not familiar with it. Therefore, I have asked someone to help me.'</i>
ID4		Experience as wage worker before freelancing	<i>'It is important to gain work experience during salaried employment before entering business ownership. Some people start freelancing immediately, but I think it is better to have knowledge from different companies and their internal processes in order to become an expert in your field.'</i>
ID6			<i>'Without all the jobs in salaried employment I would not have been able to be a freelancer. I needed the experience from working in companies, getting to know other people, understanding processes and the customer's demands. I owe a lot to the fact that I was able to work for a lot of beautiful companies. I never could have started straight away.'</i>
ID11			<i>'Previous work experience at an agency is essential, since all mistakes you would make already have been made and corrected'</i>

			<i>during salaried employment. When you lack experience and knowledge with regard to organizational processes you are more likely to make fatal mistakes. Hence, I would advise people to work at a company first to become familiar with all the ins and outs before becoming self-employed.'</i>
ID6	4.3 Building the business	Hybrid entrepreneurship	<i>'In the time that I have been a freelance copywriter I also intervened at advertising agencies in salaried employment, which resulted in paying less attention to my own business.'</i>
ID12			<i>'I freelanced when I was not working at an agency in salaried employment. As soon as I left an agency I started freelancing until I was employed again. [...] Actually, this sums up my entire career.'</i>
ID13			<i>'I am planning on working hybrid until my business becomes more successful. However, if the organization where I am currently following an internship offers me a fixed-contract then I will be honored to stay.'</i>
ID1		Dynamic / changing environments	<i>'It is important to keep up-to-date and innovate, since the video industry continues to evolve. For example, new computer software is released almost every month. However, the video industry is also very expensive.'</i>
ID13			<i>'It is really important to know what is going on to be able to anticipate on your customer's demands. Accordingly, you can adjust your marketing strategy, because when you market yourself on what books looked like in the year 1900 with bold black letters no one would be interested nowadays; They want straight lines and bright colors.'</i>
ID6		Positioning of the business	<i>'I noticed my interests had changed, which automatically resulted in a challenge. When you always have been operating as a copywriter and you suddenly want to become more involved on a strategic level you should be able to prove your capabilities to the outside world. Hence, you need to change your market position. That is tricky, because people keep thinking you are that guy from the copy.'</i>
ID7			<i>'I need to be more selective regarding the type of assignments, since that would</i>

			<i>contribute to my brand positioning. However, declining assignments is not always possible financially. [...] Currently, I am figuring out how to find a balance.'</i>
ID1		Broadening work experience	<i>'We are currently working on broadening our portfolio.'</i>
ID4			<i>'I have broadened my experience without having planned on it. Initially, I was a specialist, but now I am also asked for other things.'</i>
			<i>'Multiple freelancers notice that the first half of their career is coming to an end and they are figuring out how to structure the second half of their career. [...] Hence, I started writing books, I have tried to launch an app and I developed a television format to see whether it has potential to fill up the gap when my clients do not call me anymore.'</i>
ID8		Teamwork	<i>'Working together with other freelancers is quite difficult, since they are not all registered at the Chamber of Commerce and they do not know how to send invoices.'</i>
ID1	4.4 Goal setting and future prospects of the business	Overlap professional, business or personal goals	<i>'My goal is to own an agency specialized in digital content that allows me to help companies with creative issues by connecting them to the right people. I do not necessarily want to keep producing videos myself, but I want to become more involved on a strategic level to continue to develop myself.'</i>
ID6			<i>'I developed a system with a co-copywriter that we could implement in multiple large organizations. It focuses on the effects of language, which I find really interesting. [...] I hope that this new business model is going to pay off the next years.'</i>
ID14			<i>'Nowadays, I am also highly involved on a strategic level by trying to develop a team of experts in organizations. However, I also would like to stay involved in the execution process. I like to think creatively and develop new plans. A balance between those two roles would be interesting. Besides, it ensures that I am more future-proof.'</i>
ID1		Lack of future-oriented plans	<i>'I do not need to worry about my pension yet, I am too young for that.'</i>

ID5			<i>'I always considered pension a fearful mentality. Why do you need to save money for your pension? If you start living and traveling the world with your spouse you are not able to really enjoy yourself anymore, since you are too old by that time.'</i>
ID7			<i>'I am not concerned with future-oriented plans to be honest. I am not going to think 10 years ahead.'</i>
ID10			<i>'I do not know if my current business activities are in line with my plans for the future. The man I spoke with this morning also asked me how I see my future. Well, I live from day to day, so I have no idea.'</i>
ID6		Back-up plans	<i>'Then I would like to work in a rehabilitation clinic. [...] That has mainly to do with my personal background; Hence, I would like to guide people that are recovering from an addiction.'</i>
ID8			<i>'I am always able to go back to teaching. Whether I like it is a second issue, since I really enjoy what I am doing at the moment. Maybe I would teach part-time while searching for creative alternatives in the meantime.'</i>
ID9			<i>'I also find architecture interesting if I would be forced to terminate the business. [...] I have a technical background which would definitely fit that option.'</i>
ID12		Employability	<i>'Reading and talking to people is very important. I am not quite familiar with digital and social, since I did not grow up with that. I know what it is and I understand how it works, but the people that are daily confronted with social media already know what was invented yesterday while I figure it out a week later. Therefore, I need to remain up-to-date.'</i>
ID14			<i>'I keep developing myself to remain interesting.'</i>
ID15			<i>'You have to keep innovating. I already noticed that I do not travel first class on the digital boat, so I really need to catch-up. I cannot write codes yet or whatever. And with regard to digital marketing, I would not consider myself a professional yet. Hence, I need to keep developing myself.'</i>