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Daily work-related recovery of entrepreneurs

An exploratory study of recovery activities

Master's thesis

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Abstract

Entrepreneurs are a group that is known for experiencing high levels of stress due to the nature of their work characteristics. They operate in environments that include a lot of risks and uncertainty and are responsible for the success and survival of their company. In addition, many entrepreneurs identify strongly with their work, and work harder and longer than the regular employee. Due to the challenging conditions faced on a daily basis entrepreneurs are more likely to report chronic or ongoing stress. The ability to *recover* after work might therefore be especially important for the entrepreneur. However, no current research has looked into entrepreneurial recovery. We therefore aimed to answer the following research question in our study: *How do entrepreneurs recover daily after work?* A qualitative, exploratory study of ten entrepreneurs was conducted using a schedule of last week and in-depth interviews, following a rich thematic analysis. The thematic analysis discovered five activity themes: streaming, workout, hobbies, introspection, and social gatherings. The five themes revealed that the entrepreneurs are high in all recovery experiences addressed in the literature; psychological detachment, mastery, control, relaxation, and pondering. However, how the recovery experiences were combined, and particularly the sequence in which they were used, seemed to have an impact on the entrepreneurs perception of recovery. In addition, the social aspect of the activities influenced the degree of recovery experienced by the entrepreneurs. Lastly, the entrepreneurs held an impressive level of consciousness regarding their activities related to stress-reduction. Our data suggest that they use stress reduction strategies such as reflective and deliberate practises as well as displaying a high degree of psychological capital. Suggestions for future research are explored.

Sammendrag

Gründere er en gruppe som er kjent for å oppleve høyt stressnivå på grunn av krevende arbeidsvilkår. Dette inkluderer faktorer som mye risiko og usikkerhet samt ansvar for bedriftens suksess. I tillegg identifiserer mange gründere seg med arbeidet sitt, og jobber hardere og lengre enn vanlige ansatte. På grunn av de utfordrende arbeidsvilkårene, rapporterer gründere høyt nivå av kronisk eller pågående stress. Evnen til å restituere etter arbeid kan derfor være spesielt viktig for gründeren. Imidlertid har ingen nåværende forskning undersøkt gründeres restitusjon. Vi tok derfor sikte på å besvare følgende forskningsspørsmål i studien vår: *Hvordan restituerer gründere daglig etter jobb?* En kvalitativ, utforskende studie av ti gründere ble gjennomført med en timeplan for forrige uke og dybdeintervjuer, etterfulgt av en rik tematisk analyse. Den tematiske analysen oppdaget fem aktivitetstemaer: streaming, trening, hobbyer, introspeksjon og sosiale sammenkomster. De fem temaene avslørte at gründerne har høy forekomst av alle restitusjonsopplevelsene adressert i litteraturen; psykologisk avkobling, mestring, kontroll, avslapning og grubling. Hvordan restitusjonsopplevelsene ble kombinert, og særlig rekkefølgen de ble brukt i, syntes imidlertid å ha innvirkning på gründernes oppfatning av restitusjon. I tillegg påvirket det sosiale aspektet av aktivitetene graden av restitusjon som gründerne opplevde. Avlutningsvis, hadde gründerne et imponerende bevissthetsnivå angående sine aktiviteter relatert til stressreduksjon. Våre data antyder at de bruker strategier for stressreduksjon som *reflective practice* og *deliberate practice*, samt viser en høy grad av psykologisk kapital. Forslag til fremtidig forskning blir utforsket.

Preface

This report is a master thesis written during the Spring semester of 2020 and constitutes the final work of the Master of Science degree at the NTNU School of Entrepreneurship, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology Department of Industrial Economics and Technology Management.

The thesis is a theoretical and empirical exploratory study of entrepreneurial health strategies. The main focus of the thesis is five activity themes through which entrepreneurs recover after work. In particular, the paper investigates how entrepreneurs perceive the benefits and drawbacks of these activity themes and prioritize them in order to obtain a balanced lifestyle as well as a sturdy mental health.

Not because it's easy…
Unofficial slogan, NTNU School of Entrepreneurship

Our ability to write this paper would have been moderated had it not been for the wonderful support and guidance we received from our supervisor Gunn-Berit Neergård at the Department of Industrial Economics and Technology at NTNU. She has been a great source of feedback and encouragement, and we are extremely grateful to her. We would also like to thank friends and family for listening to our tireless rants about entrepreneurial health. Finally, to those of our interview subjects who read this thesis: we appreciate your time and your honesty.

Trondheim, June 2020

Mariel Hjelle and Kristi Bjørnes Skeie

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1 Introduction

"It's not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it"

-Hans Selye

Imagine being an entrepreneur responsible for the success and failure of your own company. You need customers in order to obtain economic growth and to be able to provide for your employees. Because of unforeseen circumstances you have an important customer meeting that will make or break the future of your company. You know you do not have enough time to prepare your best, so you work day and night to deliver. At the same time your spouse is starting to complain about the lack of quality time in your relationship. Your body reacts with a stress response; increased heart rate, quicker breathing, tightening of muscles, and a rise in blood pressure. You fail to relax after a long workday and when you are going to sleep, it takes ages to put your worries away.

The effort-recovery model describes how effort at work without sufficient recovery can lead to prolonged activation of the bodily stress system. Stress experienced due to job demands creates a response explained as "load reactions" (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). These load reactions include physiological, behavioural, and subjective responses. The model stresses the importance of returning to the pre-stressor state and *recover* once the demand is no longer present*.* The consequences of not doing so have been linked to the future development of numerous physical and mental health conditions, including chronic fatigue, metabolic disorders, depression, and immune disorders (Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017; Stansfeld & Candy, 2006; Sluiter, Frings-Dresen, Van der Beek, & Meijman, 2001).

The only way to counter demanding work conditions - apart from changing the conditions in which you work - is by engaging in recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Recovery is defined as *"the unwinding process of reducing or eliminating strain caused by the stressors of work"* (Steed, Swider, Keem & Liu, 2019, p. 2). The definition also states that recovery occurs after work is done, be it daily, on weekends, or during holidays (Sonnentag, Venz & Casper, 2017). Over the past few decades, recovery experiences have been established as proven mediators of work-related stress (Bennett, Bakker & Field, 2018; Demerouti, Bakker, Geurts & Taris, 2009; Siltaloppi, Kinnunen & Feldt, 2009; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). However, the preference and/or need for the different recovery experiences are dependent on the individual, and on the work characteristics they endure (Siltaloppi et al., 2009).

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Entrepreneurs are a group that is known for experiencing high levels of stress due to the nature of their work characteristics (Stephan, 2018). They operate in highly competitive or new markets which includes a lot of risks and uncertainty (Karvin, 2008). Also, they are responsible for the success and survival of their company (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). In addition, many entrepreneurs identify strongly with their work, and work harder and longer than the regular employee (Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Dolinksy & Caputo, 2003). As a result, many entrepreneurs end up as "workaholics", having over 60 hour work weeks, working on weekends, and skipping vacations (Bradley & Roberts, 2004). One might say that entrepreneurs are more dominated by their work than employees. They often lack a clear line between work and relaxation, family and social life (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). The benefits of working as an entrepreneur are greater autonomy and self-fulfilment, and entrepreneurs tend to report higher job satisfaction than the regular employee (Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Bradley & Roberts, 2004; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). However, they seem to pay a price in terms of health, making entrepreneurship a double edged sword (Prottas & Thompson, 2006). For example, several studies have shown that entrepreneurs report lower health than regular employees (Westerlund, Theorell & Alfredsson, 2004; Jamal, 1997; Jamal and Badawi, 1995; Buttner, 1992; Lewin-Epstein & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1991). They are also 49 percent more likely than employees to report having a lifetime history of any mental health condition (Freeman, Staudenmaier, Zisser & Andresen, 2018). Due to the challenging conditions faced on a daily basis entrepreneurs are likely to report chronic or ongoing stress (Boyd & Gumpert, 1983). The combination of work characteristics and an unclear line between work and after-work life makes it harder to turn off the stress response and load reactions in the body. The ability to *recover* might therefore be especially important for the entrepreneur (Stephan, 2018; Weinberger et al., 2018).

1.1 Purpose and research question

We see a paradoxical relationship between entrepreneurial work and the need for healthy entrepreneurs in the society. In the field of occupational health research, we find well established theories of how recovery from work strain helps mediate the effects of work characteristics. A literature review from 2018 studied 144 articles describing the mental health and wellbeing of entrepreneurs (Stephan, 2018). The review found that antecedents and outcomes of mental health and wellbeing were being explored, but the mechanisms through which entrepreneurs cope with their situations were poorly understood. While an array of studies tried to measure the health and wellbeing of entrepreneurs, only two articles focused primarily on recovery. None of these focused on daily recovery after work. Weinberger et al. (2018) also stated that the field of recovery needs to be explored further in relation to

entrepreneurs because it seems that entrepreneurs may benefit more from recovery than regular employees.

Most contributions in the entrepreneurship literature which addressed mental health and wellbeing have used cross-sectional and quantitative designs. Moreover, these rely heavily on measurements of work characteristics that were developed for regular employees (Stephan, 2018). We therefore see the need for a more explorative approach which highlights the subjective mechanism of how entrepreneurs cope with stress. Furthermore, the lack of research addressing recovery of entrepreneurs and particularly daily recovery suggests the importance of looking into what entrepreneurs actually do after work and their reasoning behind it.

We therefore propose the following research question:

> *"How do entrepreneurs recover daily after work?"*

1.2 Contributions

We wish to make several contributions with our research. First, we intend to use an exploratory study design to find out what kind of recovery experiences entrepreneurs engage in. As occupational stress literature focuses on regular employees in large organizations, sources of stressors are likely to be different for entrepreneurs (Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Tetrick, Slack, Da Silva & Sinclair, 2000). For example, commonly measured stressors such as supervision and non participation do not apply to entrepreneurs since they manage their own work (Harris, Saltstone & Fraboni, 1999; Buttner, 1992). To explore how entrepreneurs perceive stressful work and recovery from an inductive approach might therefore divulge new insights.

Second, we highlight the importance of recovery in relation to entrepreneurial mental health and wellbeing. Entrepreneurial success has mostly been defined in terms of financial outcomes (i.e profit and growth). However, there is a growing recognition in the field that entrepreneurs seek other goals aside from financial ones (Hmieleski & Corbett, 2008; Gimeno, Folta, Cooper & Woo, 1997). Indeed, research suggests that wellbeing resulting from greater autonomy, independence, and meaningful work are strong motives to become an entrepreneur (Baron, 2010; Cassar, 2007)*.* Baron, Franklin and Hmieleski (2016) therefore stress the importance of taking entrepreneurial wellbeing into account when looking into entrepreneurial success.

1.3 Structure of the paper

This paper contains six chapters. Chapter 1 explains the background for conducting this study, the research question which drives the study, how the study will contribute to the academic field, and the structure of the paper. The second chapter is meant to give a deeper understanding of the theories we have based this study on. It emphasizes research on entrepreneurs and on recovery, and shows the foundation on which we build our study and our discussion. Chapter 3 covers the methodology applied in the study. We also argue the reasons for our chosen method and give a detailed overview of our analysis process. Chapter 4 details the findings of the study, and the results are further discussed in chapter 5. The fifth chapter ties the findings to relevant theory, aiming to propose possible correlations between theory and results. Here, we also present some limitations of the study. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the entire paper, as well as theoretical contributions and suggestions for future research.

2 Theory

In the following chapter we present theory from the research disciplines of entrepreneurship and occupational health. The chapter explains the uniqueness of entrepreneurs as individuals and workers, and presents the theoretical framework for work-related recovery.

2.1 The Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur has been widely discussed in the entrepreneurship literature over the decades. In the 1950s and 1960s the focus was on personal traits and characteristics of the entrepreneur. One of the most influential scientists of that era was David McClelland (1961) who demonstrated how the need for achievement is transformed into economic growth through the medium of the entrepreneur. His contribution to research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s was mainly occupied with the personal qualities of the entrepreneur. However, in the late 1980s, Gartner challenged the existing research by arguing that "who is the entrepreneur" is the wrong question. He viewed entrepreneurship as a set of activities involved in the creation of new organizations (1988). Gartner's work can be seen as the start of a focus shift from the entrepreneur himself to a more behavior and process oriented approach (Gartner, 1990). In 2000, the work of Shane and Venkataraman triggered a focused research interest on business opportunity recognition and created a debate regarding the definition in the domain of entrepreneurship research, which has continued to this day (Landström, Harirchi & Åström, 2012). In an attempt to refine the various definitions of entrepreneurship, Shane and Venkataraman formulated a more comprehensive definition; *"The field of entrepreneurship [is] the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited"* (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218). Thus arguing that entrepreneurship involves sources and processes of discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, but also includes the individuals who discover, evaluate and exploit these opportunities (Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon & Trahms, 2011).

Our focus in this paper is that of the individual who discovers, evaluates and exploits these opportunities, focusing on why or why not the entrepreneur engages in behaviour related to recovery.

Even though research on entrepreneurship has progressed beyond the entrepreneurs themselves, we still find researchers taking personal characteristics into account in entrepreneurship studies. Baron, Franklin and Hmieleski (2016) point out that recent work in the entrepreneurship literature has provided evidence around many individual level characteristics such as dispositional positive affect, optimism, self-efficacy and various aspects

of personality. These characteristics are related both to entrepreneurial success and the intention to become an entrepreneur (Baron, 2012; Baron, Tang & Hmieleski, 2011; Hmieleski & Baron, 2008; Rauch & Frese, 2007). They also point out the important role of *psychological capital* in regard to stress, and that individuals who are attracted by, selected into and persist in entrepreneurship are high in this capacity. However, persons who score low on this capacity tend to exit from entrepreneurship (Baron, Franklin & Hmieleski, 2016).

Psychological capital is a variable reflecting four underlying components which are self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). It is found to be negatively related to job stress, providing individuals with the mentality to cope with job demands (Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011; Avey, Luthans & Jensen 2009). For example, individuals high in self-efficacy believe in themselves and that they can accomplish tasks that are coming their way. This might reduce stressors, which often arise under the feeling of being unable to cope with a situation (Schaubroeck & Merritt, 1997). In addition, highly optimistic individuals help mitigate stress by the belief that they will experience positive outcomes (Hmieleski & Baron, 2009). Furthermore, individuals high in hope reduce their likelihood of becoming overwhelmed through their ability to imagine several ways to overcome challenges (Snyder, Sympson, & Ybasco, 1996). Lastly, individuals high in resilience have experience with overcoming difficulty and therefore experience less helplessness as they believe they can overcome similar obstacles in the future (Tugade, Fredrickson & Barrett, 2004).

Because we are looking at the individual's process of entrepreneurship, an enhanced understanding of the relation between wellbeing and work characteristics of the entrepreneur, and their outcomes related to value creation, is necessary. In order to do this, an understanding of the antecedents and outcomes of recovery processes is required. Hence, we address how entrepreneurs differ from salaried employees regarding their work characteristics (antecedents) and mental health and wellbeing (outcomes) before we present the recovery theory.

Work characteristics and mental health and wellbeing of entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs' mental health and wellbeing may influence their mood, cognition, energy, motivation, activity levels, creativity, and interpersonal behaviors in ways that influence business outcomes (Freeman et al., 2018). Interestingly, some research suggests that entrepreneurs with mental health problems do not experience lower wellbeing than entrepreneurs without mental health problems (Torske, Bjørngaard, Hilt, Glasscock & Krokstad, 2016; Jang, Jang, Bae, Schin & Park, 2015; Stephan & Roesler, 2010; Kawakami, Iwata, Tanigawa, Oga, Araki, Fujihara, Kitamura, 1996). Work characteristics, such as

autonomy, independence, and ownership might play a central role in why the entrepreneurs are not feeling the negative impact of high stress and uncertainty (Lechat & Torrès, 2017; Lewin-Epstein & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1991). For example, Baron et al. (2016) found that founding entrepreneurs were less affected by work strain than other entrepreneurs. Another study found that entrepreneurs experience lower rates of negative affect, and exercise emotion and problem-solving coping methods more frequently than employees (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011). Research suggests that nascent entrepreneurs were more satisfied if they experienced high demands and worked long hours (Bradley & Roberts, 2004). For them, it meant that the business was doing well. However, another study found that longer working hours were no longer related to entrepreneurs' wellbeing when recovery was taken into account . Entrepreneurs who managed to psychologically detach from work in their spare time were unaffected by longer working hours (Taris, Geurts, Schaufeli, Blonk & Lagerveld, 2008). Even though entrepreneurs report high wellbeing despite stressful work characteristics, they also score high on mental illnesses. In an American study, entrepreneurs were 49 percent more likely to report having a lifetime history of any mental health condition than comparison participants. They were 30 percent more likely to report depression, 29 percent more likely to report ADHD, 12 percent more likely to report substance use and 11 percent more likely to report bipolar disorder (Freeman et al,. 2018). Entrepreneurs also reported lower health than regular employees (Westerlund et al., 2004; Jamal, 1997; Jamal and Badawi, 1995; Buttner, 1992; Lewin-Epstein & Yuchtman-Yaar, 1991). The gap between wellbeing and mental disorders and health in entrepreneurial research is therefore an interesting one. Entrepreneurs seem to experience high levels of wellbeing in contradiction to their demanding and stressful work. At the same time we find a higher amount of mental disorders and lower health compared to the average population.

2.2 Recovery after work

Recovery experiences are the mechanisms through which recovery processes occur after work (Sonnentag & Geurts, 2009). That is, the activities you do after work are considered mediators between work characteristics and wellbeing outcomes (Kinnunen, Feldt, Siltaloppi & Sonnentag, 2011). The four most researched recovery experiences are 1) psychological detachment (mentally detach from work-related thoughts), 2) relaxation (having a low activation level), 3) mastery (learn or master an activity), and 4) control (a feeling of control over what to do) (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Below, we will cover the four different recovery experiences as well as work-related rumination and problem-solving pondering, which comprise another recovery experience mentioned in the literature.

Recovery experiences

Psychological Detachment

Psychological detachment is described as a state where the individual is mentally distancing themselves from work-related thoughts during time off from work (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). That is, the individual is not occupied with work in a physical nor a mental way. It is considered a rather neutral concept (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). However, the inability to mentally detach from work might have a detrimental effect on recovery outcomes. An example is a study done by Weigelt and colleagues (2019) where psychological detachment was the strongest predictor for general wellbeing, flourishing, and satisfaction with life.

Relaxation

Relaxation is characterized as a state of low activation and affect (Stone, Kennedy-Moore & Neale, 1995). It is commonly perceived as non challenging and described as activities requiring little physical or intellectual effort, with few social demands (Tinsley & Elredge, 1995). Two examples are meditation, which entails relaxation of the body and mind (Grossmann, Niemann, Schmidt & Walach, 2004), or a light walk in nature (Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis & Garling, 2003). Relaxation is important because of its effect on reducing work-related stressors, both in the short and long run (Stone, Kennedy-Moore & Neale, 1995; Van der Klink, Blonk, Schene & Van Dijk, 2001). By engaging in relaxation, the body is reducing the prolonged activation of stressors and restoring itself to the pre-stressor state, minimizing the harmful long term effects (Brosschot, Pieper & Thayer, 2005). In addition, the positive affect will help in reducing the negative effect of job demands. Hence, positive emotions can undo the effects of negative emotions (Frederickson, 2000).

Mastery

Mastery experiences are characterized as activities that work as distractors through learning and challenges in other domains (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Activities like rock climbing, taking a language course, or learning a new hobby might yield mastery experiences (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). These activities require a degree of self-regulation and are not effortless. For example, if a person is engaging in a language course he or she needs to exercise control when practicing instead of being passive (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). This is contributing to recovery because of its resource building characteristics, even though it might act as an additional demand (Hobfoll, 1998). Furthermore, mastery experiences might lead to learning skills that may be beneficial at work.

Control

Control refers to whether you have authority over what kind of activities you want to do, as well as how to do them (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). This is associated with lower distress, higher wellbeing and happiness (Larson, 1989; Lazarus, 1966). On the other hand, we tend to get negative self-evaluations and decreased self-worth when we experience low levels of control (Rosenfield, 1989). The experience of control over after-work time might contribute to a feeling of increased competency which promotes wellbeing. In this way, it might act as an external resource that enhances the recovery experience (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007).

Work-related rumination and problem-solving pondering

The concept of work-related rumination looks at the presence of work-related thoughts after work (Weigelt et al., 2019). Work-related rumination can lead to negative affective processes (Frone, 2015). However, there exists research suggesting the positive effects of thinking about work, such as positive work reflection (Binnewies, Sonnentag & Mojza, 2009) and positive rumination (Frone, 2015). Both increase self-efficacy and the meaningfulness of work. That is, if a person has positive thoughts about work after work is done, it might even increase their wellbeing and performance (Weinberger et al., 2018). One example is problem-solving pondering. Research suggests that when problem-solving pondering is combined with relaxation after work, it has positive effects on wellbeing and work engagement (Bennett et al., 2016).

Combinations of recovery experiences

In most of the literature, recovery experiences are measured as independent constructs. We do, however, find some research that has looked into recovery experience preference profiles. One example is a study by Siltaloppi and colleagues (2011) which found five distinct recovery profiles based on psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. Profile 1 consisted of people displaying high levels of detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. Profile 2 was high in mastery and control, which decreased over time. Profile 3 was high in relaxation and mastery, and control increased over time. Profile 4 demonstrated decreasing levels of recovery experiences (except relaxation). Profile 5 had low levels of all recovery experiences.

There only exists one study on the recovery preferences of entrepreneurs, which is focused on recovery in relation to creativity and work engagement outcomes. The study suggested that entrepreneurs were high in problem-solving pondering (Weinberger et al., 2018).

3 Methods

This chapter describes the process of collecting and analyzing data, as well as decisions that were made during the process, and how these were informed. Additionally, we elaborate on how we have attempted to gain trustworthiness, and reflect on possible biases, methodological limitations, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design: A qualitative exploratory study

During the fall of 2019, we conducted a literature review on recovery research, attempting to find a link to entrepreneurship. Our efforts revealed that research on entrepreneurs' recovery is quite limited. Typically, research on entrepreneurial health has been quantitative for the purpose of comparing entrepreneurs to salaried employees. However, since the purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the recovery of entrepreneurs, we opted for an inductive qualitative research design: a qualitative exploratory study. This approach is needed in the entrepreneurship academia, because inductive approaches to understanding the entrepreneur as a whole are sorely lacking (Stephan, 2018). An exploratory study design is preferable when there is sparse knowledge about the group or phenomenon in question, while researchers nonetheless have reason to believe there is something worth studying (Stebbins, 1997). Furthermore, exploration is useful when the research question is a "how-question" like ours.

Exploration requires two strategies: Flexibility and open-mindedness (Stebbins, 1997). To incorporate this, our research method consisted of two parts: an in-depth semi-structured interview of each entrepreneur, and a recall of the past week's activities (elaborated in chapter 3.2). Together, these approaches shed light on the recovery of entrepreneurs, and how their particular situation aids or hinders their recovery.

Inclusion criteria

We wanted to study a rather homogenous selection of entrepreneurs. Thus, we aimed to interview multiple entrepreneurs who worked in the same startups. This way the work characteristics are similar, thereby demonstrating nuances between personal recovery without mapping work characteristics in too much detail. Our selected entrepreneurs were working in early-stage startup companies. Specifically, we aimed at innovative startups commercializing novel technology. This choice was made because there is a link between innovative work and difficulty detaching from work (Ng & Wang, 2019). Moreover, studies have shown that older entrepreneurs in established companies tend to experience less stress than younger entrepreneurs in early-stage startups (Weinberger et al., 2018; Baron et al., 2016; Uy, Foo & Song, 2013). This is congruent with the idea that as the company survives, over time it will

be less like a startup and more like any other company. We therefore decided to target early-stage, inexperienced entrepreneurs. We defined this as entrepreneurs under the age of 30, who have been working in their startups for less than five years. This group was chosen because they likely have the greatest stress, leading to a high need for recovery. The recruitment process involved visiting several co-working spaces and asking entrepreneurs there to participate in the study.

In total, we recruited ten entrepreneurs from three startups. The startups were working on commercializing software, hardware, and digital platforms. All entrepreneurs were from the same Norwegian city, and were situated in the same startup incubator facility. The participants were all male, in their mid- to late twenties, and they were all enrolled in or graduates from university education. Their roles in the startups ranged from CEO or CTO, to business or software developer, and most entrepreneurs were the founders of their own startup.

3.2 Data sources

In order to establish rigor in qualitative research, multiple data sources are required (Anney, 2015). We therefore decided to collect two types of data from each participant: a schedule of last week, and an in-depth interview. These are further described below.

In-depth interviews

We created a protocol for semi-structured individual in-depth interviews. Open-ended questions were formulated. Although informed by the literature on recovery, the questions were put in understandable terms, and did not aim at fitting the answers received into existing theory. We included main questions as well as probing questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Figure 1; Appendix 1). The questions focused on what activities and processes took place, without influencing the interview subject. In order to achieve this, we included questions asking them to recall what they did during the past week. This strategy is useful to get more concrete answers (Yin, 2009). Based on what the subjects said, we elaborated, trying to understand the results each event or activity yielded, and asking for examples. Our interviews included questions about recovery and mental health, and we also explored how the entrepreneurs' habits had come about in order to understand whether or not they were conscious choices. Activities can have varying effects on recovery, where individuals might have a preference for certain recovery experiences (Bennett et al., 2018; Weinberger et al., 2018).

4. Which day was the worst day? What is the reason you chose that day?

5. What do you wish to do more of after work?

6. What do you wish to do less of after work?

7. Go through each activity and ask:
   - How long have you done X?
   - What made you start?
   - What are the benefits of X?
   - Tell us about the last time you did X

Figure 1 Selection of interview questions

In order to analyze the results with some context, we included simple questions about the entrepreneurs' self-rated mental health and wellbeing. We also took into account the entrepreneurs' understanding of the term *wellbeing*. This was included because the distinction between individual perceptions of wellbeing likely plays an important role in understanding entrepreneurial health (Stephan, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Recall of last week

In order to help trigger memories of the interview subjects, we printed out a schedule from Monday through Friday. Since our focus is on daily recovery after work, we did not include questions about work characteristics, holidays, recovery during breaks at work, or during weekends. In the schedule we asked our participants to mark out what time they had been working each day, and what other activities they had done after work (Figure 2). A significant portion of the interview time was spent on the recall, as the activities listed were used as prompts for further discussion. This also served as a way to include a more rich data source in our study. The schedule helped us gain more nuanced and realistic answers from the participants, as well as providing a means of comparison between what was said during interviews and what was reported in the schedules. One reason the schedules were helpful was as an attempt to reduce over-reporting of activities due to social desirability and memory lapses (Brenner & DeLamater, 2014). Another aspect was that in most cases, chunks of time were left blank, where the participants said they did "nothing". Using the schedules helped divulge what was done when the participants did nothing. These activities might not have been included with the interview alone. Several entrepreneurs complimented the use of the schedule, stating that it helped them give realistic answers. Moreover, all participants used

their smartphone calendars in order to remember what had been done, further improving trustworthiness of the recall.

What happened last week?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
05:00					
06:00					
07:00					
08:00					
09:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00					
13:00					
14:00					
15:00					
16:00					
17:00					
18:00					
19:00					
20:00					
21:00					
22:00					
23:00					
00:00					

Figure 2 Schedule for recall of last week

3.3 Data collection

We conducted a total of ten semi-structured individual interviews with the entrepreneurs from each startup. The interviews were conducted during the spring of 2020, and every entrepreneur working in the same startup was interviewed during the same week. Hence, inconsistencies in work characteristics were kept to a minimum. On average, the interviews lasted 50-55 minutes and both authors participated in each interview; one as a lead interviewer, and one to keep track of the progress, ensuring that all questions were touched upon. The interviews were tape recorded, enabling us to accurately quote the entrepreneurs.

We started the interviews by giving a brief introduction to the theme of the study, and collecting written consent to process data from the interview. The interview protocol consisted of opening questions, the entrepreneur filling out their schedule for the past week, then a discussion of the activities on the schedule followed, before the final nine questions were asked (Appendix 1). Apart from discussing the activities and habits of the entrepreneurs and the

reasons for them, the main questions were: "What is your relationship with recovery after work?"; "What is your relationship with stressful work?"; "What is mental health to you?"; and "What in your life helps you reduce stress?".

3.4 Analysis method: Thematic analysis

In this paper, we opted for a thematic analysis of our data, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is useful in contextualist and constructionist research, focusing on how individuals make sense of their experiences while including a strong factual foundation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It consists of 6 steps: 1) familiarising yourself with your data through the transcription process and initial reading and rereading, 2) generating initial codes by organizing the data into meaningful groups, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes in two stages, ensuring they have internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, 5) defining and naming themes and subthemes, 6) producing the report.

Since the recovery of entrepreneurs is an under-researched area, we decided to do a rich thematic description of our entire data set based on a semantic level analysis of the interview recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that our analysis focused on the explicit surface meanings of the words that were used in the interviews, and that we did not emphasize the underlying assumptions and ideologies that shaped the semantic content. An inductive approach to identifying themes was preferred, meaning that we assessed the data in an unbiased manner. We were not trying to fit the data into existing theory, but rather letting the data speak to us independently (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006). We believe this decision was important given the differences between entrepreneurs and employees, because it allows for the discovery of entrepreneurial strategies that are still unexplored. A theme was identified if it answered our research question, detailing *what* recovery activity was done, *why* it was done, and *how* it made the entrepreneur feel.

Identifying themes

This section describes the thought process of how themes were formed. A more in-depth presentation of each theme is to be found in chapter 4. Furthermore, we decided to include a more interpretative analysis of the themes in our discussion (chapter 5), where we draw lines between our findings and research on recovery and entrepreneurship.

All interview recordings were transcribed in as much detail as possible. Once this task was complete, the process of analyzing the data could begin. As described above, this entailed reading all transcripts and taking notes based on the semantic level analysis approach (i.e. the surface meaning of the words that were used to describe activities). Then, we re-read the

transcripts with special attention to our notes, trying to find consistencies in what the entrepreneurs had said. We identified five themes and corresponding subthemes. Moreover there was a distinction between activities that were done alone as well as with others. We believe this distinction is relevant because several entrepreneurs spoke to this fact affecting their perceived recovery.

Some themes were easily identifiable and could be clearly distinguished from one another with internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as they bore few similarities with other activities that were mentioned by the entrepreneurs. For example screen time activities like Netflix, HBO, NRK, and YouTube could be categorized as *Streaming*. Entrepreneurs mentioned that they spent time on streaming alone or together with other people, which led us to distinguish two subthemes: streaming alone, and social streaming.

Similarly, any activity involving physical exertion, like bouldering, running, jogging, spinning, swimming and strength training could be categorized as *workouts*. Again, participants mentioned doing this type of activity in solitude as well as sociably. As such, we established subthemes to account for these differences: working out alone, and social workouts. Workouts are a means to obtain physical wellbeing. Furthermore, many participants explained that working out helps them mentally detach from work-related thoughts, or that they process work-related thoughts while working out.

Multiple participants described activities involving planning, pondering, meditation, journaling, and sessions with a psychologist. Because of the self-analyzing focus of these activities, we decided to categorize them as a common theme: *introspection.* This differs from streaming and workout in that the mental processing, detachment or relaxation that happens during introspection is deliberate whereas the processing, detachment or relaxation that occurs during streaming and workout is a bi-product of the activity.

Various entrepreneurs spoke about activities that they did regularly and that were motivated by their personal interests. These activities include cooking, reading, playing musical instruments, drawing or painting, volunteering for student organizations, and gaming. We grouped these into the theme *hobbies* because of the significance of the subjects' interest in pursuing the activities. Moreover, the subjects mentioned that they enjoyed the progression in their skills, and the sense of exploring and learning something new. Like in the other themes, some of the activities were done both with and without other people, like cooking, gaming, volunteering and music.

Apart from introspection, all other themes (hobbies, workout and streaming) involved a social element. However, many participants mentioned "being social" as a free-standing activity. The theme *social gatherings* was identified as any activity that involves more than one person,

but is not the same as any of the aforementioned themes. These activities happened at home or in public places and included parties, food with friends, family or sweethearts, and work events.. The main distinction between social gatherings and the other themes, is that the social element is the main focus of the activities.

Finally, there were two activities that could not be classified within any of the above themes. These were traveling and sleeping during the day. We put these collectively in the theme *other* because they did not have enough in common with the themes workout, streaming, social gatherings, introspection or hobbies. Travel is an activity that is normally not done everyday after work, but rather in combination with weekends or vacations. Since our focus is on everyday activities, travel is therefore excluded from further analysis. With regards to sleep, this was a one-time occurrence, and not a regular habit. In addition, these were not common across our selection. As such, *other* is a theme that is not included in further analysis.

Table 1 shows an excerpt from the document used to record statements from the entrepreneurs. This particular extract displays quotes about streaming. "Motivation" details what entrepreneurs said were the reasons they spent time on the activity and how it started. We did not ask specifically about negative outcomes. Rather, these were volunteered by the entrepreneurs. When "Do more" is marked with an x, it means the entrepreneur wished to spend more time on the activity in question. For the complete analysis document, see appendix 2.

Table 1 Excerpt from analysis document

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
Streaming	Netflix	1	"(…) and yeah, uhm, watch some series" "It's lovely to drop onto the couch and relax a little (...) I'm a bit of a film nerd" "Watching something random (...) Just letting time pass"	Relaxing, personal interest, pass time, detachment	Relaxation, engagement in series, detachment			
	HBO	2	"Brain dead TV-watching" "You watch one episode and then you've suddenly watched five episodes. I'm stuck in a series hell like that right now. Just get trapped in a series so whenever I'm not doing anything else I switch it on, and then time goes by." "Life is not good, it's not bad, it just is."	Pass time during dinner, losing control, easy, relaxing	Relaxation	Not enriching, unproductive		x
	HBO, Netflix	3	"I often binge series til late at night, even though there aren't enough hours left in the day"	Relaxing, detachment	Engagement in series, reducing stress	Addiction to series, losing sleep		x
	Netflix	4	"Yeah, so it's mostly Netflix, different series" "There are evenings where I need to be completely relaxed and that's when I choose Netflix"	Free time, alone time, need for recovery and relaxation	Detachment, relaxation, recovery		x (alone)	
	YouTube, Netflix, NRK	5	"I don't remember exactly what else I did on Monday, though. Uhm, it's sort of sitting and watching YouTube or something dully" "What can I say? It's not positive to just lie on the couch for four hours"	Relaxing, easy	Entertainment	Not enriching	x (social)	x (alone)
	NRK, Netflix	6	"I watch an awful lot of movies, like series and stuff (...) Like yesterday, I binged a series. I was totally dead" " I get flushed in the head. The only thing I want is to work out or go home and just sit there and watch TV and not think about anything"	Nice, relaxing, learning (self-development)	Nice, mastery, detachment, relaxation			
	Netflix, YouTube	7	"[slacking off involves] YouTube, for example... in front of the TV" "(...) just watching some crap on Netflix" "It's my go-to actually."	Easy, pass time during dinner, relaxing, unwinding, "autoplay"	Relaxation, detachment, socializing	Not a satisfying activity (YouTube)	x (Netflix)	x (YouTube)
	Netflix, YouTube	8	"It's sort of either Peaky Blinders or YouTube" "It's a very low-threshold activity, and I get a sort of self-realization from [YouTube]"	Relaxing, learning, easy	Socializing, relaxing, mastery (YouTube), entertainment	Losing sleep (YouTube)		
	Netflix, YouTube	9	"I watched a movie with my flatmates (...) something on Netflix" "That's what I did last weekend, I watched an entire series" "For a long time I've watched a YouTube clip or a quick series on Netflix before going to bed"	Easy, relaxing, entertainment, easy to fall asleep after	Easy to fall asleep, entertainment, relaxation, recovery	Tired the next morning if you watch too long		x
	YouTube	10	"I take some YouTube breaks (...) at dinner time" "I got interested in learning (...) there's so much information on YouTube" "I just play a video and it's the content creators who decide what I learn"	Learning, pass time during breaks/dinner, relaxing, personal interest	Passively learning, relaxation			

3.5 Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, trustworthiness is built upon the four main elements identified by Guba (1981): credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Our research is idiographic, and focuses on the views of individuals rather than formulating laws that can be generalized (Krefting, 1991). In this section we demonstrate our efforts to maintain rigor in our study.

Credibility

In order to obtain credibility, we relied on the following strategies (Anney, 2015): *data triangulation*, in which we collected multiple formats of data (interviews and weekly schedules); *researcher triangulation*, co-authors with different educational backgrounds; *interview technique*, we received feedback on our interview guide and practiced our technique; and *peer debriefing*, where we presented our findings to peers and experts in order to gain a better understanding of our data. *Member checks* are often used to establish credibility in qualitative research. Nevertheless, we opted out of this due to our semantic level analysis, which we believe leaves little room for misinterpretations. For example, as demonstrated in chapter 3.4, we have not digressed far from what has been explicitly stated during the interviews.

Transferability

In order to establish transferability, we made sure to include thick descriptions of our methods throughout chapter 3. This includes our process of selecting study participants which was deliberate, purposive, and clearly articulated in section 3.1.

Confirmability

We seeked to establish confirmability by clearly describing our logic and thought process in the analysis of our data. During the interviews, we made an effort to build *rapport* with our interviewees, making them feel relaxed and comfortable. Additionally, we clearly stated that all participants would remain anonymous and that there were no "right" answers. Moreover, we remained skeptical about statements in the interviews that we felt could be inaccurate. Many participants admitted to finding it difficult to remember what they had spent their time on last week. Nevertheless, we believe our ability to find truthful data was improved by the use of weekly schedules, which for example, helped us fill gaps in the memories of the entrepreneurs. Moreover, we saw discrepancies between how many working hours the entrepreneurs reported when asked, and how many hours were listed on the schedule. This leads us to believe that social desirability bias was reduced by the use of timetables. Similarly, asking about a specific time interval rather than "Do you ever…" has been shown to reduce

bias (Gordon, 1987). In the process of analyzing the data, we used an *audit trail*, clearly demonstrating what statements led to what themes (chapter 3.3; appendix 2). Finally, we made sure to reflect on the lens through which we perceived our data based on our own educational backgrounds (chapter 3.5).

Dependability

Our main strategy for building dependability for our research was our *stepwise replication*. That is, we both analyzed the data set independently, and subsequently discussed our findings and agreed on themes. We also coded and re-coded our data in order to make sure that we found the same themes both times. Dependability is also established with strategies that have already been mentioned, like *audit trail*, *triangulation*, *peer examination*, and *reflection* (chapter 3.5).

3.5 Reflection

Reflection on oneself and the decisions that are made is an essential means to establish rigor in qualitative research (Anney, 2015). This chapter presents our evaluation on ourselves and our methods.

The authors

In order to establish rigor in our research, we reflect on our personal backgrounds and how they might influence our interpretations of the data collected. Currently, both authors of this paper are enrolled in the master's program at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology School of Entrepreneurship. This has given us theoretical and practical knowledge of entrepreneurship, as well as the ability to observe entrepreneurs and their environment. Before this degree, one author completed a master's degree in organizational psychology while the other completed a bachelor's degree in public health. Therefore, our interpretations have been informed by literature on entrepreneurship, psychology, and health behavior. Our backgrounds have helped support our understanding of the topics covered in this paper. Moreover, we recently conducted a literature review on mental health and wellbeing of entrepreneurs as well as on recovery research, which yielded updated knowledge on the research field. However, we acknowledge that academics from other fields might analyze entrepreneurial recovery in a different manner.

Choice of methods

An exploratory study is an appropriate method when you wish to study a phenomenon which has not been well established by previous research (Stebbins, 1997). The choice of doing a rich thematic analysis of our data was chosen, as it is a true and tested qualitative method for

analyzing interview data in as much detail as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, when conducting a rich thematic analysis, some depth may be lost. In our opinion, this is an acceptable trade-off given the relative newness of the research field we are exploring.

Originally, we had planned to interview around 15 participants from 4-5 startup companies. Regrettably, during our data collection, the world was put on lock down because of the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, our final interview was conducted via video. We found that it was challenging to maintain natural conversational flow, and to establish rapport in this situation. We therefore decided not to recruit any more participants for our study. Moreover, any new participants would have presented weekly schedules that were far from representative for their actual work- and life situations. This would effectively make the results incomparable to the rest of the interviews.

It is difficult to make confident conclusions based on a single interview rather than a longitudinal study. Moreover, due to our semi-structured interview guide, the degree to which we as interviewers were able to ask probing questions would vary between each interview. As a result, some interviews lasted less than 45 minutes, while others took more than an hour to complete. Effectively, this means that some interviews yielded richer data which other interviews could not provide a comparison to. Additionally, one entrepreneur said after the interview that we had caught him in a good week, and that his answers might have been different had we asked him two weeks ago. To counter this, we reached out to all the entrepreneurs to solicit a short follow-up. The covid-19 pandemic was also a trigger for this attempt, as we wished to compare a regular week to a week during lock down. Unfortunately, only two participants responded to our request, and we could therefore not include it in our study. Another consideration when it comes to follow-up studies is that the first interview created an increased awareness of recovery in many of our participants. This means that results from a second interview would be challenging to compare with the initial results. Of course, there are positives and negatives related to this effect, in that more conscious entrepreneurs might give clearer answers, but might not be indicative for "ordinary" entrepreneurs.

Ethical considerations

This study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) and fulfills the demands of ethical research and processing of sensitive data. All participants signed informed consent forms, allowing us to handle the data from the interviews and the timetables. Furthermore, anonymity is safeguarded, as no identifying markers are presented that are unique to neither company nor individual.

4 Research findings

In the following chapter, the themes encountered through thematic analysis of our interviews are presented. We also present insights on entrepreneurs' interpretations of certain aspects of recovery, stress and mental wellbeing. In the presentation of the findings, we include relevant statements from the entrepreneurs. We refer to each participant by assigning him a number between 1 and 10 and referring to this number in a parenthesis.

4.1 Activities

In the following, each theme will be described in detail along with references to statements from participants.

Streaming

Different streaming activities were mentioned among the entrepreneurs, such as watching NRK, Netflix, HBO and YouTube. In fact, streaming activities were something that all of the participants did several times during the week. They watched both NRK, Netflix and HBO alone and in combination with other people, whereas YouTube was mainly watched alone. Streaming was described as an activity that was often chosen based on the lack of better options, or as something that was done when all other activities were finished. It was also portrayed as an easy, low effort choice, and as the perfect activity when you need to relax.

> *"when I get flushed in my head, when I get tired, I just want to go workout or just sit there and watch TV, not thinking about anything"* (6)

> *"It's lovely to drop onto the couch and relax a little (...) I'm a bit of a film nerd"* (1)

However, some of the participants expressed some ambivalence around using these streaming services as it is hard to stop when you should. Furthermore, YouTube in particular tended to induce this feeling, but only when streaming was done alone. When used in combination with socializing, no ambivalence was induced. Rather, it was seen as a positive way to relax and be around other people at the same time.

Workout

Eight out of ten entrepreneurs had been working out at least once last week, while the final two were currently hindered. Workout includes fitness center activities such as strength training, spinning, running, and tabata (i.e high intensity interval training) as well as swimming, bouldering, and skiing. Several of the entrepreneurs mentioned that they tried to work out multiple times a week. The amount of physical exercise and its enjoyment was high

among all of the entrepreneurs. There was no negative association considering workouts, and several participants longed to exercise more. All entrepreneurs mentioned positive benefits associated with this activity.

"My biggest motivation for working out is that it makes me happier" (7)

I get to think about things, it makes me sleep better at night, it makes me feel proud and it makes me keep up my health goals. A lot of benefits actually" (8)

Workouts were a means to obtain physical wellbeing and mental detachment. In addition, there was also a distinct focus on progress.

"I find it a bit fun to set up a workout schedule, and I am much more motivated when I write down and see progress" (7)

"It's something about the self-development that I talked about earlier, if I don't get progress in something, then I get restless and annoyed" (6)

It is also worth mentioning the social aspect of this activity. Several of the entrepreneurs expressed joy in sharing the experience with others. Both during the activity and afterwards (e.g talking to friends in the sauna). Lastly, some entrepreneurs mentioned improved relaxation post workout as a result of the physical strain imposed on their body.

Hobbies

Eight out of ten entrepreneurs engaged in some kind of hobby that was motivated by their personal interests. These activities include cooking, reading, playing music, drawing, learning a new language, volunteering in student organizations, and gaming.

One of the most mentioned hobbies was gaming, as four out of ten had gaming as a hobby. This included both single player and multiplayer games, on the computer and on a playstation device. Nevertheless, the perceptions of gaming differed. For example, one entrepreneur expressed negative associations with just playing alone, mentioning that he did it as a default activity when he did not have anything else to do. Furthermore, he expressed a wish to do more social gaming. In contrast, another entrepreneur told us that he gamed to relax by himself and saw it as a positive activity. The entrepreneurs engaging in gaming explained it as fun and bonding when sharing it with others.

"[My friend] made a mancave, and about once a month I pack my playstation and go to his place, so we have two playstations and two TVs and then we play [Call of Duty] together next to each other, he-he" (10)

"It's both social and you don't need to ponder or use any brain power, you can just sit there in total relaxation" (9)

Two of the entrepreneurs played musical instruments regularly. One was attending jamming sessions with a friend, while the other played in a band and was active in student associations. They both expressed great joy in doing something completely different than they normally did and the mastery involved.

"[Playing an instrument]If it's a good audience you get an adrenaline kick like nothing else" (10)

"It's just amazing, it builds friendship, it's something to look forward to, and just the music is, you know fantastic" (8)

Lastly, a few entrepreneurs engaged in hobbies like reading books, drawing, cooking and volunteering. While drawing was put forward as a need to be creative, cooking was presented as a hobby where you could learn new things and develop your skills. Volunteering was put forward as a way of gathering new skills and friends. Reading books was also something that was done to gather new skills, and not necessarily just for entertainment.

"When it comes to books, like I said earlier, something that I want to get better at. If I try to read fiction like Ernest Hemingway (...) It is, you know, beautifully written but what do I get out of it, what have I learned?" (6)

Introspection

Over half of the selection engaged in one or more of the activities within the introspection theme. Introspection comprises *pondering* about situations or work, *planning* what to do, a *journal* to keep up with thoughts and goals, *meditation* to focus, and sessions with *psychologists* to care for mental health. There was some overlap between these activities, meaning that they were used interchangeably and simultaneously. The entrepreneurs spoke positively about introspection, explaining that it was nice to take a moment to themselves during the day.

Three entrepreneurs stated that they engaged in *pondering*, explaining that it helped them generate new ideas and technical solutions. It often occurred in combination with planning and journaling. The nature of planning was more structured than pondering, where planning followed a recipe while pondering happened spontaneously and in conversations with others. One entrepreneur in particular stated that he sits down every week and jots down his thoughts and ideas, prioritizes them, and develops goals and progress plans. The entrepreneur who applied this framework stated that he experienced very little stress related to work, regardless of workload and time pressure.

"I work a lot on planning and organizing my days, so on a general basis that makes me much less stressed" (5)

Journaling also had a lot in common with planning because in both cases, thoughts were gathered and written down. In several cases, there also seemed to be a degree of sorting and prioritizing these thoughts.

As mentioned, the lines between pondering, journaling and planning were weak, and how the activities were combined differed from participant to participant. For example, one entrepreneur started planning and ended up in pondering, while another started with pondering and ended up writing goals in his journal. The frequency of introspection also differed. While some only did journaling once in a while, two of the entrepreneurs wrote in their journal regularly.

In addition to pondering, planning and writing a journal multiple participants mentioned engaging in meditation. The meditations were used as a way of centering the mind as well as focusing on positive things in life. One entrepreneur mentioned noticing himself becoming increasingly stressed, subsequently using meditation as a way to calm down and mentally detach from the work-related thoughts he was ruminating about. Another entrepreneur used meditation as a method of motivating himself and preparing for the day ahead, indicating a more invigorating or refreshing effect.

"That's where I appreciate the time, enjoy the day that has been, looking forward to the upcoming day, what will happen in ten years, just ten minutes for reflection" (8)

Overall, every participant who engaged in activities within this theme, expressed the importance of setting aside time for introspection.

"I have noticed that I in a way do not reflect enough about things that happen at work and social life, so sometimes I just take time to sit quietly and do it consciously" (9)

"I need to be better at being alone (...) then I get time to, you know, maybe read a book, think and reflect over things like you can do when you are alone" (4)

Social Gatherings

The theme *social gatherings* was identified consisting of several activities commonly referred to as "being social", involving more than one person, but not including activities in the aforementioned themes. This included eating food, both at home and at cafés and restaurants, and going to the cinema, parties and work events. The entrepreneurs took great pleasure in social gatherings, and several had some kind of ritual related to dining with the same people.

"I have started cooking more the last six months, and then invite people over for dinner. It's very nice and social, I like to cook and they like to eat. It's a very nice combo" (5)

"We usually eat and hang out together every Thursday evening" (7)

Another activity that was mentioned was *parties.* Four out of ten listed parties on their weekly schedule, however most of them explained that this was mainly done during weekends. One of them was at a work event and said that it was one of the best days of the week. Another attended a farewell party during the week, and also brought that day up as the best day. They explain parties as something fun, which is enjoyable because of the social and energizing aspect of it.

The entrepreneurs in the present study spoke to a significant extent about the importance of social gatherings to their recovery, mentioning experiences like psychological detachment and (for some) relaxation. Several participants highlighted the fact that they had extroverted personalities and that social activities therefore invigorated them.

"It's a way of unwinding being with friends or my girlfriend or having dinner with... Yeah, so I'm actually pretty busy (...) I'm a very extroverted and social person" (4)

Entrepreneurs in our study also spoke to benefits like maintaining their relationships with their friends, family, and partners.

"I prioritize [being social] above everything else (...) It's an effort, but at least once a week is pretty important, I think. It really fills up your energy" (5)

"When I'm here (at work) so much, I have to do it (have dinner with my girlfriend) or else it goes to hell, haha" (6)

As a contrast, some entrepreneurs in our selection expressed that social activities, albeit desirable, could also be a source of stress. For example, two of the entrepreneurs needed to make time for solitary activities like introspection and relaxation.

Beneath is figure 3, visualizing the five identified themes presented above, including the activities that were done by the entrepreneurs. The different activities are grouped together under each theme and marked with an S or an A. A stands for activities done alone while S stands for activities done with others (social). SA stands for activities that are done either alone or with others.
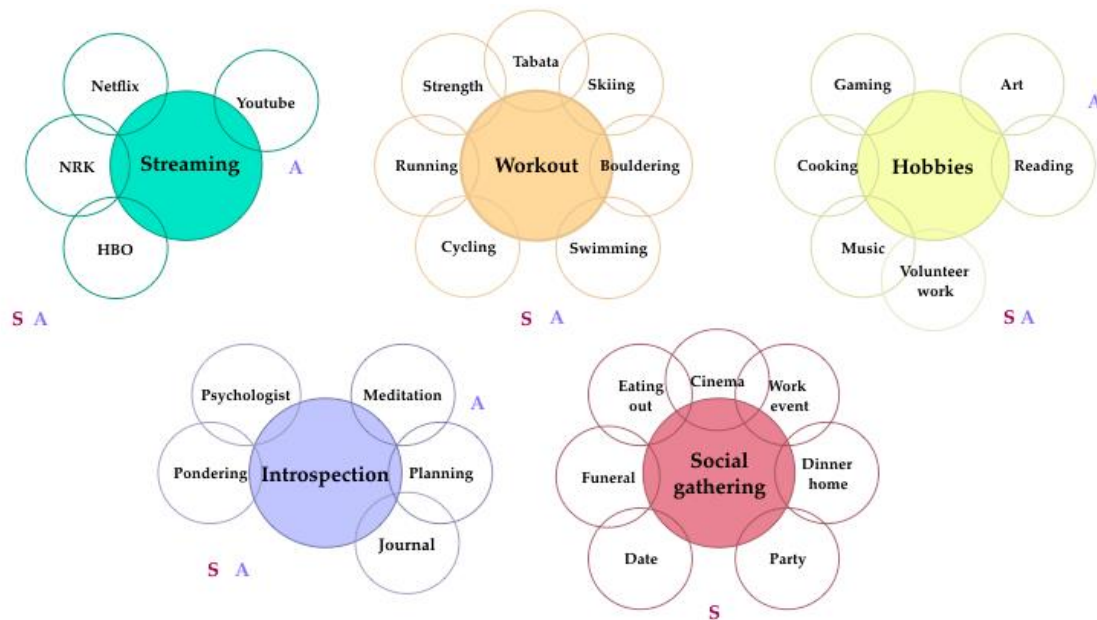
Figure 3 Visualization of themes and activities

4.2 Stress and Recovery

As mentioned, the interviews included questions touching upon how the entrepreneurs interpreted the concepts of stress, recovery and mental health. This section presents some of the most interesting information that was mentioned.

Perception of stress

One of the main differences in the entrepreneurs' perception of stress was whether the participant was stressed by situational and immediate circumstances, or by persistent pressure over time. Handling large work volumes and difficult tasks over time was either overwhelming or stimulating to the entrepreneurs. Similarly, short bursts of intense stress, would either push the entrepreneurs to focus and perform better, or overwhelm and cause them to perform poorly.

> *"I'm really good at overstressing minor things, (...) but if there's extreme pressure,(...) then I flourish, so if I have to go to war mode, I handle stress really well, but everyday stress I handle very badly"* (3)

> *"I'm in two startups as well as school, volunteering (...), I like doing things, so being under stress and such, I actually find it a little fun"* (4)

Reflections about positive stress in important situations were present in four entrepreneurs. One entrepreneur even intentionally let work pile up close to the deadline, so he could "rise

to the occasion". On the other hand, there were multiple participants who seemed more stressed about situations, and less about everyday pressure. In both cases, entrepreneurs claim that stress can be something positive, but the nature of positive stress is different.

Finally, there were some participants who did not perceive stress as positive in any scenario. However, it seems like the entrepreneurs were all accepting of the stressful nature of working in a startup.

Recovery and stress reduction

Entrepreneurs had individual ways of handling stress. The most prominent ways of dealing with stress was changing their work or the way they thought about their work, and/or by asking for help.

> *"I've learned that many of the things you stress about aren't really that big a deal. So I've developed a much more relaxed relationship with deadlines"* (2)

> *"I don't mind letting go of an assignment, and [my co-founder] doesn't mind taking over an assignment. (...) You eventually learn what you're good at and what you're not good at, so there's honesty there"* (8)

It became apparent that most entrepreneurs were aware of their need for recovery, and deliberate about what activities they chose to spend their time on. When asked specifically about work-related recovery, most entrepreneurs stated that this was important, and that they aimed to achieve an optimal lifestyle. Four of the ten entrepreneurs had no activities that they wanted to do less of. This came from their active pursuit of a balanced life. Meanwhile, three participants said recovery is something they wish to get better at. It was unclear what recovery experiences they were specifically referring to, but relaxation and taking breaks were mentioned as the desired recovery activities.

> *"I think maybe, without being aware of it, you perform better if you are able to relax properly"* (10)

4.3 Summary of findings

In this chapter we presented five activity themes that were identified through our analysis of the interview data. These were streaming, workout, hobbies, introspection, and social gatherings. We included explanations from the entrepreneurs on what recovery effects each activity entailed. In addition, we saw entrepreneurs' ways of handling stress and increasing their own recovery. Overall, it can be established that the participants in the current study

had a high degree of consciousness over the activities they chose to spend their time on as well as what wellbeing outcomes the activities produced.

5 Discussion

The following chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the recovery and entrepreneurship literature. First, we present the co-occurrence of recovery experiences through the entrepreneurs' use of the activities. Then, we discuss how entrepreneurs use reflective and deliberate practices to reduce stress. Finally, we explore the role of psychological capital as a factor in entrepreneurial stress management.

5.1 Recovery experiences

When addressing what kind of activities the entrepreneurs did after work, we found a wide use of all the recovery experiences; psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, control, and problem-solving pondering. In addition, social support is suggested as an additional factor in entrepreneurial recovery.

Psychological detachment

Psychological detachment was presented as a positive element in all of the activities except work-related pondering and problem solving. Psychological detachment is described as a state where the individual is mentally distancing themselves from work-related thoughts during time off from work (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). It was prominent that engaging in activities such as workouts, hobbies, gaming, and social events gave benefits such as forgetting work and doing something completely different.

Relaxation

Relaxation is characterized by a state of low activation and affect (Stone, Kennedy-Moore & Neale, 1995). It is commonly perceived as non challenging and described as activities requiring little physical or intellectual effort (Tinsley & Elredge, 1995). The activities that were most associated with relaxation were streaming and easier versions of gaming. As mentioned in our findings, the entrepreneurs had mixed feelings about the activities expressed as relaxation. For example, streaming alone was described as an activity that was often chosen based on the lack of better options. However, relaxation after a workout session was seen as a positive outcome of the workout activity. Relaxation in combination with other people was seen as the most rewarding, this included activities such as watching a movie with friends after dinner. One might question whether something is actually categorized as a recovery experience if the entrepreneurs have negative associations around it, such as feeling lazy or guilty about not spending time doing something more productive. In a study on after-work activities, three types of moods were induced; positive, negative, and dynamic and complex. Negative moods such as boredom have been reported as a consequence of the misuse of after-work activities

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1994). Meanwhile, dynamic and complex changes in moods ranging from negative to positive were identified as a usual experience in a variety of leisure situations (Lee & Shafer, 2002; Lee, Dattilo & Howard, 1994). For example, in the start of a workout one might experience strain and negative feelings, but after a while the activity could induce "runners high". The mood itself is not necessarily the factor that decides whether recovery occurs. However, positive moods induced by after-work activities help alleviate stress (Patterson & Coleman, 1996). We therefore suggest that entrepreneurs might experience a higher degree of recovery when they perceive the recovery experience as positive.

Mastery

Workout and hobbies were used as mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are characterized as activities that work as distractors through learning and challenges in other domains (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). These experiences were expressed as the most beneficial, both in terms of happiness and sense of achievement. For example, several of the participants that engaged in running referred to "runners high" as one of the most pleasant feelings they could get. This might suggest an intrinsic motive (Markland & Ingledew, 1997) behind doing workout activities. However, when explaining why they started to do the different workout activities some of the participants mentioned motivation like pride (e.g. ambitions to get better than another person), or that they did not enjoy the activity at all in the beginning. The ability to engage in recovery activities even though they are not pleasant or intrinsically motivated from the beginning might come from high self-efficacy. It is proposed that higher self-efficacy leads to higher self-set goals. It is also proposed that self-efficacy might impact performance through cognitive processes such as coping and persistence (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Actually, entrepreneurs have been suggested to score high on this ability (Baron et al., 2016), which is something we also see indications of in our study.

Control

Control refers to a recovery experience where you have authority over what kind of activities to do, as well as how to do them (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). The participants did not express any particular emotion or perception around control. They all managed their after-work time as they preferred. Even though they did not mention the benefit of control explicitly, our interpretation of the data suggests that the entrepreneurs experienced control through multiple activities (e.g. through streaming; Granow, Reinecke, & Ziegele, 2018). One reason for this freedom is the age and life situation of the selection. None of the entrepreneurs had children or obligations outside of work. In addition, they all seemed very conscious about how they managed their spare time. The selection also expressed that they sometimes experienced lack of control at work, and if these periods lasted for too long it caused negative effects on physical and mental health.

Problem-solving pondering

The concept of work-related rumination looks at the presence of work-related thoughts after work (Weigelt et al., 2019). Some of the participants explained that they enjoyed pondering about work related challenges after work. For example, two participants regularly discussed problems and technical solutions to work-related challenges with other people. One expressed that he actively looked for YouTube videos explaining work-related concepts, and another used his walks home from work to process work-related projects. Work-related rumination can lead to negative affective processes (Frone, 2015). However, research also suggests benefits of positive work reflection (Binnewies, Sonnentag & Mojza, 2009), problem-solving pondering (Weinberger et al., 2018), and positive rumination (Frone, 2015). The participants seemed to enjoy rewards like creativity and problem solving. Yet, when work stress was too demanding, the entrepreneurs preferred to engage in activities that induced psychological detachment. Weinberger and colleagues (2018) posit that entrepreneurs are high in problem solving pondering. Their study focused on recovery in relation to creativity and work engagement outcomes (Weinberger et al., 2018). However, our data did not suggest that problem-solving pondering was prioritized over other recovery experiences. On the contrary, the entrepreneurs seemed more engaged when they talked about activities that entailed recovery experiences such as mastery and psychological detachment.

Combination of recovery experiences

The high use of all recovery experiences are in line with profile 1 in Siltaloppi and colleagues (2011) study on recovery profiles; people displaying high levels of detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. However, this was the most common profile, containing 70 percent of the study population. We therefore see the benefits of looking into not only what kind of recovery experiences the entrepreneurs engage in, but also in what sequence they appear. For example, workout activities induced enjoyment in pre-workout planning (control), feeling of achievement (mastery) and a break from work-thoughts during workout (psychical detachment), and due to the physical strain entailed increased relaxation post-workout. However, several participants expressed ambiguous feelings around relaxation activities like streaming. This is corroborated by their statements like "getting trapped, over-extending, dull, non-enriching, slacking off, and watching crap". The sequence in which the recovery experiences are used and the combination of them might therefore have an impact on what degree of recovery that occurs.

Social support

The social aspect of the activities influenced the degree of recovery experienced by the entrepreneurs. Additionally, activities including other people were a priority across all activity

themes that involved a social facet. Gunnarsson and Josephson (2011) found that having a satisfactory social life was related to good health in a study on entrepreneurs, even when controlling for factors like work characteristics and job satisfaction. The entrepreneurs in the present study spoke about benefits such as maintaining their relationships with friends, family, and partners. According to Rath & Harter (2010), investing in your close relations' wellbeing ultimately means investing in your own wellbeing, as humans are affected by the people who surround them on many levels. As a contrast, some entrepreneurs in our selection expressed that social activities, albeit desirable, could sometimes be a source of stress. This supports findings by Oerlemans et al., (2014) suggesting that social activities can only improve recovery when they are being enjoyed. Still, the sum of our findings suggests that social support affects entrepreneurial recovery positively. Regrettably, social activities have been sparesley presented in recovery literature, and the recovery experiences induced are inconclusive. Sonnentag (2001) highlighted the importance of social activities for recovery, but unfortunately this article was written before recovery experiences (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) had been conceptualized. The mechanisms she described were therefore merely that social activities put demands on resources that are not depleted during work, that they provide opportunities for social support, and that positive affect plays a role in the relation between social activities, recovery and wellbeing (Sonnentag, 2001). Sonnentag's (2001) findings were corroborated and expanded by Korpela & Kinnunen (2010) who found that employees rated the effect of social relations on recovery quite highly (3,5/4) only being surpassed by physical exercise, being in nature, and relaxing. Oerlemans, Bakker & Demerouti (2014) also found a link between social activities and recovery, which was mediated by feelings of happiness. Based on the consistent findings on social impact in our study as well as literature, we suggest that social support is a factor that should be taken into consideration when exploring how entrepreneurs recover in the future.

An overview of the different recovery experiences used by the entrepreneurs, and how they interact is to be found in figure 4 The arrows represent the interaction between the recovery experiences. That is, if there exists an arrow between two recovery experiences are they both used together during one or several of the activities. Furthermore, the recovery experiences are of equal value and there exists no hierarchy. However social support was influenced by, and influenced, all other recovery experiences.
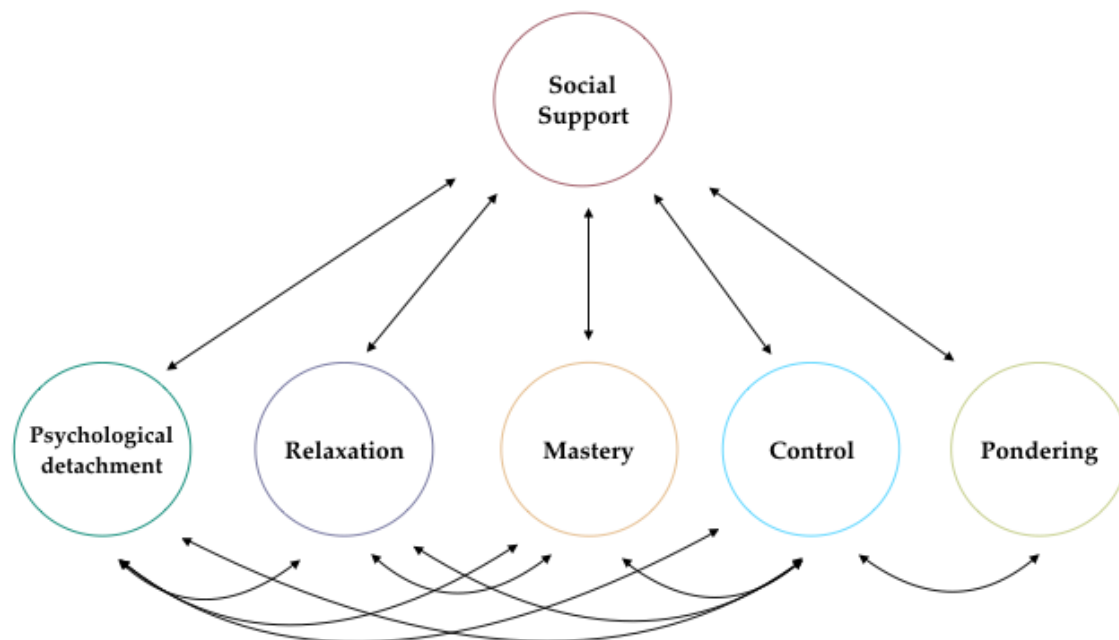
Figure 4 Interaction of recovery experiences used by entrepreneurs

5.2 Entrepreneurial stress reduction

Up until this point, we have explored the activities entrepreneurs use in order to recover. However, as stated in chapter 4, another interesting finding in the present study was that entrepreneurs held an impressive level of consciousness regarding their activities related to stress-reduction. In many cases, this came from the entrepreneurs' intentional effort to improve their own wellbeing and reduce stress. In the following section of the discussion we take this finding one step further by linking our findings to research on entrepreneurial learning and skills. Thus, we explore what may have enabled the entrepreneurs to display this level of deliberateness.

Reflective practice

One of the most prominent trends in our data was how purposive the entrepreneurs seemed to be about their time expenditure and how it affected their stress levels. Multiple entrepreneurs had identified what they described as "pillars" upon which their wellbeing rested. These pillars came from their engagement in self-analysis where they tracked and interpreted their needs, their habits, and their wellbeing outcomes. Albeit varying in consistency, this practice was present in the majority of the selection. This is interesting because it opposes what Bernier (1998) suggested: that there are subtle psychological processes which are inaccessible to the interviewee. Our findings, however, bear testament

to a highly conscious selection of entrepreneurs who frequently reflected on a meta-cognitive level.

In research on entrepreneurship education, the concept of *reflective practice* has been highlighted as a crucial part of learning how to be an entrepreneur (Tikkamäki, Heikkilä & Ainasoja, 2016; Cope, 2003). Reflective practice comprises six elements: 1) studying oneself, 2) changing one's point of view, 3) putting things into perspective, 4) harnessing a feeling of trust, 5) regulating resources, and 6) engaging in dialogue (Tikkamäki et al., 2016, p 46). Multiple examples in our data point towards entrepreneurs engaging in reflective practice. To name a few, entrepreneur 6 stated that he often analyzed the reasons for his own behavior, entrepreneur 2 changed his perspective on work tasks in order to decrease stress-levels, entrepreneur 8 overcame stress by redistributing work tasks in the startup team, and entrepreneur 7 highlighted long conversations with friends. As reflective practice appears to be a success criteria for improving as an entrepreneur, it could be that the entrepreneurs in our study have developed their reflective capabilities at work, which they can subsequently apply in their home life. An alternative view is that the entrepreneurial personal characteristics that attract individuals into entrepreneurship might also promote reflective practice.

Tikkamäki et al. (2016) found a link between reflective practice and positive stress, claiming that for entrepreneurs, the key to harnessing stress in a positive manner was through reflection. This resonates with our participants' statements about stress being positive and necessary for driving work progression. Furthermore, positive stress resembles what Cropley & Zijlstra (2011) refer to as *challenge demands* in the work context. These are stressors at work that can promote motivation in the worker, like time pressure due to a large order from a new customer. One entrepreneur stated that *"It's less problematic with high pressure if things are going well with the company"* (2). His statement is one of many examples of entrepreneurs' satisfaction being related to work performance, and that high pressure is tolerable as long as it yields good results. As such, our findings show support for the findings of several scholars who have attempted to explain why stress is less threatening to entrepreneurs (e.g. Tikkamäki et al., 2016; Cardon & Patel, 2015; Bradley & Roberts, 2004).

Deliberate practice

Another intriguing aspect of the data is the self-discipline entrepreneurs appear to possess. The entrepreneurs spoke at length about finding balance in their lives between effort, enjoyment, and rest. There was a continuous process of prioritization, and the entrepreneurs exerted control over their time. Control is on its own a recovery experience which restores depleted resources (Hessels, Rietveld & Van Der Zwan, 2017; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). Control has also been shown to reduce the degree to which an individual is threatened by stress (Bennett et al., 2018). However, what

the entrepreneurs were doing seemed to be more sophisticated. Baron & Henry (2010) proposed that expert performance in entrepreneurship comes from engagement in *deliberate practice*. Such practice involves intense, effortful, prolonged, and highly focused efforts to improve current performance, and it has been found to be a key ingredient in the attainment of performance that is consistently above the ordinary (Baron & Henry, 2010, p 50). The authors go on to claim that deliberate practice not only influences domain-specific knowledge (i.e. knowledge related specifically to the tasks performed), but that it also improves basic cognitive resources. This effect could help explain the immense control and discipline entrepreneurs are displaying, and how conscious they seem of which activities are likely to improve their wellbeing. Along these lines, several entrepreneurs explained that self-improvement was essential to them and their wellbeing. Han & Patterson (2007) support this by stating that leisure activities are a means of improving self-exploration and self-identification skills. As such, it seems that entrepreneurs take an approach similar to deliberate practice when it comes to using leisure to recover from work-related effort.

Psychological capital

Psychological capital consists of four constructs: self-efficacy (i.e. belief in own abilities to accomplish goals), hope (i.e. belief that the chosen path can lead to the desired outcome), optimism (i.e. positive outlook on life), and resilience (i.e. ability to perform well under pressure and recover after setbacks) (Ross, Strevel & Javadizadeh, 2020). Research has shown a link between psychological capital and entrepreneurship (e.g. Baron et al., 2016). At the same time, several of the constructs withins psychological capital have been explored in relation to wellbeing outcomes (e.g. Ross, Strevel & Javadizadeh, 2020; Fisher et al., 2014). *Self-efficacy* appears to be a factor that resurfaces time and again. In most of the activities identified in our population, the participants needed to be self-driven and exert control, especially when it comes to the activities that induce mastery experiences. *Hope* has been found to be a key element of entrepreneurs' recovery after burnout (Ross et al., 2020). In our population, two entrepreneurs had recovered from such conditions. Although hope was not explicitly discussed during the interviews, it was clear that the entrepreneurs displayed significant inner motivation in their work, and belief that what they were doing was working. As a side note, adverse events such as experiencing burnout could, according to Cope (2003) have a positive impact on entrepreneurial learning. *Optimism* was also present in various entrepreneurs, especially entrepreneur 8, who incorporated optimism into his mindset through his reflective practice. Finally, *resilience* was present in several entrepreneurs who stated that they thrive under pressure. Indeed, Fisher, Maritz and Lobo (2014) found that entrepreneurs displayed higher levels of resilience than the average population, and that when combined with harmonious passion, resilience predicted entrepreneurial success. Thus our findings support what others have proposed: entrepreneurs appear to be especially high in

psychological capital (Baron et al., 2016), which may help them perform at work and recover at home.

5.3 Summary of discussion

In this chapter, we have produced evidence from our data which indicate that entrepreneurs are high in all recovery experiences from the recovery literature. We identified the recovery experiences induced in each activity theme through analysis of statements from the entrepreneurs as well as findings of other researchers. Additionally, we discussed the importance of what sequence recovery experiences are used in, and the role of social activities in recovery.

Moreover, we have seen a display of consciousness in entrepreneurs which is especially prominent when it comes to decisions on how they spend their free time. We draw the line between indications from our data and research conducted on entrepreneurial learning and skills. We thereby argue that the relation between entrepreneurs' recovery and mental wellbeing could be affected by the entrepreneurs engaging in reflective or deliberate practice, or by the entrepreneurs' psychological capital.

5.4 Limitations

As with all studies, ours also includes some limitations. First, the selection we recruited for this study was quite small, and homogenous in terms of various demographics. This could have affected the results in this study. For example, higher education has been demonstrated to increase self-efficacy (Van Dinther, Dochy & Segers, 2011). However, a homogenous selection yields less variance in life situation and work characteristics, which made it easier to compare data from each participant without focusing too much attention on circumstantial elements.

As mentioned in the methods chapter, there are some challenges with creating consistency between interviews while using a semi-structured format. For example, there are inconsistencies in which probing questions were asked in each interview. There are two main reasons for this. First of all, our confidence as interviewers improved throughout the process of conducting the study. Second, as we gained increasing insight from each interview, we became better at predicting what questions might yield valuable answers. This is one of the main benefits and strategies with exploratory studies; flexibility in what information to use, and open-mindedness in where to find information (Stebbins, 1997).

6 Conclusion, contributions, and future research

The following chapter presents a conclusion and summary of our findings, the theoretical contributions made by this study, and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Conclusion

In this thesis we aimed to answer the following research question:

How do entrepreneurs recover daily after work?

A qualitative, exploratory study of ten entrepreneurs was conducted using a schedule of last week, and an in-depth interview. Then a rich thematic analysis of the data set was conducted, through which we identified five activity themes of interest: 1) Streaming, 2) Workout, 3) Hobbies, 4) Introspection, and 5) Social gatherings. Overall, the entrepreneurs displayed a high degree of consciousness over the activities they chose to spend their time on as well as what wellbeing outcomes the activities produced.

The five themes revealed that the entrepreneurs are high in all recovery experiences addressed in the literature; psychological detachment, mastery, control, relaxation, and pondering. However, how the recovery experiences were used together, and particularly the sequence in which they were used, seemed to have an impact on the entrepreneurs' perception of recovery. In addition, we found that the social aspect of the activities influenced the degree of recovery experienced by the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs prioritized activities including other people across all activity themes that involved a social facet.

Additionally, the entrepreneurs held an impressive level of consciousness regarding their activities related to stress-reduction. In many cases, this came from the entrepreneurs' intentional effort to improve their own wellbeing and reduce stress. Our data suggest that entrepreneurs use stress reduction strategies such as reflective and deliberate practises as well as displaying a high degree of psychological capital.

Contributions and future research

Our study provides several contributions to the literature. First, by using a qualitative, explorative study design we get a new understanding of how entrepreneurs recover from work-related stress. Our findings suggest that socializing is an important factor which influences entrepreneurial recovery. Socializing as an aspect of recovery has somehow been overlooked in recent recovery research. The mechanisms and recovery experiences obtained

through socializing are still unclear, yet the entrepreneurs in the present study highlighted its importance. We suggest that future research should integrate social activities into recovery research by looking into whether social support induces or comprises recovery experiences.

Furthermore, our study indicated that the sequence in which the recovery experiences were used might have an effect on the outcomes of recovery. Due to the high activity level and combination of recovery experiences revealed by the entrepreneurs, a deeper understanding of their interactions might be important. We therefore suggest that future research look into how sequences and combinations of recovery experiences can affect entrepreneurial recovery.

Lastly, our insights suggest that entrepreneurs perceive stress as less threatening than expected. This appears to be related to entrepreneurs' reflective and deliberate practice, autonomy, and self-efficacy, as well as owning a company making stress "worth it". Gaining a deeper understanding of how reflective and deliberate practices can be used as stress coping strategies for entrepreneurs, might yield future opportunities for research. Furthermore, we contend that psychological capital, reflective practice, and deliberate practice are teachable. As such, the ability to lead a healthy life as an entrepreneur might become accessible to all who wish to educate themselves.

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8. Attachments

Appendix 1: Interview protocol

Opening statement

Thank you for taking the time to participate in our study. There are no wrong answers. In short, we write a master's thesis on what helps entrepreneurs to recover after work.

Here is an information and consent form that we want you to sign. You will remain anonymous and all information we have about you will be kept separate from your contact information.

We hope it is okay that we take audio recordings of the interview. Do you have any questions before we start? Just ask if you are wondering about anything..

Background information ~5 min

Tell us about yourself:

- ❏ Age
- ❏ Profession
    - ❏ Tell us about your job / company
    - ❏ How long have you held this position?
    - ❏ What kind of tasks are you working on / responsible for?
    - ❏ How many hours do you work in a week?
- ❏ Education
- ❏ Living situation

Main section ~40 min

1. Roughly fill out this week's schedule for last week. Your job does not need to be as detailed, we are more interested in what you did while you were not working.
    - ❏ Exercise
    - ❏ More work
    - ❏ Relaxing
    - ❏ Socializing
        - ❏ Family
        - ❏ Friends

❏ Sweetheart

❏ Hobby / Interests

2. Was this a typical week?

3. Which day was the best day? What is the reason you chose that day?

4. Which day was the worst day? What is the reason you chose that day?

5. What do you wish to do more of after work?

6. What do you wish to do less of after work?

7. Go through each activity and ask:

  - How long have you done X?

  - What made you start?

  - What are the benefits of X?

  - Tell us about the last time you did X

8. Tell us about your relationship with stressful work?

9. Tell us about a time you experienced stress as an entrepreneur

  - What did you do to handle the situation?

  - What do you think is the reason this worked for you?

10. What do you do in your spare time that helps you perform at work?

11. What is your relationship to recovery after work?

Closing questions ~15 min

12. What is mental health to you?

13. How would you describe your mental health compared to others?

14. What do you do to improve your mental health?

15. What helps you reduce stress?

16. What increases your stress?

17. Is there something you want to mention or highlight that we haven't asked?

18. How did you experience the interview?

Conclusion

Thanks again for taking the time to participate in the study. It has been very informative. We will continue to interview more entrepreneurs, analyze the answers, and write our thesis over the next few months. We may want to contact you again to clarify if we are unsure whether we have understood something correctly. Is it okay for you?

Thanks and goodbye!

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
Workout	Tabata	1	"I usually workout three times a week" "You get so tired you dont manage to think about anything else" "we have classes with 60 people and thats pretty fun and it gets more social" "Its a good mental break and I get better sleep at night"	Social, mental break	Detachment		x	
	Strength training, running, spinning	2	"It feels great to work out, but its more fun when its with other people" "my goal is to workout at least two times a week, preferable three" "Runners high is one of the best feelings that exist"	Social, pleasure	Detachment		x (with other people)	
	Ski, climbing	3	"for example skiing and climbing more (..) I dont need that much of it, but I feel that you need some resources and time to start doing that" "I used to boulder before"	Fun	Mastery		x	
	Strength training, running, cycling, swimming, skiing	4	"I have done strenght training since secondary school" "I customice my training regime (..)it can be one month where I swim and do cycling and cardio, strengt etc" "	Prevention, variation, energy	Mastery			
	Strength training, intervall,	5	"I love it. To sit in the sauna and just talk shit, cause its always someone at (university) that works out at (the training center) (...) Just relax, its a kind of luxury" "The last semester have I been working out a lot more. But thats because the other in the startup workout more as well" "I focus a lot better when I workout, do it two three times a week (...) I just feel more awake and less dull"	Social, energy, focus, *stay in shape*	Relaxation, *improved work performance, increased sentience*			
	Strength training, intevall	6	"It was a girl that beated me in running so I was like, fuck this is rock bottom. So I just, I didnt have running shoes, so I just put on my converse and jogged around the nabourhood everyday" "its something about the self development that I talked about earlier, if I dont get progress in something, then I get restless and irritated" I workout with my girlfriend, its one of the activities we have in common, so when I workout in the evenings, its usually together with her"	goal achievement, relationship	Mastery			
	Strength training, running	7	"my biggest motivation is that it makes me happier" "the goal is to work out three times a week, but I can see that thats not happening that often though. But yeah, its great for clearing your mind" "I find it a bit fun to put up a workout schedule, and are much more motivated when I write down and see progress"	Happiness, goal achievement	Mastery, detachment			

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
	Running, bouldering,	8	"I get to think about things, it makes me sleep better at night, it makes me proud and it makes me keep up my health goals. A lot of benefits actually" "Its just an amazing thing. When you go bouldering you have to take off your watch, your phone, as you cant wear it, and just test your bodys limit thru something that is so much fun" "Its fun and healthy"	Fun, physical and mental health	Mastery, detachment			
	Bouldering, running	9	"You feel a progress when you manage a harder and harder (climbing) route, so it feels useful, even though you just get in better shape" " I tried to get the people I live with to join something active, since we gamed a lot (...) so I got them to join bouldering, and a lot of them got hooked" "Its a little pleasure to manage three hard workout sessions in a row, like a last minute intense effort"	Social, goal achievement	Mastery		x (running)	
	Strength training	10	"I become a completely different person when I workout (...) I become a wreck without and when I do it I get super positive and have a lot of energy, go to work is not a problem and everything works out"	Energy, pleasure	Mastery			
Streaming	Netflix	1	"(...) and yeah, uhm, watch some series" "It's lovely to drop onto the couch and relax a little (...) I'm a bit of a film nerd" "Watching something random (...) Just letting time pass"	Relaxing, personal interest, pass time, detachment	Relaxation, engagement in series, detachment			
	HBO	2	"Brain dead TV-watching" "You watch one episode and then you've suddenly watched five episodes. I'm stuck in a series hell like that right now. Just get trapped in a series so whenever I'm not doing anything else I switch it on, and then time goes by." "Life is not good, it's not bad, it just is."	Pass time during dinner, losing control, easy, relaxing	Relaxation	Not enriching, unproductive		x
	HBO, Netflix	3	"I often binge series til late at night, even though there aren't enough hours left in the day"	Relaxing, detachment	Engagement in series, reducing stress	Addiction to series, losing sleep		x
	Netflix	4	"Yeah, so it's mostly Netflix, different series" "There are evenings where I need to be completely relaxed and that's when I choose Netflix"	Free time, alone time, need for recovery and relaxation	Detachment, relaxation, recovery		x (alone)	
	YouTube, Netflix, NRK	5	"I don't remember exactly what else I did on Monday, though. Uhm, it's sort of sitting and watching YouTube or something dully" "What can I say? It's not positive to just lie on the couch for four hours"	Relaxing, easy	Entertainment	Not enriching	x (social)	x (alone)
	NRK, Netflix	6	"I watch an awful lot of movies, like series and stuff (...) Like yesterday, I binged a series. I was totally dead" " I get flushed in the head. The only thing I want is to work out or go home and just sit there and watch TV and not think about anything"	Nice, relaxing, learning (self-development)	Nice, mastery, detachment, relaxation			
	Netflix, YouTube	7	"[slacking off involves] YouTube, for example... in front of the TV" "(...) just watching some crap on Netflix" "It's my go-to actually."	Easy, pass time during dinner, relaxing, unwinding, "autoplay"	Relaxation, detachment, socializing	Not a satisfying activity (YouTube)	x (Netflix)	x (YouTube)

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
	Netflix, YouTube	8	"It's sort of either Peaky Blinders or YouTube" "It's a very low-threshold activity, and I get a sort of self-realization from [YouTube]"	Relaxing, learning, easy	Socializing, relaxing, mastery (YouTube), entertainment	Losing sleep (YouTube)		
	Netflix, YouTube	9	"I watched a movie with my flatmates (...) something on Netflix" "That's what I did last weekend, I watched an entire series" "For a long time I've watched a YouTube clip or a quick series on Netflix before going to bed"	Easy, relaxing, entertainment, easy to fall asleep after	Easy to fall asleep, entertainment, relaxation, recovery	Tired the next morning if you watch too long		x
	YouTube	10	"I take some YouTube breaks (...) at dinner time" "I got interested in learning (...) there's so much information on YouTube" "I just play a video and it's the content creators who decide what I learn"	Learning, pass time during breaks/dinner, relaxing, personal interest	Passively learning, relaxation			
Hobbies	Cooking (drawing)	1	Drawing; "I draw once a year...I buy new eqipment and draw a whole week in a row"					
			Cooking;"Its like a hobby in general" "I try to get better with knives for example or combine new tastes"	Learning, exploring, unwind	Mastery, detachment			
	Learning Chinese,	2	"I asked myself; what can I do today that makes me a better version tomorrow (..) so I started to learn Chinese"	Learning	Mastery			
		3						
	Gaming, volunteering	4	Volunteering: "I'm in the committy at the student association"	Social				
			"A lot of dinners and playing Fifa"	Social	Detachment			
	Gaming, cooking	5	Cooking; "two years ago, the I really got my eyes up for cooking" "I like to try out new recipies, culture and such. I tested a whole month as a vegeterian for example"	Exploring, social	Mastery, enjoyment			
			Gaming: "Its something that I want to do more of, actually do gaming with other people and not just dull gaming alone" "Gaming is fun, its a little bit more active (than yotube) and if you can connect with people, then its even more fun, so yeah. So itts activities I do when I really dont have anything else to do"	Social, pass time			x (with others)	x (alone)
	Reading, cooking	6	Cooking: "Its very nice, all the planning, you need to go there and buy this and its a little bit exciting as well to actually make the food (...) and if it is a complete fail then we have to eat a frozen pizza instead"	Learning, exploring, social			x (focus on nutrition)	x (less interested)

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
			Reading: "Right now I wish I read more. I used to read a book every week" "During vacations I read to giant books (...) when I don't have anything else to do" "If I spend time unwinding with [a book] I feel like it's antisocial because I could watch something with [my girlfriend] instead" "when it comes to books, like I said earlier, something that I want to get better at. If I try to read fiction like Ernest Hemningway (...) It is, you know, beautifully written, but what do I get out of it, what have I learned?	Learning (self-development), unwinding	Mastery, detachment, relaxation		x	
		7						
	Music, painting	8	"I have a new year's resolution to make one paintint each month"	Self-realization	Feels good		x	
			"Jamming with [a friend]" "Its just amazing, its build friendship, its something to look forward too, and just the music you know fantastic" Just a lot of joy joy joy, and a feeling of, its always a form of progression"	Learning, socializing, fun	Mastery			
	Gaming	9	"If I want to relax, I just play more mechanical games that not require any thought work such as car games etc."Its both social and you dont need to pondering or use any brain power, you can just sit there in total relaxation" "the last years has it been more for chilling and not an full focus activity"	Mental break, social				
	Music, gaming	10	"Just boring stuff, a little YouTube, a little Playstation" "He has made an mancave and around once a month do I pack my playstation over to his place, so we have two playstations and two tvs and then we play Cod together next to eachother hehe"	Social, fun	Relaxation			
			"If its a good audience then you get an adrenaline kick like nothing else" "Its a grat source for, not relaxing, but to do something completely different"	Social	Detachment, emotional release (being a little crazy), adrenaline kick			
Introspection	Pondering/rumination, meditation	1	Pondering: "[Want to do less] thinking about work. Just getting away from - what do you call it - anxiety, problems (...) background stress that is gnawing at you"	Stress, unable to detach		Anxiety		x
			Meditation: "Meditation is something I've tried a little bit" "I think it seems interesting (...) you snap out of your state of mind"	Stress, unable to detach, improving mental health	Psychological detachment, being more conscious			
	Journal, psychologist	2	Psychologist: " I take one [psychology session] a month for follow-up"	Follow-up from burnout, prevent new burnout				

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
			Journal: " I feel like I have good insight into how I feel, as a result of logging it for nearly four years" "I keep a journal [where I] keep track of experienced happiness over time" "I log experienced happiness over time, day by day, twice a day (...) I summarize the hours into a number between zero and ten"	Tracking happiness	Understanding what makes you happy, identifying key criteria for happiness			
	Psychologist	3	Psychologist: "(...) I was starting to really crash (...) and I was like 'Now I need mental health care' and I found myself a psychologist" "I'm in the process of trying to become a whole human and sort of get over complexes and insecurities and work a little with my head too" "[I take sessions] as often as I can. Maybe every two or three weeks"	Improve mental health, prevent burnout, suggestion from team member	Improve mental health			
	Planning, reflection	4	"I need to get better at being by myself (...) then I get proper time to sort of maybe read a book, think a little, reflect on things that I can do alone, think about other things, plan some more, just have some [me]-time"	Spending a lot (too much) time with others	Gain perspective, process thoughts and events, problem-solving pondering		x	
	Planning	5	Planning: "I like organizing and planning" "I normally plan each week and use time blocking" "I plan my week, but I mix it up as needed" "I know how I function. If I don't get any breaks to myself, things get really messy, things get unorganized, I focus on the wrong things usually" "I use 'Getting things done' (...) it's a method for organizing things. You can look it up (...) its basically about gathering thoughts and organizing: 'What are reasonable thoughts? What are not reasonable thoughts?' and you make little projects out of the reasonable thoughts"	Working more efficiently, prioritizing, ensuring enough time for desirable activities, inspired by influencer	Reduce stress, increase control, working more efficiently, identifying what is important			
	Journal, Meditation	6	Journal: "I reflect on things a lot, but I don't always arrive at an answer necessarily" "I've been conscious for a long time, I've sort of tried a lot, writing journals, meditating and stuff for many years" "I dont write in my journal that often, it's more like, it can be reflection that I do now and then. I don't feel like I need to write that much nowadays, there isn't that much to reflect on, not much going on at the personal plane" "I just make goals and stuff (...) I look at my habits and am like 'OK, is there anything I can do differently?'"	Having time to reflect, need for mental processing, checking in with oneself, improving lifestyle	Lifestyle improvement, visualizing own achievements (mastery?), learning about oneself			
	Journal, Meditation	7	Meditation: "I like it when I have time to meditate, time to journal if I feel like it (...) have a good balance in life" "When I haven't meditated in a while and I meditate, I get disappointed at the damn chaos that can be up there [in my head]" "(...) and I'm like 'Jesus, this is pleasant' and it gives some more clarity" "(...) you can train the skill (mindfulness) over time, so it's easier to jump in and out"	Need for relaxation and psychological detachment, high stress, meditation is 'trendy' and 'supposed to be good for you', improve mental health	Relaxing, calming down, reducing stress, increase work performance, psychological detachment, pleasant activity, mastery			

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
			Journal: "I wrote in my journal last Tuesday or Wednesday" "It's a reactive tool I use, not very proactive. (...) I don't do it that often, but I know that the times I've done it, I always feel better afterwards" "I write everything, completely unstructured and then it's like 'OK, but what's all this?' and you organize your thoughts like 'OK fine, but what are you going to do now? What can you do about the situation?'"	Need for prioritizing, need for mental processing, improve mental health	Prioritizing, planning, reduce stress, improve work performance			
	Meditation, Journal, Pondering	8	Journal: "I take three photos every day no matter what. That way I can remember where I am and who I'm with" "I keep a journal and write about, uhm, just what I think and how I feel" "Time goes by so quickly, I experienced so much and I wanted to remember" "I used to make reports and give grades" "I write in my journal twice a week" "I read my old journal entries now and then for fun" "It's just for me (...) I could share it with [my girlfriend], but not just anybody" "Sometimes it's good to just thing things over and arrive at a conclusion before you (...) start talking about what you're thinking"	Fear of forgetting, tracking happiness, remembering, mental processing	Nice ritual, remembering, feeling secure			
			Pondering: "On a good day (...) if I take something positive home from work, then I love talking about work" "It generates more ideas and you're sort of in flow" "But on a bad day, it would be begative if I sort of took the problem home" "I just remind myself about the challenges at work"	Sharing excitement about positive work experiences	Generating ideas, problem-solving pondering, increase creativity, flow, increase work performance	Increase stress (bad days), decrease detachment		x (bad days)
			Meditation: "I have some rules of thumb. Focus on the positive (...), focus on what I can do something about, and make the best out of the situation" "I do ten minutes of meditation when I arrive at work" "I sort of appreciate time, enjoy the day that was, look forward to the new day and the future ten years from now" "It's easy to skip [meditation] when I need it the most" "Crazy amounts of research says it's good. Many of those I look up to do it"	Trendy (inspired by influencers), improve mental health, reduce stress, increase work performance, scientifically proven to be healthy	Reduce stress, relaxation			
	Pondering, meditation	9	Pondering: "(What helps you perform at work?) maybe conversations with flatmates about technical solutions to things, which make me see our product in a different way and see if we can do things differently" "To see things in a new way and sort of hearing examples of how he's implemented something and sort of considering if it's a good observation (...) it helps me"	Flatmate works with similar technology, interested in work-related technology	Problem-solving pondering, generating ideas, increase work performance			

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
			Meditation: "I met [team member] through [the startup] and he meditates and after I had to ask how he meditates" "I haven't officially started meditating myself, but sometimes I just have a cup of tea and stare at something and just sort of sit and look into the air" "I notice that I don't think enough about things that happen (...) so sometimes I take time to just sit still. That's what I do deliberately"'	Team member meditates, need for mental processing	Relaxation, processing thoughts, planning, reducing stress		x	
	Pondering	10	"I would say mainly it's sort of being interested in what's happening at [work] and spending some time at home nurturing that interest" "Not just working with [startup]-related things, but also reading a little about the underlying technology we use, so I can arrive at work and have some extra knowledge and be super interested and being into what we are doing, I feel like that helps a lot"	Being interested in work	Work engagement, problem-solving, work performance			
Social gatherings	Party	1	"A moving out party" "One of my friends submitted his thesis on Wednesday. I live with him, so we got a little drunk actually. It was great. And he's moving and that's a little sad"	Celebration	Fun, detachment		x	
	Work event, cinema, being social	2	Being social: "So yeah, I've been pretty good at being social recently" " I'm lucky, I have a neighbor who's really nice, so I hang with him quite often" " I try to be social as often as I can"	Being extroverted	Increased sentience, more energy		x	
			Cinema: Respondent wrote cinema on the schedule	Being social	Increased sentience, more energy			
			Work event: "I think [the best day] must have been Friday (...) I had a [work] event that day. It was the social happening of the week"	Invited by student association	Fun			
	Clubbing, being social, funeral	3	Being social: "I wish I had a rhythm that harmonized more with people who are close to me so it'd be easier to be together, but we'd have to live together because of my life style" "When I'm in [my home town], the quality of my free time is much higher"	Loneliness, need for social support	Feeling closeness with others, sense of community		x	
			Funeral: "Last week was different because a friend of mine passed away. I was at a wake and stuff" "[The best day was] the funeral day. It was goood to cry a little and be with good friends afterward."	A friend passed away, grieving	Feeling closeness with others, emotional release, sense of community			
			Clubbing: "What the hell did I do Friday evening? Oh, I hadn't slept, so I fell asleep until around midnight and then I went out. Sober by the way" "When I don't live near my close friends, I don't have anyone close to me, so I'm sort of, uhm, going around, an hour with some friends here and there, and I think 'This is dull, might as well work' (...) Usually out getting a beer"	Pass the time, detachment	Detachment	Feels like a meaningless activity		x

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
	Dinner, cinema, being social, café date, party	4	Being social: "It's a way of unwinding being with friends or my girlfriend or having dinner with... Yeah, so I'm actually pretty busy" "I'm a very extroverted and social person" "Lots of dinners involved [in hanging out]" "Sometimes it's them and sometimes it's those, there are many friendships I'm trying to tend to" "I really relax when I'm around people"	Detachment, tending to relationships, being extroverted	Recovery, detachment, nice, relaxation	Never being alone		
			Cinema: "We watched 1917. I would recommend it"	Being social				
			Party: "Each semester (...) we (the student association) celebrate the newcomers and celebrate those that are leaving"	Volunteering, celebration				
			Date: "It was Valentine's day, you know (...) So I went to a café with my girlfriend"	Tending to relationship				
	Date, dinner, being social	5	Being social: "(...) trying to set up meetings with some people. Just going out and being social. Dinners or, uhm, yeah. Dates or something like that. I try to do as much of that as possible, actually. At least twice a week" "I prioritize it above everything else" "It's an effort, but at least once a week is pretty important, I think. It really fills up your energy" "I don't think I could do it every day because it requires effort" "You have social needs" "What's most critical to me [regarding mental health] is being social"	Avoiding loneliness, relaxing, need for social support	Relaxation, detachment, fun, more energy	Takes effort to plan		
			Date: "I was visiting a lady on Thursday" "It's important now and then. Pretty nice"	Finding love (?)	Fun, detachment			
	Being social, dinner, party/ clubbing	6	Being social: "I'm very social." "To improve my performance at work the most important is not feeling crap the next day, hehe, so no parties, going to bed early and saying no to social activities" "It's not that much fun, (...) social events can be a little stressful, and the past few years I've gottten better at just saying no"	Keeping in touch with people, fear of missing out, detachment	Fun, detachment, maintaing frendships	Not relaxing, increased stress		
			Dinner: "When I'm here (at work) so much, I have to do it (have dinner with my girlfriend) or else it goes to hell, haha"	Same as motivation for cooking, tending to the relationship,	Detachment, enjoyment, maintaining relationship, relaxation			
			Clubbing: "I go out quite often. I've started to limit it a bit now because I want to work out more" "I was in the committee, the one that hosts the Saturday parties, so Saturdays are basically mandatory" "I really like being alone and I really like partying with people"	Keeping in touch with people, fear of missing out, detachment	Fun, detachment, maintaing frendships			

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
	Celebration, being social, Skype date, dinner	7	Being social: "I'm not always social while I slack off, but what can I say? I'm a bit of a flatmates-guy" "That's the go-to. Trying to work out on the way home, make some food and then hang out or watch TV" "What I wish I did more of is having less time at work, getting to work out more and sort of, yeah, going out and meeting some other friends" "(...) having time for long conversations with friends, uhm, and just having a good balance in life with friends and loved ones and exercise - development at different levels" "Say you have a friend who's been nagging 2-3 times about hanging out and you haven't had time (...) when you're the bottleneck (...) that's stressful" "These evenings with good friends, just laughing (...) I'm extroverted, so it boosts me"	Tending to friendships, detachment, being extroverted	Detachment, enjoyment, maintaining relationship, personal development, improving mental health	Increased stress, feeling guilty	x (other friends)	
			Skype: "I Skype with my girlfriend about 2-3 times a week" "(...) when you can't do the Skype date at the time you planned, and you only have time for a short chat before she has to sleep, it's sort of like (...) that feeling of not fulfilling people's expectations, like when it affects someone else (...) that's stressful"	Tending to relationship	Detachment, maintaining relationship	Increased stress, feeling guilty		
			Dinner: "Eating with the flatmates, then hanging out with the flatmates, then going to bed" "I pretty much always eat my dinner in the living room because it doesn't cost me a lot being there (...) but if I'm really tired and there's been a lot of noise and things that have happened, it's nice to lie in bed" "I think it's because of who I'm living with"	Tending to friendship with flatmates, being extroverted	Detachment,			
			Celebration: "It was the day we got approval for our application, (...) so there were burgers and cognac with my flatmates" "We'd been working hard for weeks, so it was really comfortable to bring out the bottle of cognac"	Finishing an application	Quality time, the best day of the week,			
	Family dinner	8	Family dinner: "Working during the day, but after that (...) then family dinner. Plus a few beers" "My brother lives nearby" "I try to do family dinners every 2-3 weeks" "If too much time goes by, I feel guilty" "It's nice to check in and contribute where I can"	Feeling responsible for family member, keeping in touch	Nice, enjoyable, maintaining relationship			
			Being social: "It's the big factors I've mentioned before: Physical health, friends, family, uhm, love, free time. Those are sort of the factors that I keep track of"	Improving mental health	Nice, enjoyable, maintaining relationship			
			Dinner/meals: "I'm very lucky. We have a deal where I make breakfast and she cleans up, she cookcs dinner and I clean up" "She likes cooking and I don't"	Routine with girlfriend, practical	Nice, enjoyable, maintaining relationship, relaxation			

Appendix 2: Table of analysis

Theme	Activity	Entrepreneur	Quote	Motivation	Positive outcome	Negative outcome	Do more	Do less
	Dinner, clubbing	9	Dinner: "I don't exactly remember, but it was a movie with the flatmates, and dinner" "[We hang out] about once a week" "We clean the flat, two of us are responsible for cleaning and one is responsible for making something tasty and a movie, and then we rotate" "(...) the balance between work and social and some time for relaxation (...) those are the three criteria [for deciding which is the best day]"	Flatmates routine, motivation to clean the flat, reward for cleaning	Getting a reward for cleaning, feeling pleased that the flat is clean		x	
			Clubbing: "Yeah, I sometimes go out on Friday and Saturday, but not for the past couple of months"					
	Dinner, being social	10	Being social: "[The criteria for deciding which is the best day] is getting up early, access to coffee, working out, being productive, and being around the right people" "[The right people are] my girlfriend, the gang at [the startup] and close friends from university"	Detachment, maintaining social relations	Detachment, maintaining social relations			
			Dinner: "We shop for dinner, cook dinner, sit down and watch The office or something" "We do this almost every dinner. It's sort of become tradition"	Detachment, maintaining relationship, relaxation	Detachment, maintaining relationship, relaxation			
Other	Travel	3	"I went to a funeral in my home town"					
	Travel	7	Put travel on the schedule					
	Sleeping, travel	8	Sleeping: "I fell asleep, I was completely spent" "I almost never sleep during the day, it was an exception"					
			Travel: "Friday was work, but finished early because I travelled to [a mountain]"					