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**ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TARGETING PROSPECTIVE  
„LIGHT ENTREPRENEURS” IN FINLAND**

Bachelor's thesis

Programme International Business Administration, specialisation marketing

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Tallinn 2022

I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 9280 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Unconventional career paths are becoming more and more common. People may want to work for themselves instead of becoming an employee for a company. Additionally, there are many people who have been laid off and do not want to stay unemployed. They are interested in becoming entrepreneurs, but are afraid of associated paperwork. A third party taking care of the related bureaucracy makes the step to becoming an entrepreneur easier. These people, who do not want to set up a “real” company with all the responsibilities involved are called light entrepreneurs.

The aim of this study is to research whether social media marketing can be used to promote light entrepreneurship. This is relevant as invoicing service providers offer and market their services online and it can be assumed that their prospective customers are already active in internet and in social media. Therefore, social media marketing is suitable tool to target this customer base.

The main results of the study revealed that social media is in a highly crucial role when it comes to promoting light entrepreneurship. It was confirmed that the decision process of becoming a light entrepreneur can be assisted by social media marketing in various ways. Furthermore, the research findings suggested that relevant social media content and channels play crucial role for invoicing services, and they should be designed so that it is aligned with prospective customers’ needs and interests.

Keywords: social media marketing, light entrepreneurship, self employment

## **INTRODUCTION**

As more and more people are becoming interested in entrepreneurship, but do not want to establish an own company due to excess bureaucracy and responsibilities, a new form of entrepreneurship was created, light entrepreneurship. To be able to practice light entrepreneurship, light entrepreneurs use invoicing platforms like UKKO.fi and OP Kevytyrittäjä. The invoicing platforms handle steps like taxes, accounting and billing, which reduces the paperwork of the light entrepreneur (Autio, 2021).

Light entrepreneurship is a constantly growing trend, especially in Finland. It is a fairly new phenomenon, and many people might not have even heard the term light entrepreneurship. Therefore, there does not exist a lot of previous academic literature on it, and thus there is a need for more research on the topic. With this study, the author will create awareness around the concept of light entrepreneurship.

The motivation for this study comes from the willingness to find out if social media marketing can be used by invoicing services in order to advertise light entrepreneurship. As the popularity of light entrepreneurship is growing all the time, there are more and more competing invoicing service providers. The research problem of this thesis is that there is a lack of knowledge on light entrepreneurship and little evidence on how social media can be used to promote it. The aim of this study is to research whether social media marketing can be used to promote light entrepreneurship. This is relevant as invoicing service providers provide and market their services online and it can be assumed that their prospective customers are already active in internet and in social media. Therefore, social media marketing is suitable tool to target this customer base.

There are two main questions formed for this research topic, and they are as follows:

- How can social media marketing help in the decision process to becoming a light entrepreneur?
- How can invoicing service providers deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?

These research questions are interlinked as both contribute to the success of light entrepreneurship concept.

To answer the research questions, the author will gather qualitative data in form of interviews with UKKO.fi representatives, which is an invoicing service provider company in Finland, invoicing service users and people who are interested in becoming an entrepreneur but are neither entrepreneurs nor light entrepreneurs. These interviews will help to gain understanding on light entrepreneurship and its connection to social media. Secondary data conducted from previous literature will be collected from e.g., articles, internet, surveys and books.

This thesis is constructed of five main parts, which are theoretical background, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. In the first chapter the author will go through the concepts of light entrepreneurship and social media marketing, as well as explain the main theory behind this research, UTAUT2. Second chapter will be about the research strategy and methodology of this study. In the third part, the author will go through the findings of the research. Last parts of the thesis hold discussion and conclusions.

Furthermore, the author would like to thank her supervisor Susanne Durst for her valuable guidance and support through the thesis writing process. Also, the author wants to thank all the participants of the interviews for dedicating their time and providing highly beneficial answers for constructing the thesis.

# **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter describes the main theoretical concepts used as a base for this thesis. These include definition of light entrepreneurship as a concept, introduction to social media marketing theory, and user acceptance of information technology theories. These theories help to build a big picture around light entrepreneurship and social media marketing and describe how they can be linked. Therefore, they are essential enablers for answering the research questions set for this study.

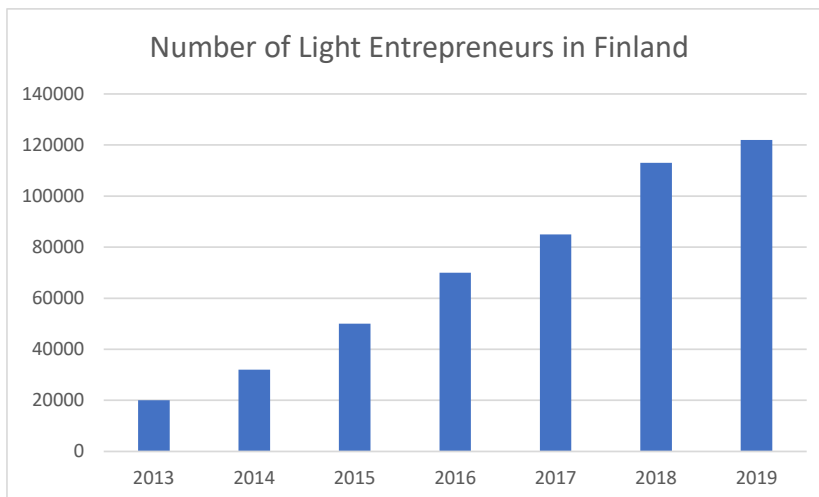
## **1.1 Light entrepreneurship**

Before providing detailed definition of light entrepreneurship, a definition of entrepreneurship is given. Schumpeter (n.d.) gives the following definition: entrepreneurship is an innovation function or creative activity. The process of entrepreneurship may include: 1) introduction of new product, 2) deployment of new methods in production, 3) opening a new market, 4) acquire of new raw material and 5) new form of organization. On the other hand, “an entrepreneur is individual who creates a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The process of setting up a business is known as entrepreneurship.” The associated obstacles in entrepreneurship include e.g. 1) Overcoming bureaucracy, 2) Hiring talent and 3) Obtaining financing (Hayes, 2021). Light entrepreneurship aims to tackle the first obstacle (Autio, 2021; Nurminen, 2018; Uusi työ ry, n.d.). Light entrepreneurship introduces a new way of exercising entrepreneurship (Uusi työ ry, n.d.). Light entrepreneurship is quite a recent concept and thus there does not exist much of academic research on the topic yet. Another reason for limited amount of research is the fact that the concept of light entrepreneurship is not a common global trend, but the phenomenon is concentrated in Finland. This is one evidence that in Finland there might exist major barriers in establishing a company compared to other countries (Autio, 2021).

Finnish association promoting light entrepreneurship, The New Work Association (Uusi työ ry in Finnish) defines light entrepreneurship as “a line of business that is conducted through an invoicing service”. Invoicing service, on the other hand, is defined as a service that provides a possibility for the self-employed persons to invoice their work without a business identity code (Uusi työ ry, n.d.;

Christiansen & Koeman, 2015). The customer is invoiced by the invoicing service for the job done. Then the invoicing service pays the salary for the light entrepreneur. Moreover, the invoicing service handles the statutory employer obligations on behalf of the light entrepreneur. The business of invoicing service is covered by charging a fixed percentage of the earnings of the light entrepreneur (Laitinen et al., 2022). Typical professions among light entrepreneurs include journalists, specialists and musicians (Uusi työ ry, n.d.; Laitinen, 2020a; Laitinen, 2020b). As shown in Table 1 the number of light entrepreneurs has grown rapidly during the last years (Mutila, 2020).

Table 1. Number of light entrepreneurs in Finland (Uusi työ ry, n.d.)



Some further details about the light entrepreneurship are given by Finnish governmental internet site, Suomi.fi. It defines light entrepreneur as a private person that invoices his/her customers through invoicing service. In that role he/she does not have to establish a company or does not have to have a business identity code. The invoicing service is responsible for invoicing the customer, paying the salary for the light entrepreneur and taking care of accounting and tax returns. In taxation and accounting light entrepreneurs are typically considered as employees, but in pension and unemployment issues they can be considered as entrepreneurs. Light entrepreneurs cannot operate on licensed sectors, e.g. running a restaurant serving alcohol. (Suomi.fi, n.d.)



## 1.2 Social media marketing

Before describing what social media marketing is, a short definition of social media is given. Howard and Parks (2012) state social media consisting of the following components: 1) information infrastructure and tools to produce and distribute content, 2) content taking digital form consisting of news, ideas or personal messages and 3) people, industries and organizations producing and consuming both content and tools. Compliant with this social media definition, Tuten and Solomon (2017) define social media marketing as deployment of social media channels, technologies and software for creating, delivering, communicating and exchanging offerings that are valuable from the organization's stakeholders' point of view. Examples of popular social media platforms include e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

The proactive objectives of social media marketing from the organization's perspective include traffic generation to online platforms, increasing sales, optimizing marketing costs, improving brand image, equity and awareness, and growing user interactions. Brand equity in this context means premium that a company can provide compared to peer companies. On the other hand, the reactive objectives of social media marketing include analyzing and monitoring what users of social media discuss about company and its actions (Felix et al., 2016). From the consumer's perspective, information technology (IT) communication technologies and social media marketing can improve efficiency, convenience, and enable richer and collaborative information. Also, it enables cost reduction, competitive pricing, broader product selection and diversity, as well as proactive communication including peer judgements (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). The main benefits of social presence as stated by Tiago and Verissimo (2014) are highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2. Benefits of digital presence (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014, p. 705)

Benefit type	% <sup>a</sup>
Improves information gathering and feedback	87
User-friendly tool	85
Increases knowledge	85
Promotes internal and external relationships	82
Supports decision-making process	60
Increases productivity	58
Better outcome measurement	53

Note: N=170

<sup>a</sup> Percentage of respondents rating 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale where 5 = extremely important.

Social media marketing can be applied both in the context of B2C and B2B cases or even cases that lie between these two categories (Nurminen, 2018). An example of B2C social media marketing is paid social advertising like YouTube ads. An example of B2B social media marketing is creating connections with prospective customers in LinkedIn. The main scope of this thesis is on social media marketing actions concerning branding in the form of providing information for prospective customers and collaboration in the form of providing online assistance and (prospective) customer engagement as these are the areas, which can help in the decision process to become a light entrepreneur. The focus of branding is in line with the findings of Table 3. that shows brand awareness and brand building having the topmost priority in social media marketing both for B2B and B2C businesses.

Table 3. Top priorities for businesses using social media marketing (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 54)

	% Using	B2B Product	B2B Services	B2C Product	B2C Services
Brand awareness and brand building	46.1 %	45.3 %	48.9 %	45.6 %	43.9 %
Acquiring new customers	31.4 %	27.0 %	30.4 %	36.8 %	40.4 %
Introducing new products and services	28.9 %	29.9 %	27.4 %	35.1 %	24.6 %
Retaining current customer	28.4 %	26.3 %	24.4 %	33.3 %	38.6 %
Brand promotions (e.g., contests, coupons)	28.4 %	27.7 %	27.4 %	38.6 %	22.8 %
Improving employee engagement	20.1 %	17.5 %	23.0 %	15.8 %	24.6 %
Marketing research	14.7 %	12.4 %	14.8 %	17.5 %	17.5 %
Identifying new customer groups you currently don't target	13.7 %	14.6 %	14.1 %	15.8 %	8.8 %
Identifying new products and service opportunities	11.1 %	8.8 %	14.8 %	7.0 %	12.3 %
Improving current products or service	7.2 %	6.5 %	8.9 %	5.3 %	7.0 %

As illustrated in Figure 1. below, social media is composed of four zones: social community, social publishing, social commerce and social entertainment. All of these zones can be used for social media marketing purposes. The following lists the main characteristics of these zones. Social community can be used for example for sharing, socializing and discussions. It enables multi-way communication, and the focus is on sharing of experiences and collaboration. The applicable platforms include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social publishing produces content for distribution via different social publishing sites. The applicable sites cover blogs and different media sites like YouTube. Social commerce covers online shopping, buying and selling of products and services. Social commerce enables shared participation for the buying decision. The platforms used for social commerce include for example Facebook and TripAdvisor. Social entertainment is intended to provide pleasure and enjoyment for shared entertainment purposes. It addresses also different events and performances. The applicable platforms include e.g. Spotify. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

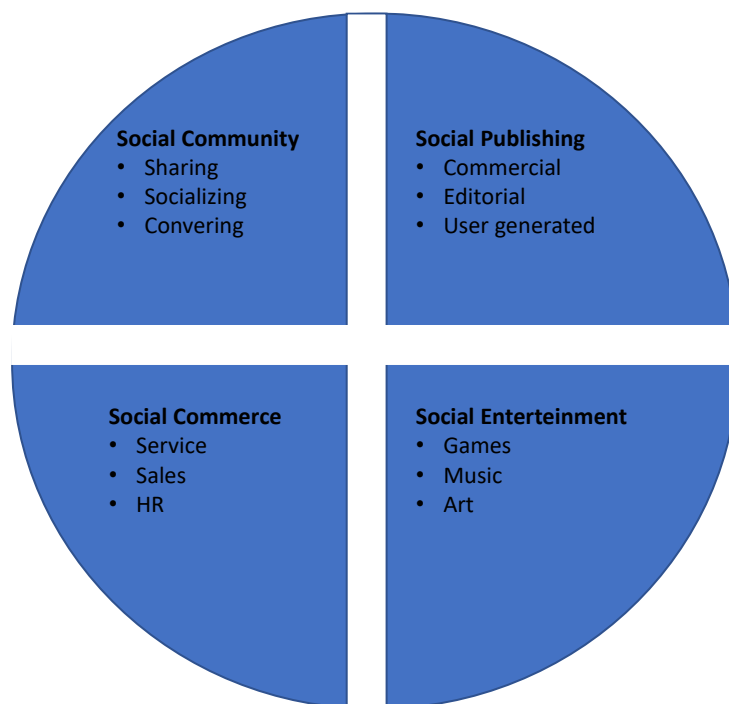


Figure 1. Zones of Social Media (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 43)

Compared to social media marketing, the concept of strategic social media marketing is somewhat different in scope as it includes organization's decisions, how to plan social media framework for the company. The strategic social media marketing framework is composed of four main

dimensions as shown in Figure 2. (Felix et al., 2016). This framework should be compliant with the company's vision, mission, goals and available resources. By analyzing the dimensions of social media marketing framework, a company can find its current position in the framework and can also consider what is its target position and then take actions accordingly.

### Scope

Scope defines level of focus on different possibilities of social media. Defender approach focuses on single/few aspects of social media, e.g. uploading entertainment content. Explorer approach, on the other hand, appreciates two-way communication and utilizes various means of social media in an integrative and collaborative way.

### Culture

Culture describes willingness to take risks with social media marketing. Conservatism refers to traditional, internally focused approach, where risks should be avoided. Modernism refers to more open and risk-taking approach, where the company accepts that part of social media content control is at hands of consumers.

### Structure

Structure measures the level of control a company wants to have for its social media marketing actions. In hierarchical approach social media is centrally controlled and only at hands of few people. Network approach, on the other hand, drives the idea that all employees are responsible for social media marketing, thus part of a company's DNA.

### Governance

Governance defines, how social media marketing is governed in the company. It defines employee policies and guidelines for e.g., who is entitled to provide social media content, which kind of content is allowed and which social media applications to be used. With autocracy approach a single department is responsible for controlling and administering social media communication. Contrary that approach, anarchy means that no rules exist, and employees can freely communicate on social media platforms.

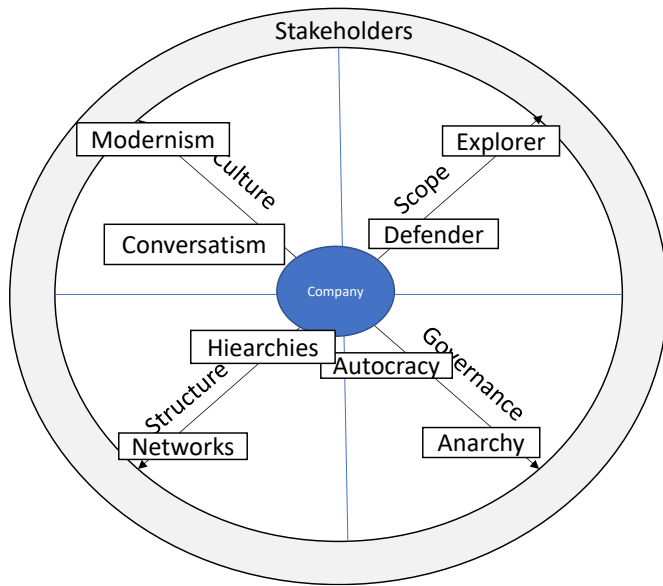


Figure 2. Social Media Marketing Framework (Felix et al., 2016, pp. 118-126)

Social media marketing concept as described by Tuten and Solomon (2017) has been chosen as it describes in detail the foundations of social media marketing, what are four main zones of social media marketing, what added value social media marketing can provide for companies and customers, and how to plan social media marketing. These are all relevant aspects, when answering both research question of this thesis. Strategic social media marketing as described by Felix et al. (2016), on the other hand, helps to understand, how to plan social media marketing so that the company's position in terms of social media framework is optimal compared to its vision, mission, goals and available resources. This is relevant especially when answering the reseach question "How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?".

In the next section, the extended unified theory of acceptance and use of technology is presented (UTAUT2 - the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2). This theory explains the consumer behavioral intention to accept and use new IT technologies. The relevance for this study derives from the fact that social media and online invoicing service platforms can be considered such new IT technologies. In the end of the section it is also justified, why combination of social media marketing and UTAUT2 theories are relevant for this study.

### 1.3 Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

The theoretical background of this paper can be mapped to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (Venkatesh et al., 2012), because UTAUT2 theory can give reasoning why to adopt a new IT technology, which in this case concern both adoption of social media and online invoicing service platforms. UTAUT2 is a theoretical model that describes what are the user's intentions to use IT systems and following the usage behavior from the consumer use context. UTAUT2 is an enhancement of UTAUT model that describes the same but from the organizational context perspective, i.e. what is employee acceptance. (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012)

UTAUT model is composed of the following key components: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions. UTAUT2 enhances the original UTAUT model with the following three key components: hedonic motivation, price value and habit. All these components are further explained in Table 4. (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012) The relevance of the components of this table for this study is further explained in the end of this section.

Table 4. Components of UTAUT2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012)

Performance expectancy	Degree that technology helps to gain benefits in job performance
Effort expectancy	Perceived ease of use
Social influence	Perception that he/she assumes that people important to him/her recommends him/her to use the technology. The status of a person in social system is increased due to usage of technology.
Facilitating conditions	Existence of organization and technical infrastructure to support use of technology
Hedonic motivation	Pleasure to use technology
Price value	Tradeoff between perceived benefits of technology and monetary cost of usage
Habit	Extent of automatic behaviors based on the learning

Figure 3 highlights that all seven components are directly determining the behavioral intention, which in turn impact use behavior. Additionally, facilitating conditions and habits are directly impacting use behavior. In UTAUT2 model age, gender and experience are used to moderate

different UTAUT2 relationships. In UTAUT model performance expectancy was concluded to be the strongest predictor concerning the intention to use the technology, whereas UTAUT2 model did not conclude direct rating among hedonic motivation, price value and habit but all of them were stated important. (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012)

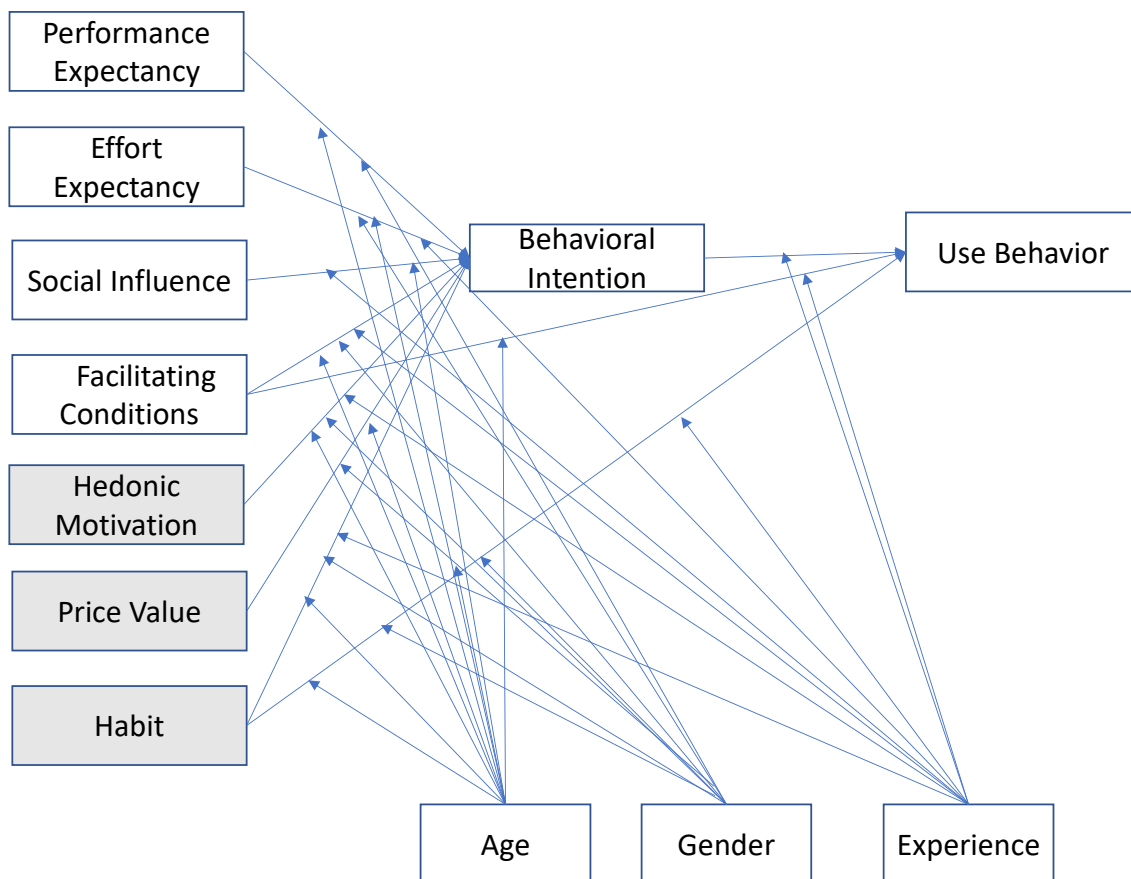


Figure 3. UTAUT2 Model (inspired by Venkatesh et al., 2012)

Regarding the question of applicability of UTAUT vs. UTAUT2 model for this study it can be concluded that UTAUT2 is more applicable as it also includes main components of UTAUT model. Prospective light entrepreneurs fit more to consumer use context, because the price value is critical for them due to the fact that they pay the costs of technology themselves. Organizational use context of UTAUT model becomes more relevant when the prospective light entrepreneur becomes light entrepreneur. In any case, the role of other components of UTAUT2 model, especially performance expectancy, should not be neglected either. One can consider from UTAUT2 model from the following perspectives in the context of light entrepreneurship

- which criteria outlined in Figure 3. are most relevant in the context of user (prospective light entrepreneur) accepting and using the technology (invoicing service platform) provided by invoicing service provider
- which criteria outlined in Figure 3. are most relevant in the context of user (prospective light entrepreneur) accepting and using the technology (social media) used by invoicing service provider

Moreover, UTAUT2 model has been used to setup and scrutinize the research questions set for this study. Additionally, the interview questions have been derived bearing in mind UTAUT2 model.

In summary, from the theoretical background perspective of this study, UTAUT2 theory complements the social media marketing theories as it provides an understanding why a user would adopt and use a new IT technology, which in this case would be IT platform used by invoice service provider for its online invoicing service and social media platforms used for its marketing purposes. As earlier mentioned, UTAUT2 theory can give reasoning why to adopt a new IT technology in the first place, and social media marketing theories explain how social media marketing can influence the intention to adopt that new IT technology.

## **1.4 Findings from existing research**

The objective of this section is to capture the findings regarding the research aim, which can be derived from the existing research. This includes clarifying what are the main concerns of prospective light entrepreneurs, and how social media marketing can be deployed in the process of becoming a light entrepreneur. Furthermore, some examples, how social media is researched in the context of UTAUT2 model is given.

### **1.4.1 Concerns of prospective light entrepreneurs**

Before discovering actions that can help in a decision process in becoming a light entrepreneur, it is important to understand, what kind of concerns prospective light entrepreneurs might have, which may impact their decision about light entrepreneurship. Many of the concerns of prospective light entrepreneurs relate to entrepreneurship in general, which some of them can be mitigated by becoming a light entrepreneur (Uusi työ ry, n.d.; Muller et al., 2017). These mitigation actions should be then utilized in social media marketing.



Giacomin et al. (2011) have identified the following barriers for establishing a start-up among students from different countries: 1) fiscal and administrative costs, 2) lack of knowledge and experience, 3) lack of support structure and economic climate, 4) lack of entrepreneurial competencies, 5) lack of self-confidence and 6) risk aversion. These barriers are such that one may consider them to be applicable for other groups besides students, as well. Light entrepreneurship can mitigate 2) and 4) out of these. For 2) and 4) invoicing service providers can offer mitigation by covering most of the bureaucracy and paperwork. Additionally, social media marketing can be used to provide trainings and information sharing via social media channels and to provide online helpline to enable prospective light entrepreneurs to ask questions (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

According to Autio (2021) and Riihinen (2022), (prospective) light entrepreneurs have brought up specifically the following barriers for entrepreneurship:

- 1) entrepreneurial environment composed of
  - economic situation not favouring entrepreneurship
  - lack of financing
  - high taxation
  - excessive governmental regulation
  - red tape and paperwork
  - administrative complexity
  - stiff social security system
- 2) risk composed of
  - uncertain future
  - lack of savings
  - irregular income
  - uncertain business idea
  - fear of failure
- 3) skills and support composed of
  - complex process of establishing a business
  - lack of support to establish and run a business
  - lack of knowledge to establish and run a business
  - lack of knowledge in financing and accounting

Light entrepreneurship can help in mitigating many of these barriers including red tape, paperwork, administration and accounting (Uusi työ ry, n.d.). Additionally, light entrepreneurship partly eliminates the barriers of uncertain business idea and lack of skills, because one can experiment the business idea and learn about entrepreneurship without too great commitment (Autio, 2021). Invoicing service providers should market these messages via their social commerce channels, e.g. including compact message of benefits invoicing service can provide in their social media ads. Furthermore, social media marketing in this context can help to mitigate fear of failure and uncertainty about the business idea by sharing experiences and success stories and socializing with other light entrepreneurs via social community channels, e.g. on Facebook. (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Some barriers specific for light entrepreneurs can also be identified in Finland. The most important one is uncertainty about getting unemployment benefit. This unemployment benefit is only available for part-time light entrepreneurs. However, there is no clear definition of who is full-time vs. part-time light entrepreneur. (Autio, 2021; Riihinen, 2022; Kananen et al., 2019; Koivunen, 2016) Another barrier specific for light entrepreneurship is the fact that some consider it too expensive. It is claimed that invoicing service providers take too large share of light entrepreneur's income. Furthermore, a light entrepreneur is not eligible for entrepreneur's deductions, expense deductions from profits and cannot make VAT deductions, if he/she does not have a business ID (Riihinen, 2022; Suomi.fi; n.d.). Moreover, a part-time light entrepreneur or light entrepreneur without a business ID is not eligible for start-up grant (Suomi.fi, n.d.). Autio (2021) states also that transition from light entrepreneurship to traditional is not straightforward. There are not clear instructions from different organizations how to make this transition. Also invoicing service providers may consider light entrepreneurs as cash-cows and are not willing to help in transition. How social media marketing can help in mitigating light entrepreneurs' concerns and thus help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur is further discussed in chapter 4.

#### **1.4.2 Decision process of entrepreneurship and role of social media marketing**

For understanding how social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur, it is essential to understand what the decision model of entrepreneurial acts is as outlined in Figure 4. Campbell (1992) focuses to describe the model of entrepreneurial act in the context of starting a new business, which in the scope of this thesis is light entrepreneurship. However, he states that this model can be deployed also for any other entrepreneurial acts. Campbell (1992) also mentions that this model is partial as it describes the economic aspects only.

He admits that in order to form a complete picture, sociological, cultural and psychological aspects should be considered also. The main idea of this model that prospective entrepreneur compares the expected net benefits vs. expected gains from wage labour. The expected gain is derived by defining the difference between: 1) product of probability of success and average income of entrepreneurs and 2) product of probability of employment times the average income of non-entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1992).

The grey boxes of Figure 4. highlight the acts that can be mapped to issues impacting the decision to become a light entrepreneur. It also illustrates where social media marketing can help in the decision process.

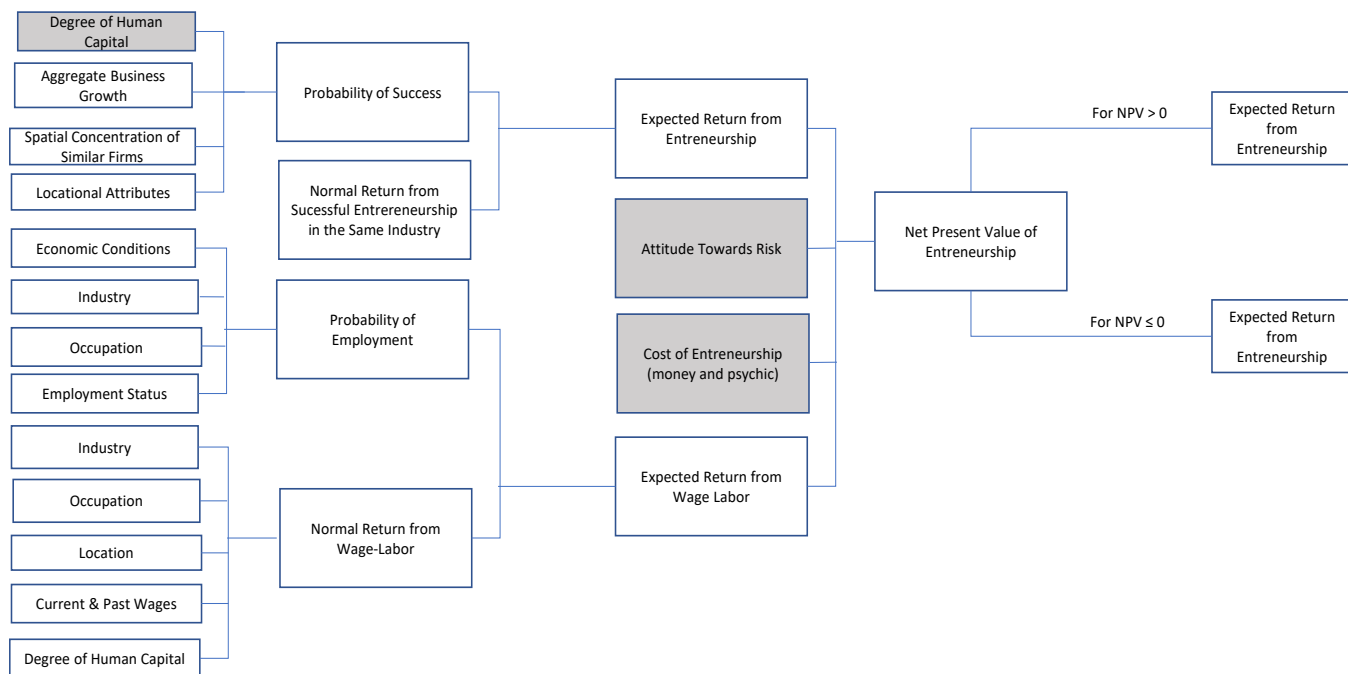


Figure 4. Economic decision model for entrepreneurial acts and relevant acts for social media marketing of light entrepreneurship (figure prepared by the author, inspired by Campbell, 1992)

Following, there is a list of conclusions that can be derived from the three items:

1. Degree of human capital: This can be mapped to lack of skills and lack of competencies in financing and accounting (please refer to section 1.4.1). Social media marketing can be used to increase the human capital in the form of providing training via social publishing (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

2. Attitude towards risk: This can be mapped to fear of failure and uncertainty about business idea (please refer to section 1.4.1). Social media marketing can help to impact to attitude towards risk, for example, by increasing human capital, providing online help, enabling word of mouth communication and possibility for collaboration via social communities (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).
3. Cost of entrepreneurship: This can be mapped to high costs of deploying invoicing services, potential loss of social security benefits and loss of taxation benefits and start-up grant (please refer to section 1.4.1). Furthermore, in line with UTAUT2 theory the cost of entrepreneurship can be linked to price value (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research design**

The selected research design for this research was a case study, the case being a phenomenon of attracting prospect light entrepreneurs via social media. Creswell (2013) defines a case study as research with qualitative approach, where the researcher explores a contemporary case within real-life involving multiple sources of information. As the objective is to study and describe a specific phenomenon currently ongoing, descriptive case study is considered a suitable approach for this research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For this case study qualitative data was collected based on interviews with invoicing services provider and (prospective) light entrepreneurs as primary source. Reading articles, books and earlier surveys were the secondary source of data used in this thesis.

### **2.2 Research approach**

A qualitative approach was chosen for this case study using interviews as source of primary data and theory part and previous literature as source of secondary data. This was due the fact that understanding the role of social media marketing in helping people to make a decision to become light entrepreneurs was in the focus of this research, not so much what was the magnitude of impact in terms of how many prospects become light entrepreneurs due to impact of social media marketing (Creswell, 2013).

#### **2.2.1 Data collection method**

This thesis deployed both primary and secondary data. The author performed structured interviews in order to collect primary data, and in addition to primary data collection, the secondary data analysis was conducted from the theory and previous literature. The chosen primary data collection method for this research was in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are used to create

understanding and explore concepts, conducted from small number of participants (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). Thus, it was a suitable method for this thesis.

Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of the sample in order to gain the most effective use of the limited resources. This included selection of individuals to the interview, who already have knowledge and experience of the phenomenon we are interested in, light entrepreneurship (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The primary information for this thesis was collected by carrying out interviews. Two interviews were carried out with UKKO.fi representatives. Moreover, three interviews were carried out with people who are, or have previously been using invoicing services, and four interviews were carried out with persons interested in entrepreneurship, but not being an entrepreneur nor a light entrepreneur. The interviews were carried out as online structured interviews for which comprehensive interview question lists were formed with open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were selected as they are the recommended method for an interview with qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Reja et al., 2003).

The interviews were recorded, and a transcription was made of them. This was to ensure that the data needed for the research was really collected and targets the specific phenomenon investigated. No specific interview tool was used due to the limited number of interviews. The interviews were conducted in Finnish language, since that was the common language between all participants, and that way they were able to express themselves the most naturally. The focus of these interviews was to conclude whether the secondary data conducted via literature review can be validated via the collected findings from the primary data (Creswell, 2013).

The interview questions were developed in such a way that they best possible way enable to give answers to the set research questions. Different sets of open-ended questions developed by the author was set for UKKO.fi representatives, invoicing service customers, and for prospective (light) entrepreneurs. The interview questions for UKKO.fi representatives mainly targeted to answer research question: “How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?” The interview questions for (prospective) invoicing service customers, on the other hand targeted to answer the research question: “How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur?”

The objective of literature review was to discover the theoretical framework around social media marketing and UTAUT2 model that is applicable in the context of light entrepreneurship and was used to derive answers to set research questions in combination with acquired interview answers. This included discovering what might be the key issues of social media marketing while targeting prospective light entrepreneurs. Interviews with UKKO.fi representatives and (prospective) invoicing service customers, on the other hand, provided insight into latest developments in the context of invoicing service business and facilitates validating the findings concluded based on the secondary data.

## **2.3 Data analysis**

The primary data collected via online interviews was analyzed using the analysis approach suitable for qualitative research with the following steps as proposed by Creswell (2013) and Bazeley (2013):

- 1) Reading the transcripts and making notes
- 2) Annotating the transcripts
- 3) Conceptualizing the data with categories and themes
- 4) Segmenting the data with creating connections between categories
- 5) Analyzing the segments
- 6) Writing the results

Due to the restricted sample size no software was used to analyze the collected data. Based on the frequently identified themes and categories the data collected from the open-ended questions was analysed by trying to find frequently mentioned themes from the answers. When these themes were identified, responses related to them were analysed separately and conclusions what were the answers for the research questions was made.

### **2.3.1 Codes**

The codes used in the data analysis were derived using deductive method. In deductive method the codes are determined before analyzing the collected data and the objective is to test an existing theory (Delve, n.d.), which is the case in this thesis. The codes using deductive approach were

obtained from social marketing and UTAUT/UTAUT2 theories and hypothetical assumptions concerning (light) entrepreneurship benefits and challenges.

The following deductive example codes as shown in Table 5. were used when analyzing the data. The objective was that the used codes correspond as much as possible the set research questions.

Table 5. Example codes derived using deductive approach. Source: Prepared by the author

Code	Research Question	Description	Example
Security	How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?	Security risk associated with deploying social media	" The extent to which one worries about privacy and the risks related to the collection, unauthorized secondary use, errors in, and improper access of personal data is known as privacy salience"
Collaboration	How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur?	Cooperating via social media	"Some industry experts argue that consumers want to have meaningful relationships with the brands they use frequently, and particularly with those brands they consider lovemarks. "
Cost	How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?	Costs associated with light entrepreneurship	" ...in consumer contexts, unlike workplace contexts, users are responsible for the costs and such costs, besides being important, can dominate consumer adoption decisions"
Sharing	How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur?	Provide content via social media	" Members can access how-to guides, articles, and research provided for community members, contribute content, and engage in discussions with other members."
Habit	How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?	Tendency to spend time in social media platforms	" Habit was discovered as a reliable indicator for both purchase intention and usage behaviour, ..."
Influencer	How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing for their business?	Person with ability to influence potential buyers on social media	" Thus, for purchase decisions, opinion leaders are extremely valuable information sources due to their social power."
Performance	How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur?	Gaining benefits at work	" ... social commerce initiative also includes social media monitoring to alert the social media team when consumer posts request a response, and a fast and thorough response."
Phases	How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur?	Phases of entrepreneurship	" ... For a pre-launch phase the entrepreneur needs to be proactive and overcome barriers. He or she must have long-term wish that needs to be translated into an intention..."

The intention was to study whether the codes or associated themes appear frequently in the analyzed material. If yes, then the further analysis was made to see whether they validate and give answers to the related research questions or whether they do not give any evidence about the relevance of the research questions.

## 2.4 Research data

This section describes the research material of the empirical section of the study. A total of nine interviews were conducted. The interviews held are listed in Appendix 1. Transcription that was made of the interviews is listed in Appendix 3.



#### **2.4.1 Interview with UKKO.fi representatives**

The interviews with the UKKO.fi representatives were carried out with employees working in communications and marketing departments. This ensured that most up-to-date information regarding UKKO.fi social media marketing activities are captured. The objective of the interviews was to clarify which social media channels and contexts are used especially for targeting new customers and whether targeted social media marketing is used towards prospective light entrepreneurs. The list of the questions asked from the UKKO.fi representatives can be found in Appendix 2. From the theoretical perspective all of the questions can be linked to social media marketing framework (Tuten & Solomon, 2017) and questions 5, 8 and 10 can be linked with UTAUT2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

#### **2.4.2 Interview with invoicing customers**

The interview with an active invoicing service customer was carried out with a customer deploying *Op Kevytyrittäjä* invoicing service provided by Pivo Wallet Oy. Furthermore, two interviews with people who have been using UKKO.fi invoicing services were carried out. The objective of these interviews was to find out which are the media channels a customer primarily used to look for information about light entrepreneurship before becoming one, what kind of information a customer searched from social media prior to registering for invoicing service, what were the main pain points before becoming a light entrepreneur and which were the criteria when selecting the primary service provider selection. The interview questions asked from the invoicing service customers can be found in Appendix 2.

#### **2.4.3 Interviews with people interested in entrepreneurship, but are not entrepreneurs nor light entrepreneurs**

The interviews with persons registered for invoicing service, but not actively using it are carried out with four persons, who are not entrepreneurs nor light entrepreneurs. However, they have some business ideas in mind, but they have not yet decided to take a step towards entrepreneurship. Additionally, the persons were selected so that they had some prior understanding about light entrepreneurship. Primarily the objective of these interviews is to find out whether they would be interested in becoming a light entrepreneur and whether social media could help them in this decision process. Secondly, the objective is to clarify which are the social media channels these persons primarily use and what kind of information they have searched regarding their business idea. The interview template used for interviewing this group of people is included in Appendix 2.

### 3. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It also outlines the relationship between the collected empirical material and research questions and provides a basis for discussion.

#### 3.1 Interview findings regarding research question “How social media marketing can help in decision process to becoming a light entrepreneur?”

Regarding the interviews with people interested in entrepreneurship but are neither entrepreneurs nor light entrepreneurs (A, B, C, D), everyone was aware of the concept of light entrepreneurship, describing knowing the term “well” or “reasonably well”. All of them stated in their interviews that the main benefits of light entrepreneurship would be the ease and convenience of it. This confirms earlier findings of Autio (2021) and Nurminen (2018). People who were or had been users of invoicing services (E, F, G) stated as well that the reason why they decided to become light entrepreneurs was that they found it difficult and bureaucratic to set up a real business.

*“The advantage is that there is a low threshold to start an entrepreneurship.” (Interviewee B)*

*“Ease is the main advantage in my opinion” (Interviewee C)*

*“I became interested in becoming a light entrepreneur for the reason that I found it difficult to set up a limited company or business name. In light entrepreneurship, all things are handled much easier.” (Interviewee E)*

*“I think light entrepreneurship enables a great way for you to see if entrepreneurship suits for you or not” (Interviewee D)*

*“I just wanted to try it on my own business idea. It didn't make sense for me to get an accounting firm and a business name, I found it too bureaucratic.” (Interviewee F)*

*“Ease. Light entrepreneurship at that point was the easiest way, things were made really easy, it was a half-hour job to set up a light entrepreneurship.” (Interviewee G)*

Concerning the use of social media, all participants interested in entrepreneurship and the invoicing service customers confirmed that they are users of social media. The most mentioned platforms were Facebook and Instagram, and everyone used either or both of these platforms. This supports the fact that active or prospective light entrepreneurs are present in social media and internet. Furthermore, the interviews with UKKO.fi representatives revealed that they deploy especially Instagram and Facebook as marketing tools for their prospective customers, which supports the fact that social media is in an important role in promoting light entrepreneurship. UKKO.fi representative (H) stated:

*“The main channel to get new light entrepreneurs is through various social media channels.”*  
(Interviewee H)

Regarding the question for people interested in entrepreneurship, if they thought collaboration with invoicing service provider via social media channels would help them in a decision process to becoming a light entrepreneur, three expressed their opinion by stating that it could be possible. This is in line with social media marketing theory which stresses the importance of collaboration in social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

*“Maybe if there was good social media content, then it could pique my interest.”* (Interviewee A)

*“Possibly could.”* (Interviewee B)

*“It could possibly help, yes.”* (Interviewee C)

When asked what kind of services were expected from invoicing service providers in social media, several interviewees mentioned knowledge sharing of new legislations, information on tax rules, and general tips related to light entrepreneurship rather than any actual additional services. None of the interviewees expressed that they would really expect any type of services from social media. This resonates well with Performance Expectancy of UTAUT2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

*“I don’t so much expect services through social media, but mostly perhaps content tips.”*  
(Interviewee F)

*“Mainly information on new legislation regarding taxation, accounting, possibly also invoicing.”*  
(Interviewee E)

*“For example, content with information related to possible changes related to light entrepreneurship.” (Interviewee B)*

### **3.2 Interview findings regarding second research question “How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?”**

Regarding the interviews with UKKO.fi representatives, it became evident that social media has an essential role in UKKO.fi’s marketing strategy. Most of the new customers are acquired through social media channels. This complies with Hedonic Motivation and Performance Expectancy of UTAUT2 model (Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012), as the best means of acquiring new customers is via social media, and prospective UKKO.fi customers are active users of social media.

*“Social media is linked strongly to the whole marketing strategy and it is the main forum and channel to acquire new light entrepreneurs to deploy our services.” (Interviewee H)*

With respect to the question of deployment of social media, the most important social media channels for UKKO.fi include Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. They are also using LinkedIn and Twitter, but not as paid media. Thus, from the theoretical perspective one can conclude that social community is the most important zone of social media for UKKO.fi, as these channels can be used for example for sharing, socializing and discussions (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). UKKO.fi is also using targeted social media marketing, which aims to maximize the conversion of potential customers into real customers.

*“Target groups are selected at line of business level, i.e. what are the biggest potential user groups that can be converted into customers. Lucrative business domains include e.g. culture, communications, marketing, beauty, construction and interior design.” (Interviewee H)*

Concerning the demographic target group selection, the age profile of the most potential customers is around 30 years. From the geographic perspective capital area and Uusimaa are the main target domains as most of the potential light entrepreneurs operate there. This aligns well with UTAUT2 model, which assumes that demographic parameters impact technology adoption, i.e., in this case can refer to social media and online invoicing service platforms adoption. (Venkatesh et al., 2012)

*“The most active age group is around 30 years old, a bit below and above. Other age groups are quite evenly distributed. From the demographic perspective capital region and Uusimaa are the most important areas as it is more effective to reach large masses in those areas and typical light entrepreneurs operate there. However, UKKO.fi provides its services nationwide.” (Interviewee H)*

*“There are numerous target groups. All target groups are mainly adults aged 18-54.” (Interviewee I)*

The interviews reveal that the company also uses collaborations with both prospective customers and customers as part of its social media marketing. Related benefits include, for example, visibility from a different perspective and the ability to highlight certain features and benefits of the service.

*“Collaboration is done widely with both bigger and small influencers. Additionally, user testimonies of happy customers are shared.” (Interviewee H)*

*“The benefits of collaboration include visibility, and the features/benefits that are emphasized. We have not directly identified any direct disadvantages, perhaps costs, if there is no value from the collaborations.” (Interviewee I)*

With respect to content of social media marketing UKKO.fi highlights the importance of improving brand awareness and added value it can provide for its customers compared with competition. This is in line with proactive objectives of social media marketing that include improving brand image, equity and awareness (Felix et al., 2016). UKKO.fi does not only promote its services via social media, but also provides added value for its (prospective) customers by offering entrepreneurship training on how to become a light entrepreneur, how to sell and price offerings and how to handle taxation. Overall, social media content of UKKO.fi can be considered a “data bank” providing support and help. Offering relevant content and training increases human capital and impacts attitude towards risk and thus lowers the barrier to become an entrepreneur, which is in line with the economic decision model for entrepreneurial acts as explained in Figure 4 (Campbell, 1992).

Table 6 summarizes UKKO.fi’s key objectives related to the company’s social media marketing and content. These are much in line with Tuten and Solomon’s (2017) findings that suggest that top priorities for businesses using social media marketing include brand awareness and brand building, customer acquisition, and customer retention.

Table 6. Key objectives related to the company’s social media marketing and content. Source: Prepared by the author

Objective	Quotation Examples
Increase brand and product awareness	<p><i>“Social media marketing increases brand awareness overall, and thus we can communicate our strengths and competitive benefits--.” (Interviewee H)</i></p> <p><i>“Presence in social media provides means for customers that they can easily contact UKKO.fi. Without social media presence UKKO.fi would not necessarily be considered as online digital service.” (Interviewee H)</i></p>
Acquire new customers	<p><i>“Overall, we track how many people we reach via social media. However, the most important thing is how many people out of these become our customers and how much it costs per customer”. (Interviewee H)</i></p>
Retain current customers	<p><i>“Besides communication about our services, we provide added value for the customers by arranging entrepreneurship training dealing with many aspects of entrepreneurship. This includes, e.g. how to sell and price offerings, what needs to be considered in personal tax return.” (Interviewee H)</i></p>
Create awareness of light entrepreneurship	<p><i>“Strong social media presence provides aid and support for those deciding to become light entrepreneurs.” (Interviewee H)</i></p>

Even though invoicing service providers can take advantage of social media marketing to attract new customers, there are also some downsides to having a presence on social media. According to the interviewees, negative messages on social media are often associated with feedback. Appropriate feedback is answered but inappropriate messages are deleted.

*“If you spark a conversation, it is noticed. Not everyone can be pleased, and people will unload their bad feelings online. Inappropriate comments will be removed, otherwise we will leave them.” (Interviewee I)*

*“The functionality of the service causes criticism on social media occasionally. We respond to this type of feedback. In addition, we highlight issues that raise questions as articles in social media.” (Interviewee I)*

To conclude the findings from the interviews with UKKO.fi representatives in response to the second research question the following aspects of social media marketing are in essential role when attracting prospective light entrepreneurs via social media marketing:

- Social media marketing needs to be an essential part of the company marketing strategy and actions need to be planned accordingly
- Brand awareness is the main social media marketing objective in targeting prospective light entrepreneurs
- Special attention needs to be paid to select most effective social media channels to reach prospective customers
- It is not sufficient to promote company via social media channels, but customers need to be provided with added value, e.g. online customer service for efficient collaboration, up-to-date data bank, and entrepreneurship trainings
- Customer queries, negative comments and misunderstandings need to be acted upon quickly and effectively
- Service platforms need to operate technically flawlessly in order to preserve customer trust
- Tracking performance of social media marketing in monetary terms is a must

## 4. DISCUSSION

The focus of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this thesis based on the interview answers that were gathered for this study and to answer the research questions 1) How social media marketing can help in decision process to become a light entrepreneur? and 2) How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers? based on the findings of this study. Some of the issues prospective light entrepreneurs face in the decision phase to become a light entrepreneur cannot be even partly mitigated by means of social media marketing and those are excluded from this discussion.

Both earlier research (e.g., Ahmadi & Soga, 2022; Tuten & Solomon, 2017) and the empirical findings confirm that the decision process of becoming a light entrepreneur can be assisted by social media marketing by providing information about the mitigation actions concerning the barriers prospective light entrepreneurs face. Consistent with the findings by Tuten and Solomon (2017), this study also finds that the decision process can be supported by promoting the online services and trainings offered by the invoicing service providers via social media channels. Moreover, as argued by Tuten and Solomon (2017), social media communities enable socializing and word-of-mouth communication between (prospective) light entrepreneurs, which is essential for sharing experiences and information among peers. This may encourage them to take a step towards light entrepreneurship and aid to decide, which invoicing service platform to select. Finally, Uusi työ ry, the association of invoicing service providers, can raise awareness of faults in the legal treatment of light entrepreneurs via its social media channels. Furthermore, Uusi työ ry would also be able to actively interact and collaborate with decision makers in their own social media platforms like a member of parliament's Facebook or Twitter accounts.

To summarize the findings regarding the second research question it is firstly answered in terms of what content invoicing services providers should provide via which social media channels. Secondly, the forms of collaboration important with prospective light entrepreneurs are identified. Thirdly, some contemplation is carried out on how an invoicing service provider could position itself in the social media framework as discussed in section 1.2.



Based on the findings of earlier research (e.g., Autio, 2021; Campbell, 1992; Riihinen, 2022) and interview answers, Table 7 outlines the generic entrepreneurial concerns and barriers prospective light entrepreneurs face in the decision process to become a light entrepreneur. Perceived relevance of social media content is of crucial importance as confirmed by the UKKO.fi representatives. Thus, invoicing service providers should design the social media content and channels towards prospective customers in such a way that it is aligned with their needs and interests. Concerning the risks, the applicable marketing objective could be to share information about success stories via social publishing channels and arrange online training sessions in order to raise confidence about the feasibility of business idea. Another objective could be to enable collaboration among light entrepreneurs to share information on how others have mitigated risks.

Regarding the lack of skills, fear of effort and concerns of entrepreneurial environment as outlined in Table 7 derived from the interviews of this thesis and earlier research by Autio (2021) and Nurminen (2018) invoicing service providers could to a large extent mitigate these by their service offerings and trainings. The findings suggest that invoicing service providers should promote the benefits of their services via their social commerce channels, like social media ads.

Table 7. Entrepreneurial risks and concerns prospective light entrepreneurs face and mitigation actions offered by social media marketing. Source: Prepared by the author

Entrepreneurship concern/barrier	Comment	Applicable Entrepreneurship Decision Component	Invoicing Service Provider Marketing Objective	SMM Mitigation content & channel
Risks	Uncertainty about business idea, fear of failure (Autio, 2021; Campbell 1992; Riihinen, 2022; Annual Report on European SMEs 2016/2017, 2017)	Attitude towards risk	Sharing experiences about successful light entrepreneurs; enable collaboration among light entrepreneurs	Invoicing service provider to share success stories via social publishing channels (e.g. own website) and to enable collaboration between (prospective) light entrepreneurs via social media community channels (e.g. Facebook)
Lack of knowledge, experience and skills	Cognitive and genetic factors and abilities, self-confidence, lack of sector-specific mentors that could advise them; lot of information available, but it is scattered around numerous organizations and pages and it is your own responsibility to find that information (Autio, 2021; Campbell, 1992)	Degree of human capital	Promote services that can compensate lacks; enable collaboration and training	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits of mitigating lacking skills and knowledge with its service offering by taking care of red tape and paperwork. This should be communicated in its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels; invoicing service provider to enable collaboration between (prospective) light entrepreneurs via social media community channels (e.g. Facebook); invoicing service provider to offer online helpline and training
Entrepreneurial environment	Red tape and paperwork (Autio, 2021; Ahmadi & Soga, 2021; Riihinen; Annual Report on European SMEs 2016/2017, 2017)	Cost of entrepreneurship	Promote services that can take care of red tape and paperwork	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits of its service offering by taking care of red tape and paperwork. This should be communicated in its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels.
Effort	Entrepreneurship takes too many hours (Autio, 2021; Riihinen, 2022)	Cost of entrepreneurship	Promote services that can take care of red tape and paperwork	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits of its service offering by taking care of red tape and paperwork. This should be communicated in its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels.

Table 8 derived from the interviews and theoretical framework of this thesis captures the light entrepreneurship specific concerns and barriers that prospective light entrepreneurs may face. Many of these concerns relate to the unspecified role of light entrepreneurship in the eyes of social security system and legislation, which impact one's chances in getting e.g. unemployment benefits and different deductions. As these concerns are common irrespective of what invoicing service provider a light entrepreneur uses, it may be worth considering raising awareness of these issues and try to impact decision makers via Uusi työ ry. Social media could be used as one of the influencing channels by Uusi työ ry. Additionally, according to the empirical findings as well as observations by Riihinen (2022), invoicing service providers should offer up-to-date online information and training regarding legislation and social security impacting light entrepreneurs in centralized places so that one does not need to look for information scattered around and so that one can access the information whenever it suits best for them.

One special concern raised by light entrepreneurs is the difficulty of transition from light entrepreneurship to entrepreneurship. Autio (2021) states that easy and step-by-step advice should

be available on how to run a business and what are the steps needed towards entrepreneurship if they want to take that step in the future. This advice should include information about the process, risks associated and costs. Invoicing service providers should not block this development in fear of losing their businesses. Instead, they should develop services that they can offer also for entrepreneurs. The interviews with UKKO.fi representatives confirmed that the company is considering this approach.

Table 8. Light entrepreneurship specific concerns and barriers and mitigation actions offered by social media marketing. Source: Prepared by the author.

Light entrepreneurship specific concern/barrier	Comment	Invoicing Service Provider Marketing Objective	SMM Mitigation content & channel
Undefined position between employee and employer	Undefined position in getting unemployment and other social benefits (Autio, 2021; Riihinen, 2022, p. 9; Kananen et al., 2019, p. 8)	Raise awareness of social security concerns	Uusi työ ry to raise awareness of social security related problems in the context of light entrepreneurship via social media publishing channels and by giving feedback to governmental decision makers via their social media channels concerning the related legislation.
Not allowed to deduct VAT	If light entrepreneur does not get business id (Y-tunnus) (Autio, 2021; Riihinen, 2022)	Clarify prospective light entrepreneurs about possibility to VAT deduction by getting business id	Invoicing service provider to provide information in its training material available via social media publishing channels (e.g. own website) about benefits associated with getting business id. This info should be available via invoicing service provider's online helpline if asked.
Not eligible for the start-up grant offered by TE-office	If light entrepreneur does not get business id (Y-tunnus) (Autio, 2021)	Clarify prospective light entrepreneurs about possibility to get start-up grant by getting business id	Invoicing service provider to provide information in its training material available via social media publishing channels (e.g. own website) about benefits associated with getting business id. This info should be available via invoicing service provider's online helpline if asked.
Obligation to take pension insurance	Meant for entrepreneurs and individuals that are self employed (Riihinen, 2022, 19; Kananen et al., 2019)	Market the option that invoicing service provider takes care of pension insurance	Invoicing service provider to market a service, where they will take care of the YEL insurance by prospective customer filling up a power of attorney. This info could be shared via social commerce channels (e.g. invoicing service provider's website)
Not eligible for entrepreneur's tax deductions	If light entrepreneur does not get business id (Y-tunnus) (Riihinen, 2022, 10; Kananen et al., 2019)	Clarify prospective light entrepreneurs about possibility to get tax deduction by getting business id	Invoicing service provider to provide information in its training material available via social media publishing channels (e.g. own website) about benefits associated with getting business id. This info should be available via invoicing service provider's online helpline if asked.
Client of light entrepreneur not eligible for tax credits on household expenses	If light entrepreneur does not get business id (Y-tunnus) (Riihinen, 2022, p. 10)	Clarify prospective light entrepreneurs about possibility of their clients to get tax credits, if they apply for business id	Invoicing service provider to provide information in its training material available via social media publishing channels (e.g. own website) about benefits associated with getting business id. This info should be available via invoicing service provider's online helpline if asked.
Part of sales lost to invoicing service platform	Different commission fees, expensive service (Autio, 2021; Riihinen, 2022, p. 5)	Improve perceived customer service quality (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 154)	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits associated with invoicing services as part of its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels; increase collaboration with (prospective) customers in social community channels.
Legislation	Legislation to be updated to include light entrepreneurship as its own form of employment (Riihinen, 2022, p. 5)	Influence governmental regulators to recognize light entrepreneurship in legislation	Uusi työ ry to raise awareness about the gaps in legislation via social media publishing channels and by giving feedback to governmental decision makers via their social media channels concerning the related legislation.
Complex termination of business	If light entrepreneur has business id, reason must be given why to terminate light entrepreneurship whereas traditional entrepreneurs do not need to give that (Riihinen, 2022, p. 8)	Clarify prospective light entrepreneurs about disadvantages of getting business id; provide training about termination of business	Invoicing service provider to provide information in its training material available via social media publishing channels (e.g. own website) about disadvantages associated with getting business id. This info should be available via invoicing service provider's online helpline if asked.
Prohibition of light entrepreneurs working in licensed domain	E.g. selling alcohol (Riihinen, 2022, p. 38)	Influence governmental regulators to allow light entrepreneurship in some licensed domains.	Uusi työ ry to influence governmental decision makers via their social media channels concerning the related legislation.
Not understanding the idea behind light entrepreneurship	Why to not establish company instead? (Riihinen, 2022, p. 41)	Improve perceived customer service quality (Tuten & Solomon, 2017, p. 154)	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits associated with invoicing services as part of its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels; increase collaboration with (prospective) customers in social community channels.
Controlling business	Losing complete control of business; uncertain how to take next step to become entrepreneur (Riihinen, 2022, p. 40)	Clarify benefits invoicing service can provide by taking care of part of business responsibilities; help in transition from light entrepreneur to entrepreneur	Invoicing service provider to highlight the benefits associated with invoicing services to take care of part of business responsibilities like red tape and paperwork in its marketing campaigns via social commerce channels; invoicing service provider to arrange online trainings how to become from a light entrepreneur to an entrepreneur

Regarding the research question “How invoicing service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers?” besides considering the appropriate social media content,

channels and forms of collaboration, one should consider also how an invoicing service provider should position itself in the social media framework by Felix et al. (2016) (please refer to Figure 2). Based on earlier research and the research findings, it can be assumed that invoicing service provider and their (prospective) customers are typically quite active users of social media. Thus, it could be expected that invoicing service providers tend to position themselves into explorer domain in scope and modernism domain in culture as described in Figure 2. Then the question remains how they should position themselves in terms of structure and governance. The decision on how to position oneself in these domains depends also on the company vision, targets, social media budget, etc.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide insights on whether social media marketing can be used to create awareness and promote light entrepreneurship. To research this topic, the author had prepared two research questions: 1) how social media marketing can help in decision process to becoming a light entrepreneur, and 2) how invoice service providers can deploy social media marketing to attract new customers. Interviews with people registered to invoicing services, interested in entrepreneurship, and working for an invoicing service were conducted. The empirical findings were compared to previous research, and they were then analyzed together in order to answer the research questions.

The research results indicate that social media plays an important role in spreading awareness of light entrepreneurship and in marketing invoicing services for light entrepreneurs. This was supported by the statements of many interviewees regarding their presence in social media as well as the interview with UKKO.fi representative that revealed that their new customers come mainly from different social media platforms. To answer the question of how social media marketing can help in a decision process to becoming a light entrepreneur, it can be concluded that it can happen by providing information to help answer questions concerning different aspects of light entrepreneurship. Also, social media marketing can be helpful in terms of promoting online services and training by invoicing services and enabling communication between (prospective) light entrepreneurs. Regarding the second research question, it can be stated that relevant social media content and channels are crucial for invoicing services, and they should be designed so that they are aligned with prospective customers' needs and interests.

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this study also provides practical value for companies. Table 8 of this thesis comprehensively presents various light entrepreneurship specific concerns and barriers as well as a set of mitigation actions that companies can take into account in their social media marketing. Businesses trying to attract prospective light entrepreneurs should also ensure that the social media marketing is part of their overall marketing strategy. Moreover, they

should not only promote their own services in social media but also provide useful content for prospective customers, such as information on legislation, taxation, and responsibilities for light entrepreneurs. This helps effectively raise awareness of this form of entrepreneurship, from which companies in the sector can benefit both in terms of branding and a growing target group.

There are some limitations to the study that should be taken into account. The findings cannot be widely generalized since this is a qualitative study for which only a limited number of interviews were conducted. Furthermore, only one invoicing service provider representative was interviewed even though there are multiple invoicing service providers in Finland. This may somewhat narrow down the view of invoicing service providers included in this thesis and thus affect the generalizability of the results. Additionally, existing research on light entrepreneurship is quite limited since it is still a relatively new concept and rather unexplored in the marketing research. As with some other topics, there is not as comprehensive research tradition to which empirical observations could be compared and reflected upon.

As light entrepreneurship is a fairly new phenomenon, and mainly established in Finland, suggestions for future studies include to research if there is potential for light entrepreneurship in other countries as well. In this domain, special emphasis should be put on clarifying what are the reasons why light entrepreneurship is increasingly popular in Finland and whether those same reasons exist in some other countries. Furthermore, one could study whether light entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that may disappear over time as the legislation evolves. Additional suggestion for further research is to investigate how invoicing service providers can help on transition from light entrepreneurship to traditional entrepreneurship and still keep their business viable and lucrative.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: List of interviews

Interviewee	Letter Code	Date
UKKO.fi representative	Interviewee H	5.4.2022
UKKO.fi representative	Interviewee I	29.4.2022
Invoicing customer 1	Interviewee E	26.3.2022
Invoicing customer 2	Interviewee F	4.4.2022
Invoicing customer 3	Interviewee G	5.4.2022
Person interested in entrepreneurship 1	Interviewee A	22.3.2022
Person interested in entrepreneurship 2	Interviewee B	22.3.2022
Person interested in entrepreneurship 3	Interviewee C	25.3.2022
Person interested in entrepreneurship 4	Interviewee D	15.4.2022

## **Appendix 2: Interview templates**

### **Interview with UKKO.fi representative**

#### Social media marketing strategy related questions:

1. Does UKKO.fi has a social media marketing strategy? If yes, what is it?
2. What are the objectives of social media marketing? How do you track performance of social media marketing?
3. Which social media channels UKKO.fi deploys to target prospective customers?
4. Does UKKO.fi deploy targeted social media marketing with prospective customers?

#### Customer relationship/ requirements management related questions:

5. What is the typical profile of UKKO.fi customer?
6. How does UKKO.fi react to bad publicity, complaints or negative posts in social media?
7. What are the pain points of prospective customers and how do you address them in social media?
8. Does UKKO.fi collaborate with (prospective) customers in social media? How?
9. What information prospective customers look for concerning invoicing service from social media?
10. What is the added value of UKKO.fi's social media marketing brings for their (prospective) customers?

### **Interviews with invoicing customers**

#### Questions relating to decision to become light entrepreneur:

1. Why did you decide to become light entrepreneur instead of traditional entrepreneur?
2. What were the main concerns before you decided to become a light entrepreneur?

#### Buying decision related questions:

3. Which were the decisive criteria when you selected your invoicing service provider?

4. What information you searched from social media prior to selecting invoicing service? How easily the information was available in social media? Did you use other media channels besides social media for that purpose?
5. What are the benefits/problems from your perspective that your invoicing service provider is present in social media?

Social media deployment related questions:

6. Which social media channels you use for business purposes? Are you a frequent user of social media?
7. What kind of services you expect to receive from your invoicing service provider via social media?
8. Have you collaborated with your invoicing service provider in social media?
9. If you send query via social media channels to your invoicing service provider, do you expect to receive an answer and when?
10. Have you recommended/given negative statements concerning your invoicing service provider in social media?
11. Do you follow posts, trainings, etc. in social media regarding your invoicing service provider?

**Interviews with people interested in entrepreneurship, but are not entrepreneurs nor light entrepreneurs**

Questions relating to light entrepreneurship:

1. How familiar you are with the concept of light entrepreneurship?
2. Which are the key benefits of light entrepreneurship from your perspective?
3. How familiar you are with bureaucracy and paperwork regarding entrepreneurship?
4. Which one you would prefer: traditional entrepreneurship or light entrepreneurship?
5. What should happen that you would become a light entrepreneur?

Social media deployment related questions:

6. Which social media channels you use? Are you a frequent user of social media?
7. What kind of services you expect to receive from your invoicing service provider via social media if you become a light entrepreneur?

8. Would you think collaboration with invoicing service provider via social media channels would help you in decision process to become a light entrepreneur? Which would be your preferred collaboration channel (chat, email, Instagram, LinkedIn)?

### **Appendix 3: Interview transcript**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AAZn-qab5YK7AXviviaX\\_VDSjbONWxxkn0sbnUarWg8/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AAZn-qab5YK7AXviviaX_VDSjbONWxxkn0sbnUarWg8/edit)

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