Role models in Social Entrepreneurship

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Submitted to Sabine Sedlacek

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AFFIDAVIT

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ABSTRACT

Combining the resource efficiency and innovation of entrepreneurship with the positive social and environmental impact sought after by organisational bodies, the concept of social entrepreneurship is relatively young, but quickly becoming a cornerstone toward creating more sustainable and inclusive economies in a world of limited resource.

This research focuses on the social entrepreneurs leading these social ventures specifically through exploring their relationships with role model-like figures from which they have drawn support, inspiration, and motivation throughout their social entrepreneurial journey. The author has worked with the organisation Social Impact Award International and ten founders of impact-based ventures gathering data through a combination of questionnaire and in-depth interview. The results of this work are the inductive establishment of role model profiles for interpretation, a drafted relationship distance framework, and a method for calculating role model influence, all tools which aim to provide understanding, guidance and standardisation for future studies in this field.

Keywords:

social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneur, role model influence, role model profiles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SIA   Social Impact Award

EU   European Union

WYR   World Youth Report

NGO   Non-government Organization

SEB   Social Entrepreneurial Behaviour

BI   Behavioural Intentions

SE   Self- Efficacy

IRB   Institutional Review Board

P1   Participant 1

P2   Participant 2

P3   Participant 3

P4   Participant 4

P5   Participant 5

P6   Participant 6

P7   Participant 7

P8   Participant 8

P9   Participant 9

P10   Participant 10

RMI   Role Model Influence

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context or problem presentation

We live in a world with finite resources which requires conscious and purposeful harvesting and usage of these resources if we want to create a sustainable future for the environment and generations of people that will come to live on this planet. However, how these resources are identified, distributed, and consumed is governed by imperfect human-made economic and social systems. This has resulted in an innumerable number of negative consequences which include poverty, sickness, hunger, climate change, human injustice and inequality, energy crisis and species extinction, which all have the potential to be avoided or at least better mitigated

The world has organisations which have the awareness of these issues, as well as the willingness to create positive social and environmental impact with their work. However, this is not enough. These problems are urgent and difficult to solve, thus requiring a high level of speed and innovation. These challenges will also not be solved overnight, which is why a sustainable operation is also key to the solution. The combination of these characteristics describes the idea of Social Entrepreneurship. Through the concept of social entrepreneurship organisations like Social Impact Award (SIA) International (SIA International, 2021a), Ashoka (Ashoka, 2021a), and governing bodies such as the European Union (EU) and the Austrian Government have been able to support individuals towards initiating and driving positive impact in areas of need.

But how well do we understand the people behind the social enterprises, the social entrepreneurs who are trying to make a positive difference in society and the environment? In this still emerging field, the real-world practice of social entrepreneurship has moved far quicker than the state of the academia around the topic of social entrepreneurship. Through the work carried out in this study, the intention is to further generate knowledge and new insights on this topic to help close this gap. More specifically we aim to build understanding around social entrepreneurship with a focus on the social entrepreneurs and their role models. By focusing on role models, the aim is to explore the nature and impact of relationships which have the potential to influence the social entrepreneur's intention, provide support, and alter perception when it comes to pursuing a career or goal.

This study has been performed in partnership with SIA International, with all respondents being alumni from the SIA incubation program and who are in the process of or having started their own social venture. Through a combination of online questionnaires and interviews with ten social entrepreneurs across four European countries an in-depth exploration of their per-

sonal experiences with role models and other influential relationships on their social entrepreneurial journey has been conducted.

1.2 Aim of this study and research questions

The aim of this study is to build further understanding of social entrepreneurs and their influential relationships with a focus on role models. As there has been no previous study found on the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship and much of the literature on role models is based on classical entrepreneurship, the methodology of this study is primarily focused on exploration and building fundamental understanding. For this reason, the first research question established in this study is:

1. What role do role models play in social entrepreneurship?

To be more specific, this question has been further broken down into four sub-questions:

1a. How are role models depicted and interpreted by social entrepreneurs?
1b. Who are the role models of social entrepreneurs?
1c. What is the nature of the relationship between the social entrepreneur and role model?
1d. What level of influence do these supporting roles have on social entrepreneurs?

The second focus of this study is more future- and practice-oriented with the aim to better understand and support the next generation of social entrepreneurs and their own transformational journeys as they work in this field. For this reason, the second research question is:

2. How do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves as role models?

This has then been split into the following two sub-questions:

2a. How do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves to act as role models?
2b. What are the perceived limitations in their progression as role models?

Through establishing a questionnaire and follow-up interview guideline for interviews with the social entrepreneur participants, both quantitative and qualitative data has been collected to answer these questions.

Through the results of this study, the reader will gain a insight from the perspective of social entrepreneurs on how role models are interpreted, who these role models are and how the relationships to the social entrepreneur can look like. Furthermore, it will be explored how this generation of social entrepreneurs are positioning themselves to become role models themselves, what limitations exist and what barriers they are facing in this area. This study aims to take the first steps towards building a stronger understanding of role models for social entrepreneurs and highlight interesting aspects which may deserve focus in future studies.

1.3   Structure of the thesis

This study is structured into nine chapters. It starts with an introduction of the problem and context as well as a presentation of the aims and research questions targeted in this study.

The following chapters 2 to 4 introduce the greater context to the subject by highlighting literature on social entrepreneurship This includes the background, definitions and spectrum of the social entrepreneurship and the ecosystem in which it operates; the social entrepreneur, including their defining characteristics, and behaviour and intention; and role models in entrepreneurship, discussing what role they play, theories around their influence and impact, and the research gap found on this topic. Chapter 5 summarises these findings and connects the literature back to the study through further specification of the research questions.

In chapter 6 the methodology of this study is described. Firstly, the research principles followed whilst conducting this study are introduced. Secondly, an introduction to SIA international and the impact of working with them towards conducting this study is given. Thirdly, the methodology used for data collection, including the selection of target group, tools, used and the methodology used in question formation. Finally, it is outlined how the data collection was executed and which process was followed when analysing the data by using a coding guide.

Chapter 7 introduces the findings of this study in three subchapters, firstly summarising the participants and their social enterprises for context; secondly a visual demonstration of the questionnaire answers including descriptive analysis; and lastly a more personal introduction to the social entrepreneur participants detailing their backgrounds and personal definition of role models.

In chapter 8 the results are discussed in order to answer the research questions. Inductively established role model profiles are introduced and used in combination with the other results in order to answer questions regarding role model definition, interpretation, and level of influence from the social entrepreneur's point of view. The last subchapter is dedicated to discussing how the participants perceive themselves to be role models in social entrepreneurship and that limitations they are facing.

Chapter 9 concludes the results and discussion and highlights the knowledge contribution of this study, the limitation of these findings, and potential future works.

2 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.1 The drive for sustainable and social thinking

It is no secret that in the current age, some of the most impactful megatrends and existential risks to humankind are surrounding the topics of sustainability and social issues. As Kate Raworth, the thought leader behind Doughnut Economics, states: "Humanity's 21st century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, to ensure that no one falls short on life's essentials (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth's life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend" (Raworth, 2013). In fact, such topics were already critically introduced and analysed approximately 50 years ago by groups such as 'Club of Rome' in their 'Predicament of Mankind' project leading to key literature such as 'Limits to Growth' which already identified the risk of exponentially growing systems that create positive feedback loops of resource usage and negative impact overwhelming the Earths capacity to replenish what humankind uses (Meadows *et al.*, 1972). These issues have only become clearer and more urgent with time. This has also had the result of driving innovation and the introduction of many concepts, frameworks, and movements to tackle them. Concepts such as Doughnut Economics, which also discusses the limitations and boundaries of our environment and planet (Raworth, 2013); or the circular economy, which aims to re-introduce products at the end of their lifecycle to the beginnings of another products lifecycle in an attempt to be conscious of the entire product lifecycle and more efficiently use our resources (European Commission, 2019). Frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line, which aims to help businesses and organisations account for a boarder and realer range of costs and impacts when it comes to their operation (Norman and MacDonald, 2004); or the EU Social Economy which "is intended to make profits for people other than investors or owners" (EC Europa, 2016a) meaning a more inclusive and distributive form of economy that also relies on social enterprises. Movements such as "Fridays for Future", a form of grass-roots activism that looks at the anthropogenic climate change and demands more of those currently in authority in creating and acting upon a sustainable plan that will not allow more than a 2° C warming in average global temperature (Fridays for Future, 2021), or ethical consumption movements, which make use of "boycotting" to align an individual's consumption patterns with their values and sending this message to businesses through their purchase power (Ethicalconsumer, 2018). These are examples of the mechanisms being invented, implemented, and fought for as the world faces these extremely complex issues. The drive to work on these problems is large and the solutions to tackle them diverse. It is these sorts of positive ideas and creativity driven by people that have also led to the establishment and growth of 'Social Entrepreneurship' as a concept that will be further explored in this study.

2.2   The definition and background of Social Enterprises

From the previous chapter, it is clear that effective solutions that drive change will need to be inclusive of society, be able to support, and be supported by, political and economic structures and involve an element of awareness building and impact focus. Social enterprises are described by the European Commission to be able to "combine societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit. These organisations focus on achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives. The European Commission aims to create a favourable financial, administrative and legal environment for these enterprises so that they can operate on an equal footing with other types of enterprises in the same sector" (EC Europa, 2016b). It is most likely for the reasons in the above description, as to why social enterprises can be seen as an effective solution to some environmental and societal problems and are becoming more widely utilised as a mechanism to create positive impact in these areas.

Looking at the history of the concept of social entrepreneurship, Borzaga and Galera (2014) propose that it has evolved out of the non-profit sector in approximately the 1970's, by taking on characteristics which were more aligned with profit-oriented businesses including the use of innovation in product and process creation, a focus on productivity and entrepreneurial behaviour. These original social enterprises however aimed to also "be more locally oriented and smaller in operation and attributed a high importance to a clearly defined social goal" (Borzaga and Galera, 2014, pp. 6–7). Ebrashi (2013) claims that the role of the social entrepreneur was first mentioned by Banks (1972) in his book Social Movements and Social Change to describe the need to use "managerial skills to address social problems as well as to address business challenges" (El Ebrashi, 2013, p. 188). Geographically, chapter 1 of the World Youth Report (WYR) 2020 from the United Nations specifies social entrepreneurship as being "born out of the cooperative movement that began in nineteenth-century Europe" (UN DESA DISD, 2020, p. 9) demonstrating the inclusion of other parties outside of the private sector. As can be seen, an exact origin is not precisely defined, however these early mentions pinpoint a merging of social goals with classical business ideas and managerial skills, whilst involving other parties outside of the private sector in Europe from the early 1970s onwards.

What can be identified more precisely is the development and greater recognition of the social entrepreneurship concept on the world stage from the 1980s onwards. One of the large developments during this time was the conception and development of one of the perhaps most well-known use-cases of social entrepreneurship, the Grameen Bank by Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh. What began as a pilot research project in 1976 to create opportunity for the poor through micro-loans and principles of customer-ownership, was established and authorised in 1983 as an independent bank by the Bangladeshi government. This was a critical point for social entrepreneurship as further described in the WYR2020 from the United Nations, "Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank have also played a prominent role in the rise of social entrepreneurship. With the founding of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh in the 1980s, Yunus

helped bring global attention to the importance of pro-poor financial services and products in the fight against poverty" (UN DESA DISD, 2020, p. 10). A second development which likely led to the popularisation of social entrepreneurship was the founding of the organisation Ashoka by Bill Drayton in 1980 in India. Ashoka began by "identifying and supporting the world's leading social entrepreneurs who have ideas for far-reaching social change. It started by first distilling their unique qualities and pioneering a rigorous global system for vetting and electing them to the Ashoka Fellowship" (Ashoka, 2021b) to create "the world's first professional association of leading social entrepreneurs" (Ashoka, 2021b). The WYR2020 from the United Nations, also describes the Ashoka organisation as "largely responsible for the popularization of the term social entrepreneur and is a prominent contributor to and proponent of the social innovation school of thought" (UN DESA DISD, 2020, p. 9).

Since these early origin and development steps, the concept of social entrepreneurship has been continuously refined and discussed over the years, which has led to several different definitions and descriptions of the concept that tend to overlap ideas, but also highlight disagreements. From a defining piece of literature on this topic drafted in the 1990's "The meaning of 'Social Entrepreneurship'", the view was that social entrepreneurship was seen as predominantly a form of entrepreneurship combining the pursuit of opportunity, innovation and acting boldly on limited resource, but first and foremost including the mission to create and sustain social value at the center of the enterprise (Dees, 2018). This appears to be one of the most common definitions of the concept aligning with several other pieces of literature (Mair and Martí, 2006, p. 37; Peredo and McLean, 2006, p. 5). However, as pointed out by Kerlin (2010), this definition can vary and place more importance on different aspects, especially when viewed from a geographical standpoint, which are also largely influenced by the political frameworks established to support different forms of social enterprise. Other definitions emphasise the focus on "local (social and economic) development and the importance of mediating roles" (Macke *et al.*, 2018, p. 683), or in other words, local social support functions perhaps being more influenced from the NGO origins. This influence that comes from the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) origins can also be seen in definitions that focus on the inclusion and interaction across multiple political stakeholders or in other words that social enterprises "rely on a collective dynamics involving various types of stakeholders in their governing bodies" (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008, p. 5) or that they are explicitly defined to be not-for-profit.

What the varying definitions of social entrepreneurship demonstrate, is that the concept itself is trying to capture and frame many different characteristics (OECD, 1999) which are seen as key and necessary in creating the wanted positive impact. It demonstrates that the general purpose is clear, however the methodology and execution is more complicated and still being developed and understood. It shows that there are several initiatives that fall under the concept of social entrepreneurship and that it can actually allude to a much broader description

of social and environmental activity with nuances depending on which group is discussing this topic (Mair, 2010). Also, beyond those groups that are already attempting to define social entrepreneurship, there are many environments where the concept is completely new or unknown limiting the level of validity and impact that social entrepreneurs can have. A clear example of this is in the EU where Bilan et al. (Bilan *et al.*, 2017) shares that from their findings, standardisation is still occurring when it comes to legal, organisational and conceptual forms of Social Enterprises (Bilan *et al.*, 2017). Studies which then aim to align definition and deepen understanding and enable the sharing knowledge and awareness of social entrepreneurship are then critical.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of social entrepreneurship used is that which is summarised from Dees (2018) work:

the pursuit of opportunity, innovation and acting boldly on limited resource, but first and foremost including the mission to create and sustain social value at the center of the enterprise (Dees, 2018)

This also aligns with SIA International's definition, as a venture that is "developing and implementing innovative business solutions to tackle the most important societal challenges of our times" (SIA International, 2021a). This definition is broad but takes into account the core principles which overlap across all the definitions found in the literature.

2.3   Range of Social Enterprises

When discussing the definition of social enterprises in the previous chapter, it can be seen that they tend to have a mixture of attributes also belonging to not-for-profit organisations and a profit-driven businesses. This mixture of traits is what leads to the depiction of a range or spectrum of social entrepreneurship when it comes to defining the social enterprise.

Abu-Saifan (2012) demonstrates this using the following figure 1, demonstrating that social enterprises primarily act in between enterprises that are completely financially dependent on external parties, and those that are primarily profit-driven. Importantly, this spectrum is exclusive from these outer groupings, which allows differentiation and boundaries to be defined between the types of enterprises, especially that of not-for-profit organisations and profit-oriented business. This figure also demonstrates that the social enterprises can be defined into two categories, those that are non-profit with earned income strategies which "is both social and commercial; revenues and profits generated are used only to further improve the delivery of social values" (Abu-Saifan, 2012, p. 26), and those that are for-profit with mission driven strategies which "is both social and commercial; the organization is financially independent and the founders and investors can benefit from personal monetary gain." (Abu-Saifan, 2012, p. 27).
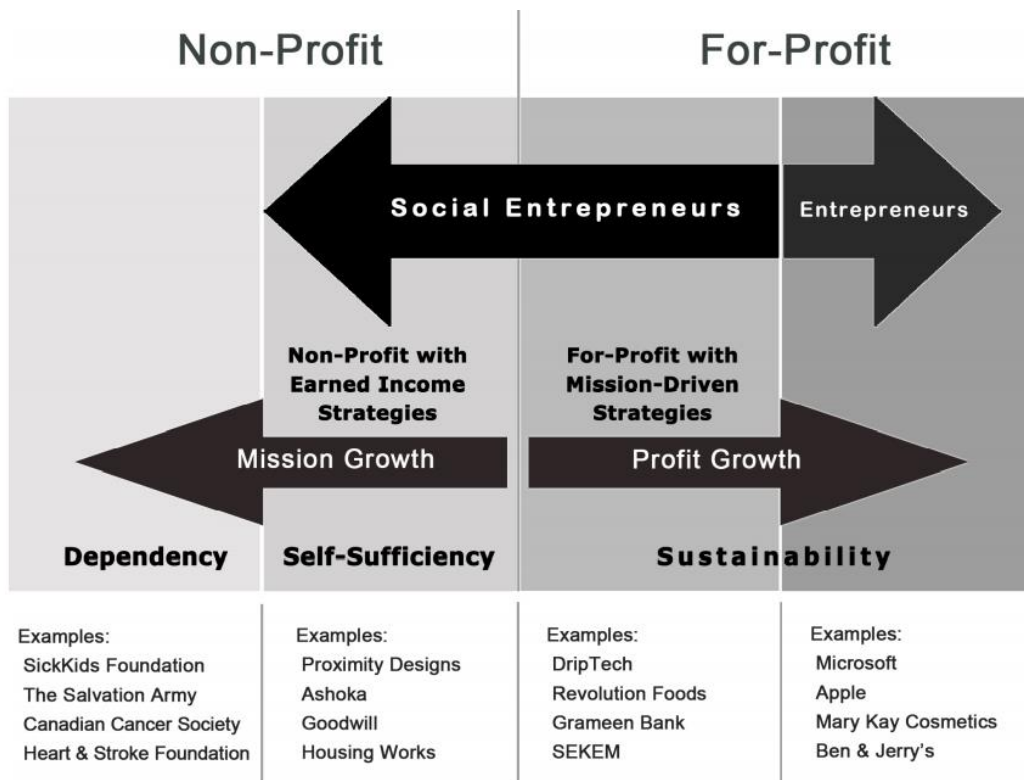
Gandhi and Raina (2018) break this spectrum down further by focusing on one of the unique aspect of the social enterprise which is the level of social or environmental impact created, and how central the intent of creating this impact is to the overall venture. This is summarised in the table 1 portraying a succinct summary of the range of social entrepreneurship that they have identified using this characteristic.

TABLE 1 - VARYING LEVELS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (GANDHI AND RAINA, 2018)

Social goals	Commercial exchange
Exclusively social	None
Exclusively social	Some, that can either lead to profits directly to the social benefit (integrated) or in support of the enterprise (complementary)
Chiefly social but not exclusively social	Profits in part to benefit entrepreneurs and/or supporters
Prominent goal among other goals	Profit making is strong objective to the entrepreneur and others
Subordinate goals among other goals	Profit making is prominent or the prime objective

What can be seen from this sub-chapter is that even within a general definition of the social entrepreneurial concept, there is a spectrum of social enterprise implementation, primarily varying in the level of focus on social or environmental impact, as well as profit-earning im-

portance. Since the various levels of implementation are all classified under social enterprises, they are equally relevant and should be equally considered. This means that the comparison and analysis of different social enterprises is actually a very broad comparison that can include enterprises with varying goals, desired impact, beneficiaries, and business models.

For the purpose of this study and in alignment with SIA international, the primary focus has been on those social enterprises that have chiefly social goals, but also aim to have some commercial exchange enabling at least financial self-sufficiency. In other words, this can be seen to align with figure 1 from Abu-Saifan (2012), as well as targeting the more socially oriented side of the spectrum as seen on table 1 provided from Gandhi and Raina (2018).

2.4   The social entrepreneurial ecosystem

Beyond the definition and range of social enterprises, it is also important to consider the ecosystem in which they operate. Figure 2 below is taken from the EU *Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe* report (2020), demonstrates the four quadrants of the ecosystem that surround social enterprises here in Europe. A summary of the quadrants has been shared below.
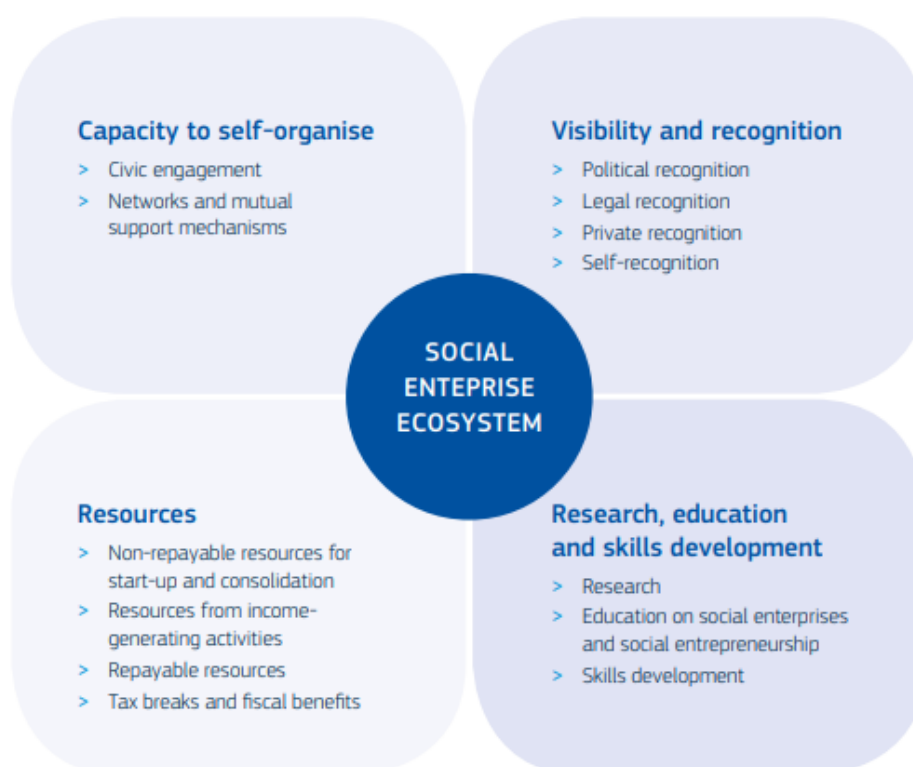
FIGURE 2 - SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND THEIR ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE (PUBLICATIONS OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2020)

Capacity to self-organise: this quadrant consists of the effective support from and participation of citizen-individuals, networks, and groups for the social enterprise. The citizen participation

can be seen as important since from the same report it is stated that "very high degrees of citizen participation have in general contributed to the broad diffusion of new social enterprise initiatives" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 49), for example through volunteer engagement. Examples of group support were found at international, national and regional level, and classified by offering "networks and platforms as well as mechanisms of mutual support" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 50). An international level example would be the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS, 2021).

Visibility and recognition: This quadrant consist of the recognition of the social enterprises and their goal from political and legal perspectives. This can for example be represented by the inclusion of social entrepreneurial implementations or initiatives in political campaigns, or from a legal perspective, the introduction of law and policy which specifically defines and frames social entrepreneurial operation. A third perspective is the private recognition of social enterprise in the form of marks, labels and certifications, which as outlined in the report, partly exist due to the "is the willingness of the concerned enterprises to signal their specificity, given the lack of ad-hoc laws and strategies designed for social enterprises or concrete incentives pushing social enterprises to register" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 66). The final form of recognition shared is self-recognition by the enterprises themselves, which is seen as highly varying across countries, however having a tendency to limit, with a "reluctance of many de facto social enterprises to self-recognise as such and the inability of the various forms of social enterprise (e.g., associations, cooperatives, legally recognised social enterprises) to speak with one voice or articulate their different voices." (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 68).

Resources: This quadrant predominantly alludes to the financial resource requirement and describes the complexity due to the focus on social impact, the limited ability to distribute profits to the funders and owners, and further the low suitability for investors looking for significant financial return. The financial resources have been split broadly into financial resource for start-up activities, ongoing operation, expansion, development and finally benefits that may be available as social enterprise, dependent on the ecosystem. Further differentiation has been made between what is repayable and non-repayable.

Research, education, and skill development: The final quadrant highlights several topics including the importance of research on the topic of social entrepreneurship which "has contributed to enhancing the visibility of social enterprises and related phenomena as well as to raising the awareness of citizens and policymakers about the relevance of such themes for society" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 95). The consolidation of social enterprise education and training is also highlighted, discussing the increasing incorporation of formal education on the topic which range in their form from "courses and modules to full programmes and are available via online learning or through distance and blended learning platforms and

range from regular bachelor's degree subjects to graduate and postgraduate levels that include lifelong learning" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 99). This further relates to the less formalised skill development programs through private or public institutions which aim to offer "theoretical foundations, these programmes emphasise the skills and networking development of social entrepreneurs and managers, such as business and organisational development, communication and leadership skills, etc." and are often coupled with awards and prizes that include instruction in these kinds of skills and networking development" (Publications Office of the European Union, 2020, p. 100).

As can be seen, the ecosystem surrounding social enterprises, especially in the EU is complex and involves many different aspects and stakeholders. Many of these aspects appear to be developing in a positive direction with the growth, uptake and support for social enterprises apparently increasing, although greatly varying from country to country. What can be seen as relevant to this study are the factors which impact the context in which the social enterprises and social entrepreneurs that have participated in this study are operating.

2.5 Key distinctions between social enterprises and profit-oriented business

It is important to recognise that much of the literature that reviews social entrepreneurship originates from literature based on classical entrepreneurship. For this reason, the differences between these two areas are being highlighted in this subchapter. This provides additional context and background when it comes to the application of classical entrepreneurship-based theory and concepts towards social entrepreneurship. The following factors have been identified as particularly relevant for consideration and summarised from a collection of works. (Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Gandhi and Raina, 2018; Mair and Marti, 2004).

Mission and Strategy: Most clear among the distinctions is the difference in mission and strategy when working with social enterprises. Social enterprises are **directly** creating social value and positive impact as the primary goal, as opposed to the main motivation of profit-gain. This can still be the case even if profit gain is deemed as necessary, since this would be "a necessary by-product that ensures the sustainability of the initiative and financial self-sufficiency" (Mair and Marti, 2004, p. 8). Of course, classical entrepreneurship also may often act in a socially responsible manner. However, this is nearly always only **indirectly** targeting social issues as Boschee and McClurg (2003) clarify classical enterprises "donate money to nonprofits; they refuse to engage in certain types of businesses; they use environmentally safe materials and practices; they treat their employees with dignity and respect. All of this is admirable, but their efforts are only indirectly attached to social problems" (Boschee and McClurg, 2003, p. 3). What this mission enables are business strategies that can be more cooperative rather than competitive, firstly because the achievement of the main social goal is only further enabled through an increase in supply of the product or service, but also due to the need caused by

potential poor working capital (Gandhi and Raina, 2018). This difference in mission and strategy is a fundamental characteristic which has flow-on effects to all aspects within the enterprise as further discussed in the points below.

Performance measurement: One of the key flow-on effects from a difference in mission, is the type of results that must be measured in order to understand the performance of the enterprise. Classical entrepreneurship is almost primarily measured based on financial results. However social entrepreneurship can have a range of measures that must also cover some level of impact (Gandhi and Raina, 2018). It results in more complicated performance measurements, in comparison to traditional performance indicators which for example tend to be more easily quantifiable. There is then an expectation to measure and report on social value or impact created, which tends to be more qualitative in nature, as well as non-standardised.

Governance and Financing: With a social mission, social enterprises often have access to forms of financial support, such as through donors, that classical enterprises do not have (Gandhi and Raina, 2018). This can enable a greater leverage of limited resources, however, also may build a dependency, and impact the governance and control of where and how financial resources can be used, and how the results must then be reported. This can often lead to different governance structures.

Customers and beneficiaries: With social enterprises, the social value created is often targeted at a target group of beneficiaries that are in need, which may not always align with the customers. As a result, another group of critical stakeholders may be involved in the business plan, one that in fact may be lacking the resources to compensate the social venture for the service or product (Gandhi and Raina, 2018). The relation of this additional factor to the creative financing models required in social enterprises previously mentioned is clear.

2.6   The demand for more research and awareness

Previous chapters have described the drive and ideas behind the mega-trend of sustainable and social thinking, and how social enterprises are playing a key role in creating much needed social value. What is clear is that social enterprise as a practice is and has been occurring throughout history and across the globe. However, the literature and theoretical support behind this concept is relatively young and needs to catch up to practice. In the case of recency and relevancy, Hand (2016) demonstrated that this is clearly lacking from a literature review article posted in 2016 showing that only 14 of the top 25 cited articles at that time in relation to social entrepreneurship were published after 2005. From these articles "nearly two-thirds were published in traditional management and entrepreneurship journals, with only two articles in non-profit journals and two in public administration journals" (Hand, 2016), showing an interesting preference towards classical entrepreneurship communication channels even for social entrepreneurial content. A content analysis conducted by Cukier et al. (2011) on the

topic of social entrepreneurship highlighted another insufficiency in regard to the lack of empirical materials used or practice-based literature in many studies. Even beyond the extent to which the research is lagging behind the practice, the awareness and knowledge about the concept of social entrepreneurship itself is not equally distributed throughout different countries and demographics (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008, p. 4) meaning that not only must more deep and relevant research be conducted, but also communicated through the right channels to further build and support the idea of social entrepreneurship.

Beyond the literature on social enterprises, another problematic trend can be realised from the study completed by Macke *et al.* (2018), which is the lack of focus in academia on the entrepreneurs themselves. Rather, a greater focus is laid upon the application of social entrepreneurship with different social issues; the concept and theory of how social entrepreneurship can be defined and operated; and the understanding of the network and ecosystem between the varying parties involved. This lack of focus on the entrepreneurs in an area of study that is already found to be lacking other aspects shows the strong need for more research since it is the social entrepreneurs as people that are trying to operate in the difficult environments with complex issues and limited resources that need support the most.

Overall, there is a strong need to close this gap between the practice and academic spheres. The topic of social entrepreneurship needs more state-of-the-art studies to be conducted that take advantage of the possibility to collect empirical evidence and understand the current practice and perhaps most urgently, target the social entrepreneurs themselves.

3 THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

3.1 Who are Social Entrepreneurs?

When considering the many various actors in the social entrepreneurial ecosystem discussed in subchapter 2.4, those which were perhaps not so apparent, but most central and essential are the social entrepreneurs themselves. These are the people that as described in the previous chapter are taking ideas based on creating social value and turning them into financially sustainable businesses in a challenging and still developing ecosystem, through taking advantage of opportunities, smart use of limited resources and innovative thinking.

As the distinctions between social enterprises and profit-oriented business have been highlighted in previous chapters, it is important to do this once more with the entrepreneurs. The reason for this is that a significant amount of the literature originates from classical entrepreneurial backgrounds, and therefore may not be applicable to social entrepreneurial practice. This risk that misleading or incorrect concepts maybe be applied to social entrepreneurship by default was also highlighted by Mair (2010) who stated that "we are currently observing a transposition of practices from the business world to social entrepreneurship that might have detrimental effects" (Mair, 2010, p. 9) with the example being the "quest for growth" (Mair, 2010, p. 9). From the literature the following traits are the key differentiators for social entrepreneurs: emotionally charged and empathetic; visionaries with optimism and hope; mission and opinion leaders; change agents; and highly accountable (Abu-Saifan, 2012; Bublitz *et al.*, 2020). Social entrepreneurs should also be differentiated from other roles which aim to create social value such as the social activist or social service provider. Gandhi and Raina (2018) identify two differences of note which are firstly, the social entrepreneur's entrepreneurial ability and secondly, the desire to take direct action to create a new and sustainable status-quo (Gandhi and Raina, 2018).

These are the people that we are trying to better understand and enable through this study so that they can go on to create the positive social and environmental impact that is needed in the world today.

3.2 Drivers of social entrepreneurial behaviour

An important question is then: What drives or leads people to become social entrepreneurs and start ventures that create social value for society? The concept used to describe what leads to the creation of social enterprises is commonly referred to as Social Entrepreneurial Behaviour (SEB) and is depicted to be influenced from Behavioural Intentions (BI). This influence of SEB from BI is supported by at least one well researched social–cognitive model, the

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which poses that "intention is the most important determinant of behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, 2020). Both SEB and BI are more general concepts that for example also overlap with classical entrepreneurship. According to one influential study that was carried out by Mair and Noboa (2006), a social entrepreneur's BI is made up of two components. Firstly, *perceived desirability* is seen to be a combination of emotional and cognitive perceptions by the individual or in other words, what they may think and feel. The second component, *perceived feasibility*, is then made of enablers which can be seen as either internal or external. This can be seen in figure 3 below. This study has been the foundation of several other later studies on this topic which tend to confirm this foundational basis, but also stresses the impact of more specific components in the model on BI such as empathy (Tiwari *et al.*, 2020), past experience with the social problem being tackled (Hockerts, 2017), or moral obligation (Akter *et al.*, 2020). However, what this overall model is missing according to Stirzaker et al. (2021) is greater focus on the situational context. This theory poses that, the external influencers under perceived feasibility have a more complex and deeper impact on the social entrepreneur's overall BI. Furthermore, context factors such as "spurs for altruism and the human, financial and social capitals, skills and experiences of social entrepreneurs" should also be brought into greater consideration. When accounting for this view, the drive tended to fall into two categories. Either the social entrepreneur was on a "personal, social or philanthropic mission" or aiming to "conduct commercial business in a socially and ethically-informed way" (Stirzaker *et al.*, 2021, p. 21).
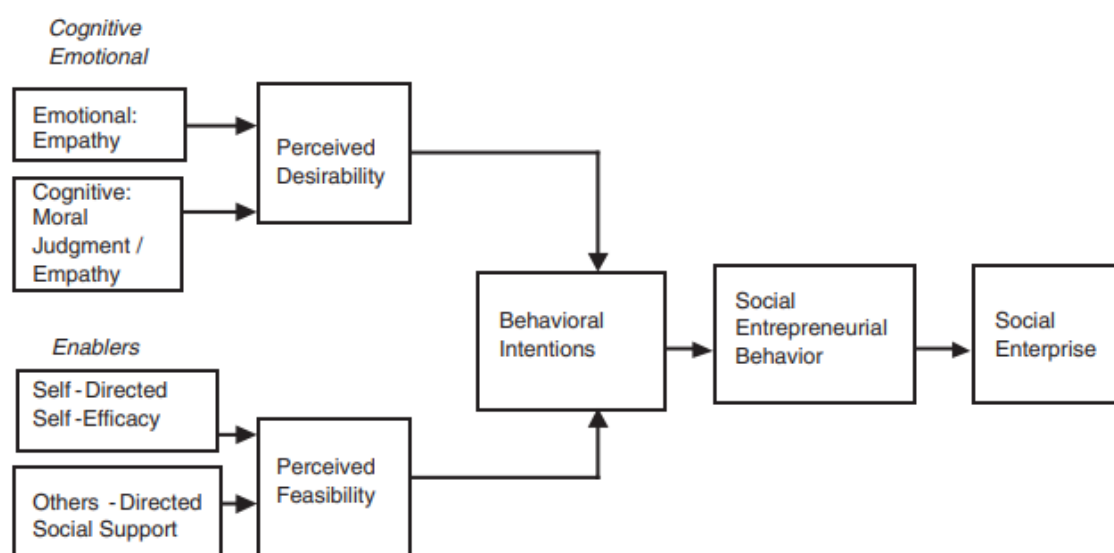
FIGURE 3 - SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR (MAIR AND NOBOA, 2006)

What the forementioned research in this area shows is that SEB as a field within social entrepreneurship is still relatively young. There are significant academic studies undertaken even in recent years which use empirical data to dive deeper into the topic. The studies also show that there is an ongoing discussion over what the most significant drivers and influences are to SEB and BI. There is however a consistent pattern that especially points to external enablers in the

form of social support enhanced through situational context, being a key aspect in influencing social entrepreneurs. This study will be taking a closer look at this key aspect, exploring the external enablers in the form of other people playing different roles, with a main focus on the influence of the social entrepreneurial role models.

4 THE ROLE OF ROLE MODELS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4.1 How role models and relationships fit into the entrepreneurial ecosystem

As identified in subchapter 3.2, the external enabler in the form of social support and enhanced through situational context is a key aspect which may lead to positive impact for a social entrepreneurs BI and SEB. This demonstrates from the perspective of behaviour and influence why the concept of social support is important to social entrepreneurs. To build upon this further, this study has used an overview of Spigel's (2017) interpretation of the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem shown in table 2, which demonstrates three different sectors within an entrepreneurial ecosystem. It should be noted that this interpretation of the ecosystem is more generally applicable in comparison to the EU-oriented ecosystem for social enterprises that was reviewed in subchapter 2.4. The reason this has been done is two-fold, firstly since there was no literature found specifically targeting role models in the context of social enterprises and therefore the upcoming literature on role models is aimed to first be contextualised through a classical entrepreneurship ecosystem framework, secondly the ecosystem framework provided by Spigel (2017) specifically accounts for the social aspects within the ecosystem as a standalone sector which more clearly differentiates where role models fit into the ecosystem. To further clarify, looking at table 2 the top level of the ecosystem is split into three types of attributes including cultural, social and material. Diving further into the social attributes, two particular attributes of interest can be found described as "Networks: presence of social networks that connect entrepreneurs, advisors, investors and workers and that allow for the free flow of knowledge and skills" and "Mentors and role models: Local successful entrepreneurs and business people who provide advice for younger entrepreneurs" (Spigel, 2017, p. 8). These two attributes are the connection to the concept shown in the previous subchapter 3.2 figure 3 from Mair and Noboa (2006) of *social suppor*t leading to BI and as a result SEB.

Through the above explanation, a link of how the drives and influencers from SEB are connected with the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem can be seen. What this means is that the relationships formed with different individuals that offer social support to the social entrepreneurs, appear to be critical to improving the behavioural understanding of social entrepreneurs, the foundation of entrepreneurial intention, and the environment in which social enterprises operate (Bublitz *et al.*, 2020; Spigel, 2017). It is for this reason that the topic of socially supportive relationships and roles is the key focus of this study. More specifically, the role that role models hold for social entrepreneurs as assessed through their ability to influence;

who these people are; how the relationships can be interpreted; and how they have developed, is further reviewed.

TABLE 2 - ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM ATTRIBUTES (SPIGEL, 2017)

Type of Attribute	Attribute	Description	Examples
Cultural	Supportive culture	Cultural attitudes which support and normalize entrepreneurial activities, risk taking, and innovation.	Aoyama (2009); Feldman (2001); Julien (2007)
	Histories of entrepreneurship	Prominent local example of successful entrepreneurial ventures.	Nelles et al. (2005); Feld (2012)
Social	Worker talent	Presence of skilled workers who are willing to work at startups.	Arruda, Nogueira, and Costa (2014); Audretsch et al. (2011); Bahrami and Evans (1995); Harrison and Leitch (2010)
	Investment capital	Availability of investment capital from family and friends, angel investors, and venture capitalists.	van der Borgh, Cloodt, and Romme (2012); Kenney and Patton (2005); Malecki (2009)
	Networks	Presence of social networks that connect entrepreneurs, advisors, investors, and workers and that allow the free flow of knowledge and skills.	Dubini (1989); Malecki (1997); Neck et al. (2004)
	Mentors and role models	Local successful entrepreneurs and business people who provide advice for younger entrepreneurs	Feld (2012); Kenney and Patton (2005); World Economic Forum (2013)
Material	Policy and governance	State-run programs or regulations that either support entrepreneurship through direct funding or remove barriers to new venture creation.	Desrochers and Saulet (2008); Isenberg (2010)
	Universities	Universities and other higher education institutions which both train new entrepreneurs and produce new knowledge spillovers.	Audretsch et al. (2011); Dubini (1989); Feldman et al. (2005); Wolfe (2005)
	Support services	Firms and organizations that provide ancillary services to new ventures, for example, patent lawyers, incubators, or accountancies.	Kenney and Patton (2005); Patton and Kenney (2005); Startup Genome Project (2012)
	Physical infrastructure	Availability of sufficient office space, telecommunication facilities, and transportation infrastructure to enable venture creation and growth.	Audretsch et al. (2011); Mack and Rey (2014)
	Open markets	Presence of sufficient local opportunities to enable venture creation and unimpeded access to global markets.	Spilling (1996); World Economic Forum (2013)

4.2 Entrepreneurial role models, definition, and importance

In the previous subchapter, it became clear that individuals that offer social support such as in a role model capacity for social entrepreneurs are of great importance, since they can have an impact on a social entrepreneur's BI and SEB and are a recognisable attribute to the ecosystem. However, through the literature review, there were no identifiable studies specifically on the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship previously conducted. It is for this reason that the literature presented here is primarily drawn from the field of classical entrepreneurship and it is particularly important to refer to the previous chapters which describe the distinctions between social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, and their classical business counterparts in order to contextualise and frame the contents of this subchapter.

When it comes to defining the concept of role models, for the purpose of this study the definition demonstrated by Gibson (2004) has been used as the primary basis, where a role model is defined as "a cognitive construction based on the attributes of people in social roles an individual perceives to be similar to him or herself to some extent and desires to increase perceived similarity by emulating those attributes" (Gibson, 2004, p. 136). What Gibson has also importantly clarified, is the differences that delineate role models from other similar concepts such as behavioural modelling and the concept of mentors. In summary, it is stated that in comparison to behavioural modelling, role modelling tends to be more role-based in terms of transition of knowledge and learning. In comparison to mentors, the scope of potential learning is broader and more flexible in this type of relationship. In both comparison cases the idea of empathy and building of similarity in traits is absent (Gibson, 2004).

When it comes to how this relationship can establish an influence from one person (role model) to the another (entrepreneurial recipient), there are many mostly overlapping theories. Bosma et al. (2012) summarises several works to pose that "the phenomenon of role models can be explained by theories of (role) identification and social learning" (Bosma *et al.*, 2012, p. 5) with the entrepreneurial recipient closely identifying with a role model through apparently similar characteristics or motivations, and as a result further see their role or position as something attractive and potentially rewarding (Gibson, 2003, 2004). Bosma et al. (2012) further proposes that "role models may enhance the desire to become an entrepreneur by providing legitimization and encouragement to turn entrepreneurial ambitions into reality" (Bosma *et al.*, 2012, p. 6). This tends to align with other entrepreneurial role model theories which pose that role models may have a positive impact on an entrepreneurs Self-Efficacy (SE) and also impact their attitude which in turn have a critical effect of the entrepreneurs BI (Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Nowiński and Haddoud, 2019; Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016).

It is perhaps from the definition and building of relationship understanding that from the standpoint of entrepreneurship and career, it has already been clearly acknowledged through many studies that role models play a significant role and have a large influence on the preference, expectancy, and decision-making of the entrepreneur (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1976; Scherer *et al.*, 1989). It is however noteworthy to recognise that the studies from Krumboltz et al. (1976) and Scherer et al. (1989) originate from the 1970's and 1980's which is before the formal concept of social entrepreneurship existed. This is another aspect deserving attention when considering the applicability of such literature and the importance of generating new literature based on current situations

As a demonstrative example of this importance, in a study conducted in 2012 in the Netherlands with 292 entrepreneurs where it was recorded that 54% have a role model, 33% of these entrepreneurs say they would not have started an endeavour without this role model and 20% would not have continued post-start-up (Bosma *et al.*, 2012).

4.3 Entrepreneurial role model theories and hypotheses

In this subchapter, several theories are presented from the literature regarding role models and the relating hypotheses which may be relevant towards this study. These hypotheses are further brought into the context of the research aims of this study in subchapter 5.2.

From the study of Bosma et al. (2012), the theory that role models perform the following four interrelated functions is discussed: (i), inspiration and motivation (i.e. the role model creates awareness and motivates people to get started), (ii) increasing self-efficacy (i.e. the role model makes people confident that they too can achieve a certain goal), (iii) learning by example (i.e. the role model provides guidelines for action), and (iv) learning by support (i.e. the role model provides hands-on support or advice) (Bosma *et al.*, 2012). These four functions have been summarised as role models that are motivating, relatable, an example or supportive.

When analysing the demographic characteristics of the role models, Bosma et al. (2012) also hypothesised and found empirical evidence suggesting a *similarity in the gender and race of the role model and entrepreneur*.

The idea of similarity, the concept of identification, or the adaptation and imitation from other similar characteristics also come to the fore. One hypothesis that can be drawn from the works of Kagan (1958) is that *imitative behaviour may occur if there is perceived benefit or reward as a result*.

A further study conducted by Karimi et al. (2013) in Iran produced results that indicated that knowing entrepreneurial role models positively influences firstly, perceived behavioural control), "most likely through increasing one's knowledge, mastery, or general set of ability with regard to engaging in tasks required for becoming an entrepreneur" (Karimi *et al.*, 2013, p. 209); secondly, attitude "most likely through developing or modifying one's evaluation and perception of the desirability of a career as an entrepreneur" (Karimi *et al.*, 2013, p. 209); and finally, subjective norms, "most likely through providing support, encouragement and social influence" (Karimi *et al.*, 2013, p. 210). These results were found by the author to be consistent and generalisable to other cultural contexts. From these results, it can also be seen that this study builds the hypothesis, *that role models have a positive influence*, what is likely a key assumption in most cases when regarding role models. However, a counterhypothesis can also be seen as posited from work by Gibson (2004), where it is more accurately portrayed that entrepreneurs also learn from the negative sides of role models and that *negative role models that "represent behaviours and attitudes that the individual seeks to avoid"* (Gibson, 2004, p. 145) can also exist.

In fact, the idea of positive and negative role models from Gibson's (2004) work, are just two dimensions that can be associated with role models that are identified in a framework pre-

sented which can be seen in table 3 below. Using this dimensional framework, Gibson (2004) suggests "a variety of different types of role models, each depending on the needs and wants of the individual" (Gibson, 2004, p. 143). Varieties of types which classify a role model beyond the function that they perform, but rather describe the relationship they have with the individual, in this case the entrepreneur. This theory then identifies *four dimensions which further describe the type of influence, interaction, and connotation that the entrepreneur has with the role model including (i) positive to negative, (ii) global to specific, (iii) close to distant, and (iv) up to across/down* (see table 3).

TABLE 3 - ROLE MODEL DIMENSIONS (GIBSON, 2004)

Cognitive dimensions	
Positive	**Negative**
Refers to a role model having attributes which are perceived by the individual as similar, are admired and sought out for possible emulation	Refers to a role model having attributes which are primarily observed by the individual as examples of how *not* to behave in a particular context
Global	**Specific**
Refers to a variety of attributes in a role model which are attended to by the individual, including skills, traits, and behaviors	Refers to a single or small set of attributes in a role model which are attended to by the individual
Structural dimensions	
Close	**Distant**
Refers to a role model who is in the same workgroup or department, and/or with whom the individual interacts with frequently	Refers to a model who is outside the individual's workgroup or department, and with whom the individual interacts infrequently or not at all
Up	**Across/down**
Refers to a role model who is higher in hierarchical status than the individual	Refers to a role model who, in relation to the individual, is a peer, a subordinate, or who is ambiguous in status (e.g., a client)

As touched upon in subchapter 3.2, the concept of SE has been found in several studies (Mair and Noboa, 2006; Perusquia and Ramirez, 2019) to be a critical factor for BI. Engel et al. (2014) has additionally found this to be especially important for younger and starting entrepreneurs since "entrepreneurs can mitigate the seemingly negative consequences of an 'experience deficit' by acting as-if the relevant abilities to establish their ventures" (Engel *et al.*, 2014, p. 16). Since this has been found to be an important factor, one problem with this identified in works from Brändle (2018) in a German study containing 753 nascent entrepreneurs, is that when mission and social impact driven entrepreneurs were compared with classical entrepreneurs, it was found that they "do not demonstrate high levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy" (Brändle *et al.*, 2018, p. 1) and that this may "lie with the ease or difficulty they have in experiencing accomplishments, managing vicarious learning, receiving positive feedback, and maintaining a stable physical and emotional state." (Brändle *et al.*, 2018, p. 21). This could lead to the conclusion that, *social entrepreneurs, especially those that are younger, may have a lower SE in relation to their classical entrepreneurial counterparts*.

However, as also acknowledged in subchapter 3.2, several findings indicate that role models likely have a positive impact on the entrepreneurs SE or even directly impact their BI (Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Nowiński and Haddoud, 2019; Tran and Von Korflesch, 2016). This could mean that *role models have the potential to offset the potentially lower SE that may be experienced by social entrepreneurs*, which further highlights one of the key reasons that this topic is currently relevant.

4.4 Role Models in Social Entrepreneurship: an opportunity

The need for positive social impact is clear, and with social entrepreneurs in the right positions to create this impact, there is also a strong demand to assist and enable them through supporting roles such as the role models. The potential and positive influences that role models may have on social entrepreneurs has been clarified in previous chapters. However one challenge highlighted by Bosma et al. (2012) is that finding role models that are successfully creating positive change for society and the world, social entrepreneurs tend to need to look at distant icons or public figures since they are hard to find in the social entrepreneurs close environment. It was further found in the same study that these more distant 'icons' were seldom considered as the role models for entrepreneurs, and that the entrepreneurs were rather to be impacted by those they had direct contact with in their personal or professional networks (Bosma *et al.*, 2012). In other words, it was found that social entrepreneurs need to look to the media at distant icons and public figures, since they lack the local examples of successful social entrepreneurs. However, this is resulting in a lower effectiveness of these potentially positive relationships.

This highlights the need for processes and mechanisms that can aid the development of a local community of social entrepreneurial role models. The most obvious methodology is supporting the transformation and development of nascent social entrepreneurs towards becoming the local role models of the next generations of social entrepreneurs. Additionally, a case study from Kubberød et al. (2018) suggests that creating programs that draw on role model-like characteristics from peers and mentors by including peer mentoring rather than pure teaching, can provide much more efficient support to the entrepreneurial learning process (Kubberød *et al.*, 2018). Dickel and Eckardt (2021) suggest that "a fit between the type of entrepreneurial intentions and demographic and attitudinal factors can best foster social entrepreneurship" (Dickel and Eckardt, 2021, p. 16). This alludes to the potential in finding empathetic role models from other roles outside of social entrepreneurship if they match on other aspects such as intention, culture, and demographic. Another source of potential lies inherently in the aging population and older generations, where Mair (2010) states "with increased life expectancy and enhanced living conditions, we can draw from a large pool of highly educated and experienced retired people who represent a powerful resource for social change agents or supporting social change efforts" (Mair, 2010, p. 8).

As can be seen, the benefits to social entrepreneurs of leveraging more role model examples are numerous. This study aims to support social entrepreneurs through this mechanism and as Hand (2016) once argued in an online article on the research gap in social entrepreneurship "we see opportunity and responsibility: Opportunity for academics to support practitioners' efforts and to hold them accountable, and responsibility to push continually toward more effective and rigorously tested work to the benefit of the communities practitioners support" (Hand, 2016).

5 OBSERVATIONS BASED ON THE THEORETICAL FINDINGS

From the review of the current state-of-the-art literature, theory and topics surrounding the concept of role models in social entrepreneurship, the following contextual aspects have been gathered and summarised in this chapter to create a frame for the methodology, results and discussion to follow.

5.1 Summary of findings

Firstly, the drive for sustainable and social thinking has been depicted as a clear megatrend which is current in society today. This form of sustainable thinking means inclusion of societal and environmental benefits with a longer-term outlook. Ideas, frameworks, and movements that all aim to bring these benefits into society are being explored. However, the concept of social entrepreneurship was found to have the potential to be particularly impactful and central in developing this area, but also lacking research and theory in comparison to the re-world practices.

Social entrepreneurship was defined through diving into its relatively brief history and interpretation, but also the publics awareness of the concept. A broader definition of this concept was recognised for the purpose of this study, where social enterprises *pursuit opportunity, innovate and act boldly on limited resource, but first and foremost including the mission to create and sustain social value at the center of the enterprise*. The relative youth, complexity, and spectrum of social enterprises was also understood. Regarding spectrum of social entrepreneurship, it was narrowed to ventures which have *chiefly social goals but also aim to have some commercial exchange*. A brief overview of the social enterprise ecosystem in the EU environment was then also outlined. From this, a clear distinction was made to profit-oriented businesses in order to consciously prevent biased or grouping between the classical entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship where it should not exist. This distinction primarily highlighted the difference in mission, and the flow on effects this had to the business model, particularly around funding, performance, and the target markets. Perhaps most importantly, it was recognised that the people behind the ventures, the social entrepreneurs, are not clearly understood in the literature and this gap can be addressed through further empirical studies targeting the aspects of social entrepreneur behaviour, intention, and influence.

In terms of understanding social entrepreneurial behaviour and intentions, the influence of socially supporting roles was identified and could be placed within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This led to the further clarification of roles such as role models, mentors, and peers/networks. Individuals which shared similarities in their characteristics, behaviours or goals, but also had aspirational abilities of skills which incited a desire to emulate (Bosma *et*

al., 2012)*, otherwise known as role models, in particular were found to have an extremely influential role on entrepreneurs. From this perspective, many studies have observed and reported on clear functions that role models take on to create this influence. A clear gap in literature was also highlighted when no other studies on the topic of role models in entrepreneurship were found.

Overall, the literature on social enterprises and entrepreneurs was found to be relatively young and sparse with the majority of sources published in the last ten years, and nearly all of them in the last 25 years. This is in clear contrast to the sources used regarding role models in classical entrepreneurship, which were published as early as the 1970's. This is a clear indication that there is a demand for more research on the topic of social entrepreneurship with an even greater urgency needed when specifically trying to understand the social entrepreneurs, the people behind the social ventures.

5.2   Research Questions: Further development

From the literature review, the research questions were re-examined in terms of relevance. They were then further detailed to specifically include key findings, theories and hypotheses identified in the literature. The following section highlights each research question and provides additional detail.

5.2.1   Research question 1a: specification

Research question 1a "How are role models depicted and interpreted by Social Entrepreneurs?"

Through the literature, the importance of this first research question has been further highlighted. This is firstly because it was found in the literature that the definition of a role model was not consistent. Different roles were also mentioned (behavioural modelling, mentors, and peers) that had some characteristics which overlap but with different focusses of importance in their functions. This highlights a clear need for further development and general understanding of the term role model especially in social entrepreneurship, as well as an interest in how role models may be differently interpreted by the social entrepreneurs themselves.

Additionally, two frameworks were used as a basis to frame the methodology for this research question. Firstly, the framework introduced by Bosma et al. (2012) that highlights four key functions which role models may fulfil in a classic entrepreneurial sense, were outlined which include the role model being motivating, relatable, an example, or supportive. Attention was also given to the aspects that role models may demonstrate as highlighted in the framework presented by Gibson (2004) in table 3 subchapter 4.3. More specifically if these aspects in table 3 were identified in the data collected from the participants as they described their personal role models.

5.2.2 Research question 1b and 1c: specification

Research questions 1b: "Who are the role models of social entrepreneurs?"

Research question 1c: "What is the nature of the relationship between the social entrepreneur and role model?"

Through the literature review, both questions have been found to still be relevant, but seen to have some overlap in their target of focus, namely that role models tend to overlap with other roles. Examples found in the literature include parents or family, friends, peers, mentors, coaches, bosses, teachers, and public figures. Many of these roles naturally have their own typical nature of relationship and communication attributes which in many cases will reduce the dependence on the collection of this data through direct questions according to research question 1c.

An additional focus from the literature and SIA was on youth entrepreneurs. In the understanding that adults in the form of parents, teachers, or mentors may form different relationships with the social entrepreneurs, especially in the attributes of dependency and control, particular attention will be given to the analysis of these relationships. Regarding younger entrepreneurs, there is also an understanding of a closer connection between younger generations and digitalisation. It was thus given special attention to the broader possibility for communication, networking and information sharing through digital platforms, and how this impacts the nature of relationships and communication being formed with the role models, especially to public figures in the media.

Focus was also given to the theory from Bosma et al. (2012) highlighting a tendency of similar gender and race between role model and the social entrepreneur or individual.

5.2.3 Research question 1d: specification

Research question 1d: "What level of influence do these supporting roles have on social entrepreneurs?"

This question will also be framed through the lens of Bosma et al. (2012) and Gibson's (2004) frameworks similar to question 1a and has been explored through the collection of empirical evidence of role models fulfilling these functions.

It was also found that role model influence can be time or phase dependent, meaning that the potential influence may occur upon founding the social venture, or during the ongoing operations, or even occur long before the venture had started. This time and phase dependency was also included for consideration in the data collection.

Focus was also given to the existence and impacts of positive role models in contrast with negative role models, and furthermore, how the social entrepreneur either imitates or avoids particular behaviour and characteristics in order to achieve a positively perceived outcome.

5.2.4   Research question 2a and 2b: specification

Research question 2a: How do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves to act as role models?

Research question 2b: What are the perceived limitations in their progression as role models?

By targeting role models questions from the point of view of the social entrepreneur, this confronts the topic of SE, which was highlighted as a critical topic in the literature when it comes to the social entrepreneurs BI and SEB. The theory that younger mission-driven social entrepreneurs have a lower SE was explored, as well as the potential positive impact role models that may have on improving SE.

In the literature review an opportunity was identified where more local role models would be beneficial to social entrepreneurs which confirmed the relevance of research questions 2a and 2b. This is because one key method is supporting the nascent social entrepreneurs to transform and develop into the local role models for the next generations, which requires an understanding of their current perspective and barriers.

Both frameworks from Bosma et al. (2012) and Gibson's (2004) to question 1a were also used here, with the point of view as the social entrepreneur being the role model.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research principles

Chapter 6 outlines the methodology used in the form of the research principles, data collection, execution, and the data analysis. In this first sub-chapter, the principles which underlie the entire process have been outlined.

1. *Sequential explorative mixed-method*: From the literature review it was clear that there is a gap concerning literature on role models in social entrepreneurship. For this reason, the research methodology in this study has been designed to be explorative. A sequential mixed-method approach has been selected to combine the benefits of a less resource intensive initial probe, in the form of a questionnaire, to discover potential points of interest. This is followed by a deeper inquiry in the form of an interview, to build understanding and test the theory and hypotheses found in the literature.

2. *Data privacy and security*: In this study, personal topics and relationships were shared and discussed. Both the questionnaire (part 1) and interview guidelines (part 2) were approved by Modul University Vienna's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Consent was provided by all participates for the use of data collected exclusively for the purpose of this study and by SIA. To maximise the feeling of privacy and security, the participants personal details have therefore been kept anonymous. Furthermore, specific digital tools which also prioritise data privacy and security have been used in the collection of the data. It is also likely that this enabled the participants to be open and sharing during the data collection phase of this study.

3. *Supporting social entrepreneurs*: The main goal of this study is to support social entrepreneurs through developing academic understanding in the area of social entrepreneurship. This aim was communicated to all potential participants and aligned through a working partnership with SIA. Furthermore, the results of the study are to be shared with the participants upon completion.

6.2 SIA Partnership for data collection

6.2.1 Background and Introduction

SIA is an organisation that runs education and incubation programs to enable early-stage social entrepreneurs to take their social oriented business ideas and turn them into a reality. They represent the largest community of social entrepreneurs under 30 years old in Europe. Founded in 2009 by Peter Vandor in Vienna, Austria at the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Vienna, the organisation started off as a program to identify who the

student social entrepreneurs in the country and motivate them by means of reward to progress with their idea. As of 2020, the SIA program operated in over 14 countries and 134 cities, based in Europe, Africa and Asia. They conducted over 150 workshops in that year, reaching over 5000 participants and for the incubation program received over 550+ applications, from which the 52 of the most impactful ventures were selected to be supported through a three-month incubation education and mentoring program to bring their ideas further (SIA International, 2021a).

In January 2021, the author established contact with SIA through Corina Angelescu, who was largely responsible for building the alumni community within SIA. The first steps were taken towards working together on this study with the primary goal to better understand social entrepreneurs and through this support them in their endeavours, as well as build up the social entrepreneurial community. Through Corina, different country leads of SIA branches internationally and individual social entrepreneurs who were alumni of the SIA incubation program were contacted and invited to take part in this study with the title "Role Models in Social Entrepreneurship". This resulted in a total of ten social entrepreneurs taking part, from four different countries being Austria, Romania, Croatia and Lithuania.

6.2.2   Incubation program entry criteria

Since all participants in this study are SIA incubation program alumni, the program marketing and criteria can already be seen as a selection criterion for all social entrepreneurs.

The wording for entry into the incubation program was as follows: *"You can submit your social or ecological project idea and get the chance for a paid internship with your own project and for the Social Impact Award 2021!"* (SIA International, 2021b). As SIA finalists (top 10 entrants per year per country), the following rewards are received:

- *"Professional support through the incubation program of the Social Impact Award Austria from July to September (program length shown for Austria, but varies per country)*
- *Production of a short pitch video"* (SIA International, 2021b)

As SIA winners (top 5 entrants per year per country) the following rewards are available:

- *"4 Jury Awards: up to 3.000 € (amount shown for Austria, but varies per country)*
- *1 Community Award: up to 2.000 € (amount shown for Austria, but varies per country)*
- *Free ticket for our SIA Summit with all winner projects from all other SIA countries (participation is requested and at least 1 participant per team)*

- *Access to our Alumni Network, through which all winners of the Social Impact Award Austria since 2009 are offered different opportunities and contacts"* (SIA International, 2021c)

To be eligible to enter the SIA incubation program, applicants must satisfy the following points as of 2021:

- *"All core team members must be born between January 1, 1991 and December 31, 2006; This is per the EU definition from youth: between 14 and 30 years old.*
- *The applicant(s) did neither participate in SIA's incubation nor won SIA in previous years with the same idea.*
- *The ideas submitted in previous years, except previous finalists or winning ventures can be resubmitted in 2021.*
- *Individuals/teams can apply with new ideas even if they were selected as finalists or winners in previous years.*
- *The idea has not been legally founded before January 1st, 2020.* This earlier than in the same year in which the program is taking place.
- *The idea has not received formalized monetary support by an external party exceeding 6.000€ (e.g. angel investment, grants, prize money etc.) before the submission date. (amount shown for Austria, but varies per country)*
- *Only those applications can be considered, which are complete and have been submitted through our website by May 16, 2021 at 6pm CET"* (SIA International, 2021c)

Marketing of the program was generally seen through the following channels:

- Social media: primarily Facebook and Instagram
- University newsletter and posts
- Affiliates and partners e.g. Impact Hub Vienna
- Website advertising

6.2.3   Incubation program content and process

The SIA incubation program, that all participants have taken part in, helps the social entrepreneurs build the foundational skills needed to start their venture and puts them in touch with a mentor suited for their venture needs. The incubation is heavily focused on mentor and coach relationships to cater to the more specific needs of the various winners but should always cover the business fundamentals. This includes problem-solution fit, business model and operations. Beyond the direct teaching of start-up knowledge and guidance, the incubation program also aims to create a community of social entrepreneurs that as an entry point towards networking in this area.

By the end of the program most teams and ventures aim to have created their first prototype, be ready to enter the market, or potentially already have their first customers or partners with an early product or service (SIA International, 2021d). As the earliest SIA alumni that participated from this study are winners from the 2020 program, this program would have ended for them in September or October 2020.

6.2.4 SIA concluding thoughts

The partnership with SIA in conducting this study creates context when analysing and discussing the results of this study. Through SIA, the author had greater access to social entrepreneurs who were able and willing to participate in this study. However, the following limitations and considerations have been introduced, as summarised from the subchapter 6.2.1-6.2.3 content:

- Due to SIA's primary focus on students and youth including a participant age restriction of 30 years old, none of the participants are older than 40 years old.
- As alumni of an incubation program, the participants have tended to be in the early or founding years of their social venture.
- As alumni of an incubation program, the participants must have been living in countries where the SIA organisation is present.
- As alumni of an incubation program, they have also been provided with a basis of start-up knowledge for the initial business development.
- Through the incubation program, the participants have all been provided access to mentors and/or coaches and have therefore at least singular experience with this form of relationship.
- Due to the competitive program entry requirements, participants have all shown some level of initiative and proactiveness towards creating impact and social value.
- Due to the broad entry requirements into such a program, the participants are working in ventures that range across industry and type.

6.3 Data collection methodology

6.3.1 Target group criteria

For this study, the target group was narrowed according to two independent sets of criteria. The first set of criteria was highlighted in subchapter 6.2 and was the filtering through the SIA program selection, as only alumni to this program were in the participant pool.

The second set of criteria is based on a significant study completed by Bublitz et al. (2020) on understanding youth social entrepreneurs. This study heavily explored the topic of youth social

entrepreneurship through conducting in depth interviews with the social entrepreneurs themselves. This study aims to imitate the criteria for use in targeting participants in this study which are as follows:

- Have founded a social impact initiative in the last 10 years.
- Organised and lead a team to advance their initiative.
- Implemented their initiative to create measurable social impact.

(Bublitz *et al.*, 2020)

However, one key difference is that for the last point, only part of the criteria has been used, namely that the social entrepreneur has implemented the initiative. The reason for this is that several alumni from the SIA program have only recently implemented their initiative and even though they are planning to have measurable impact, have not yet created this through their venture.

It should also be noted here that the study was only conducted in the English language, as well as exclusively online. These two conditions under which the study was conducted would have also impacted the ability for those to partake predominantly towards those that have been educated to learn English as a secondary language, as well as feel confident to use it for the purpose of this study; and those that live in environments that have the infrastructure to have steady internet access and have the resources to afford devices such as a computer or smart phone.

6.3.2 Tools

In this study, a survey was completed using a combination of two data collection tools, a questionnaire, and an interview. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the questionnaire round was first created and conducted to allow a collection of responses to questions based predominantly on theory and hypothesis found in the literature. And interview round was conducted after the questionnaire to allow for the opportunity to more deeply discuss the answers provided, and also to talk-about more open-ended and exploratory topics. Further description of the characteristics around which both tools were designed is provided below. This is to be followed by the process of question formation in the following sub-chapter.

A **questionnaire** was designed around the following characteristics:

- Completion time of approximately 15-30 minutes
- Questions derived from a combination of the research questions and literature review
- To be completed in combination with a follow-up interview and discussion
- Predominant use of closed questions to be answered through yes/no/NA, single/multichoice, or Likert-scale based answers.
- To be delivered online and participants invited through an email link

- Enabled through the tool and platform **Blocksurvey** . Blocksurvey is a blockchain based survey creation platform that enables the collection of sensitive or private data for the purpose of research. It contains "no trackers, cookies, ads or censorship" (BlockSurvey, 2021) and does not allow access to any other party other than the holder of the account through a private key.

A set of **interview guidelines** were designed around the following characteristics:

- Completion time of approximately 45-60 minutes
- Topics derived from a combination of the research questions and literature review
- Discussion guidelines adapted to the answers provided in the questionnaire
- Semi-structured, casual and discussion-based interview style
- To be delivered online through a video conference platform
- To be delivered through the tool and platform **8x8 Meet** (8x8 Meet, 2021). This is a video conferencing platform based off the open-source projects from Jitsi (jitsi, 2021) which focuses on the deployment of secure video conferencing solutions. Of particular use in this study regarding the 8x8 Meet platform was the ability to record calls to .mp4 format video, as well as create transcriptions in .html format.

6.3.3 Question formation

In order to form the questions that appear in both data collection tools for this survey, a systematic process was used. The process consisted of the following five stages which used literature and the original research questions to derive questions firstly for the questionnaire, followed by the interview guidelines.

1. For each of the research questions (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b), survey questionnaires were derived from the found literature. The connections between literature and research questions can be found in subchapter 5.2. These questions were recorded in a table in excel.
2. The questions were then further detailed according to whether the format of the expected answers would be open or closed. According to this categorisation, the questions were tagged to either appear in part 1, the questionnaire, or in part 2, the interview.

The table formulation of steps 1 and 2 can be found in the appendix A.

3. For the questionnaire which contained the majority of the closed questions, the answer types were then further defined. The types of answers which were designed for this survey consisted of: binary, scale, selection single-choice, selection multi-choice and open text.

For the purpose of scaled answers, a six-step *Likert scale* was used in order to provide enough granularity to provide three levels of severity on the positive and negative sides, and also to avoid the default use of a neutral option from survey participants (Albaum, 1997).

The table formulation of step 3 can be found in appendix B.

4. The questionnaire was then finalised for approval and transformation to a digital format. This included adding questions to capture demographic information, segmenting groups of questions into segments, and adding comments and tips for readability.

The table formulation of the questionnaire after step 4, which was approved by Modul University Vienna's IRB, can be found in appendix C. This is the questionnaire version, that was converted to an online questionnaire using Blocksurvey.

5. The interview guideline was then populated with the questions that were selected for discussion. This consisted predominantly of the questions that would likely have open-ended answers or required some initial direction from a closed-answered question that would be answered in the questionnaire and therefore enable a more in-depth answer in the second phase of the survey. As a result, the interview guideline had both standard discussion topics that would occur in every interview, but also allowed for conditional forks in discussion direction according to the questionnaire answers provided by the participant in the first stage of the survey.

The table formulation of the interview guidelines after step 5, which was approved by Modul University Vienna's IRB, can be found in appendix D.

6.4 Execution

The following sub chapter outlines the key aspects of the execution phase of this study through which the data was collected.

Tools: The final digitalised version of the questionnaire for part 1 of the survey can be found in appendix E. The final interview guideline form used during the interviews or part 2 of the survey can be found in appendix E. Note that the differences from the Modul University Vienna's IRB versions is purely format and platform based.

Communication: All initial contact including the initial request to take part in this study was conducted through Corina Angelescu as part of SIA International. This enabled a more consistent approach upon first contact with the SIA alumni, meaning that the communication would travel internally within the SIA organisation and enable a higher likelihood of participation. This consisted of an introductory email to the project, details outlining the two stages of

the survey, and a link to complete the questionnaires that were all designed by the author and shared with Corina Angelescu to be forwarded onto the SIA Alumni. Participants were generally contacted in sets of eight social entrepreneurs per country and were given between two and three weeks to complete the questionnaire.

Target group: A total of 57 social entrepreneurs that fulfilled the criteria outlined in subchapters 6.2 and 6.3.1 were contacted across five different countries including Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Romania. From this, 10 social entrepreneurs volunteered their time to take part across four different countries. Further details on the participants can be found in Chapter 7.1.

Time frame: This survey was conducted between April 2021 and June 2021 (inclusive).

Interview follow-up: All follow-up interviews were planned to be conducted within ten days of the initial questionnaire completion so that the questionnaire answers were still fresh in the participant's mind. This was fulfilled in all but three cases due to various personal reasons which required the appointments to be moved to a later date. The appointments were organised by the author in direct contact with the participants once they had completed the questionnaire and according to a time suggested by the participant. All interviews were conducted in a 1 on 1 setting online between the author and the participant.

Artefacts: For every participant in the survey, four data artefacts were collected that were further processed and used for analysis purposes.

- Questionnaire answer as a .pdf document: containing the questions and participants answers to the questionnaire
- Interview guidelines as an Excel form: an Excel form outlining the interview questions and notes taken during and after the interview
- Interview recording as an mp4 file: a recording of the video conference session during the interview using the 8x8 Meet platform.
- Interview transcription as an HTML file – an automatically transcribed version of the audio during the interview produced by the 8x8 Meet platform.

6.5 Data analysis

As can be seen from the previous chapters, the data collected in this study presents itself in several different forms including quantitative data from the questionnaires with predominantly closed-answered questions, and qualitative data from the interviews with predominantly open-answered or discussion questions. The analysis has been conducted in these three stages: descriptive analysis of the questionnaire results, coded interview analysis, and social entrepreneur case study analysis. In addition, a coding guide was established as a tool in order to facilitate the analysis of the interview data in a consistent and accurate manner.

This chapter is only a description of the data analysis process and the results and discussion regarding these analyses are covered in chapters 7 and 8.

6.5.1 Questionnaire – descriptive analysis

A descriptive analysis of the questionnaire answers which were typically in the form of nominal or ordinal data was conducted. In most cases, this involved the graphical presentation of the data followed by a description of relevance and key points. The content that was analysed in this method included the answers to the questionnaire questions, which were typically derived from the literature and research questions, but also the questionnaire questions targeting demographic information of the participants.

6.5.2 Interview – coding guide tool

In order to conduct the second part of the analysis on the interviews conducted, a coding guide that related to the research questions was first established which can be seen in table 4 below. As can be seen, the codes are related with a one-to-one relationship to each of the research questions, with the exception of two codes, *Gen* and *Spe*, which are both used to capture broader, but potentially still useful information.

TABLE 4 - CODING GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Topic	Code	RQ ref.
General info	Gen	
Special info	Spe	
Role Model interpretation	Int	1a
Who are the role models	Who	1b
Role model relationships	Rel	1c
Role Model influence	Inf	1d
Self-interpretation as a role model	Sel	2a
Barriers to becoming better role models	Bar	2b

The more detailed description of these coding topics is as follows:

Gen: General information consists of information that does not fall into the other categories but may still be relevant for context. Examples of general information may be the participants background, venture introduction, and influences from culture or environment.

Spe: Special information aims to capture particular points of interest that highlight aspects of relationships, especially between role model and social entrepreneur, that may lead to new directions of academic exploration or potentially meaningful factors that fall outside the scope of the research questions.

Int: Role model interpretation attempts to capture information relating to the definition, meaning, or understanding of what a role model is, and what they may do. Examples may in-

clude a direct description from a participant of what makes someone a role model or a mention of what special traits that their role models have. This code relates to research question 1a.

Who: This code attempts to capture information which identifies the specific people that have held role model roles for the social entrepreneur, or other persons that have fulfilled functions similar to those which a role model may fulfill. Examples may include a boss at work, ex-colleague, or public figure. This code relates to research question 1b.

Rel: Role model relationships attempts to capture information that describes the characteristics of the relationships between the social entrepreneur and role model or another person. Examples could be how often there is communication, if the feelings are reciprocated, or how close/distant the relationship is. This code relates to research question 1c.

Inf: The role model influence code attempts to capture information that describes the effect or impact that the role model may have on an external party such as the social entrepreneur or other individuals. Examples may include the feelings the role models inspire in an individual or a description of a form of support in which the role model interacts with an external party. This code relates to research question 1d.

Sel: Self-interpretation as a role model is an internally facing measure that attempts to capture information that looks at the SE of the social entrepreneur. Examples may include the sharing of leadership roles, a demonstration of confidence, or discussed aspirations to be a role model for others. This code relates to question 2a.

Bar: Barriers to becoming a better role model attempts to capture any obstacles or difficulties that the social entrepreneur may be experiencing that are particularly relevant to their ability or desire to become a role model for other social entrepreneurs. Examples may include a lack of time, networks, or desire to do this. This code relates to question 2b.

6.5.3   Interview – coding analysis

Using the previously mentioned coding guide, the data collected through the interview process was analysed. The data was collected in the form of video recordings and transcriptions and processed and analysed in the following three stages: transcription clean-up, key information discovery and coding.

1. Transcription clean-up: In this stage the automatically created transcription files were quality controlled. This included reviewing the video recording taken and verifying the accuracy of the transcription through simultaneous review of the video interview and transcript reading for mistake correction. The typical transcription consisted of between 450-700 lines of conversation from the approximately 50-minute interviews.

2. Key information discovery: From the transcribed text, key statements that were expressed by the participant were identified and summarised in an additional column. Key information can be described as information that had some relation to one of the codes shown in table 4 from the previous subchapter. This stage in the analysis of the interview typically reduced the transcribed text down to 30-70 key points of information.

3. Coding: In the final step of interview data analysis, the codes as shown in table 4 were assigned to the key information points to give a basis of how the key information relates back to and can answer the initial research questions. For every social entrepreneur, this led to a summary of key data points collected through the interview process being categorised under each of the research questions.

6.5.4 Social entrepreneurial case study analysis

Using the context and answers provided from the questionnaire, as well as the codified interview data, the social entrepreneurial participants were then reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This part of the analysis aims to portray a succinct summary of each of the individual social entrepreneur's views and understanding when it comes to the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship, especially regarding their background and opinion on the role that role models play in social entrepreneurship.

7 RESULTS

7.1 Participant introduction

In the results chapter, the findings of the survey (questionnaire and interviews) are presented. This has been done predominantly in the form of tables and graphs with additional descriptions of the data. In this sub-chapter, the participants 1 through 10 are briefly portrayed in terms of their demographic data and within the context of their current social entrepreneurial activity.

As can be seen in table 5 below, the majority of the participants were female with seven female and three male participants. The majority of social entrepreneurs were also most active in Romania with half of the participants being born and operating in Romania, and the other half being split between Austria, Croatia, and Lithuania. The age span of the social entrepreneurs ranged from 23 years old to 38 years old, with six out of ten being under 30 years old. In terms of formal education, all social entrepreneurs had achieved at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent, however six out of ten also had a master's degree or equivalent.

TABLE 5 - SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Participant	Nationality	Gender	Birth year	Highest education	Questionnaire date	Interview date
1	Austria	Female	1982	Bachelor's or equivalent	12-Apr	20-Apr
2	Romania	Male	1993	Bachelor's or equivalent	13-Apr	21-Apr
3	Romania	Female	1993	Master's or equivalent	16-Apr	22-Apr
4	Austria	Female	1997	Master's or equivalent	16-Apr	25-Apr
5	Romania	Female	1993	Master's or equivalent	21-Apr	29-Apr
6	Romania	Female	1996	Master's or equivalent	21-Apr	30-Apr
7	Croatia	Male	1989	Bachelor's or equivalent	7-May	2-Jun
8	Lithuania	Female	1985	Master's or equivalent	1-Jun	8-Jun
9	Romania	Female	1988	Master's or equivalent	1-Jun	14-Jun
10	Croatia	Male	1998	Bachelor's or equivalent	6-Jun	21-Jun

In table 6 below, additional details are provided on the current social enterprises of the social entrepreneurs. Regarding the maturity of the social enterprises, the majority of the enterprises are in the seed or early stages of development, with three exceptions. Two enterprises are still in the pre-seed phase and another enterprise is already established. As can be further identified from the table, the social enterprises that the social entrepreneurs are currently working with are spread across at least six different industries. However, it should be noted that education is the most commonly appearing industry with six of the ten enterprises operating in this area. All social enterprises are creating impact through their product or service. However, half of the enterprises also aim to create impact outside of this through either building awareness, communities, or through employment. Notably absent is the goal to create impact through donations from enterprise earnings.

TABLE 6 - SURVEY PARTICIPANT ENTERPRISES

Participant	Social venture maturity	Social venture industry	Social impact
1	Established: sustainable business operation, ready to handover over exit	Education	Through our products and services
2	Early: product recently on the market, enterprise is running	Health services	Through our products and services, Through building awareness and information sharing
3	Seed: initial funding and early product available	Textiles/clothing, education	Through our products and services
4	Seed: initial funding and early product available	Food and drink	Through our products and services
5	Early: product recently on the market, enterprise is running	Education, Health services	Through our products and services, Through building communities, Through building awareness and information sharing
6	Early: product recently on the market, enterprise is running	Education, Media and Culture	Through our products and services, Through building communities
7	Pre-seed: idea or concept building	Professional services	Through employment, Through our products and services
8	Seed: initial funding and early product available	Health services	Through our products and services
9	Pre-seed: idea or concept building	Education	Through our products and services, Through building awareness and information sharing
10	Seed: initial funding and early product available	Education, Textiles, clothing	Through our products and services, Through building awareness and information sharing

7.2   Questionnaire results

In this chapter the answers to the questionnaire questions will be presented in graphical form. The presentation of this data has been split into three sections, aligning with how the survey was designed. First, there is the definition and interpretation of role models in social entrepreneurship. Second, there is social entrepreneurs personal experience with real role models. The final section tackles how they perceive themselves as a role model to others.

Note that participants will be referred to here on as PX where X is their designation number as per the table 5 from the previous subchapter.

7.2.1   Role model interpretation

The following subchapter targets the first section of the questionnaire questions numbered 9.1 to 9.4 and 9.6. These align with questions 13-18 in the approved questionnaire draft found in appendix C. It should be noted that this difference in numbering is due to the automatic question numbering of the Blocksurvey platform when the online version of the questionnaire was created.

For the following represented questions shown in figure 4, the scale of answering from 1-6 is a range from disagree to agree. As demonstrated in the results from figure 4, in nearly all cases, the participants have answered with a 4, 5, or 6 showing agreement with the questions associated with role model functions found in the literature and presented in the questionnaire. The one exception is on the topic relatability. When asked if the function of relatability for a role model was important, two participants slightly disagreed. The next most contentious role model function was if a role model is an example of what was possible, with the most popular answer only slightly agreeing that this is important, but otherwise a fairly even spread across the agreement side of the answer scale. Looking at the answers to whether it was important if social entrepreneurial role models provided direct support, the majority of answers were in agreement, however with two participants only slightly agreeing. Finally, the function that was most clearly depicted by the participants as important was a social entrepreneurial role models' ability to motivate others by sharing their work or impact where the majority completely agreed with this statement.

9. For social entrepreneurial role models is it important that they…
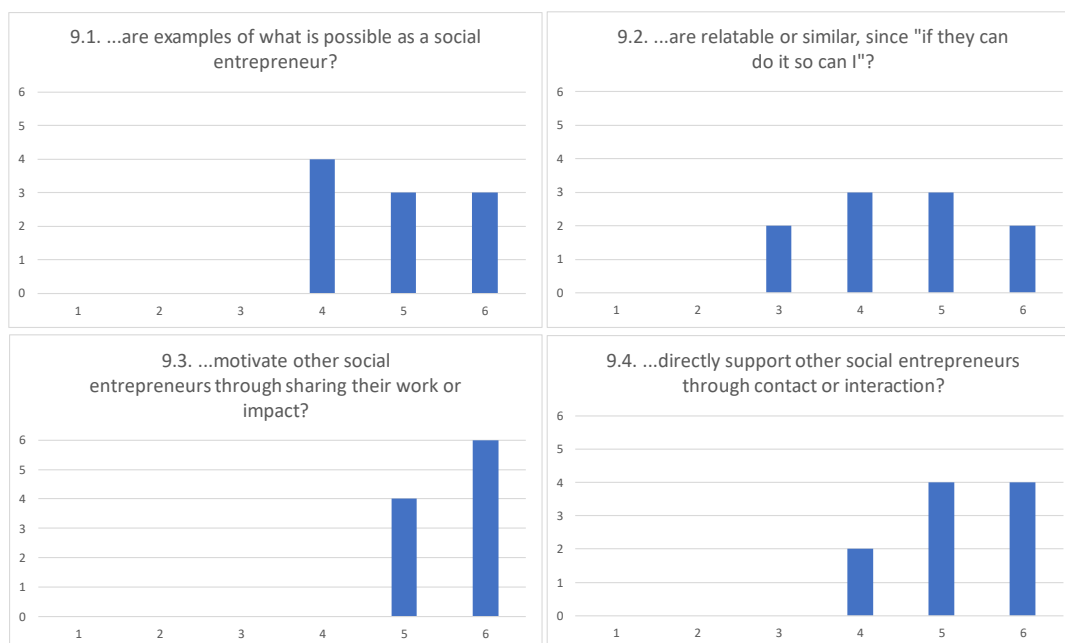
FIGURE 4 - SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE MODEL FUNCTIONS (N=10; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

These four questions then had two follow-up questions in the questionnaire. The first question that directly followed was: "9.5. Do you believe they influence you or create impact in other forms, outside of those mentioned in the previous 4 questions?". It had four of the ten participants answering in an affirmative way. In the comments section, the following three answers were provided:

"Our vision has to help people around world to be positive and grow" (P7).

"They set an example how such activities can have balanced impact on people, communities, economy, etc." (P8).

"Directly connecting with their customers and being connected to the matter they are involved in at a broader maybe international level." (P9).

The second follow-up question regarding the criticality of role models for a social entrepreneur to be successful can be seen in figure 5 and uses the same scale of disagreement to agreement. As can be seen, there was a higher tendency to agree with this statement, however with three participants disagreeing to some extent. Thus, there was no clear-cut agreement or disagreement on this topic.
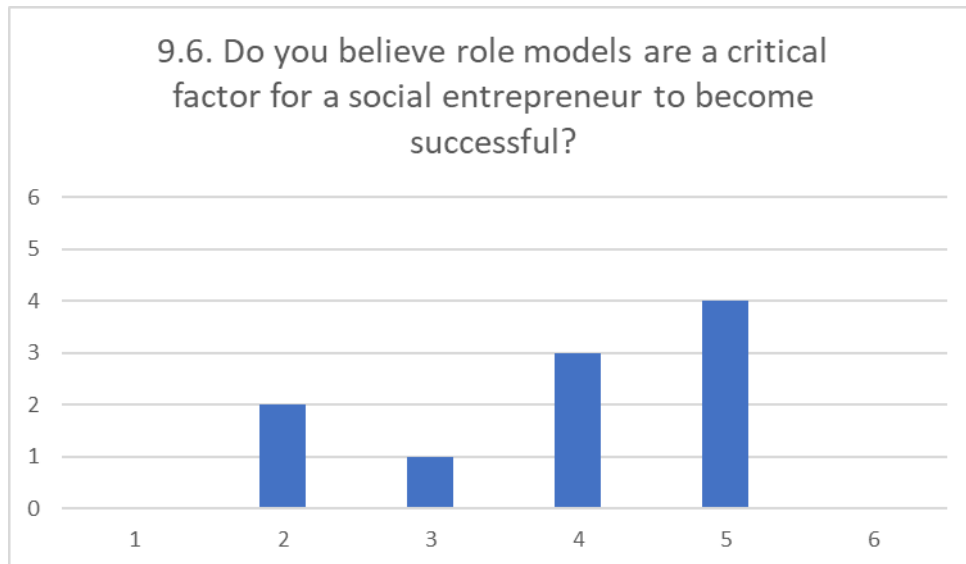
FIGURE 5 - CRITICALITY OF ROLE MODELS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS (N=10; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

7.2.2 Social entrepreneurial experience with role models

In this section of the questionnaire, the participants could enter between 0-3 of their personal role models. As a result, a total of 24 role models were described in this section of the questionnaire by the ten participants. None of the participants entered zero role models in this section.

To firstly outline who these role models are, the relationships and frequency of communication have been displayed in figure 6. The first graph shows that there is a wide variety of relationships that the participants had with their role models. The most common type of relationship consisted of public figures sitting at just under 30% representation. Other more commonly identified groupings were acquaintances, friends, and partners all with more than 12% representation. Types of relationships that were not identified before the survey that appeared under the "other" category included a former boss and former mentor.

When looking at the frequency of communication in the second graph from figure 6, it is also spread out across all the groupings. This however aligns as expected with the types of relationships in the first graph. This can be seen in the three major groupings around the answers "we do not communicate", "once every few months", and the combination of "daily" and "weekly" frequencies. The relationship of the alignment between these relationship types and the communication frequency has been further investigates in the discussion subchapter 8.2.

13. Considering only (this role model)...

13.1. ...what relationship do you have with this individual?

13.2. ...how often would you communicate with this individual?
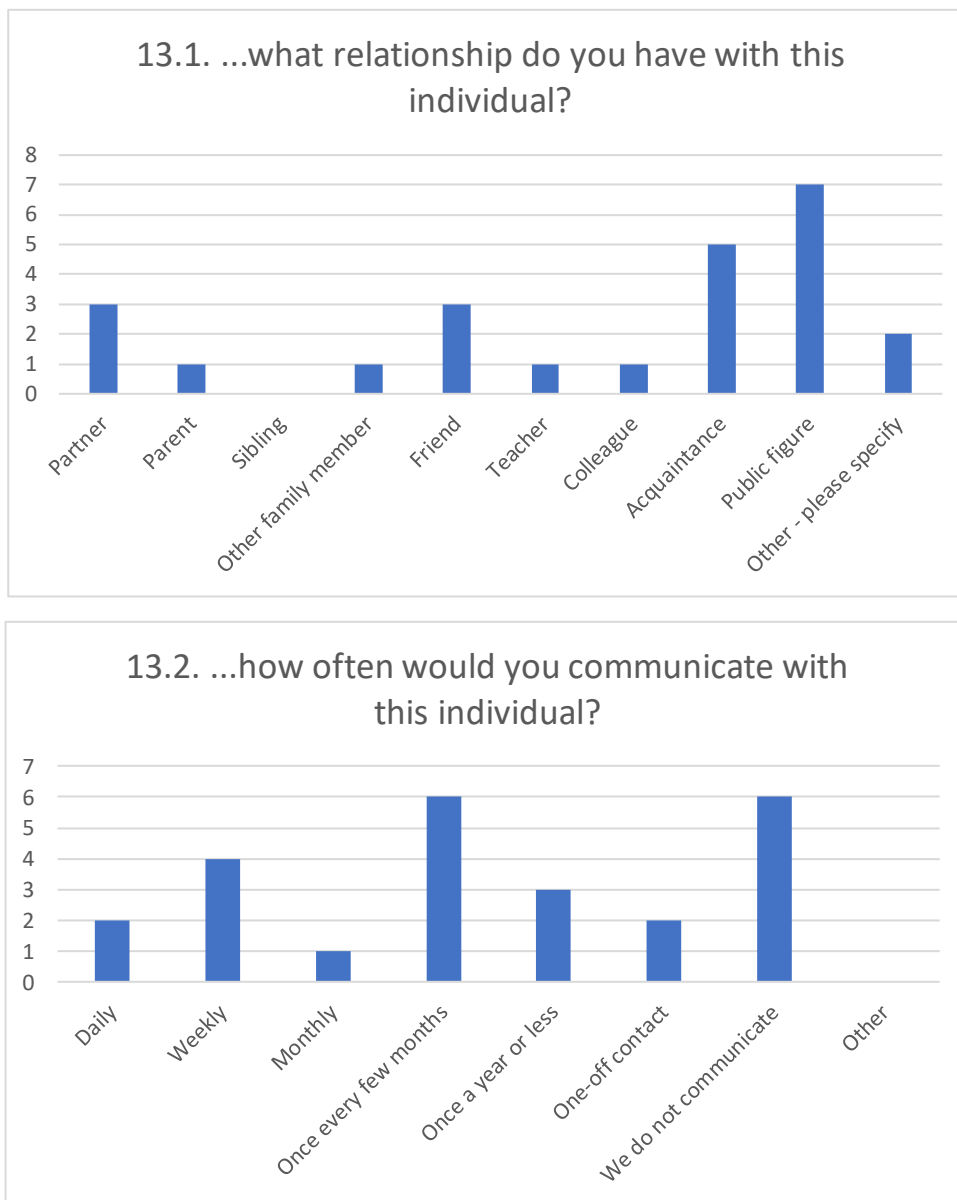
FIGURE 6 - REAL ROLE MODELS, RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY (N=24; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

The following four graphs from figure 7 aim to gauge the level of influence the role models had for the social entrepreneurs at different stages of their development in the area of social or environmental impact. The scale for answering these questions ranged from 1 representing no influence, to 6 meaning very high influence. From the first graph labelled with question 13.3, it can be seen that there were 9 out of 24 cases where the role model had a high or very high level of influence in regard to the initial interest in social entrepreneurial activities. However, large groupings showing a medium or low level of influence also demonstrate the situational dependency of this the role models influence in this topic. In the graph labelled with question 13.4, it is noticeable that three-quarters (18 out of 24) of the role models had an above medi-um level of influence on the social entrepreneurs when it came to starting the social enter-

prise. This pattern appears to repeat itself when looking at the graph labelled 13.5 regarding the influence of the role model on the continued operation and development of the social enterprise, with two-thirds of role models having an above medium level of influence. On the fourth graph with the question labelled 13.6, it can be seen that 14 out of 24 role models had a high or very high influence on the social entrepreneur's personal capability in the field of social entrepreneurship, with the remainder of role models having evenly spread lower levels of reported influence here.

13. Considering only (this role model)…
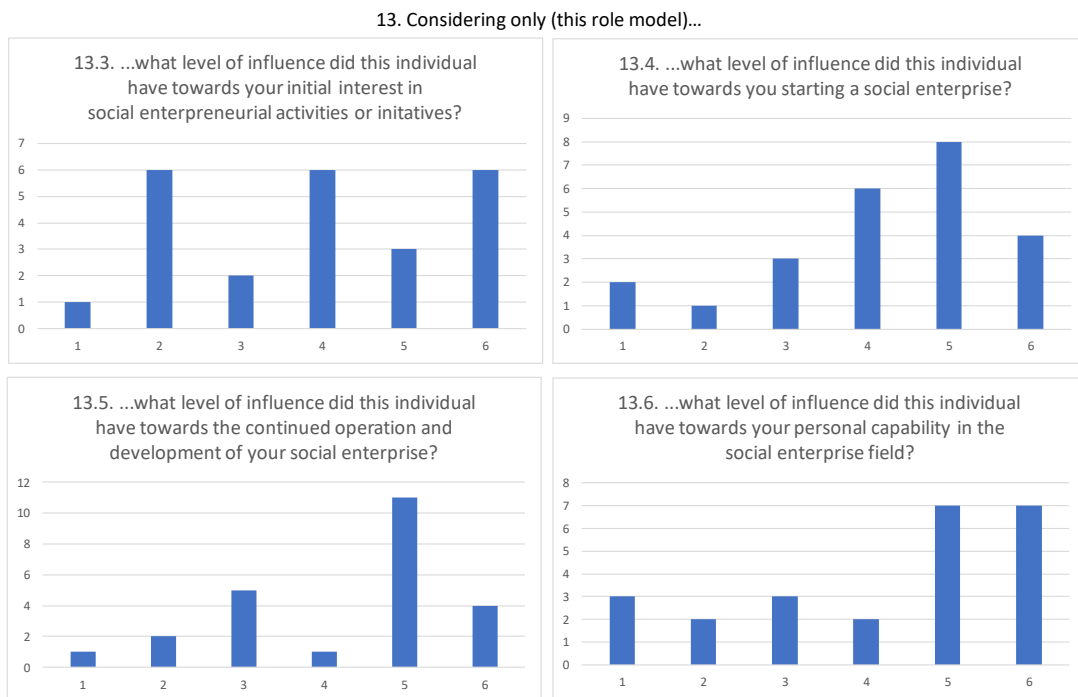
FIGURE 7 - INFLUENCE LEVELS OF ROLE MODELS (N=24; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)
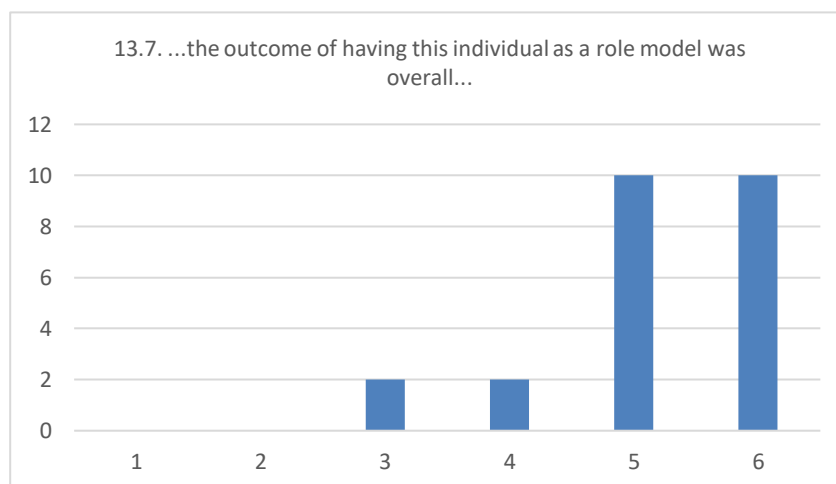
FIGURE 8 - OUTCOME OF HAVING THESE ROLE MODELS (N=10; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

In the final graph shown in figure 8 of this second section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked if the outcome of having these individuals as role models was negative to positive

using a scale where 1 represented negative, and 6 represented positive. It can be seen that from the role models that were provided in the questionnaire answers, 20 out of 24 of the role model relationships were seen as mostly positive or positive by the social entrepreneurs, with none of the role model outcomes being seen as negative or mostly negative.

7.2.3 The social entrepreneurial participants as role models

The following subchapter targets the third section of the questionnaire questions numbered in 16.1 to 16.5. These questions align to questions 28 to 32 in the approved questionnaire draft found in appendix C.

For the following represented questions shown in figure 9, the scale for answering these questions ranged from 1 representing none, to 6 meaning very high or critical. In the two related questions 16.1 and 16.2, it can be seen that the average scores of answers in 16.2, which all have answers ranging from 4-6, are significantly higher than in 16.1, where the majority of participants have answered from 1-4. This demonstrates that the social entrepreneurial participants do want to have more impact and influence in the field of social entrepreneurship than they are currently believed to be having. It also highlights two more points, firstly their belief in having a lower impact in social entrepreneurship potentially from their relatively lower level of experience and time in the field or lower self-perception of their impact; and secondly that all the participants appear to be impact driven, with all of them wanting to create an above medium level of impact and influence in social entrepreneurship. The answers to question 16.3 are not consistent, being spread out across all levels. This shows that the participants have mixed levels of conscious intention to act as a role model in the area of social entrepreneurship. The answers to question 16.4 also indicate a mixed range of answers when it comes to the participants self-interpretation of capability to be a role model. The participant's answers appear to be split evenly into two groupings, one group feeling a low-to-medium level of capability, and the other feeling a very high level of capability. Another comparison that can be observed is that the average score of answers to question 16.4 is higher than the answers to 16.1, demonstrating a likelihood that the participants ability to create impact and have influence is not limited to their self-perceived capability.

The final question in this section is graphically depicted in figure 10 and asks the participants what factors may aid their ability to be a role model for social entrepreneurs. This was a multichoice question, where the participants could select as many answers as were applicable, resulting in a total of 62 answers from the ten participants. The most common answers are *peer interaction* (8 out of 10), *time* (7 out of 10), and *money* and *personal marketing* (6 out of 10). The least common answers are exposure to *societal issues* (3 out of 10), *formal education* and *work experience* (4 out of 10). No answers in the *other* category were provided.

16. Nearly there! When considering yourself as a role model…

16.1. …what level of impact or influence do you think you have had so far on others in the area of social entrepreneurship?

16.2. …what level of impact or influence do you want to have as a role model on others in the area of social entrepreneurship?

16.3. …what level of effort do you make to consciously act as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship?

16.4. …how capable do you feel to be a role model for other social entrepreneurs?

FIGURE 9 - SELF-INTERPRETATION AS ROLE MODELS (N=10; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

16.5. …my ability to be a role model for others in the space of social entrepreneurships would improve if I had more…
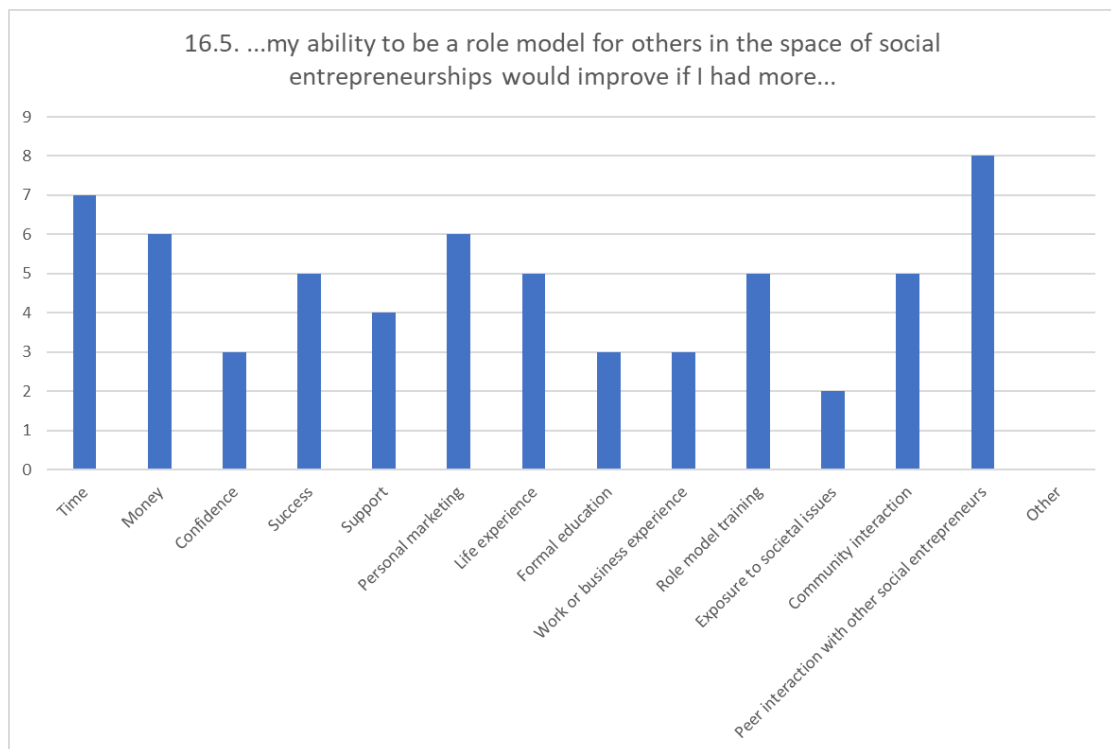
Figure 10 - Limitations to development as a role model (N=62; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

7.3 Introduction to the social entrepreneur participants

In this sub-chapter, each of the participants will be presented as an individual case study which has predominantly been built from the interview portion of the survey. The aim is to introduce

the social entrepreneur and also summarise their views on how they have interpreted and experienced role models.

7.3.1 Introduction to participant 1

Participant 1 (P1) had worked with her social enterprise for nine years, which was the longest out of the social entrepreneurs that participated in this survey. She had worked in several NGOs, which focused mainly on helping children and was partly driven to create her own social enterprise through a lack of finding a job that aligned with her own passion to empower kids.

P1 saw role models as important. She described them as people that do hard things, are tough, turn ideas into reality and are not afraid to fail. Further, she stated that role models are not caring for fame or position, fight against injustice or unfairness, and can see the potential in others and engage this potential so that it can develop. Furthermore, P1 sees role models as having some direct contact with the audience, provide some level of direct teaching, support, or feedback. She also finds that ideas can also be an inspiration and an example similar to role models.

7.3.2 Introduction to participant 2

Participant 2 (P2) had worked for seven years in social activities and more than two years with his social enterprise. He was first exposed to social activities through high school workshops and has worked in several NGOs also holding some leadership positions and has been personally impacted by the problem that his social enterprise is trying to tackle.

P2 saw role models as important, but not to him directly. He saw them as field specific and therefore not generally relevant for him, unless for example they worked in the field in which his own social enterprise operated. P2 sees role models as people that are doing great and difficult things that others aren't doing. They draw other people towards them and get involved to help people. At the same time, they are able to run a financially sustainable operation and create buyable products. He has been influenced by negative examples of role models, that have misled P2 on his social entrepreneurial journey.

7.3.3 Introduction to participant 3

Participant 3 (P3) has worked for seven years in social activities and approximately one year with her social enterprise. As a child she received help from others and started working with NGOs in university predominantly helping children, students, and animals. P3 believes people have the ability to do good no matter what position they are in.

P3 sees role models as having a significant role, being a guide or coach in all aspects of life. She believes role models have the ability to create real impact and influence, and larger role mod-

els can create more impact. This is assumed to mean role models that have more reach. However, their ability to achieve this is all tied to "doing" or in other words, acting. She had not personally investigated the topic of role models deeply but shared that one person who she would consider as a role model stood out to her especially due to her perseverance, positivity and ability to know her own limits.

7.3.4 Introduction to participant 4

Participant 4 (P4) has an academic background in Environmental and Sustainability studies. The founding of her current social enterprise is her first foray into social activities, and this opportunity was enabled by chance through a communication from SIA to take part in their program. P4 has a strong belief in enablement through awareness.

P4 sees the role of role models as prestigious and to be called a role model represents an achieved level of capability. This means that the role models tend to be valuable to listen to and can be enabling for other people. She sees that role models do things that are not easily copied. They may not be particularly special as a person but have a collection of traits and values that are respectable. Role models to P4 fight for human justice and equality, create intervention and present well to others. They are able to fill knowledge gaps through their experience and expertise and thereby create more options in general decision-making processes.

7.3.5 Introduction to participant 5

Participant 5 (P5) had worked for ten years in social activities and approximately 1 year with her social enterprise. Since her time in university, she has worked in several NGOs also holding some leadership positions and has been personally impacted by the problem in her youth that her social enterprise is trying to tackle. She entered the field of social entrepreneurship through her contact with SIA.

P5 sees role models as people she admires and have characteristics that she would like to imitate. It is important to her that these role models are impact driven and authentic, in that they do are not motivated by material things and do not have to be perfect. Personality wise, her role models should be understanding and empathetic. This enables them to build trust and draw people towards them. She also appreciates when they are knowledgeable in all areas related to their field and can therefore provide concrete answers and examples to the social entrepreneur based on their experience. P5's role models should be people with a connection that is not too distant and who understand both success and failure. She sees many examples of "fake" role models who talk about things they do not really know or understand.

7.3.6   Introduction to participant 6

Participant 6 (P6) had worked for approximately ten years in social activities and was introduced to the topic through a high school teacher. She has worked on her social enterprise for 1 year and was involved only by chance in the areas of social entrepreneurship after taking part in a leadership course during university with a social project idea.

P6 sees role models as being important for inspiration and shaping, but not imitation. It is important that they are human and kind, and they do not need to be perfect people. In her role models, the traits she has valued are a combination of kind, smart, organised, and opinionated; authentic, innovative, and different; and the ability to not let hindrances prevent progress or the perception of what they are doing. She believes that for the role models to have impact, they have to become "cool" enough for others to look up to and follow. P6 has seen examples of "anti" role models that many people admire, but on a personal level treat other people terribly.

7.3.7   Introduction to participant 7

Participant 7 (P7) has worked with the idea of his social enterprise for over four years, however, has been able to work on founding the enterprise more intensely in the last year. He entered many different support programs with his social idea and received in the last year media publicity around the idea of his social enterprise.

P7 believes role models should be leaders who are smart, can express themselves well and have foresight to think ahead of the curve. They should be people that achieve hard things, never give up, and can give something great back to the people. It is key that the role model is successful. Additionally, he appreciates from his personal role models when they can provide direct emotional support, a source of motivation and feedback.

7.3.8   Introduction to participant 8

Participant 8 (P8) has been involved in social activities for over ten years, predominantly working with enabling students through providing guidance and sharing own experience, especially in the area of mentoring. This is an area which she has personally experienced and realised a lot of benefit from when she was younger. For the last year, she has worked with one of her best friends on their enterprise.

P8 sees role models as people that are active, with high energy and intelligence. They are inclusive and enablers for others. She believes it is important that the role models have a journey that is transparent and can be followed and therefore learned from, which also removes those that have achieved success mainly through luck or other less honourable methods. P8 believes a role model should be strong, demonstrate pushing through hard times and over-

coming challenges, and be able to share these life lessons. It is beneficial when the role model is active in the same area as P8.

7.3.9   Introduction to participant 9

Participant 9 (P9) has worked for more than four years in social activities starting in high school. She has further worked in NGOs, predominantly working with helping with the needs of marginalised groups. She shared that she has personally experienced a tougher upbringing as a child due to family and community.

P9 finds role models very important from her personal experience. She sees role models as having a role of shaping and guidance provision, understanding, and giving the freedom of choice to the audience and not enforcing a particular direction. She has admired in her role models that they can be sharp and exact in their interactions, creating meaningful interventions and perspective change, but at the same time are human and can show compassion and create a connection. Success is not a must, as P9 sees the struggle as just as important. She has and even greater respect for social entrepreneurial role models due to the assumed values of those working in this field and the difficulty of trying to succeed on this pathway.

7.3.10   Introduction to participant 10

Participant 10 (P10) has only recently in the last year started working with his social enterprise. This was originally a more business-oriented idea but changed as it also had the potential to create positive social impact in the form of enabling freedom of expression to everyone, as well as positive environmental impact through reducing and reusing waste material. He shared that he has personally been impacted by the issues that his social enterprise is trying to solve.

P10 sees that role models are not one individual, but an imaginary combination of the best aspects of many people put together. In that sense he believes that a role model can be any-one and his idea of a role model can therefore be influenced on a daily basis. However, from the specific individuals highlighted in the questionnaire and discussed in the interview, P10 admired that the role models were firstly, all supportive, kind, motivating, and understanding of struggles from their mutual experience in the industry. Secondly, that they are highly competent, being experts in the fields with knowledge that they willingly shared in aspects of business know-how, design process and different aspects of their industry. Finally, that they are all open to sharing their connections which have to date greatly helped P10's social enterprise in regard to partnerships, reach and development.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 How are social entrepreneurial role models depicted?

In the previous chapter, the results of the survey where shared. This consisted of graphical and descriptive analysis of the questionnaire answers, as well as a summary of each of the participant follow-up interviews, depicted as an individual case study. In the discussion chapter, the aim is to analyse all of the results togethers meaning across both data collection methods, as well as across the different participants to answer the initially proposed research questions.

This sub-chapter aims to answer research question 1a "How are role models depicted and interpreted by Social Entrepreneurs?". As highlighted in subchapter 5.2.1, research question 1a was found to be highly relevant since a clear interpretation of what a role model is, especially in the context of social entrepreneurship, was not clearly depicted in the literature. For this reason, from the data shared by the participants of this study, six different interpretations of role models, in the form of profiles, have been inductively established and described below.

This has been done through defining the role model profiles based off a combination of the participants' common interpretation, as well as real experience of what role models should be doing and have done; and what characteristics they should represent and have represented. These profiles are not independent and can simultaneously apply to individuals. The different profiles are then framed through two theories. This is done in order to provide additional context for each role model profile and also test the applicability of both theories to social entrepreneurial role models. The first theory from Bosma *et al.* (2012) poses that role models perform four interrelated functions being: an inspiration and motivation; relatability increasing SE; an example of what can be done; and a provider of direct support or advice (Bosma *et al.*, 2012). The second theory from Gibson (2003) outlines four dimensions of role models including: positive to negative; global to specific; close to distant; and up to across/down (Gibson, 2003).

The naming of the role model profiles established in this study is based off the general profile characteristics and is not rooted in the external literature. The reason for this is to be able to reference the profiles using the created naming convention. They are introduced in alphabetical order below.

8.1.1 Business hero

Role models that fit the *business hero* profile have been particularly important to P2 as he sees that it is harder for a social enterprise to be financially successful, perhaps due to the primary focus on impact and the side effects this may have on business decisions and potential ability

to earn revenue. He has therefore depicted the *business hero* role model to be someone who can build "very stable, very good revenue-based businesses that are also creating opportunities and value for buyers" (P2). As the founder responsible for business development, marketing, public relations, and process, P10 sees this similarly and perhaps for this reason can clearly identify one of his role models as "a straight business role model… so as a role model definitely all the business characteristics, so motivation, design, connections also knowledge transfer because he also gives constant advice." (P10). As a result, the *business hero* role model may have the ability to be able to provide "spot on ideas and spot on solutions" (P9) when it comes to the topic of business advice and tools. This was the case for P9, where her role model was able to recommend a thorough business budgeting tool to help clarify and explain some of the finance concepts required during the development of their social enterprise.

When relating this profile back to the functions that role models perform, the above comments from the participants clearly demonstrate that the *business hero* tends to fulfill the functions of being an example of what can be done, as well as directly supportive to the social entrepreneur. The first function of being an example of what can be done appears to be especially important to those social entrepreneurs that either do not have an academic background, lack previous experience with business and economic practice, or those that are holding the key roles of business development and operations. Regarding the second function of direct support which can be seen in the *business hero* role model, this is also an essential part of this profile due to the ability of the role model to clearly understand the situation of the social entrepreneur, thus enabling a more effective sharing of applicable advice or solution, as well as presenting the opportunity for other feedback and follow-up reviews.

In terms of the role model dimensions relating to this profile, the *business hero* has been seen as mostly positive as demonstrated in the previous examples, however, if the role model also demonstrates a stronger capital drive and is predominantly chasing financial reward, this can be received by social entrepreneurs as more negative because it is disagreeable or no longer conforming to the idea of a social entrepreneurial role model. P3 mentions this idea in her interview:

> "[…] [T]he entrepreneurs who is social people, I think he or she wants to have her social impact, not higher amount of money, but very very good impact… to help others and to make good things on this planet, and it's not only to have money" (P3).

The *business hero* can be seen as a specific role model relating mainly to the field of business. In terms of the distance dimension, the examples seen have been either close, with examples being a direct boss, or somewhere between the close and distant, which will be named as *arm's length*, with examples being a mentor or network acquaintance. Correspondingly, this profile has tended to have the dimension of either up or across.

8.1.2 Enabler

Role models that fit the *enabler* role model profile have been seen as having a particularly critical impact for several of the social entrepreneurs interviewed in this study through being people that are able to deeply understand the social entrepreneur, provide thorough intervention and guidance, and create situations that stretch and grow their capability. P6's description of the opportunities and development enabled through this role model (previous teacher), reinforced the idea of a role model fulfilling the *enabler* role:

> *"He [the previous teacher] had this NGO and he had a lot of volunteering activities that he wanted us to be involved in, and he liked me very much and I was part of everything that he did and coordinating people" (P6).*

P6 further shared that she continued working with NGOs after she no longer had close contact with this role model showing a lasting influence. P1 also describes how one of her role models, who was a former boss at an NGO, enabled her to achieve personal break throughs and development. She said during the interview: "He had the power, well he still has it I think, when he sees young people, to push young people, or to help them to, he wants to support young people to develop" (P1). After she shared a concrete example of her working on a social problem, she said:

> *"He was really the one pushing, he was like okay, so what, what should you do if you don't like it… I think this is something that really helped me to really understand he's right, what do we do about it" (P1).*

Another example of the *enabler* profile which demonstrates the ability to provide thought intervention is shared by P5 as she describes how she feels about her interaction with one of her role models:

> *"She is super empathic and somehow you know with encounters, let's say, she managed to talk with me in a way that made me change something just because she somehow puts it very nice" (P5).*

When relating the *enabler* profile to the role model functions, it appears to align most closely with the supportive and motivating functions. It can be seen from the presented examples that a close working relationship was required between the *enabler* role model and the social entrepreneur in order to create an understanding of the social entrepreneur's needs and therefore provide the right opportunities for them to develop. A level of motivation enabled through personal growth and the opportunity to attempt new forms of thinking and doing could also be realised during the interviews and demonstrated through the examples provided.

The role model dimensions of the *enabler* profile can be seen as positively received by the social entrepreneur participants. Global, since this profile is able to support the social entrepreneur in a more general manner. Close, due to the connection needed to create this effective support and enablement, and Up, as they are generally someone that generationally or hierarchically senior to be able to have the position, experience and resource to create opportunity for and provide guidance to the social entrepreneur.

8.1.3 Expert

Role models that fit the *expert* role model profile were commonly reflected on and referred to by the study participants. They can be seen as the role model types that demonstrate extreme competence in their field, tend to show a high-quality level of output, and maintain an admirable level of industry specific knowledge with the willingness to share this information with the social entrepreneurs. As an example, when P5 describes one of her role models she says:

> *"Her knowledge, being in 'innovators for children' and it being mainly about children and impact on education, and we were also talking about GDPR and legal stuff and I was amazed by how well she knows the industry and everything that you have to do to be okay from all perspectives, legally marketing and so on" (P5).*

P10 also shows his admiration for the expert knowledge of one of the experts in his industry, stating:

> *"We saw her talking about sustainable fashion, how she, think about this, she dyes her clothes only natural colours so she has her own vine yard she uses leaves from the vine and the grapes… she makes her own clothes and she dyes the clothes herself in an Eco-way so we kind of think of her as an as a role model on how the business model should look like and design process should look like" (P10).*

P1 shares this view with one of her role models, stating

> *"[...] because she is also a social worker, but she runs her own department, it was just really concrete work and impressive, and she was always good for feedback and tips and ideas because she has amazing experience" (P1)*

This admiration for the high-quality output of work appears very similar to P8's opinions of one of her role models where she stated: "What she creates is also amazing in the very high quality, I would say that also that it is amazing like this what one person can do" (P8).

The *expert* role model profile then demonstrates role model functions in all four areas. They tend to be both motivating through a form of admiration of knowledge and experience, and example of what one person can understand within a specific industry. Therefore, they represent a "goal" to strive towards in skill and capability. They also provide a direct support to the

social entrepreneur through shared knowledge, learnings, and consultation. Lastly, they also may be relatable to the social entrepreneurs, if they are both sharing of field and industry shown by P10s statement: "We are from the same branch, we kind of all, we know the struggle".

Looking at the role model dimensions of the *expert* profile, they are mostly received positively. However, as P2 experienced, some individuals may act as experts or share advice outside of their scope of knowledge leading to negative consequences, in this case additional unnecessary cost. Regarding this, P2 shares:

> "This was bad advice from someone that has not started a venture in this area and just talked from books, and so right now I myself am not open to listening to like everybody… even though a lot of people maybe good and maybe giving good advice, I have formed this defence mechanism because yeah, I have been burned before." (P2).

An *expert* will also tend to be specific in nature, to their field of expertise. Looking at the structural dimensions, most of the role model examples were close, allowing the sharing of specific needed information and consultation, and tended to either be up or across in position in relation to the social entrepreneur.

8.1.4 Humble hero

The *humble hero* role model profile has been depicted as having the following traits: they are primarily driven to create positive impact, doing hard things, fighting for justice, helping people and the environment, and drawing people in through trust. This profile appears to be the most commonly referenced archetype of role model profiles with nine out of ten participants having mentioned role model types that demonstrate *humble hero* characteristics. P5 shared a story about how her role model demonstrated these qualities:

> "They are four volunteers that deliver how many hundreds or thousands of calls daily, so I was amazed by her power to continue working so much and by her, I don't know, there's something that makes people trust her and be around her and work for her on a volunteer basis which I think is amazing, and we are not talking about students, we are talking of grown-ups with probably other jobs families and so on" (P5).

P1 shared her own story of one of her role models which clearly demonstrates the *humble* hero persona:

> "She was this impressive old lady who founded this NGO working with refugees so one of the first ones… and she was very powerful because she gave all her life to them and did a lot for them and now there are housing projects, education projects all from her" (P1).

When asked specifically about social entrepreneurial role models, P9 shares how she believes social entrepreneurs especially demonstrate the desire for positive impact and grit:

"It really multiplies this thing [being a social entrepreneur] even more because I think it's hard to be an entrepreneur, but to really have a social impact it's like, oh my God that's the greatest thing ever for me please, because yeah you have the profit but you're also supporting some communities and that's great, and in our community in our country I think this is very very hard and the environment is pretty hard to do that and I just have a lot of respect, you have to be pretty resilient and have a lot of endurance to really make it and to be in this field." (P9).

Another aspect is the ability to cope with the mental fatigue that comes with working in the social impact field, where P9 also shares her respect for a role model that appears to be able to handle this stress quite well:

"Because we want to save someone or make people feel better, but she wanted to do that, but not with that attachment and that weight upon her and was like okay let's do stuff" (P9).

Regarding the role model functions, the *humble hero* profile aligns closely with the function of inspiration, example and being relatable. First and foremost, role models of this profile are an inspiration, representing values and actions that most of the social entrepreneurs involved aspire to, and are motivated and moved by. This was often demonstrated with the memorable stories of these types of role models that created such an impression in the social entrepreneur's memory to be recalled and retold during the interview discussions. They also offer examples of what social entrepreneurs may achieve, often representing meaningful results or impact through their struggles to help others. For social entrepreneurs with backgrounds working with NGOs, *humble hero* types can also be especially relatable. It should also be noted, that even through the *humble hero* profile has not be characterised to provide direct support to the social entrepreneur, they often provide an extreme level of direct support to the beneficiaries and volunteer workers of their projects.

Regarding Gibsons' (2004) role model dimensions, the *humble hero* profile can be seen as being positive; globally applicable in regard to the attributes which are attended to; ranging from close to distant in the proximity of the relationship to the social entrepeneur; and have a tendency to be up in the hierarchical status.

8.1.5   Real person

Role models that fit the *real person* role model profile were also often mentioned and referenced by the participants. This profile describes the human aspect of the role models through

demonstrations of emotion, empathy and understanding. This is well demonstrated in P9's description of her interactions with one of her role models:

> "I felt like I was talking with a person like with the human connection and the compassion and the empathy, and the way we communicated it was not the like I'm the expert you're the tiny bits, you have to do this and this and this, she was like yeah I know where you are at now I can see the water you are in, and maybe the human connection was very important" (P9).

The profile *real person* also ties to acceptance of imperfection, and the demonstration of failure and struggle being equally important to the successes of the role model. This is well described by P6 as she shares her interpretation of a role model, especially in comparison to a negative example of a *rockstar*-like profile, that will be expanded on in the next sub-chapter:

> "[…] there can be a lot of bad aspects of them [rockstar-like role models], but for me a role model should be kind and should be human, you cannot tell somebody they are stupid… people are human, and nobody's perfect and for sure they [rockstar-like role models] are role models for people that I know, that are not my type, I need beautiful people to inspire me." (P6).

This *real person* profile also tends to be transparent in their struggles as shown by P8's capability to know that her role model "has very personal challenges in her life and regarding her health but she still doesn't stop" (P8). This highlights another aspect of the *real person* profile, which is the need to understand the whole journey to be able to see the issues they are dealing with as well as the success and impact they achieve. This is described well by P9 in that with her role models she tries to "follow his or her steps in the social activities and so on, it's like we follow his or her journey, it could be that I can read the book of the person than learn from them and he or she inspires me to do something" (P9).

The functions that the *real person* role model profile fits are predominantly the relatability, motivation, and example aspects. Relatability is most important for this profile, with a focus on realising the reality of how social entrepreneurship does not work perfectly. There are ups and downs in what is done, which is what the social entrepreneurs actually experience and can understand from one another. As P5 shares, this helps to break the "impossible standards" (P5) and "fake perceptions of what life needs in general" (P5). In this realisation, the *real person* profile then appears to inspire the participants through providing what they perceive as examples from real people attempting to create the positive impact that they are also trying to create themselves.

The role model domains that are connected to the *real person* profile are positive, especially when understood in comparison to the unrealistically perfect role models that may appear. They are global, since they are not specific to any industry or role. They range from close to

distant, as with a closer proximity a clearer view into the reality of the role models struggles can be understood, however for distant figures this can also be communicated through different more detailed and transparent mediums such as biographies or documentaries. Finally, they could be seen as up, across or down, since the hierarchal relations do not appear to have much impact on the influence and interpretation of this role model profile.

8.1.6 Rockstar

Role models that represent the *rockstar* role model profile demonstrate traits such as being well-presented, intelligent, with a strong personality, and are typically considered leaders or successful in their field. Two of the role models mentioned by P7 fit the *rockstar* profile, which can be seen from his descriptions of these people. P7 mentions for one of his role models: "He knows how to express what they, want what everybody wants, you know so everything I learned was from him… about to like to say no, he is the great guy that always said no no no no" (P7), and for another role model that he "is extra genius man, he talks 8 languages, he was also CEO, he was a brain" (P7). This is however not to say that the *rockstar* role models were only represented by this profile, as for example for the same role model P7 also mentions:

> *"He was always trying to cheer me up, like everything will be fine and it's the best thing that he has always been good at being there for me, support[ing] and he calls me every day and he's the guy who never gives up" (P7)*

This also shows aspects of the *real human* profile. As P4 shared her views on why and how she chose one of her role models, it can also be seen how easy it can be to find and choose a role model that fits the *rockstar* profile:

> *"Because he communicates quite well and the media just you know pushes him as that. And so, it's easy for me and I guess, me and other people to say okay I'm going to pick you as a role model" (P4).*

Regarding the role model functions, the *rockstar* profile performs that of inspiration and being an example for others. Inspiration due to the combination of aspirational traits that role models with this profile represent, and an example to demonstrate the extremities of what a person can potentially achieve as an individual.

Regarding the role model dimensions of the *rockstar* profile, as shown by the participant statements, there appears to be a split between positive and negative views. These views appear to be dependent on firstly, the values and reasoning behind the actions of the *rockstar* role model profile in relation to those of the social entrepreneur, and secondly, the credibility of the actions and results they achieve. Amongst the participants, this profile's dimensions can be classified to be globally applicable, being distant in relationship and up, always hierarchically higher than the social entrepreneur.

8.2   Who are the role models of social entrepreneurs?

The previous sub-chapter provided an analysis of role model interpretations from the social entrepreneur participants of this study and used this information to inductively establish different role model profiles and align them with the theoretical role model frameworks identified in the literature review.

This sub-chapter provides detail regarding the people behind these role model profiles. These people will be referenced by the type of relationship they have with the participants. More specifically, the 24 individuals that were highlighted as role models by the participants in the survey as per chapter 7.2.2, will be further defined, discussed, and compared with other data points. The goal of this examination is to present a framework that identifies who the real role models are for the social entrepreneurs in this sample, what sort of role model profiles they appear to align with, and what connection this may have to the level of influence experienced by the social entrepreneurs.

8.2.1   Definition of role model relationship types

As per chapter 7.2.2, the relationship of the role models to the participants was discovered through the questionnaire question "13.1 what relationship do you have with this individual?" (Appendix E). The potential answers were: Partner, Parent, Sibling, Other family, Friend, Teacher, Colleague, Acquaintance, Public figure, Other – please specify.

From the data, there were no results under the answer "sibling". Under "Other – please specify", two new answers were discovered, being "Boss" and "Mentor". Adding these two potential answers and removing "sibling" and "Other – please specify", left the final analysed list of eleven potential relationship types that were associated with the role models found in this survey.

It should be noted that during the interview stage of the survey, other role models from their experiences were mentioned by several participants. However, only role models that appeared in the questionnaire have been considered for further analysis since their demographic data was also required.

Some participants also mentioned other forms of role models that do not align with a single individual. These have been summarised below, but not included further in the analysis.

When asked about the concept of role models, P10 explained his concept of the *imaginary, collectively formed role model* by answering:

> "I believe we're all human beings we all have our positives and negatives and like I
> don't believe in individuality, I believe in collectives so regarding role models, I believe

we should pick up the good parts from anybody. [...] I try to build my role model perso-na on a daily basis, I don't know, I walk through the market, I see people who are clean-ing up after themselves I'll put that characteristic of that young person into my imagi-nary role model" (P10)

P8 describes the idea of a *company or community of people role model*, because she thinks:

"It's also about the ideology or like the whole concept like you are doing socially con-scious activities that that support communities and you are still successful, and it's a group of people that are united in the same [goal] who supports this, and they created this" (P8).

P1 also shares how she learned from her time with the Ashoka organisation about *idea role models*, how ideas can also fulfill a role similar to role models:

"What I also learned with Ashoka is not only to look at role models, but also to look at other ideas, and see where this already out there and what is working and how you can take in the concepts for your own projects" (P1).

8.2.2 Relationship type grouping by distance

Gibson (2003) introduced the framework of role model dimensions, which include the distance of the relationship. More specifically, he introduced the dimensions of a "close" role model as being one with whom the social entrepreneur frequently interacts, and the "distant" role model as being one with whom the social entrepreneur interacts infrequently or not at all. This idea was further inductively discovered in discussions with a few participants and especially well explained by P4, as she compared the immediacy of impact between a friend, mentor, and public figure:

"When my friend says something, it is immediately impacting right, when he [the men-tor] says something, it takes like an hour to really motivate me because it's much far-ther away and when Bill Gates, I mean when he says something to me, I would become a social entrepreneur for a lifetime, but with the reports about him right, it is just much much further away, so I guess the customer acquisition cost for Bill gates to motivate me are much higher than when a friend just texts me" (P4).

Also as discovered in sub-chapter 8.1.1, the distance of the relationship between the role model and social entrepreneur has had a third middle category added, which has been named *arm's length* and represents a semi-frequent level of contact and communication between the parties.

For this reason, the idea of relationship distance has been chosen as especially interesting and worthy of further comparison with the relationship types defined in sub-chapter 8.1. The rela-

tionship distance has then been connected to the answers to questionnaire question: "13.2 how often would you communicate with this individual?" (appendix E, also displayed in sub-chapter 7.2.2, figure 6). The connection between these two measurements is shown on table 7 below.

TABLE 7 - RELATIONSHIP DISTANCE CONVERSION

Questionnaire Answer to 13.2 - Frequency of communication	Relationship distance conversion
Daily	**Close** (Gibson, 2003)
Weekly	**Close** (Gibson, 2003)
Monthly	**Arm's length** (subchapter 8.1.1)
Once every few months	**Arm's length** (subchapter 8.1.1)
Once a year or less	**Distant** (Gibson, 2003)
One-off contact	**Distant** (Gibson, 2003)
We do not communicate	**Distant** (Gibson, 2003)

The different role model relationships were then graphed according to figure 11 to demonstrate from the data sample of 24 role models the quantity which fell under each relationship type. What is clear to see is, that even with a small data sample size, the majority of the relationship types appear to fall into one of the three distance-dimension categories.
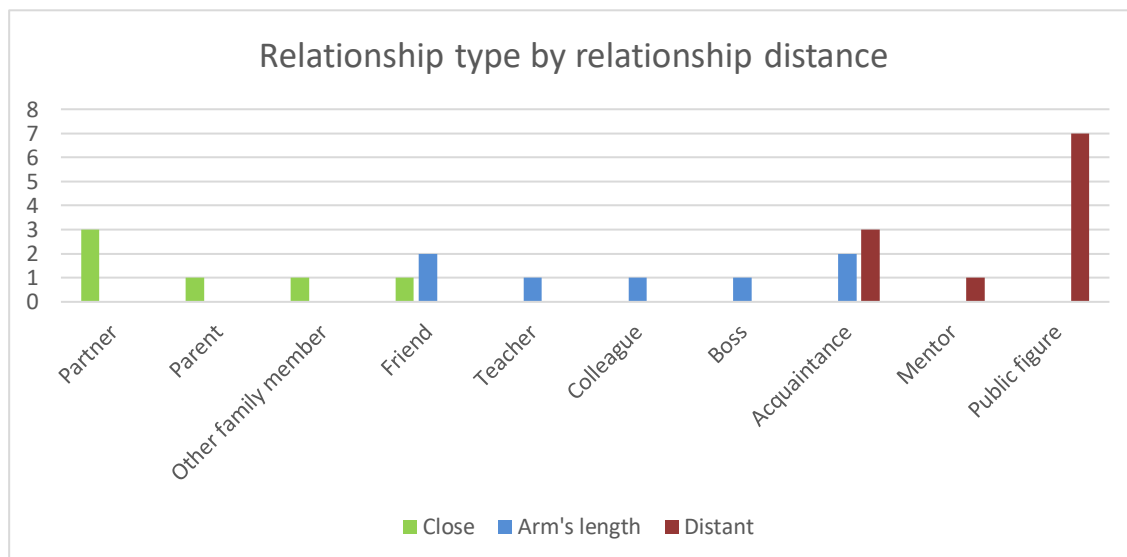
FIGURE 11 - RELATIONSHIP TYPE BY DISTANCE (N=24; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

This indicates that when it comes to the distance of the relationship between the role model and the social entrepreneur, the nature of the role model relationship appears to be super-

seded by the relationship type. Thus, the relationship type appears to dictate the frequency of the communication. This can be summarised as seeing that role models that also hold the roles of *partner*, *parent* and *family member* tend to have a **close** relationship distance by communication frequency. Furthermore, *teachers*, *colleagues*, and *bosses* tend to have an **arm's length** relationship distance by communication frequency. Lastly, that *mentors* and especially *public figures* tend to have a **distant** relationship distance by communication frequency. Also, finally that person holding the role of *friend* appears to be placed **between close and arm's length** relationships and an *acquaintance* would appear to be placed **between arm's length and distant** relationships.

These results have been presented in the following graphic shown in figure 12. This framework has been drafted by the author and it depicts who the social entrepreneur role models are according to the relationship type with the social entrepreneur, as well as their relationship distance grouped into three levels.
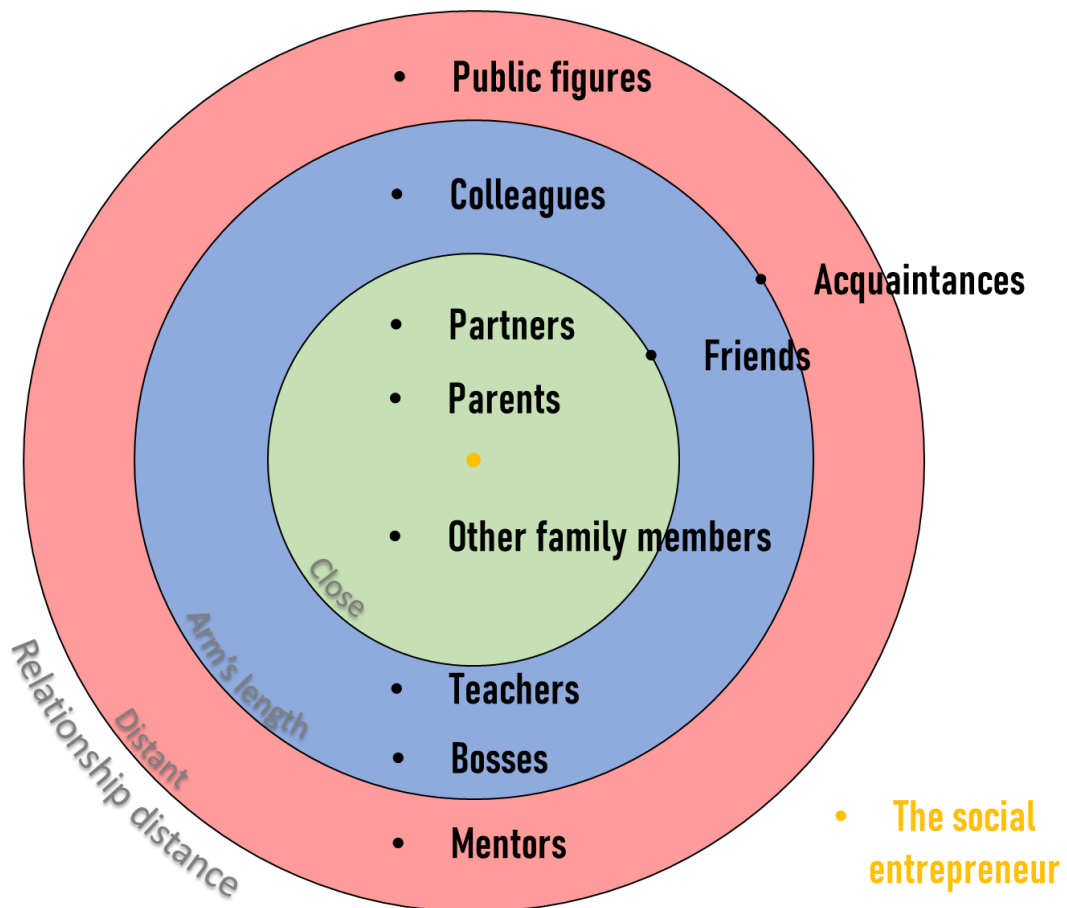
FIGURE 12 - ROLE MODEL RELATIONSHIP TYPES AND RELATIONSHIP DISTANCE (AUTHORS'S DRAFT)

8.2.3 Role model grouping by profiles

In this subchapter, the 24 role models mentioned in the survey answers of the ten participants (subchapter 7.2.2), have been tagged with the six role model profiles (subchapter 8.1). This has

been done according to the description and interpretation that each of the participants shared about their role models in the questionnaire and interview. As previously mentioned, the role model profiles were designed to overlap if the role model demonstrated characteristics from different profiles. In the case of this analysis, each of the 24 role models were attributed with 1 to 4 of the role models profiles. This has resulted in a total of 54 individual role model profiles been attributed as per table 8.

TABLE 8 - QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT ROLE MODEL PROFILE ATTRIBUTION

Role model	Business hero	Enabler	Expert	Humbler hero	Real Person	Rockstar
P1.1		1		1	1	
P1.2		1		1	1	
P1.3			1		1	
P2.1				1		1
P2.2	1			1		
P2.3		1		1	1	
P3.1				1		
P4.1				1		1
P4.2					1	
P5.1			1	1	1	
P5.2			1	1		
P6.1					1	
P6.2		1		1	1	
P6.3				1		1
P7.1						1
P7.2	1					1
P7.3		1			1	1
P8.1				1		1
P8.2				1		1
P8.3				1	1	1
P9.1	1				1	
P10.1		1	1	1	1	
P10.2	1	1			1	
P10.3			1		1	
Total	**4**	**7**	**5**	**15**	**14**	**9**
Total %	**7%**	**13%**	**9%**	**28%**	**26%**	**17%**

It should be noted that the role models in this table can be understood using the coding in the left most column in the form "PX.Y". The first part of this code is denoted by "PX", where X is the number assigned to the participant as per subchapter 7.1, the second part of the code "Y" denotes a number from 1-3 referring to the role model number as mentioned by the participant in the questionnaire when answering the following question: "11. Are there any individu-

als that you personally see as role models in social entrepreneurship?" (Appendix E) and: "12. How would you call or name these individuals?" (Appendix E).

From the sample data shown in table 8, it is clear to see that there is a noticeably higher proportion of role models which fall into the *humble hero* (15 from 24) or *real person* (14 from 24) profiles. This demonstrates the value placed by the social entrepreneurial participants on role models that are struggling and fighting to resolve social issues, creating positive impact, and are still seen as relatable human beings that represent sources of support and empathy. From these results, it is hypothesised that this may be more specific for role models in social entrepreneurship, however, this hypothesis needs to be further tested with a larger sample size to gain representability, as well as the completion of a similar study on classical entrepreneurs for comparison.

8.3   What influence are role models having on social entrepreneurs?

The previous subchapter aimed to provide details on real role models of real social entrepreneurs. The role models were then classified firstly, by their relationships with the participants in terms of three relationship distance levels (subchapter 8.2.2), and secondly, through the attribution of the six inductively created role model profiles (subchapter 8.2.3). In this subchapter, both of these classifications will be expanded upon by factoring in the influence which these role models have had as interpreted by the participants.

8.3.1   Definition of role model influence

As per sub-chapter 7.2.2 figure 7, the influence of these role models was recorded through the questionnaire questions 13.3-13.6 and could be answered on a scale of 1-6 with 1 representing the lowest score, or no influence; and 6 representing the highest score, or very high or critical influence (appendix E):

"13.3. what level of influence did this individual have towards your initial interest in social entrepreneurial activities or initiatives?"

"13.4. what level of influence did this individual have towards you starting a social enterprise?"

"13.5. what level of influence did this individual have towards the continued operation and development of your social enterprise?"

"13.6. what level of influence did this individual have towards your personal capability in the social enterprise field?"

In the case of this study, a single influence measure, named as Role Model Influence (RMI), has been created by the author for comparison measurement. It has the aim to combine firstly, the most significant level of influence a role model had on any of phases of social activity un-

dertaken by the social entrepreneur, represented by questionnaire questions 13.3-13.5; and secondly the level of influence the role model had on the social entrepreneur's capability to operate in social activities. For this reason, the score is calculated as per the formula below in figure 13 allowing for an RMI score between 1 and 36:

Maximum of:
Q13.3 score
Q13.4 score   X   Q13.6 Score   =   Role Model
Q13.5 score   Influence (RMI)

FIGURE 13 - RMI CALCULATION FORMULA (AUTHOR'S DRAFT)

According to this calculation, the role models questionnaire question scores and the RMI can be seen in table 9 below. A higher RMI is represented by a darker shade of green in the right-hand column.

TABLE 9 - ROLE MODEL RMI SCORES

Role model	Q13.3 score	Q13.4 score	Q13.5 score	Q13.6 score	RMI
P1.1	6	5	5	6	36
P1.2	4	4	4	4	16
P1.3	4	5	5	6	30
P2.1	2	1	1	1	2
P2.2	1	3	2	2	6
P2.3	6	6	3	5	30
P3.1	2	2	2	1	2
P4.1	4	3	5	2	10
P4.2	4	5	5	5	25
P5.1	5	4	5	3	15
P5.2	4	4	6	3	18
P6.1	2	4	3	5	20
P6.2	6	4	5	6	36
P6.3	3	3	3	1	3
P7.1	6	6	6	6	36
P7.2	6	6	6	6	36
P7.3	6	6	6	6	36
P8.1	3	4	3	4	16
P8.2	4	5	5	5	25
P8.3	5	5	5	6	30
P9.1	5	1	3	3	15
P10.1	2	5	5	5	25
P10.2	2	5	5	5	25
P10.3	2	5	5	5	25

It should also be noted that for the purpose of RMI calculations, the results of the three role models marked in red in table 9 from P7 are not taken into account. This is because all three role models were given maximum scores by default across the impacted questionnaire questions 13.3 to 13.6 apparently unintentionally. This means the RMI calculations are based on 21 role models from nine participants.

8.3.2   Role model influence of relationship type grouping by distance

As per subchapter 8.2.2, the role models were categorised into three classifications within the dimension of distance being close, arm's length and distant. Each of the role models within each of these distance classifications then had their RMI calculated and displayed in figure 14. The RMI scoring of the individual role models is displayed in blue, with the average RMI score of the group displayed on the left-hand side in red. From our sample, the average RMI of role models that were considered as *close* to the role model was 24, the average RMI of role models that were considered as *arm's length* to the role model was 29, and the average RMI of role models that were considered as *distant* to the role model was 10.
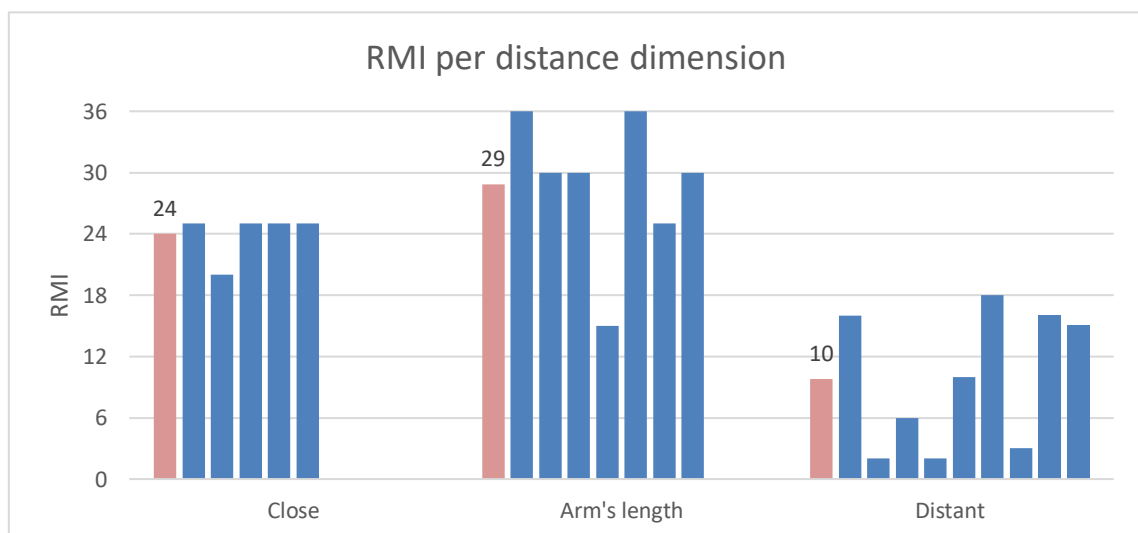
FIGURE 14 - RMI PER DISTANCE DIMENSION (N=21; ABSOLUTE NUMBERS)

For *close* role models, this data indicates is that they have had a middle to high level of influence on the social entrepreneur participants. The results indicate a confirmation of the hypothesis that role models with a closer relationship to the social entrepreneur have a higher influence on them. This result also appears to be consistent from our sample data with little deviation between the individual RMI scores in this grouping.

For the role models that were categorised as *arm's length* from the social entrepreneurs, it can be seen that they have had a high to very high level of influence on the participants. This result could be less expected, if a larger distance in the relationship is considered to be negatively associated with the influence that the role model can have. However, from the empirical find-

ings of this study, it is hypothesised that the RMI for role models in the arm's length group is higher for two reasons. Firstly, there is a larger number of potential role model candidates in the *arm's length* group, which include friends, colleagues, bosses, teachers, and acquaintances, in comparison to the *close* group, which include only partners, family and friends. This combined with the fact that the method of data collection asks for a limited number of role model examples has enabled the participants to hand-pick the best examples with the largest impact and influence, potentially resulting in the selection of role model candidates that have a higher RMI. Secondly, the area of RMI in the case of this analysis is applicable to the specific activity of creating social impact and having the capability to do so. However, the skills and experience needed to be an influential role model in this space are specific, and it is therefore more likely that the social entrepreneur finds individuals that would belong to the *arm's length* relationship distance have the necessary skills and experience to be considered an influential role model for the social entrepreneur.

For *distant* role models, it can be seen that there is a large variation in the RMI scoring between the role models. However, what can be hypothesised quite clearly from the above results, is that having a distant relationship between the role model and social entrepreneur does introduce a limitation to the level of RMI that the social entrepreneur can receive from the role model. What may also be significant is that out of the four role model examples that had a higher RMI than the average of the *distant* group (10+), three of them had had direct contact with the social entrepreneur at least one time.

8.3.3   Role model influence of relationship type grouping by profiles

As per subchapter 8.2.3, the role models of the study participants were categorised into the role model profiles inductively established in subchapter 8.1. The RMI score was also applied to each of the profile categories, with the average RMI for each profile of role models being displayed in figure 15 below. These results show that from the sample data, *enabler* role models have had the highest level of influence, with an average RMI of 28. They are followed by *real person* role models with an average RMI of 25. *Experts* have had the third highest level of influence, with an average RMI of 23, followed by *humble hero* profiles with an average RMI of 18. Finally, having a significantly lower level of influence are the *business hero* profiles with an average RMI of 15, and the *rockstar* profiles with an average RMI of 14.

That *enabler* profile role models have had the highest RMI on average can perhaps be explained through the definition of the profile. It is defined as individuals that can provide guidance, influence direction through intervention and create opportunities for growth and development. This likely results in their influences being dramatic and large.

It is significant that *real person* profile role models had the second highest average RMI out of the role model profiles from this data sample. It can be hypothesised that this demonstrates

two important interlinked points that relate specifically to social entrepreneurship. Firstly, it appears to demonstrate the high value that social entrepreneurs associate with the ability to be human and show empathy and understanding. Secondly, it also likely demonstrates the need for such support and understanding for those working in fields of environmental and especially social activism. As shared by many of the participants in prior quoted statements, working with groups in need or societal problems can be extremely demanding regarding energy and emotional strain. Thus, a *real person* role model that can provide support to counter this burden is highly influential for the social entrepreneur.
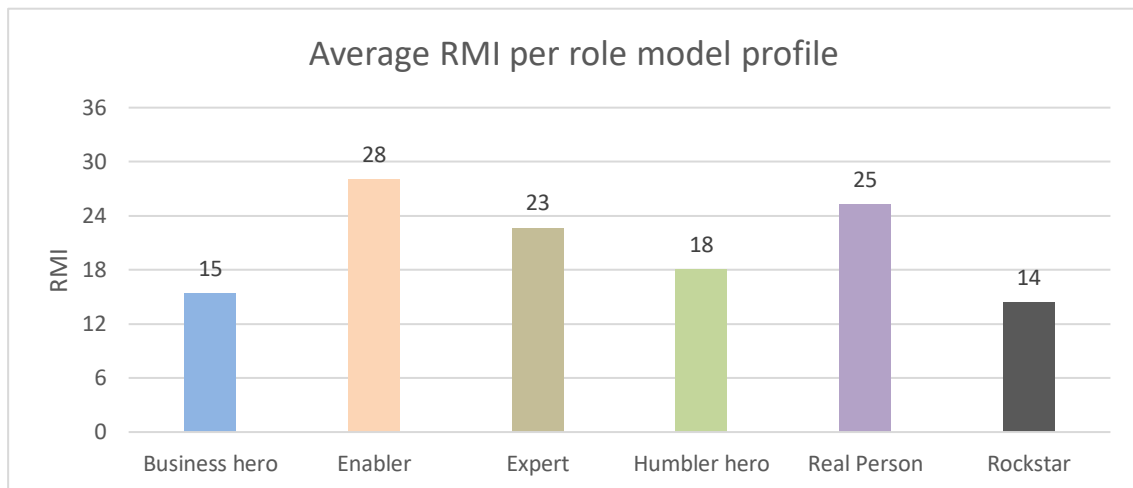
FIGURE 15 - AVERAGE RMI PER ROLE MODEL PROFILE

Experts were found to rank as the third most influential role model profile, having a medium to high RMI on the social entrepreneurs' social activities and capability. It can be hypothesised that the reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, role models that can be labelled with the *expert* profile have the ability to fill knowledge gaps and directly help the social entrepreneur in developing capability in their field of desired expertise. Beyond this direct support of learning and knowledge transfer, during the interview several of the participants mentioned their admiration of their role models' deep level of knowledge in their area of expertise demonstrating how *experts* can also be influential in the form of motivation for the social entrepreneur to master their domain of social activity.

The *business hero* also tended to fall within a similar category and have similar characteristics as the *experts*, however only in the area of business acumen and expertise. It is perhaps for this reason that they have a relatively low RMI as perceived by the participants.

The *humble hero* role models average RMI was on the lower end relative to other role model profiles on the social entrepreneurs. This is interesting since *humble hero* role models' profiles were the most apparent form of role model profile from in this data sample. The reason for this likely lies in the relationship distance most often associated with this role model profile. More than half, or 8 out of 15, of the role models fell into this category and were categorised

as having a *distant* relationship distance. As seen in the previous sub-chapter, this level of distance appears to place a limitation on the RMI that the social entrepreneur is able to perceive. It should be noted that this level of distance is also related to the relationship type. The majority (10 out of 15) of the role models in this category were either a public figure or an acquaintance.

For similar reasons to the previous profile, role models that fall under the *rockstar* role model profile also have a relatively low RMI score, in fact even lower than the score of the *humble hero*. This is likely due to the social entrepreneur participants finding the *humble hero* public figures and acquaintances more agreeable through mutually shared values of primarily aiming to create positive social and environmental impact.

8.4   Becoming a social entrepreneurial role model

This sub-chapter aims to demonstrate each of the social entrepreneur participants' interpretation of themselves as a social entrepreneurial role model. A classification of their role model characteristics using the six role model profiles established in chapter 8.1 based on the participants' own description of their role-model-like activity and experiences is also provided.

8.4.1   Participant 1 as a role model

When seeing herself as a role model, P1s questionnaire answers show that she believes she was already making some impact and was somewhat capable to do so. She has often provided direct support to several other social entrepreneurs through sharing her own experiences, answering questions or meeting to talk. She believes these actions from others have helped her directly in the past. P1 also sees the struggle of trying to emulate what some of her role models have done, due to the difficulty in replicating what they have achieved and how they behave. The biggest barrier that was mentioned towards becoming better role models was the lack of time, likely due to the high time investment required to run the social enterprise, as well as the wish to have a stronger peer network to gain further insight and contact with others that are on a similar journey.

When looking at the role model profiles, P1 first and foremost shows the qualities of the *real person* profile which can be seen through the examples she shares of directly supporting other social entrepreneurs with advice and tips, especially those just starting with their enterprise. In a more limited capacity, she can be seen as a *humble hero*, focused on creating positive impact by helping those in need, and as an *expert* in the domain of her work having successfully navigated the complex landscape of her enterprise for ten years.

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a more limited capacity, she can be seen as a *humble hero*, focused on creating positive impact by helping those in need, and as an *expert* in the domain of her work having successfully navigated the complex landscape of her enterprise for ten years.

8.4.2 Participant 2 as a role model

P2 aims to be a role model in the domain of his social enterprise and his industry. He realises that he is already making some impact by providing consultation, advice and support directly with people wanting to develop and grow. This is predominantly in start-up related events and in the organisations in which he has previously worked. When it comes to barriers, he sees one's ability to be a role model as closely tied their success as a social entrepreneur, and that there is a limited amount of time that can be invested in this topic on top of trying to build a successful venture. He also sees a struggle in building an awareness of a personal brand and personally building this through media coverage is somewhat luck dependent. Finally, he sees that the social entrepreneurship community is still new and heavily relies on such organisations as SIA.

As a role model profile, P2 shows qualities relating in some capacity to the *expert* profile. He has experienced the importance of useful and helpful advice. Thus, he focuses predominantly on supporting youth towards developing their skills tech entrepreneurship similar to what he himself has been developing.

8.4.3 Participant 3 as a role model

As a role model, P3 has experienced several leadership roles in NGOs, however, does not translate this to having a higher ability to be a good social entrepreneurial role model. She sees that even though she has created clear measurable impact in her previous roles, this is not enough and that she has a lot more to do before becoming a role model in this space. The barriers that P3 sees towards progressing as a social entrepreneurial role model, is the limited time and energy which can be invested in the different projects. She also sees the limited availability of contact with peers and networks in the social entrepreneurial space to be limiting and that the classical entrepreneur networks that are more present do not offer the same level of understanding of some struggles that social entrepreneurs experience.

P3 appears to demonstrate qualities that align with the *humble hero* role model profile. This can be seen in her previous roles as a volunteer and leader creating positive social impact on a wider scale. She also had this reputation with her friends and colleagues, who often asked for her about which causes are worth supporting. This demonstrates P3's outwardly obvious focus on creating positive social impact allowing others to seek her out for advice on the topic.

8.4.4 Participant 4 as a role model

P4 does not see herself as a role model for other social entrepreneurs and does not feel capable to share too much information and advice due to a perceived lack of experience. She does believe that she can achieve what other successful people have done in her domain and that her ability to be a role model will grow with her own personal capability and experience. She would like to be a mentor for youth, especially for students in high school, since for herself the time at high school was a critical phase where she was able to broaden her knowledge and perspective. The barriers she sees towards progressing as a role model is firstly a lack of knowledge in critical topics and areas within the industry of her social enterprise, and secondly the marketing that is required to have a larger presence as a role model. Finally, she wants to gain credibility by achieving real results and gaining real experience in the areas of social entrepreneurship in order to have "earned" the position of sharing this knowledge.

P4 demonstrates qualities that align with the *rockstar* and *real person* profiles. Firstly, in fitting with the *rockstar* profile, P4 presents well and has recently had success with her social enterprise which has received positive media attention. However, also as a *real person* she also demonstrates valuing the supportive relationships with her peers and networks. She has the desire to share her learnings with youth, providing them with advice and guidance that she also wished for when she was younger.

8.4.5 Participant 5 as a role model

As a role model, P5 feels that she has started to have some impact and influence on others. This manifests itself through mentoring programs and holding interviews to provide advice, but also through posting informal social media messages, on which she has received positive feedback from her network. She has a strong inner drive towards being a person that creates positive impact and shared that she feels naturally inclined towards operating in several role model like functions, such as providing support and inspiration for other people. As barriers, P5 shares that she can sometimes feel like an imposter and that she must often overcome negative feelings, especially from her personal experiences. Also, she claims that she must often ask for help and seek out feedback (even if it is critical) to be able to make progress with her enterprise and as a social entrepreneur. Finally, she mentions how many mundane aspects of life such as the need to have money and a place to live steal time from being able to further progress in social entrepreneurship.

P5 demonstrates qualities that align with the *enabler* and *real person* role model profiles. As a *real person* profile, she strongly believes in conveying the message of reality including ups and downs and not being perfect. She represents these values in her interactions and also on social media platforms, to the point where she receives feedback from people appreciating the sharing and influence of this message. These occurrences also have the double effect of showing

her potential as an *enabler*, creating some level of thought intervention through her communication.

8.4.6 Participant 6 as a role model

As a role model, P6 sees that she is unintentionally filling the role of role model for some of her peers. She has received the feedback of being inspiring for pursuing a more unique and creative path, also from individuals she would see as having their own success. This is a situation that P6 is still uncomfortable with. However, she does aspire to be someone that people can admire and someone to help them grow, especially through teaching and knowledge sharing. As barriers towards progressing as a role model, she claims that it was only through seemingly randomly opportunities when working in the social entrepreneurship space that she realised her own desire towards wanting to teach. She also believes she needs to grow in the area of social entrepreneurship but sees the social enterprise as a mechanism to achieve this.

P6 demonstrates qualities that align with the *rockstar* and *real person* role model profiles. P6's combination of success in her academic domain as well as her ability to succeed in her current self-determined unique progression path inspires her peers in line with the *rockstar* profile. In fulfilling the qualities of the *real person* profile, she values seeing the entire journey of any potential role model and does not only want to see what is presented about these people, for example through the media. Personal interaction and being human and empathetic is especially important to her, as she attempts to replicate this with others.

8.4.7 Participant 7 as a role model

As a role model, P7 believes he has already been put in the spotlight through the media and feels the pressure of being a role-model-like public figure in his town. He is often answering questions when it comes to interactions with those younger than him. In regard to barriers that P7 is facing, he mentioned the expectation from the community several times during the discussion, including the fear of doing something wrong and the need to talk down progress to manage expectations. He also shared his difficulties in acquiring funding for his business to be able to perform the work expected of him. Finally, he mentioned that lack of time and energy to focus on being a role model whilst trying to progress his social enterprise.

P7 demonstrates qualities that align predominantly with the *rockstar* role model profile. He is an extremely driven individual that attributes much of his ability to be a role model with his personal success and the success of his social enterprise. His social enterprise has received attention in the media over the past year and he has often noticed others reacting to him differently since this publicity. P7 is someone who presents as a capable leader of his enterprise.

8.4.8 Participant 8 as a role model

When it comes to being a role model, P8 has other aspirations. She does not desire to be in the spotlight and prefers to create her positive impact from a background role. However, as a mentor and through taking part in workshops, she still demonstrates several role model functions and appears to still have some impact on others in this form. Some barriers she sees for role models are the awareness building and connection forming, since she interacts with many younger individuals that cannot identify any role models in their lives. She sees that the supply of amazing individuals with motivating stories is not lacking, as she has personally had the chance to interact with many inspiring social entrepreneurs by chance in previous roles.

In considering the role model profiles, P8 first and foremost demonstrates qualities that align with an *enabler* profile. She is self-described as not wanting to take the centre role for others but has primarily focused on creating opportunities for others, similar to the opportunities she has personally experienced which helped her develop the capabilities she has today. Further to this, she also is an *expert* in her domain of social activity, having worked in this domain for approximately ten years and often asked to join workshops on the topic. P8 is also motivated by seeing the positive impact she had on the individuals she works with, and thus fulfils the qualities of the *humble hero* profile.

8.4.9 Participant 9 as a role model

As a role model, P9 started demonstrating role model like functions in high school, being a confident for her friends and providing support and advice. She sees this counselling role as the earlier stages of her later supportive roles she held in NGOs. Her aim in these interactions has always been to be able to provide connection, real empathy, and a safe space for sharing. The barriers she sees and has experienced towards progressing as a role model and social entrepreneur are firstly, the acceptance of close individuals such as family and friends for the work being done. Further, constantly working with social problems is hard and takes a lot of energy and mental strength. Additionally, keeping interest and motivation to keep working the social venture can be tough, but she has found that peers in the form of a social entrepreneurial network can be especially helpful in this area. Finally, when looking at becoming a more public figure, she sees the marketing in social entrepreneurship as a weakness, perhaps in comparison to classical entrepreneurship.

As a role model, P9 demonstrates qualities similar to that of the *enabler* and *real person* role model profiles. Her desire to provide a human connection and safe space allowing for free expression transfers into her interactions with others. By doing so, she wants to enable other people to see their own situation from different perspectives. Furthermore, she described how she can see the strengths of the individuals she interacted with. These qualities also relate to her ability to fulfil the *real person* role model profile.

8.4.10 Participant 10 as a role model

As a role model, P10 finds it uncomfortable to place himself in such a role. However, he mentioned that through his works he has had a large direct impact on his team in bringing them together and giving them an opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills, the resources to perform and conducive environments for learning. From peers, he has also received compliments for the work he is doing through his social enterprise. However, he has not seen any direct translation of his influence as a role model into action, for example having peers start their own business. The barriers towards progression as a role model that were discussed revolved predominantly around the problems the social enterprise is facing with its own development and acceptance. P10 sees this as tying closely to the development of the founders as social entrepreneurs and therefore their ability to be role models. It was also mentioned that there was a lack of community with other social entrepreneurs.

As a role model, P10 shows qualities relating to the *humble hero* and *rockstar* role model profiles. In showing the *humble hero* qualities, when sharing the positive impact of his work, he described how he found his first outcome towards creating positive social and environmental impact extremely gratifying. P10 is also a person that associates much of the success and positive feedback he receives with the social enterprise and the work being done rather than himself. The large amount of work and obstacles to overcome which are associated with founding and operating the enterprise has only been taken positively. When demonstrating qualities aligned with the *rockstar* profile, P10 describes how he is able to effectively look after his team, strategize on how to create the outcomes the social enterprise is aiming for, network with several different parties towards creating opportunity, and expand his business and technical knowledge in his domain. As a result, he comes across as someone who is a capable, smart leader who is succeeding at what they do.

8.4.11 Summary of participant role model profiles

In the previous subchapters, the self-reflected interpretation of the participants as role models has been summarised. According to this summary and characteristics shown, the social entrepreneur participants have then been classified using the role model profiles from subchapter 8.1. A table summarising the classifications is shown in table 10 below.

It can be seen that the participants have been classified with 1-3 role model profiles depending on their self-interpretations. Another noticeable feature of the data is that the types of role models appear to be quite evenly spread across the majority of profiles, with the exception of the *business hero*, which was not represented from the participants in this sample. When comparing the percentage proportions of the participants as role models to their own role models as per table 8 in subchapter 8.2.3, there is a clear similarity in the high proportion of *humble hero* and *real person* role model profiles identified, which shows some evidence to-

wards an alignment of personality, trait and characteristics between role model and social entrepreneur. One noticeable difference is the higher proportion of *rockstar* role model profiles represented in this sample data. However, this can probably be explained due the difference in the data populations, where the participants are all social entrepreneurs and founders and therefore more likely to demonstrate *rockstar* profile traits, especially in comparison to the role models captured in the questionnaire, which did not only consist of public figures and social entrepreneurs.

TABLE 10 - PARTICIPANT ROLE MODEL PROFILE CLASSIFICATION

Role model	Business hero	Enabler	Expert	Humbler hero	Real Person	Rockstar
P1			1	1	1	
P2			1			
P3				1		
P4					1	1
P5		1			1	
P6					1	1
P7						1
P8		1	1	1		
P9		1			1	
P10				1		1
Total	**0**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**4**
Total %	**0%**	**16%**	**16%**	**21%**	**26%**	**21%**

8.5 Limitations for social entrepreneur role models progression

The final topic to be discussed in this study is the barriers that social entrepreneurs face in their journey to progress as role models in social entrepreneurship. The purpose of this exploration is to aid in the identification of some of the hurdles that are facing social entrepreneurs as they aim to improve themselves and become role models for future generations in this area.

From this study, the most apparent barrier or limiting factor mentioned was the level of exposure to other peers who are also social entrepreneurs. This was clearly demonstrated in the questionnaire, since eight out of the ten participants answered that having more *peer interaction with other social entrepreneurs* would improve their ability to be a role model. This message was also further portrayed during the interviews. The importance having peers that are also social entrepreneurs who are there to be interested and build energy from each other to maintain momentum is shared by P9, as she describes what may help her:

> *"Because I might think, we can maybe chat on skype two days a month just for catching up and talking on different stuff, and keeping people interested, and keeping people in this soup let's say, and in this thing and in this environment" (P9).*

Another important factor of being able to have peers to share a mutual empathy is described well by P3 when she is asked if she believes the peer interaction is lacking:

> *"I think it's lacking because there are some clubs or some meetings from the entrepreneurial people, but they are not from the social entrepreneurial people and it's not only to see our impact, but to see our personal lives, when we are happy, what we are struggling [with], what issue we are struggling [with], what is our point of view, it's easier to see the others experience" (P3).*

In this statement, P3 also outlines this lack of established peer networks in comparison to conventional entrepreneurship. This is interesting, since P1 also described negative interactions with another neighbouring community, namely NGOs, when she founded her social enterprise:

> *"[...] the big NGOs, at the beginning they were sceptical, they didn't know if they could trust us, and so it would have helped to have some new social businesses, for example there was one social business that started earlier than us, and they were great, they helped us a lot." (P1)*

This shows that even with neighbouring communities like classical entrepreneurship or NGOs, there is still a level of difference that prevents more natural interaction with social entrepreneurs. The lack of networks is also apparent through a statement from P10 when asked about the social entrepreneur community:

> *"Actually, I don't think I'm in a community of social entrepreneurship, I mean for now we haven't been in, I don't know like some sort of an organization that gathers all the social entrepreneurs as a collective, we haven't had touch with that, so I kind of can't relate." (P10).*

What can be summarised from this barrier towards progression as a social entrepreneurial role model is that a peer community is needed to provide support, energy and mutual understanding which cannot be gained from neighbouring communities. Furthermore, the peer community of social entrepreneurs is in several cases not apparent to the social entrepreneur participants of this study.

The second most apparent limitation is the difficulty in balancing the resources of the social entrepreneur. These resources can typically be reduced to the factors of *time* and *money*. Seven out of the ten participants answered in the questionnaire that having more *time* would improve their ability to be a role model, and six out of the ten participants answered in the questionnaire that having more *money* would improve their ability to be a role model. Two reasons for this are more clearly expressed by the participants. Firstly, there is the perhaps obvious need for time, money and also energy investment into the development of the social

enterprise which leaves no resources for personal development. P3 explains this conflict when discussing the limitation of *time:*

> *"At this moment I am very carefully with my activities because I realized that my ener-gy is limited… I could expose myself to a conference and to share my knowledge… but I want to minimize them, because… now I want to make my own results with my own project" (P3).*

A second similar conflict that competes for the investment of resources from the social entre-preneur is the need to care for basic needs and costs, as explained by P5 in her statement ex-plaining her aspirations as a role model:

> *"I feel at my best, I feel energized, I have sparkles in the eyes only thinking on the idea that I can do this [become a positive influencer] at some point in my life, but of course having to pay rent, food and everything that is more pragmatic or realistic steals some time from this journey of becoming an influential person" (P5).*

Another potential limiting factor appears to be the awareness and perception of what a role model is and does in the area of social entrepreneurship. When discussing awareness, the first obstacle is having people in this area consciously thinking about the role of role models for social entrepreneurship, which is sometimes lacking as described by P2:

> *"To tell you the real truth I didn't think a lot about role models in social entrepreneur-ship before, before, filling up your study and that's because it's not really a subject that people are talking about that much. It's really a very very very small market, its a very young market in Romania as well" (P2).*

For those social entrepreneurs that are aware of the concept of role models, the concept can be defined to be achieving difficult things that may be unique or time and energy intensive or characterised by acting rather selflessly. These definitions tend to glorify the role model to the point where most of the participants struggled to think of themselves as a role model for oth-ers or did not feel comfortable doing so. As P6 illustrates this discomfort: "I feel weird, its nice but I feel weird." (P6).

Even individuals that are conscious of what a role model is, can clearly define what it means to them, and have performed functions in a role model capacity for others, may still not self-identify as a role model, as P4 shares:

> *"I just don't see myself as a role model, and I mean maybe some of my actions, maybe I impact my friends the way my friend's actions would impact me (as a role model), but that doesn't, just like, I wouldn't call them a role model, to some of their actions that are role-model-ish, I wouldn't call myself a role model" (P4).*

This demonstrates the final problem in this section which is the difficulty to identify oneself to be in the role of a role model. This perhaps links to the hypothesis posed in subchapter 4.3 based on work by Brändle (2018), identifying that social entrepreneurs, especially those that are younger, may have a lower SE in relation to their classic entrepreneurial counterparts, and therefore may not associate themselves with roles of influence. However, without a comparison study with classical entrepreneur as participants, this cannot be confirmed.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary

In this study the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship has been explored with the primary goals of firstly, understanding how role models are interpreted, who they are and what influence they appear to have on social entrepreneurs; and secondly, understand how the social entrepreneurs perceive themselves as role models within the realm of social entrepreneurship and what barriers they may be facing when aiming to progress in this direction.

The context of this study has been framed within three broader literature topics, namely social entrepreneurship, the social entrepreneur, and role models in entrepreneurship. Through literature on social entrepreneurship, the background of this concept, different definitions and operability of social entrepreneurship, and an overview of the ecosystem were reviewed in order to understand the context of the enterprise structures being established by the participants. Through literature on social entrepreneurs, their defining characteristics, intentions, and behavioural patterns were reviewed in order to have a theoretical basis in understanding the participants as social entrepreneurs themselves. Additionally, through literature on role models in classical entrepreneurship, their role in the classical entrepreneurial ecosystem as well as hypotheses and theories around their influence and impact were identified. This provided a starting point for reference when discussing the role models in the area of social entrepreneurship. By summarising the findings from the literature, the research questions and aims of the study were refined and found to be relevant, both by further exploring another facet of the relatively young, but vital research field of social entrepreneurship, and by also addressing a clear gap in the literature around the topic of role models when specifically looking at social entrepreneurship.

A total of ten social entrepreneurs from four different EU countries took part in the survey of this study. The data was collected using a sequential mixed-method approach with the first part being an online questionnaire which consisted of predominantly closed questions. The second part was an online 1-1 interview that was semi-structured and included material from the questionnaire part of the survey for discussion. Both questionnaire and interview were broken into three sections of questions: role models in general, personal experience with role models, and the participant as a role model. The participants personal data has been kept anonymous for the purpose of data privacy.

All participants are alumni of the SIA incubation program and initially invited to take part in the study through SIA. This had several implications, including a relative youth in average age and

the age of their enterprises, a minimum level of due diligence on the venture idea, as well as foundation of social entrepreneurship knowledge and skills.

The results of this survey allowed the creation of participant summaries as use cases detailing firstly their demographic and enterprise details, but also sharing their individual stance on the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship. The questionnaire results of the ten participants, and their resulting 24 role models mentioned, were also displayed, and descriptively analysed.

In order to answer the first primary research question, **"what role do role models play in social entrepreneurship?"** it was broken down into the following four sub-questions:

"How are role models depicted and interpreted by social entrepreneurs?" This sub-question was answered through the inductive creation of six role model profiles that were designed through the interpretation of the participants' opinions and experiences, in combination with role model theory. They inductively identified role model profiles are the *business hero*, *enabler*, *expert*, *humble hero*, *real person*, *rockstar*. The 24 role models of the ten participants mentioned in the questionnaire were also classified with these role model profiles, showing that more than 50% of the role models of the social entrepreneurs in the data sample were aligned with the *humble hero* or *real person* role model profile (subchapter 8.2.3, table 6), demonstrating an affinity of the participants towards role models that demonstrate characteristics of being impact oriented, fighting for justice, hardworking without complaining, empathetic, understanding and transparent with both struggles and success (subchapters 8.1.4 and 8.1.5).

"Who are the role models of social entrepreneurs?" This sub-question was answered through the identification of eleven different relationship types that the social entrepreneurs from this data sample had with the 24 role models they identified in the questionnaire, which were: *partner, parent, other family, friend, teacher, colleague, boss, acquaintance, mentor and public figure* (subchapter 7.2.2, figure 6). It was apparent that the two most common groupings of role model relationship types were *public figures* and *acquaintances,* which together defined half of the role models mentioned. This was followed by *partners* and *friends,* which together represented one quarter of the role model sample population.

The related sub-question **"what is the nature of the relationship between the social entrepreneur and role model?"** was also answered by cross referencing the data of these aforementioned relationship types with their frequency of communication and identifying that all relationship types with the role models from this data sample fit into the three levels of relationship distance: close, meaning daily or weekly communication; arm's length, meaning monthly communication; and distant, meaning yearly, one-off or no communication (subchapter 8.2.2 table 7). This further led to a framework diagram which demonstrates the role models

relationships and communication levels as discovered in this study (subchapter 8.2.2, figure 12). Even from a small sample, the answers to these questions demonstrate several potential characteristics of role models in social entrepreneurship. Firstly, that the role of *role model* appears to be superseded by the type of relationship when it comes to classification, for example participants were much more prone to referring to a friend who showed role model characteristics as a *friend* rather than a role model. Secondly, that the level of communication between role model and social entrepreneur appears to also be dependent on the type of relationship rather than the role model relationship, and that this could be grouped into one of three levels of communication. Thirdly, that there is a diversity of relationship types which the participants had with their role models, with eleven unique relationship types identified from 24 role models. Finally, that there was a tendency for the participants to identify acquaintances or public figures as role models, with which they had a distant relationship and therefore less communication.

"What level of influence do these supporting roles have on social entrepreneurs?" This subquestion was answered through the creation of a metric that measures the role model influence, called RMI, which accounts firstly, for how each participant has perceived their role models influence at a key phase in their entrepreneurial journey, and secondly, the role model's influence on the social entrepreneurs' capability to operate in the area of social entrepreneurship (subchapter 8.3.1). The RMI score was calculated for each of the role models recognised by the participants in the questionnaire and analysed by building upon the categorisations highlighted in the previous research question answers, being the six role model profiles and the three levels of relationship distance. When looking at the RMI per the six role model profiles, it was found that role models that aligned with the *enabler*, *real person* and *expert* profiles appeared to have the greatest influence on the participants, likely through a combination of qualities that the participants appreciated, that respectively: created intervention and opportunity; provided support and understanding; and shared knowledge and necessary skills for operation. Role model profiles that appeared to have noticeably lower influence on the participants were those that aligned with the *rockstar* and *business hero* profiles (subchapter 8.3.3, figure 15). When looking at the RMI per the three levels of relationship distance, the role models with relationship types that aligned with the distance *arm's length* appeared to be the most influential to the participants, even more so than role models that aligned with a *close* relationship distance. It is hypothesised that this is in several cases due to the more specific intention of the interaction of role models at *arm's length* towards influencing the social or personal progression of the participant in the role of for example a teacher or boss, in comparison to a *closer* role model that may be a friend or family member. Role models that aligned with the relationship distance *distant* had a noticeably lower RMI scoring, demonstrating a potential limitation of perceived influence from a role model with which the social entrepreneur has little or no communication (subchapter 8.3.2, figure 14).

In returning to the first primary research question **"what role do role models play in social entrepreneurship?"**, it can be seen that role models and individuals that perform role model like functions are present in social entrepreneurship. The interpretations of who they are and what they do are various. However, it is possible for them to be categorised and recognised in their different forms. That role models can appear in different social circles and be represented by different overarching relationship types that tend to also dictate the relationship between the role model and social entrepreneur. It is also clear that role models can be highly influential. However, there are specific traits and characteristics that the social entrepreneurial participants appeared to attribute to more influential role models, and that the distance of the relationship appears to be a limiting factor for role model influence.

In order to answer the second primary research question, **"how do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves as role models?",** this research question was broken down into the following two sub-questions:

"How do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves to act as role models?" This sub-question has been answered firstly through identifying four factors for each of the participants regarding themselves acting as a role model in social entrepreneurship, how much influence they currently have, how much influence they want to have, how conscious are they towards acting as a role model and how capable they perceive themselves to be as a role model (subchapter 7.2.3 figure 9). From this data, a general pattern could be seen with the participants clearly wanting to have more influence as a role model than they are currently having. However, there was a mixed range of how consciously the participants are acting as a role model and their self-perceived capability to be a role model for others. The above data was also combined with the detailed interviews. Each of the ten participants was assessed using a similar methodology and framework to the 24 role models and assigned role model profiles in line with their apparent experiences, behaviours, and desires (subchapter 8.4.11, table 10). When comparing the role model profile assignment of the participant's role model group and the participants themselves (subchapter 8.2.3, table 8), it was apparent that there was an alignment between the relatively higher proportion of *humble hero* and *real person* role model personalities in both groups, what potentially shows a level of a likeness between social entrepreneur and role model and appears to reemphasise the focus on these two role model profiles from the social entrepreneur participants. Two key differences was the higher proportion of participants that aligned with the *rockstar* role model profile, which is hypothesised to be due to the to the fact that all the participants are founders of social enterprises and therefore more likely to show leadership qualities; and the lack of *business hero* representation amongst the participants, which is hypothesised to be due to the same reason as above, as well as their relative youth which results in a lower likelihood of having the business expertise and acumen of this role model profile.

"What are the perceived limitations in their progression as role models?" This sub-question was answered by combining the information from questionnaire and interview answers and assimilating this information to outline the most apparent limitations and barriers that the participants have faced to date as role models in social entrepreneurship. Three key limitations were found, being: the importance but apparent lack of peer networks in social entrepreneurship; the balance of time, energy and resource investment when split between working on the enterprise, personal development and 'real world' problems, such as earning money to pay living costs; and the difficulty in perceiving oneself as a role model for others, partly due to low awareness for the topic and also seemingly stringent and glorified role model definitions that are difficulty to satisfy.

In returning to the second primary research question **"how do social entrepreneurs perceive themselves as current or future role models for other social entrepreneurs?"**, it can be seen that even though several of the participants have found it difficult to be confronted with the idea that they are a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship, all participants appear to already act in a role model function and could be classified using the inductively created role model profiles in a similar way to their own role models. The majority are also experiencing a growing capability and desire to have a greater influence as a social entrepreneur role model.

9.2   Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to the literature first and foremost by addressing a gap in the knowledge surrounding the topic of role models in social entrepreneurship. Even with an extensive search on the topic, no other research a was found that specifically targeted this topic. With this exploratory study, the aim is to establish an entry into this specific field through having an overview of social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs and testing the applicability of role model theory that stems from classical entrepreneurial roots. Through the course of this study, the following specific contributions have been made.

Six role model profiles have been inductively established in this study which can be found in subchapter 8.1. They have been described with characteristics identified through commonly realised experiences from participant interactions with role models and can be used to categorise role models for more intuitive analysis as performed in this study (subchapter 8.2.3 and 8.3.3.).

Three levels of role model relationship distance have been established, which can be found in subchapter 8.2.2, figure 12. This expands on the two-level relationship distance aspect originally provided by Gibson (2004) and aims to place the different relationship types between role model and social entrepreneur within the diagram. This diagram aims to depict the variety of relationship types that role models may hold for the social entrepreneur, their relationship

distance according to frequency of communication, and simplification of classification to three levels of distance for analysis purposes as performed in this study (subchapter 8.3.2).

A calculation of a role model's influence on the social entrepreneur was also introduced in the form of RMI, which can be found in subchapter 8.3.1. The RMI score factors in firstly, the highest level of perceived influence from the role model at a significant phase in the social entrepreneur's development journey, and secondly the perceived level of influence on the social entrepreneur's ability to operate in social entrepreneurship. This provides a new methodology for measurement and comparison of role model influence developed by the author.

9.3   Limitations

One key limitation in this study is the sample size. With ten participants, the sample size is too small to reliably generalise any of the findings on the population of social entrepreneurs. This limitation is due to time and resource constraints and was known at the inception of this study. For this reason, the purpose of this study has always been to explore the topic with a sequential mixed methods approach and provide a basis of initial findings for potential future research to build upon.

Another limitation is the conduction of this study through the SIA International organisation, in that the participants all have a common incubation background for their social enterprises which further limits applicability of the results beyond social entrepreneurs that have been in contact with SIA. This limitation was introduced intentionally at the beginning of this study, as the perceived benefits in having access to a pool of social entrepreneurs that could be willing to participate in the study, was seen to outweigh this limitation.

Another limitation comes in the form of personal bias in the coding and analysis. As the author completed the framing though literature, questionnaire and interview design, coding and analysis, and conclusions, it is likely that some form of personal bias exists in this study. For this master thesis, this is an unavoidable limitation, however as the purpose of this study is exploration, the impact of this limitation is reduced. It could also be overcome in potential future studies with more resource investment, standardisation, and the involvement of more people.

9.4   Future research

Through the completion of this study's scope, a great potential for further exploration in the area of role models in social entrepreneurship has been identified.

The clearest need for future research in relation to this study is to overcome the limitations presented in subchapter 9.3. This can be done through the completion of a similar study with a larger sample size, the conclusions drawn could be more widely applicable and aid in defining for example trends or relationship patterns when it comes to this topic. Furthermore, with

additional resource investment and a desire for standardisation, it is also recommended that more than one individual supports the coding and analysis process of the interview data.

Future research can also be conducted using a similar process with specific target populations. In the case of working with SIA incubation program alumni, with a larger sample, the conclusions drawn could be applied to this community of social entrepreneurs. However, there is obviously also potential for geographical specific research to take place, for example in a city or country. This also applies to other ages and experience levels, as the social entrepreneurs that are SIA program alumni have also tended to be relatively young and early in their social entrepreneurship journey.

These first recommendations are also applicable not only to identify results that could be more widely applicable, but also to expand the exploration in role models in social entrepreneurship to verify the forementioned contributions to knowledge in subchapter 9.2. This could be especially relevant in the further confirmation and development of the role model profiles and RMI scoring calculation.

Another potential area for future research is the consideration of longitudinal studies in understanding how the social entrepreneur participants' views and perspectives of role models change over time as they also gain more experience working in their respective fields. Perhaps more interesting would be a longitudinal study with particular focus on the second primary research question regarding the participants' perception of themselves as role models in social entrepreneurship and how this develops over time.

Moving to aspects outside the scope of this study, it was apparent that many of the role models for the social entrepreneur participants were themselves not social entrepreneurs. This also shows potential for future research that targets a broader audience of participants when considering the different individual actors that are involved in the topic of social entrepreneurship but are not founders of social enterprises. This would likely reveal new findings that could highlight more relevant aspects when it comes to understanding role model figures in social entrepreneurship.

Another research direction neighbouring this topic that would make sense is a similar study performed with classical entrepreneurs. This would provide a point of comparison which could further highlight the level of applicability of role model theory from classical entrepreneurship to social entrepreneurship. This would allow the confirmation or dismissal of several hypotheses pertaining to the differences between the two fields.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey draft question table

This table demonstrates the initial tabular depiction of the survey questions, specifically around the formation of questions from the literature in connection to the research questions, and the categorisation into open or closed answers. This led onto the further categorisation of the questions into either the questionnaire or interview.

TABLE 11 - SURVEY QUESTION DRAFTING

Question	Type	RQ ref.	Q or I
Discuss: "role models in Social entrepreneurship" what comes to your mind?	Open	1a	Interview
When thinking of role models in the social enterprise space, how important is it for other social entrepreneurs that they:	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Provide examples that others can follow to show what is possible	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Provide motivation in the sharing of their positive work or impact	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Provide a sense of confidence that "if they can do it so can I"	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Provide support directly to other social entrepreneurs through contact	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Create impact in another form? (to be mentioned)	Closed	1a	Questionnaire
Have there being any individuals that have strongly influenced you or had an impact on your social entrepreneurship journey?	Closed	1b	Questionnaire
Discuss: Who are these people?	Open	1b, 1c, 1d	Interview
if no role models: discuss in interview	Open	1b	Interview
What relationship do you have with these individuals? (e.g. parent, friend, teacher, colleague, acquaintance, formal partnership, distant, other)	Closed	1c	Questionnaire
How often would you communicate	Closed	1c	Questionnaire
Discuss: How would you describe the overall impact of these individuals?	Open	1d	Interview
Would you have entered the social entrepreneurship space without their influence?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire

Would you have started a social enterprise without their influence?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Have they made a large difference in your personal ability to operate in the social enterprise field? (idea generation, learning, self confidence	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Would your social enterprise still be operating without their influence?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Can you see any negative consequences of having these relationships?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Overall, how important do you see the role of role models, mentors for social entrepreneurs?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Overall, how important have role models been to you and your social enterprise?	Closed	1d	Questionnaire
Discussion: Do you see yourself as a role model? Do you want to be?	Open	2a, 2b	Interview
if no I am not a role models: discuss in interview	Open	2a	Interview
How much impact do you think you have made personally as a role model to other social entrepreneurs?	Closed	2a	Questionnaire
How much impact do you think you could make personally as a role model to other social entrepreneurs?	Closed	2a	Questionnaire
Do you consciously aim to act as a role model for other social entrepreneurs?	Closed	2a	Questionnaire
Do you feel capable to be a good role model for other social entrepreneurs?	Closed	2b	Questionnaire
Discussion: a role model future, what do social entrepreneurs need in training or experience in this area	Open	2b	Interview
Do you think this will improve with greater learned experience?	Closed	2b	Questionnaire
Do you think this will improve with formal or informal training or knowledge as a role model?	Closed	2b	Questionnaire

Appendix B: Questionnaire draft answers

The below tables demonstrate the initial tabular depiction of the questionnaire answers in relation to the questionnaire questions, specifically around the types of answers available and their meaning for use in the online questionnaire.

TABLE 12 - QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWER CATEGORISATION

Question	Answer type
When thinking of role models in the social enterprise space, how important is it for other social entrepreneurs that they:	
Provide examples that others can follow to show what is possible	Scale (agreement)
Provide motivation in the sharing of their positive work or impact	Scale (agreement)
Provide a sense of confidence in seeing a relatable person achieve something and thinking that "if they can do it so can I"	Scale (agreement)
Provide support directly to other social entrepreneurs through contact or interaction	Scale (agreement)
Create impact in another form?	Comment field
In general, role models are a critical factor for social entrepreneurs to become successful	Scale (agreement)
When thinking of your own journey in the social enterprise space:	
Have there being any individuals that have strongly influenced you or had an impact on your social entrepreneurship journey?	Y/N
What relationship do you have with the most impactful or influential individual?	Selection 1
How often would you communicate with this individual?	Selection 2
What level of influence did this individual have towards you *entering* the social entrepreneurship space?	Scale (severity)
What level of influence did this individual have towards you *starting* a social enterprise?	Scale (severity)
What level of influence did this individual have towards the *continued operation and development* of your social enterprise?	Scale (severity)
What level of influence did this individual have towards your *personal ability* to operate in the social enterprise field?	Scale (severity)
The outcome of having these relationships was purely positive	Scale (agreement)
When thinking of your own impact towards others in the social entrepreneurship space:	
What level of impact do you think you have made so far as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Scale (severity)
What level of effort do you make to consciously act as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Scale (severity)
What level of impact or influence do you want to have as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Scale (severity)
How capable do you feel to be a role model for other social entrepreneurs?	Scale (agreement)

Do you believe your ability to be a role model will improve as you gain more work experience?	Scale (agreement)
Your ability to be a positive role model will likely improve with more formal or informal training as a role model?	Scale (agreement)
Do you believe your ability to be a role model will improve as you gain more work experience?	Scale (agreement)
Your ability to be a positive role model will likely improve with more formal or informal training as a role model?	Scale (agreement)
Your ability to be a positive role model will likely improve with greater knowledge on the topic of role models?	Scale (agreement)

TABLE 13 - QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWER DRAFTING

Selection 1
Parent
Sibling
Extended family
Friend
Teacher
Colleague
Acquaintance
Public figure
Other

Scale (agreement)	
Answer	*Meaning*
NA	refrain from answering
1	Strongly disagree
2	disagree
3	slightly disagree
4	slightly agree
5	agree
5	Strongly agree

Selection 2
Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Once every few months
Once a year or less
One-off contact
We do not communicate
Other

Scale (severity)	
Answer	*Meaning*
NA	refrain from answering
1	None
2	Very low
3	Low
4	Medium
5	High
6	Critical

Appendix C: Questionnaire approved draft v1.0

Below is the tabular form of the questionnaire approved by Modul University Vienna's IRB.

TABLE 14 - QUESTIONNAIRE V1.0

No.	Question	Topic	RQ ref.	Question-type	Answer-type
1	Please provide your full name	General		Open	text
2	Please enter your birthdate	General		Closed	date
36	Gender: How do you identify?	General		Closed	selection
3	In which country were you born?	General		Closed	dropdown
4	In which country are you currently living	General		Closed	dropdown
5	What's the highest level of formal education that you have achieved?	General		Closed	selection
6	For how many years have you been involved in social initiatives?	General		Closed	number
7	What is the name of your (most recent) social enterprise?	General		Open	text
8	How many years ago was * Social Enterprise * founded?	General		Closed	number
9	What is your role in *Social Enterprise*?	General		Open	text
10	What stage of development is *Social Enterprise* at?	General		Closed	selection
11	In which industry does *Social Enterprise* operate?	General		Closed	selection
12	How does *SE* predominantly create ecological or social impact?	General		Closed	selection
13	For social entrepreneurial role models is it important that they… …are examples of what is possible as a social entrepreneur?	Defining RM	1a	Closed	scale
14	For social entrepreneurial role models is it important that they… …are relatable or similar, since "if they can do it so can I"?	Defining RM	1a	Closed	scale
15	For social entrepreneurial role models is it important that they… …motivate other social entrepreneurs through sharing their work or impact?	Defining RM	1a	Closed	scale
16	For social entrepreneurial role models is it important that they… …directly support other social entrepreneurs through contact or interaction?	Defining RM	1a	Closed	scale
17	Do you believe they influence you or create impact in other forms other than those mentioned in the previous 4 questions?	Defining RM	1a	Open	text
18	Do you believe role models a critical factor for a social entrepreneur to become successful?	Defining RM	1a, 1c, 1d	Closed	scale
19	Are there any individuals that you personally see as role models in social entrepreneurship?	Personal Exp	1b	Closed	y/n
20	How would you call or name these individuals?	Personal Exp	1b	Open	text
21	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* …what relationship do you have with this individual?	Personal Exp	1b, 1c	Closed	selection

22	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...how often would you communicate with this individual?	Personal Exp	1c	Closed	selection
23	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your initial interest in social entrepreneurial activities or initiatives?	Personal Exp	1d	Closed	scale
24	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you starting a social enterprise?	Personal Exp	1d	Closed	scale
25	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...what level of influence did this individual have towards the continued operation and development of your social enterprise?	Personal Exp	1d	Closed	scale
26	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your personal capability in the social enterprise field?	Personal Exp	1d	Closed	scale
27	Considering only *RM1* or *RM2* or *RM3* ...the outcome of having this individual as a role model was overall... (positive/negative)	Personal Exp	1c, 1d	Closed	scale
28	When considering yourself as a role model... ...what level of impact or influence do you think you have had so far on others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Self RM	1b, 2a	Closed	scale
29	When considering yourself as a role model... ...what level of impact or influence do you want to have as a role model on others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Self RM	1b, 2a	Closed	scale
30	When considering yourself as a role model... ...what level of effort do you make to consciously act as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship?	Self RM	1b, 2a	Closed	scale
31	When considering yourself as a role model... ...how capable do you feel to be a role model for other social entrepreneurs?	Self RM	2b	Closed	scale
32	When considering yourself as a role model... ...my ability to be a role model for others in the space of social entrepreneurships would improve if I had more...	Self RM	2b	Closed	selection
33	Did you have anything you wanted to add?	General		Open	text
34	When would be most suitable for you to be contacted for the follow-up interview and discussion?	General		Closed	selection
35	Would you like the results of this study to be shared with you when they are completed?	General		Closed	y/n

Appendix D: Interview guideline approved draft v1.0

Interview Guide themes	Example questions	RQ ref.	Ref to questionnaire v1.0	Est. time (mins)
Share about myself/background				2
Share what we are doing				3
Intro question: Beginning in social entrepreneurship	Please tell me about how you got involved with Social Enterprises in the first place?			5
What are role models to you	Do you strongly believe in the idea of role models?			
Role model definition and depiction	When I say Role models in social entrepreneurship, what does that look like? Does this change for you when it about role models in general for life as opposed to only SE?	1a		5
Role model detail traits or characteristics	Why do you find ** important/unimportant? Are these independent or do they come together? Can you see a role model having only 1 of these traits and not the others?	1a	13-16	5
Criticality of role models	Are their other external aspects that you rate as critical?	1a	18	5
(Q19 answer "No") discussion, other guiding influences	*when NO,* who have been the most influential people in the entrepreneurial journey and how have they been influential? What motivates you in SE?	1a	19	15
(Q19 answer "Yes") Role model relationship description and detailing	How did this relationship begin? At what point was it clear to you that they were a role model? Do you see this as a conscious decision?	1b, 1c	19-20	5
(Q19 answer "Yes") Role Model influence and impact discussion	Why did this person have so much influence at ** stage in your journey?	1c, 1d	23-26	5
(Q19 answer "Yes") Role model specific questions	Is there anything you found unhelpful or had a negative side effect from this relationship?	1c, 1d	27	5
Self perception as a role model	How do you feel yourself about becoming a role model yourself for future generations of social entrepreneurs?	2a	28-31	5
Self actualisation as a role model	In what ways do see yourself being a role model? (e.g. as a speaker, through peer to peer interactions, as a facilitator etc)	2a		5
Enhancers to being a role model	What are the main barriers or reasons why, that keep you from being more active in this space?	2b	31-32	5
Additional support required to being a role model	You mentioned needing ** to become a more effective role model, can you expand on this answer and why this factor in particular needs more support?		32	5
Intervention impact from this survey	Did taking the questionnaire or going through this interview change any of your views on the topic of role models? Or social entrepreneurship?			5

Appendix E: Survey part 1 – Questionnaire

The unfilled questionnaire used in this study can be seen below. The digital form of this survey was suitable for computer, tablet and phone viewing. This questionnaire also included the data privacy and consent form on page 1.

Role Models in Social Entrepreneurship

A study of Social Entrepreneurship from Kyle Yong of Modul University in partnership with Social Impact Award

Let's go!

Role Models in Social Entrepreneurship

A study of Social Entrepreneurship from Modul University in partnership with Social Impact Awards

What we are doing here

This study is being conducted because we are passionate about the idea of social entrepreneurship. We know that the idea of social entrepreneurship is relatively new, but also, that it will be an important part of the future of business. For this reason we want to build a greater understanding of the people behind the enterprises (thats you!) so that more support and momentum can be built up in this area. Your contribution will help us towards this goal, so thanks for taking part!

Cheers,
Kyle Yong (Modul University Vienna - Student) and Corina Angelescu (Social Impact Award)

Additional info:

This questionnaire is the first part in a two part process. After the questionaire Kyle will be in touch to organise an interview discussion about the results of this questionaire.

Please estimate up to 30 minutes for this questionnaire and up to 60 minutes for the follow-up interview.

Consent - Data usage and privacy *

Data collected from this survey (both the questionnaire and interview) will be explicitly used for the purpose of this study, as well as accessible by Social Impact Award International. All data including questionnaire results and interview recordings and transcription will be presented **anonymously** in this study outside of publicly available information (e.g. name and social enterprise name).

The privacy and security of this data is of utmost importance to us. We have chosen to use the "Blocksurvey" platform for the questionaire because they encrypt all data using blockchain technology, so that only the account holder (Kyle Yong) can access the unencrypted data from the server. We are for similar reasons choosing to use "8x8 meet" for the online interview, which is built from an open-source code base with data security built into the foundation of their product. Therefore, we have tried to minimise the risk of data being accessed or used by a third-party.

Please confirm you are ok with use handling the collected data in this way.

If you have any issues with the data usage or privacy policy of this survey, please let us know.

○ I agree

○ I disagree - please clarify in a few words

1. Starting with some general questions...

1.1. Please provide your full name *

> Please enter your response

1.2. Please enter your birthdate *

dd/mm/yyyy

1.3. Gender: How do you identify? *

○ Man

○ Non-Binary

○ Woman

○ Prefer to self-describe

1.4. In which country were you born? *

Please select a country ▾

1.5. In which country are you currently living? *

Please select a country ▾

1.6. What's the highest level of formal education that you have achieved? *

○ None

○ Primary

○ Lower Secondary

○ Upper secondary

○ Post-secondary

○ Bachelor's or equivalent

○ Master's or equivalent

○ Doctoral or equivalent

○ Other - please specify

1.7. For how many years have you been involved in social initiatives? *

examples could be volunteering or working at an organisation; attending meet-ups, clubs or community gatherings; or protesting or supporting movements or rights etc.

Please enter a number

1.8. What is the name of your (most recent) social enterprise? *

Please enter your response

1.9. How many years ago was _____ founded? *

Please enter a number

1.10. What is your role in _____? *

- ○ Founder
- ○ Advisor
- ○ Key partner
- ○ Senior Manager
- ○ Other - please specify

1.11. What stage of developement is _____ at? *

- ○ Pre-seed: idea or concept building
- ○ Seed: initial funding and early product available
- ○ Early: product recently on the market, enterprise is running
- ○ Expansion: focus on growth and operational improvements
- ○ Established: sustainable business operation, ready to handover over exit
- ○ Other - please write a few words to clarify

1.12. In which industry does _____ operate? *
note: more than one industry can be selected if there is overlap

- ☐ Agriculture or Forestry
- ☐ Commerce or products
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Food or drink
- ☐ Health services
- ☐ Hotels or tourism
- ☐ Media or culture
- ☐ Professional services

☐ Public services

☐ Textiles, clothing, footwear

☐
Transport or Communication

☐ Utilities, water, gas, electricity

☐ Other - please specify

1.13. How does _____ predominantly create ecological or social impact? *

note: more than form of impact can be selected

☐ Through employment

☐ Through our products and services

☐ Through donations from our earnings

☐ Through building communities

☐ Through building awareness and information sharing

☐ Other - please write a few words to clarify

OK! Moving on to the next set of questions, here are some more general definitions of Social Entrepreneurship to consider...

*"Social enterprises combine **societal goals** with an **entrepreneurial spirit**. These organisations **focus on** achieving wider **social, environmental or community objectives**."* European Commision EU

*"What differentiates social enterprises is that their **social mission** is as **core to their success** as any potential profit, but **income and profit are involved** in the mix."* Social Impact Award

*"(They are) Organizations that **address** a basic unmet **need** or **solve** a **social or environmental problem** through a **market-driven approach**."* Social Enterprise Alliance (US)

...so how do role models come into this?

2. For **social entrepreneurial role models** is it important that they...

2.1. ...are **examples** of what is possible as a social entrepreneur? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree   Agree

2.2. ...are **relatable** or similar, since "if they can do it so can I"? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree   Agree

2.3. ...**motivate** other social entrepreneurs through sharing their work or impact? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree   Agree

2.4. ...directly **support** other social entrepreneurs through contact or interaction? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree   Agree

2.5. Do you believe they influence you or create impact in other forms, outside of those mentioned in the previous 4 questions? *

(i.e. other than being an **example** or **relatable**, or providing **motivation** or **support**)

○ No

○ Yes - please write a few words to clarify

2.6. Do you believe role models a critical factor for a social entrepreneur to become successful? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Disagree   Agree

And now, thinking of your own journey in social entrepreneurship...

3. Are there any individuals that you **personally** see as role models in social entrepreneurship? *

Examples could be your parents, a friend, a past teacher or someone famous!

○ Yes - 1 person

○ Yes - 2 people

○ Yes - 3 or more people

○ No

4. How would you call or name these individuals?

Note: Entering the first name, or a letter or a fake name will work too!
This is just to identify the individual for the next few questions.

For an example, see what happens to question 5. when you type something for question 4.1.

4.1. Role model 1 *

person 1

4.2. Role model 2 *

person 2

4.3. Role Model 3 *

person 3

5. Considering only person 1...

5.1. ...what relationship do you have with this individual? *

○ Partner

○ Parent

○ Sibling

○ Other family member

○ Friend

○ Teacher

○ Colleague

○ Acquaintance

○ Public figure

○ Other - please specify

5.2. ...how often would you communicate with this individual? *

○ Daily

○ Weekly

○ Monthly

○ Once every few months

○ Once a year or less

○ One-off contact

○ We do not communicate

○ Other - please specify

5.3. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your **initial interest** in social enterpreneurial activities or initatives? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

5.4. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you **starting** a social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

5.5. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards the **continued operation and development** of your social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

5.6. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your **personal capability** in the social enterprise field? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

5.7. ...the outcome of having this individual as a role model was overall... *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Negative   Positive

6. Considering only person 2...

6.1. ...what relationship do you have with this individual? *

    ○ Partner

    ○ Parent

    ○ Sibling

    ○ Other family member

    ○ Friend

    ○ Teacher

    ○ Colleague

    ○ Acquaintance

    ○ Public figure

    ○ Other - please specify

6.2. ...how often would you communicate with this individual? *

    ○ Daily

    ○ Weekly

    ○ Monthly

    ○ Once every few months

    ○ Once a year or less

    ○ One-off contact

    ○ We do not communicate

    ○ Other - please specify

6.3. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you *starting in* the social entrepreneurship space? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

6.4. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you *starting* a social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

6.5. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards the *continued operation and development* of your social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

6.6. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your **personal capability** in the social enterprise field? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

6.7. ...the outcome of having this individual as a role model was overall... *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Negative   Positive

7. Considering only person 3...

7.1. ...what relationship do you have with this individual? *

○ Partner

○ Parent

○ Sibling

○ Other family member

○ Friend

○ Teacher

○ Colleague

○ Acquaintance

○ Public figure

○ Other - please specify

7.2. ...how often would you communicate with this individual? *

○ Daily

○ Weekly

○ Monthly

○ Once every few months

○ Once a year or less

○ One-off contact

○ We do not communicate

○ Other - please specify

7.3. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you *starting in* the social entrepreneurship space? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

7.4. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards you *starting* a social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

7.5. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards the *continued operation and development* of your social enterprise? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

7.6. ...what level of influence did this individual have towards your **personal capability** in the social enterprise field? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

7.7. ...the outcome of having this individual as a role model was overall... *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Negative   Positive

8. Nearly there! When considering yourself as a role model...

8.1. ...what level of impact or influence **do you think you have had so far** on others in the area of social entrepreneurship? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

8.2. ...what level of impact or influence do you **want to have** as a role model on others in the area of social entrepreneurship? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

8.3. ...what level of effort do you make to **consciously act** as a role model to others in the area of social entrepreneurship? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

None   Very high

8.4. ...how capable **do you feel** to be a role model for other social entrepreneurs? *

1	2	3	4	5	6

Incapable   Completely capable

8.5. ...my ability to be a role model for others in the space of social entrepreneurships would improve if I had more... *

☐ Time   ☐ Money   ☐ Confidence

☐ Success   ☐ Support   ☐ Personal marketing

☐ Life experience   ☐ Formal education   ☐ Work or business
                                                      experience

☐ Role model training   ☐ Exposure to   ☐ Community
                            societal issues   interaction

☐ Peer interaction   ☐ Other - please
   with other social   clarify with a few
   entrepreneurs   words

9. ...and thats all!
Did you have anything you wanted to add?

☐ Life experience   ☐ Formal education   ☐ Work or business
experience

☐ Role model training   ☐ Exposure to   ☐ Community
societal issues   interaction

☐ Peer interaction   ☐ Other - please
with other social   clarify with a few
entrepreneurs   words

9. ...and thats all!
   Did you have anything you wanted to add?

   Please enter your response

10. When would be most suitable for you to be contacted for the follow-up interview
    and discussion? *

    Please estimate up to 1 hour for the interview discussion, will we be in touch to organise an
    exact time slot

	Morning (8am-12pm)	Afternoon (1pm-5pm)	Evening (5pm-10pm)
Monday	☐	☐	☐
Tuesday	☐	☐	☐
Wednesday	☐	☐	☐
Thursday	☐	☐	☐
Friday	☐	☐	☐
Saturday	☐	☐	☐
Sunday	☐	☐	☐

11. Would you like the results of this study to be shared
    with you when they are completed?

    ○ Yes

    ○ No

Submit

Appendix F: Survey part 2 – Interview guidelines

Name	
Date	
Time	

Interview Guide themes	Example	Done	Notes
Share about my-self/background	Name, University, New but interested in this topic, working in partnership with SIA as part of my study		
Share what we are doing	Catching up some of the theory with the practice, not very well explored in academia Hoping we can get some results that help everyone better understand what drives and influences SE's		
What we will be doing today	Questionnaire answered Interview to dive deeper into the topic and further discuss some of the answers Take up to 60 minutes 3 parts, The concept of role models, your role models, you as a role model.		
Questions I?	Did you have any questions at this point?		
Recording and data privacy	Before we start We would like to record this session All data will be handled with care and referenced anonymously Only SIA international and myself will have access to this data		
Intro question: Beginning in social entrepreneurship	Please tell me about how you got involved with Social Enterprises in the first place?		
What are role models to you	What do you think of the idea of role models? Does this change when thinking specifically about SE e.g. business start-up, support, heroes		
Role model detail traits or characteristics	Why do you find ** important/unimportant? Are these independent or do they come together? Can you see a role model having only 1 of these traits and not the others?		
Criticality of role models	Are there other external aspects that you rate as critical?		
(Q19 answer "No") discussion, other guiding influences	*when NO,* who have been the most influential people in the entrepreneurial journey and how have they been influential? What motivates you in SE?		

(Q19 answer "Yes") Role model relationship description and detailing	How did this relationship begin? How did you meet? How would you describe them as a person? At what point was it clear to you that they were a role model?		
(Q19 answer "Yes") Role Model influence and impact discussion	Why did this person have so much influence at ** stage in your journey?		
(Q19 answer "Yes") Role model specific questions	Is there anything you found unhelpful or had a negative side effect from this relationship?		
Self-perception as a role model	How do you make your current impact? What do you do as a RM? You want more/less, what is the motivation for this? Why do you feel this capable to be a RM? Has this changed over time?		
Additional support required to being a role model	You mentioned needing ** to become a more effective role model, can you expand on this answer and why this factor in particular needs more support?		
Questions II?	Did taking the questionnaire or going through this interview change any of your views on the topic of role models? Or social entrepreneurship?		
Wrap-up	Appreciate your input We are conducting this study with about 10-20 other SE over 5 countries in the EU over the next 2-3 months August/Sep publishing > indicated that you would like to see the results, will be shared around then Buy you a drink > PM and operations experience and would be happy to bounce ideas around if you needed an willingly listener		

Notes:

How the interview went?	
Any new avenues of interest? Noteworthy points?	