Faculty of Applied Economics – Department of Management

PhD Dissertation

A CONFIGURATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUCCESS IN SMALL-SIZED CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

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“Everything passes, everything changes. Just do what you think you should do.”

(Bob Dylan)

And that’s what I did. At the age of 10 I wanted to become a judge or a librarian. At the age of 16 I wanted to become a social worker, or a physician. At the age of 18 I started studying educational sciences in Ghent, wanting to reform our educational system. In my last year at university, I realized my dreams were changed, and I decided to add an extra year of human resources management to it. Soon after, I started as an academic researcher, investigating the survival ratio of doctoral researchers (!), which turned out not to be my cup of tea, at that time. Impatient as I am, I immediately left university and started applying for a bunch of very different positions, even in Berlin. By chance, I visited the website of Antwerp Management School, and it turned out they had a really interesting vacancy: okay, it was a research position, but within creative industries! Thanks to great colleagues and a very interesting field of research, I began to wonder and to realize that, in the end, working on my own doctoral research project would be a possible pathway for me. And here I am, finally. Starting to wonder about the future again…

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Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Wereldwijd wordt de creatieve industrie beschouwd als een aanjager van economische groei. Ook in Vlaanderen is het een niet te onderschatten sector. Volgens de laatste cijfers zijn er in Vlaanderen maar liefst zo'n 53.500 zelfstandigen aan de slag in de creatieve industrie, alsook 70.000 werknemers. Binnen deze industrie vinden we ook een heel aantal mode- en meubelontwerpers terug. De laatste jaren zien we hen goed vertegenwoordigd in de (inter)nationale pers en vakbladen. Dat heeft veel te maken met promotie en zichtbaarheid op bijvoorbeeld het jaarlijkse Salone del Mobile in Milaan, de talrijke modeweken, het erfgoed van de Antwerpse Zes, met de durf van veelal jonge labels, maar vooral ook met het talent van Belgische ontwerpers van nu. Het is een attractieve sector en veel jonge ontwerpers wagen er zich dan ook aan om hun eigen label uit te bouwen. Dit loopt echter niet altijd van een leien dakje. Via dit doctoraatsonderzoek wil ik dan ook op zoek gaan naar de verschillende wegen naar succes bij deze mode- en meubelontwerpers.

Deze sectoren kennen een klein aantal aan grote bedrijven en een zeer groot aantal aan kleine bedrijven, wat tevens een typisch fenomeen is in de andere sectoren van de creatieve industrie. Daarbij vinden we een meerderheid aan micro-bedrijven (minder dan 10 werknemers) en freelancers terug onder de mode- en meubelontwerpers. In het academische onderzoek naar strategische succesfactoren worden zij echter vaak genegeerd. Bovendien kunnen we de strategie van grote en middelgrote bedrijven niet zomaar toepassen op deze micro-entiteiten. Daarnaast is de betekenis van het concept 'succes' niet eenduidig in creatieve sectoren. Succes is voor creatieve ondernemers doorgaans niet het maximaliseren van hun financieel en economisch potentieel. Voor veel kleinschalige creatieve ondernemers betekent succes de mogelijkheid om hun creativiteit te uiten, zelf projecten uit te kiezen en uiteraard daarbij ook te overleven als ondernemer. In dit doctoraatsonderzoek zal ik daarom ook twee vormen van succes analyseren, namelijk hun bedrijfsgroei (groei in omzet, aantal werknemers en verkochte producten) en subjectief succes (zoals zij het zelf percipiëren en zouden definiëren). Deze laatste vorm van succes behelst zaken als een goede balans tussen werk en gezin, de mogelijkheid hebben om creatief en onafhankelijk te zijn, klanttevredenheid en steeds innovatief kunnen werken.

Om de verschillende wegen naar deze twee vormen van succes te exploreren, maak ik gebruik van een configurationele benadering. Deze benadering maakt het mogelijk om de gezamenlijke impact te analyseren van de verschillende strategische variabelen die tot succes leiden. Met deze configurationele benadering volg ik de holistische visie dat organisaties het best begrepen worden als clusters van geconnecteerde structuren en praktijken, in plaats van

aparte of losjes verbonden componenten die geïsoleerd bestudeerd moeten worden. Ik kijk dus naar patronen en paden die tot succes leiden, in plaats van naar geïsoleerde variabelen. Hiervoor interviewde ik 40 Vlaamse mode- en meubelontwerpers, en verspreidde daarnaast een online vragenlijst die door 54 ontwerpers beantwoord werd. De verschillende elementen van de paden naar succes werden doorheen drie empirische studies onderzocht. De keuze voor deze elementen werd bepaald op basis van praktijkkennis in de mode- en meubelsector, en op basis van literatuuronderzoek. In de hoofdstukken 1 tot en met 4 komen deze keuzes uitgebreider aan bod.

De eerste empirische studie (hoofdstuk 2) onderzocht het zelf waargenomen succes bij 19 Vlaamse modeontwerpers. Centraal in deze studie staan de concepten dominante logica en de balans tussen exploiteren en exploreren. Een dominante logica omvat de dominante manier van denken in een industrie over de (zakelijke) weg die best gevolgd wordt. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat het volgen van zo'n logica tot meer efficiëntie leidt. Anderzijds kan het onbewust ook tot te veel afhankelijkheid leiden waardoor innovatiepotentieel niet meer gezien wordt, wat uiteindelijk nefast is voor de groei van het bedrijf. De balans tussen exploiteren en exploreren gaat over de balans tussen het zakelijke en het creatieve aspect van de onderneming. In dit onderzoek wordt de visie gevolgd dat beide aspecten in overeenstemming moeten zijn bij de creatieve ondernemer om succesvol te zijn. Verder werd ook de levenscyclus van de onderneming toegevoegd aan de analyse. Uit deze empirische studie blijkt dat een balans tussen exploreren en exploiteren noodzakelijk is om tot een hoge eigen waardering van succes te komen. Verder blijkt deze balans belangrijk voor modeontwerpers in een jonge fase van de onderneming, en voor ontwerpers die een dominante zakelijke logica volgen binnen de modesector. Tot slot is het niet hebben van een balans tussen exploreren en exploiteren voldoende voor een lage waardering van succes door de ontwerper.

In de tweede empirische studie (hoofdstuk 3) werd het eigen waargenomen succes en de zakelijke groei van 21 meubelontwerpers onderzocht. Hierbij werden de volgende elementen geanalyseerd: leeftijd van het bedrijf, persoonlijke waarden, productfocus en de jobintensiteit. Persoonlijk waarden reflecteren de basisaspecten van het karakter van een individu. Deze waarden zijn universeel en zijn gewenste, zeer algemene doelen die mensen in het leven nastreven. In relatie tot succes wordt de waarde 'behoud' meegenomen, waarvan verwacht wordt dat deze waarde een negatieve impact heeft op succes, aangezien uit onderzoek blijkt dat het durven nemen van risico's en open staan voor verandering gunstig zijn voor bedrijfssucces. Productfocus gaat over de mate waarin de ontwerper enkel meubelproducten aanbied, of een zeer gediversifieerd aanbod heeft. Jobintensiteit geeft weer of de ontwerper voltijds of deeltijds aan de slag is als meubelontwerper. Uit deze studie blijkt dat zakelijke groei inderdaad beïnvloed wordt door een lage focus op behoud, in combinatie

met voltijds tewerk gesteld zijn als ontwerper en een focus hebben op enkel meubelproducten, of in combinatie met voltijds tewerk gesteld zijn en nog maar recentelijk gestart te zijn als ontwerper. Ten tweede toont deze studie dat voltijds tewerk gesteld zijn als ontwerper zeer belangrijk is voor succes. Deeltijds werken als meubelontwerper is namelijk voldoende om geen groei te bewerkstelligen. Naast het feit dat voltijds tewerk gesteld zijn leidt tot zakelijk succes, in combinatie met andere elementen, leidt het ook tot een hoog zelf waargenomen succes.

In een derde empirische studie (hoofdstuk 4) werden ten slotte 54 mode- en meubelontwerpers bevraagd via een online vragenlijst. In deze studie werden de volgende elementen onderzocht naar hun gezamenlijke impact op zakelijke groei en zelf waargenomen succes: de balans tussen exploreren en exploiteren, jobintensiteit en ondernemerschaps-oriëntatie. Het zelf waargenomen succes werd tevens opgesplitst in drie categorieën: zelf waargenomen succes met een focus op het zakelijke, een focus op het product en een focus op zichzelf als persoon. Waar in de eerste studie de balans tussen exploreren en exploiteren onderzocht werd als één variabele, werden deze concepten in deze studie apart bevraagd. Ondernemerschaps-oriëntatie omvat drie dimensies, namelijk de mate van innovativiteit, proactiviteit en het nemen van risico's. Volgens eerder onderzoek heeft een hoge mate van ondernemerschapsoriëntatie bij de ondernemer een positieve invloed op het zakelijke succes. Uit deze studie blijkt ten eerste dat een onevenwicht tussen exploreren en exploiteren leidt tot zakelijke groei en een hoge eigen waardering van succes bij designers die focussen op het zakelijke en hun product. Bij designers met een focus op het persoonlijke leidt juist wel een evenwicht tussen exploreren en exploiteren tot een hoge eigen waardering van het eigen succes. Ten tweede blijkt ook uit deze studie dat voltijds tewerk gesteld zijn als ontwerper een belangrijk element is in bijna alle paden naar zakelijke groei en een hoge eigen waardering van succes. Tot slot werd een pad gevonden dat tot alle vormen van succes leidt die onderzocht werden in deze studie, namelijk het pad van de voltijdse ontwerper met een hoge ondernemerschapsoriëntatie.

Het laatste hoofdstuk van dit proefschrift (hoofdstuk 5) bundelt alle resultaten en biedt meer reflectie op de resultaten en de concepten die geanalyseerd werden. Dit hoofdstuk haalt tevens een aantal implicaties aan voor de praktijk en mogelijke toekomstige onderzoekspistes. Dit proefschrift omhelst ten slotte vier belangrijke bijdragen. Ten eerste draagt het bij aan het strategisch onderzoek naar micro-bedrijven en freelancers, die doorgaans genegeerd worden in empirisch onderzoek. Ten tweede bekijkt dit proefschrift twee vormen van succes, namelijk zakelijk succes en succes zoals het door de ontwerper zelf gepercipieerd wordt. Hiermee wordt beantwoord aan de oproep van enkele academici om succes als een multi-dimensionaal concept te beschouwen. De toepassing van een configurationele methode vormt een derde

bijdrage. Hierdoor was het mogelijk om empirisch de complexe interrelatie tussen de verscheiden strategische elementen te onderzoeken, en na te gaan op welke manier ze gezamenlijk een impact hebben op succes. Deze benadering vormt een betekenisvolle aanvulling op de vertrouwde benaderingen die gebruikt worden in het onderzoek in de creatieve industrie, zoals kwalitatieve en econometrische benaderingen. Daarbij maakt dit proefschrift een eerste stap naar een configurationele theorie omtrent succes in kleinschalige creatieve organisaties. Tot slot is dit proefschrift sterk ingebed in de praktijk en heeft het als doel om ook de ontwerpers en de beleidsmakers te voorzien van een meer tastbaar en werkbaar begrip omtrent de verschillende paden naar succes bij mode- en meubelontwerpers.

CHAPTER 1

About this PhD dissertation

In this PhD dissertation, the success of small-sized creative organizations is researched from a strategy perspective. The concept 'strategy' is subject to many different definitions. The scientist Mintzberg, for instance, defines the variety of perspectives on strategy, and calls it 'the strategy jungle' in ten different schools of thought (Mintzberg et al., 2005). Other scholars (e.g. de Wit & Meyer, 2010) avoid giving a definition of the term because of its wide range of interpretations and non-consensus among researchers and theorists. Nonetheless, Bailey & Johnson (1995) describe strategy in a sophisticated way that stretches the overall purpose of the term: *"Strategy can be seen as the direction an organization actually pursues over time, intended or not."* (Bailey & Johnson, 1995:2). They prominently point out that strategy doesn't have to be necessarily intended, as reflected by Mintzberg (1978) and Mintzberg & Waters (1985) (van den Broek, 2012). The primary interest of strategic management researchers is to explain differential firm performance (Ireland et al., 2001). Organizational performance is an important, if not the most important, construct in strategic management research (Rumelt & Teece, 1994). Strategic management researchers want to increase understanding about the determinants of organizational performance and explain how managers can create superior performance (Combs et al., 2005; Meyer, 1991). The majority of empirical work has used various 'objective' financial and non-financial standards to measure firm-level growth and performance (Birley & Westhead, 1990; Bridge & O'Neill, 2012; Chandler & Hanks, 1993; Cooper, 1993). Performance, however, may be a much more subjective concept, depending on the personal expectations, aspirations and skills of the individual entrepreneur. Furthermore, the orientation of the owner-managers that direct the firm play an important role in determining the direction of the firm (Di Zhang & Bruning, 2011; van den Broek, 2012). Certainly in small-sized firms, the entrepreneur is the person who manages, in addition to being the founder of the business. He or she represents the firm's core resource and enjoys a high degree of decision-making authority (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2012). However in existing research on the creative industries, much attention has focused on the macro-level, and the need for a better understanding of what occurs at the micro-level is needed (Mellander, 2010).

Hence, the strategic management field must cumulate knowledge explaining organizational performance (in this dissertation described as success) and prescribe ways that

managers can adjust strategies to improve organizational performance (Combs et al., 2005; Carlson & Hatfield, 2004; Rumelt & Teece, 1994).

Therefore, the overall research question of my PhD dissertation is:

What are the different pathways to success for small-sized creative organizations?

This research question contains the following sub-questions:

What are the different pathways to success regarding perceived success?

What are the different pathways to success regarding business growth?

What are the different components of the pathways leading to success for small-sized creative organizations?

1.1. Small-sized creative organizations

Creative organizations operate within the creative industries. These creative industries consist of profit and non-profit oriented enterprises involved in the creation, production, and distribution of arts, cultural and creative goods and services (Parkman et al., 2012). Many authors include advertising, architecture, design, new media, heritage and crafts, fashion, video games and photography (Hesmondhalgh, 2012; Peltoniemi, 2015; Scott, 1999; Towse, 2003). Some also include festivals, jewelry, furniture, tourism, toys and perfume (DeFillippi et al., 2007; Peltoniemi, 2015; Power, 2009). In Flanders, the creative industries are defined as "*those sectors and activities relying on the input of human creativity to produce economic, societal and symbolic value – throughout the links of creation, production, dissemination and consumption in the value chain – and contributing to the expansion of Flanders' creative advantage."* Based upon this demarcation, the creative industries have been divided into 12 separate sectors: architecture, audiovisual industry, communication & advertising, cultural heritage, design, fashion, gaming, music, new media, performing arts, publishing, and visual arts (Jacobs et al., 2012).

The creative industries have evolved over the last 40 years (Healy, 2002; McAuley & Fillis, 2005), however they have been largely neglected in strategy research (Kusumsiri & Jayawardane, 2013; van den Broek, 2012). Although most strategy theories and research have the intention to be generalizable to a large variety of environments, I believe there are limitations to the transferability of this research to the environment of creative organizations, due to their specific characteristics. Firstly, the creative product and the makers' identity are closely related. Creatives care about their work and are driven by intrinsic motivation (Caves, 2000; Frey & Stutzer, 2002). Their products or goods are tied to the individual and his/hers

creativity (Mills, 2011). Because creatives are passion-driven workers, in many cases they are willing to settle for a lower income, arts for art's sake (Caves, 2000; Rutten, 2014). In addition, many creatives have chosen to enter the sector because of the freedom to shape their own careers and develop their businesses. For some, an early interest in the creative practice as a hobby has turned into running a profitable business as they develop their creative skills. Others are motivated by being able to run their own business and determine what they do each day (McAuley & Fillis, 2005). Secondly, creative organizations are embedded in an often turbulent context, and have a mission that revolves around a very specific creative core (HKU, 2010). The market conditions of their goods and services are considered to be different from those of economic ones: creative industries face higher demand uncertainty, strong volatility in tastes and therefore higher risks (Pratt, 2008; Rozentale & Lavanga, 2014; Townley & Beech, 2010). Creative goods and services are not consumed as are traditional goods. Because of this they raise uncertainty, not only in the creative process, that is, whether there will be a product, but also the uncertainty of its reception in a market (Caves, 2000; Townley et al., 2009). Thirdly, the non-monetary values attached to the symbolic content of creative goods and services are highly regarded by consumers, which make the creative industries high-value-added sectors. In order to cope with their turbulent environment, the creative industries constantly produce high levels of novelty (Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2008), which in turn has the potential to result in innovation (Scott, 2010). Fourthly, the creative industries contain a significant number of part-time workers (McAuley & Fillis, 2005), and multi-jobholders. In proportion, many creative professionals work outside their 'own' sector (Higgs et al., 2008). This is also linked to the polarization of the creative industries. The industry consists of many small and micro businesses or self-employed, one-person businesses (McAuley & Fillis, 2005; Parkman et al., 2012; Rozentale & Lavanga, 2014; Wilson & Stokes, 2005). Most have fewer than ten employees, and the average company has just five workers (Ziemnowicz & Menefree, 2014). Besides this, the industry is characterized by a persistent oversupply of creative labor, which is independent of economic cycles (e.g. Hesmondhalgh, 2012; Throsby, 2001), i.e. there are many more aspiring actors, singers, and designers than the respective markets can support (Peltoniemi, 2015).

In this PhD dissertation I especially look at these small-sized creative firms (less than ten employees), because of their major presence in the creative industries. In addition, the size of an organization has a direct implication on how strategy is developed within a firm. Verreyne (2006) found that the strategy models for large firms fail to be transferred to smaller firms. Instead of adopting formal, rational approaches of strategy-making, small firms rather use non-rational, emergent intrapreneurially, participative and simplistic approaches of strategy-making (Verreynne, 2006). Also in relation to performance, small business are special. Many small

firms do not grow because the owner decides to remain small (Delmar & Wiklund, 2008), avoiding the growing pains (Flamholtz, 1986) associated with growth (Anderson & Ullah, 2014; Robson & Bennett, 2000). So the attitude of the owner-manager is of great importance (Mazzarol, 2005). In small firms, a close bond between the owner and the firm is present (Cardon et al., 2012), which stimulates to look in this dissertation more at the individual level regarding performance in small-sized creative enterprises.

Furthermore, in this PhD dissertation I look at a subsector of the creative industries, namely the sector of design and more specifically small-sized independent fashion and furniture designers. These two types of designers share the creation of a product which is closely related to the crafts industry. Their products have a high degree of handmade input, are produced as a one-off or as part of a small batch, and are sold for profit (McAuley & Fillis, 2005). In recent years an increasing coverage of Belgian fashion and furniture designers and their work is seen in international niche magazines. To a large extent this increase is due to the promotion and visibility of the designers at shows like Milan's annual Salone del Mobile, the Fashion Weeks in London and Paris, the daring style of often young Belgian labels, the legacy of the Antwerp Six, but above all the sheer talent of Belgian designers today (Ceulemans, 2013; Craik, 2014). While the correlation between design firms and the overall creative industries is apparent, it has to be noted that differences across subsectors within the creative industries can also be great (Miege, 1987), and should therefore be researched separately, which is accomplished in this dissertation. Finally, empirical studies on management of design and specifically the management of design firms on both micro and macro level are scarce (Lampel et al., 2000).

1.2. Performance in small-sized creative organizations

As mentioned earlier, organizational performance is an important construct in strategic management research. This concept is a multi-dimensional issue (Murphy et al., 1996). Researchers often use employee numbers or financial performance, such as profit, turnover, or return on investment to measure success (Walker & Brown, 2004). However, many small business owners do not run their businesses to maximize financial performance. Instead, they run their businesses for other reasons, such as lifestyle reasons (Jennings & Beaver, 1997; Walker & Brown, 2004), and they often present a satisficing behavior (Simpson et al., 2012). Success for many small-firm owners means the ability to sustain an acceptable level of income for themselves and their employees, through maintaining an optimum level of activity with which they can cope (Beaver, 2002). The creative industries are a prime example where lifestyle is commonly much more important than financial gain. Managers of most small

creative firms are individuals who focus more on sustaining a lifestyle orientated toward involvement in creative output than on being financially successful (Chaston, 2008). Also issues such as work/life balance and the importance of the family are key. However, another dominant influence is the widely prevailing philosophy of "*arts for art's sake*." This view encapsulates the ongoing dilemma of the creative person, should they produce output which is personally satisfying, or generate output for which there is market demand? (Caves, 2000; Chaston, 2008). Therefore this research looks into two different aspects of the performance continuum: growth and perceived success. The first consists of growth of amount of employees, sales and turnover and is researched extensively in academic literature. The latter embraces the designers own definition of success, which is not necessarily related to financial success, and this concept of success is often lacking in academic research.

1.3. A configurational perspective

To research the different pathways to success for small-sized creative organizations, I follow an inductive exploratory configurational approach, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), which is a case oriented approach. My starting point is that while prior research has explored the individual relationships leading to firm performance, studies investigating their joint impact remain scarce. One reason for this gap in the literature is that interactions that go beyond two-way effects are exceedingly difficult to interpret. By studying the joint impact of strategic variables leading to organizational performance, I follow important scholars putting forward that organizations are best understood as clusters of interconnected structures and practices, rather than as modular or loosely coupled entities whose components can be understood in isolation (Fiss, 2007). Proponents of a configurational approach thus take a systemic and holistic view of organizations, where patterns or profiles rather than individual independent variables are related to an outcome such as performance (Delery & Doty, 1996). So, each individual case is considered as a complex combination of properties, a specific 'whole' that should not be lost or obscured in the course of the analysis (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Because of its multidimensional nature, the configurational approach is particularly relevant to the study of strategic management (Amburgey & Dacin, 1994; Fiss, 2007; Inkpen & Choudhury, 1995; Ketchen et al., 1993; Miller, 1996). Also several recent studies suggest that applying a configurational approach (QCA) in organization and strategy settings can offer new insights into causally complex issues (Bell et al., 2014; Crilly et al., 2012; Fiss, 2011; Fiss, 2007; Fiss et al., 2013; Frambach et al., 2016; Greckhamer, 2011; Misangyi & Acharya, 2014; Woodside, 2013).

QCA is furthermore very suitable to analyze an intermediate amount of cases (between ten and fifty cases), that is, situations where the number of cases is too large for traditional qualitative analysis and too small for many conventional statistical analyses (Fiss, 2007; Rihoux, 2006), which is the case in this dissertation research. To deal with complexity, a key feature of QCA is the concept of multiple conjunctural causation (Ragin, 2014). This implies that (a) most often, it is a combination of conditions (independent variables) that eventually produces the outcome (dependent variable); (b) several different combinations of conditions may produce the same outcome; and (c) depending on the context, a given condition may very well have a different impact on the outcome. Thus different causal paths – each path being relevant, in a distinct way – may lead to the same outcome (Rihoux, 2006). By using QCA, the researcher is urged not to specify a single causal model that fits the data best, as one usually does with statistical techniques, but instead to determine the number and character of the different causal models that exist among comparable cases (Ragin, 2014). Also some key strengths of a quantitative approach are embodied in QCA. As already mentioned, this approach allows us to analyze more than just a few cases, which is rarely done in case-oriented studies. However, the cases dealt with are well known rather than anonymous, as, for example, individuals are at the micro-level in large-scale survey research. Rather than being a drawback, this can become a considerable advantage that enables the researcher to go back to these cases to check and improve the relevant data (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). In the process of QCA, the researcher engages in a dialogue between cases and relevant theories or QCA is used more inductively, as in this PhD research, to gain insights from case knowledge in order to identify the key ingredients to be considered (Rihoux, 2006). Another strength is that its key operations rely on Boolean algebra, which requires each case to be reduced to a series of variables (conditions and an outcome). QCA is also an approach which allows replication, a key condition for progress in scientific knowledge (Rihoux, 2006). More information about QCA and the different steps in the analysis procedure can be found in appendix E, at the end of this dissertation.

In this PhD dissertation, I employ two different types of QCA: crisp-set QCA and fuzzy-set QCA. In crisp-set QCA, cases can either be members or non-members in the set. Their set membership score is either 0 or 1. Crisp-sets are very suitable for small N-situations (less than 30-40 cases) (Rihoux, 2006), which is why crisp-set QCA is used in the first two studies in this dissertation. However, by using crisp-set QCA, the finer grained differences and precision in a condition may be lost (Ragin, 2000). In fuzzy-set QCA, by contrast, cases are allowed to have gradations of their set membership. This type of QCA is more fine-grained and keeps more case information. A case does not have to be necessarily a full member or a full non-member of a set, but can also be a partial member. The membership scores can fall anywhere between

the two extremes of full membership value of 1 and full non-membership value of 0 (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012:13). Fuzzy-set QCA works well with intermediate N and large N-situations (Rihoux, 2006), and is used in study 3.

1.4. My data sample

The data analyzed in this PhD dissertation come from diverse interviews and surveys spread over a three year period from 2013 till 2016 and consist of three phases, linked to the three empirical studies. First, I started with a thorough literature research on strategy and the creative industries, and interviewed four fashion industry experts to gain knowledge about my research field. From the Flanders Fashion Institute's database, which lists 257 Belgian fashion designers (in 2014), I selected 50 small-sized cases following a most similar/most different strategy (Yin, 2009). Regarding this strategy cases are chosen by combining the most similar and most different method. This means that the sample consists of cases that are most similar regarding the conditions, but that there are also cases present that are most different (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). 19 cases responded positively to a request for an interview, all of whom I subsequently interviewed. In addition to the formal interviews, I collected data about the cases from financial reports, press documentation and website information.

In a second phase, I consulted the database of Design Flanders. This database consists of 58 furniture designers in Flanders and Brussels (in 2015). I expanded this database with 5 more furniture designers via snowball sampling. From this list, I contacted 40 small-sized designers, and 21 cases responded positively to a request for an interview. In addition to the formal interviews, I also collected this time additional data about the cases from financial reports, press documentation and website information, like in phase one.

Thirdly, an online survey was sent to this group of 40 interviewed fashion and furniture designers, and also to the 50 fashion and furniture designers which didn't respond to the request for an interview. This resulted in 58 responses. I dropped four cases because they didn't meet the selection criteria of being small-sized, resulting into 54 filled out surveys (28 surveys from the interviewed cases, and 26 additional surveys).

The case selection was limited to the databases in the region of Flanders, due to time constraints. This research was also granted by IWT, with the purpose to research mainly enterprises in Flanders and provide practical contributions for them. This implies that policy measures and context are the same for my cases, but that generalization to other regions must be done with caution.

The interview topic lists and the online survey can be found in appendix to chapter two, three and four. An overview of all the cases related to the different conditions has been added in appendix D, at the end of this dissertation.

1.5. Empirical studies

In this section I briefly elaborate on the three empirical studies included in this dissertation. In particular, we introduce the theoretical rationales used in the studies. An extended theoretical discussion and more information about the methodology and empirical results is provided in the respective chapters. The following table provides an overview of the main characteristics of the empirical studies:

		Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Subsector	Fashion Design	X		X
	Furniture Design		X	X
Data	Total sample	N= 19	N= 21	N= 54
	In-depth interviews	X	X	X
	Survey data			X
QCA Method	Crisp-set QCA	X	X	
	Fuzzy-set QCA			X
Outcome	Business growth		X	X
	Perceived success	X	X	X

Table 1: Overview of the main characteristics of the empirical studies

Overall, the three empirical studies generate four main contributions. First, this research employs a focus on micro-enterprises, which are often neglected in other empirical studies. Second, this study looks into two different measures of performance, growth and high perceived success, which is not common in creative industries research (Choi, 2012) and answers the call to research success as a multi-dimensional issue (Murphy et al., 1996; Walker & Brown, 2004). Third, by applying the QCA method this research is able to provide empirical evidence on the complex interrelations between the different strategy conditions and how they jointly affect the business growth and perceived success of small-sized fashion and furniture designers. This approach is a meaningful addition to the well-known approaches of qualitative studies and econometric modelling in creative industries research and a first step to a configurational theory of success in small-sized creative organizations. In addition, this research stems from practice and has the aim to provide designers and policy-makers with a more tangible understanding of pathways for success in the furniture and fashion design industry.

The three studies stem from practice, and have an exploratory mind set. No previous studies were found that provided us with an existing configurational model about conditions leading to success for small-sized creative enterprises. In this doctoral research different pathways to success are explored through the empirical studies. In this sense, study 1 can be seen as a building block for study 2, and study 2 evolved finally into study 3.

1.5.1. Study 1 on fashion designers and high perceived success

Based on strategy literature and the knowledge from creative industries research, two determinants leading to success are central in this study: ambidexterity and dominant logic. The concept of *ambidexterity* covers the tension between exploration and exploitation. Exploration includes things captured by terms such as search, variation, risk taking, experimentation, play, flexibility, discovery, innovation. Exploitation includes such things as refinement, choice, production, efficiency, selection, implementation, execution (March, 1991). The argument put forward by Levinthal and March (1993) is that the basic problem confronting an organization is to engage in sufficient exploitation to ensure its current viability and, at the same time, to devote enough energy to exploration to ensure its future viability (Turner et al., 2013). Yet the challenge is to accommodate the two (Benner & Tushman, 2003). If these twin requirements compete for scarce organizational resources, there is a tradeoff to be made between them. There is general agreement that achieving both exploitation and exploration can be beneficial in terms of financial performance (e.g. He & Wong, 2004; Kristal et al., 2010; Lubatkin, 2006; Morgan & Berthon, 2008; Turner et al., 2013), even more in creative organizations like fashion companies that by nature are more exploration oriented. In this study ambidexterity is measured as a balance of exploration and exploitation in 1 condition, based on within-case knowledge.

Previous research reveals that studies on this industry, however, largely concentrate on the ‘art’ rather than the ‘business’ side of fashion (Choi, 2012). Therefore, the concept of *dominant logic* is also taken into account as a strategic determinant for success. A dominant logic comprises originally *“the way in which managers conceptualize the business and make critical resource allocation decisions”* (Prahalad & Bettis, 1986: 490), *“a mindset or world view or conceptualization of the business and the administrative tools to accomplish goals and make decisions in that business”* (:491). Most scholars agree that an obsolete dominant logic can create strategic path dependencies, limit innovation potential and cause strategic problems (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Bettis et al., 2015), with in the end negative effects on performance. In this study a framework about a general dominant (business) logic in the fashion industry was built, looking for cases following this logic, or being deviant.

To look at the firm-level, the organizational life cycle was taken into account. Many scholars see this as an important concept to understand success and failure (e.g. Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Quinn & Cameron, 1983).

The contributions of this study are exploratory and are established in the configurational combination of different conditions: dominant logic, the balance between exploration and exploitation and organizational life cycle. In addition it adds to the qualitative studies approach and econometric modelling typical in creative industries research. This study lays the ground for study 2 and 3.

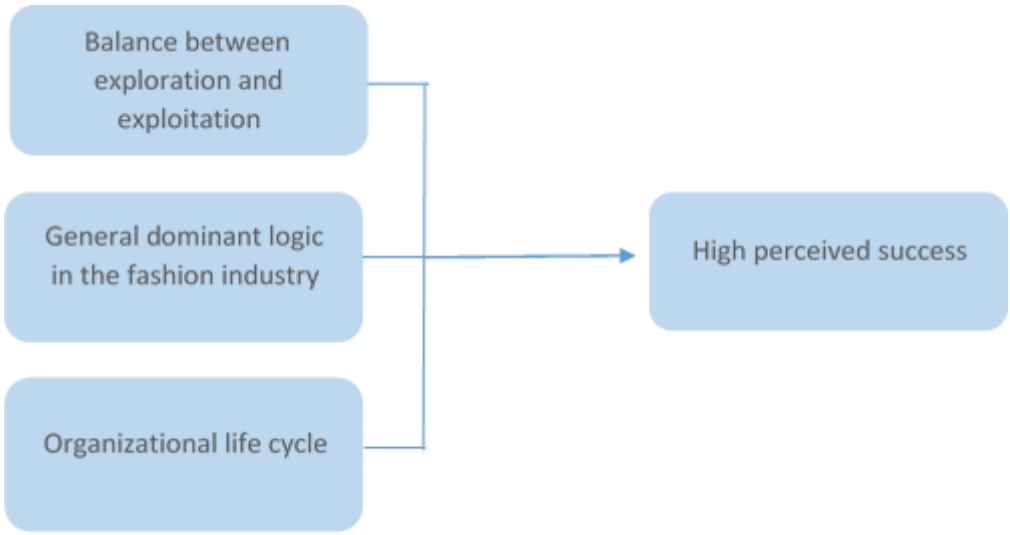

Figure 1: Visual representation study 1

1.5.2. Study 2 on furniture designers, business growth and high perceived success

To explore more in-depth strategic determinants of success, study 2 focuses not only on high perceived success, but also on business growth. A new determinant of performance is introduced, namely *personal values*. By analyzing this concept, study 2 follows the scholars arguing that some general individual differences between CEOs have a relationship with variation in firm performance (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015). Rauch and Frese (2007) find evidence for a link between CEO entrepreneurs' personality characteristics and firm performance. However, empirical research has typically investigated relations of socio-demographic characteristics, functional background, and organizational tenure in their effect on organizational performance (Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015; Rost & Osterloh, 2010). Therefore, this study takes personal values into account. Personal values reflect basic aspects of a person's character: they are desirable, very general goals that people pursue in life. Values are universal, as

seemingly people in nearly all societies from a survey of 80 countries hold them (Schwartz, 2012). Although people may share the same values, their structure may vary (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2012). In relation to success, emphasizing the value openness to change (vs. conservation) relates to generating creative and novel ideas (Kasof et al., 2007; Stephan & Roesler, 2010) and to engaging in risky behaviors. Furthermore, research demonstrates that businesses willing to take risks show better financial performance (Wiklund, 1999; Zahra & Covin, 1995). Also three other variables that are typical for creative design businesses are taken into account: firm age, product focus and designer's fulltime or part-time dedication (job rate).

As a first contribution to the literature, study 2 looks into two different measures of performance. Secondly, pathways to performance are researched through the micro-level, involving a simultaneous and joint consideration of the different conditions.

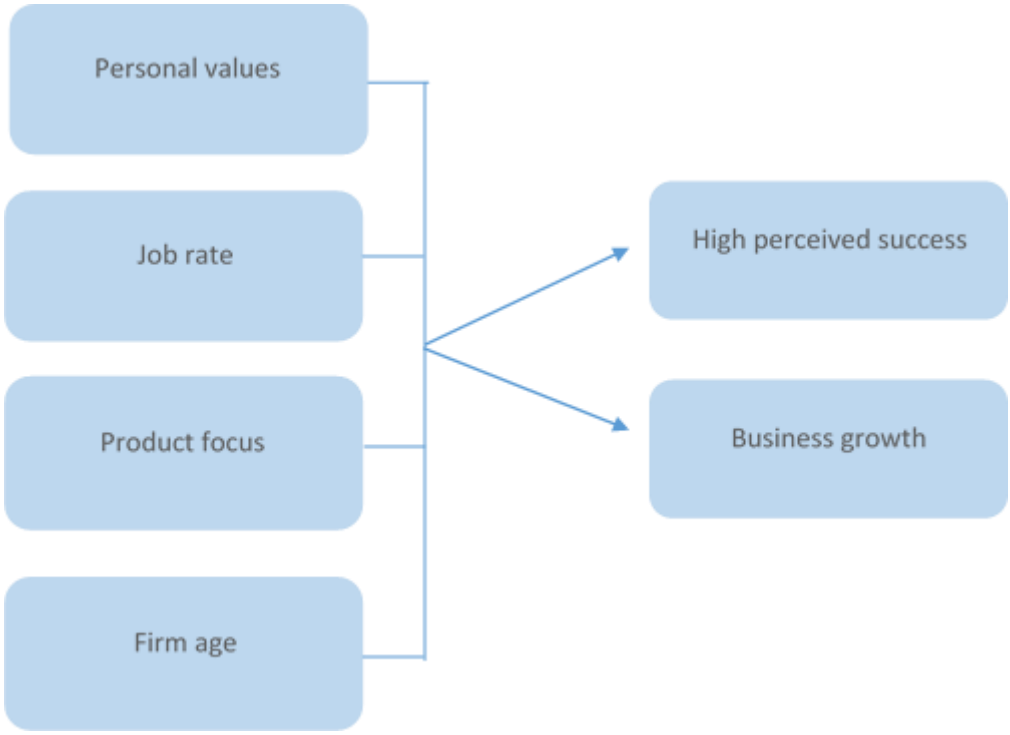

Figure 2: Visual representation study 2

1.5.3. Study 3 on designers' multiple pathways to perceived success and business growth

Study 3, the final study, investigates multiple pathways to success for fashion and furniture designers. It builds on insights from study 1 and 2. As in the previous study, performance is measured as business growth and as perceived success. However, a distinction is made between different types of perceived success, based on the qualitative data

that was collected for this study. Regarding perceived success, I found a distinction between designers defining perceived success as a business focus, a focus on the product or a personal focus. Deriving from study 1, the concept of *ambidexterity* is present as a strategic determinant of performance. Although in this study exploration and exploitation are measured separately through survey questions. The condition job rate stems from study 2. A new strategic determinant leading to organizational success in this study is the concept of *entrepreneurial orientation* (EO). Based on Miller's (1983) definition of an entrepreneurial company as *"[a firm] that engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with "proactive" innovations, beating competitors to the punch"* (p.771), EO has developed as a firm-level attitude which involves three dimensions that are used consistently in the literature (Miller, 2011; Rauch et al., 2009). These dimensions include innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). The dominant assumption of the strategy-oriented literature is that success is primarily dependent upon the entrepreneur's ability to develop and execute effective strategies (Low, 1988). Entrepreneurial firms, relative to conservative firms, have higher scores on variables representing innovative products and marketing, innovative operations, human resources, proactiveness and competitive orientation, industry awareness, service/support, and long-term financial orientation (Covin & Slevin, 1991). Though many scholars conclude that the EO-performance relationship is moderately large and that firms broadly benefit from an emphasis on EO (Rauch et al., 2009; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Zahra, 1991; Zahra & Covin, 1995), Lumpkin and Dess (1996) argue that the EO-performance relationship is likely to be dependent on the characteristics of the external environment as well as on the internal characteristics of the organization (Parkman et al., 2012).

This final study contributes to the literature and practice in several ways. First, by applying the fsQCA method the study is able to provide empirical evidence on the complex interrelations between EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate and how they jointly affect the business growth and perceived success of small-sized fashion and furniture designers. This approach is a meaningful addition to the well-known approaches of qualitative studies and econometric modelling in creative industries research. This approach is also an important contribution to the EO literature specifically, wherein several authors advocate the use of configurational models to research the EO domain (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Miller, 2011; Wales, 2016), and research into the relationship between EO and exploration and exploitation (Lisboa et al., 2011). Second, this study looks into two different measures of performance, growth and high perceived success, which is not common in creative industries research (Choi, 2012) and answers the call to research success as a multi-dimensional issue (Murphy et al., 1996; Walker & Brown, 2004). Third, when looking into ambidexterity, and more specific, into

exploration and exploitation, this variable is measured and analysed at the level of the designer. By taking into account the individual level, this study also responds to scholarly calls to shed more light on exploration and exploitation at the manager level of analysis (Mom et al., 2007; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). In addition, this study contributes on the practical level by providing designers and policy-makers with a more tangible understanding of pathways for success in the furniture and fashion design industry.

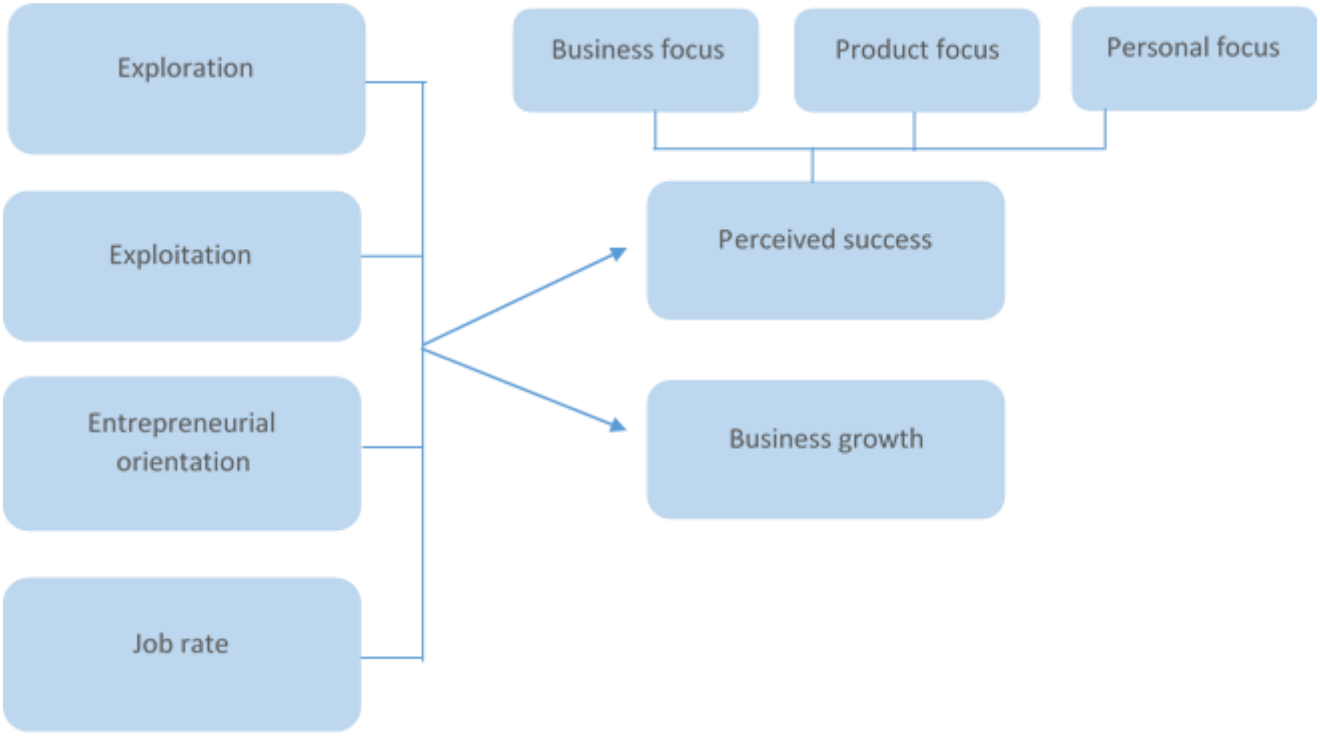

Figure 3: Visual representation study 3

This dissertation now continues with an elaboration on the diverse empirical studies. The studies are all written in academic journal paper style. Nevertheless, I hereby confirm that I collected all data and wrote all the chapters as a first author.

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CHAPTER 2

Study 1 – Unraveling Belgian fashion designers' high perceived success: A set-theoretic approach

Abstract[1]

This article presents an exploratory comparative case study of 19 cases in the fashion design industry regarding the achievement of high perceived organizational success. The set-theoretic analysis of these data yields two configurational pathways to high perceived success. Firstly, a balance between exploitation and exploration is necessary, especially when the fashion design firm is at an early stage in the life cycle or following dominant industry logic. Secondly, no balance is sufficient for low perceived organizational success. These findings enhance configurational understanding of the fashion industry and show that the business side of that industry needs more support.

Keywords: Fashion design industry; ambidexterity; dominant logic; csQCA

2.1. Introduction

In the past few decades, the Belgian fashion industry is receiving international praise as a niche-level scene and as a highly successful incubator for new fashion design and future-oriented designers (Martínez, 2007). The sector has an enviable reputation as a hub for independent designers, offering something genuinely distinctive from mainstream fashion while also attracting subsequent generations of young international designers to study fashion design in Belgium (Craik, 2014). Previous research reveals that studies on this industry, however, largely concentrate on the *"art"* rather than the *"business"* side of fashion (Choi, 2012). This sector has strong dominant logics and mainly consists of beginning entrepreneurs and small enterprises. Above all, creative entrepreneurs seem to have difficulty balancing economic and artistic tensions (Wilson & Stokes, 2005). Accordingly, fashion companies need to balance artistic and economic considerations (Kolsteeg, 2014), targeting both commercial success and artistic expression to ensure long-run survival (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000). This tension, which links to the concept of ambidexterity, is a pull between *exploration* and *exploitation* (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; March, 1991). Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004) coin

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the concept of contextual ambidexterity and argue that the best firms are those that can carefully balance explorative innovation with exploitative innovation in an ambidextrous fashion (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008).

However, within the theory of ambidexterity, almost all empirical studies focus on large, multi-unit firms (Chang & Hughes, 2012). With few exceptions (e.g. Abebe & Angriawan, 2014; Lubatkin, 2006), studies on ambidexterity fail to account for SMEs, a business type that accounts for the largest share of companies within the creative industry sector (Jeffcutt & Pratt, 2002), including the fashion industry. Andriopoulos and Lewis (2009) posit that SMEs face greater challenges than larger firms do in managing the tensions and tradeoffs that associate with explorative and exploitative innovations.

Therefore, to broaden the findings of previous research, this study combines the following concepts: Dominant logic, organizational life cycle, and the balance between exploration and exploitation. This study also employs a configurational perspective on these concepts in addition to the qualitative studies approach and econometric modelling typical in creative industries research. Finally, this study contributes on the practical level by providing fashion design managers and policymakers with a more tangible understanding of pathways for perceived success in the fashion industry.

This study builds on an in-depth comparative study of 19 cases within the Belgian fashion design industry. Fiss (2007) states that organizations are clusters of interconnected structures and practices; in this vein, this study systematically compares the cases using a set-theoretic Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to discover patterns that hold reliably across the cases (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Although QCA is increasingly common in organization and management science (Bakker et al., 2011), QCA is a novel approach in the research of management at creative firms. Set-theoretic approaches enable researchers to elucidate how factors combine into configurations of necessary and sufficient conditions underlying outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009), and so this approach identifies several models or mechanisms that explain a diverse set of comparable cases (Marx & van Hootegem, 2007).

2.2. Conditions influencing high perceived organizational success

This research seeks to explore configurational pathways to high perceived success in the fashion design industry. This article deals with three concepts: The balance between exploitation and exploration (i.e. ambidexterity), organizational life cycle, and the presence of a dominant business logic. From previous research we know that these concepts are especially relevant for organizations in the creative industries, and therefore they are explored together

in this study. A balance between exploitation and exploration is key in creative organizations that have to deal with both artistic expression and commercial success (Lampel et al., 2000), and they often have difficulties balancing these artistic and economic tensions (Guiette et al., 2011; Kolsteeg, 2014). Other research in Flanders found different dominant logics present in the creative industries with an impact on the organization itself (Jacobs et al., 2012). To enhance our understanding about these conditions, we choose to add in this study the concept of organizational life cycle. Following Hagoort (2012) it enables us to understand creative organizations more effectively.

Although we can make expectations about the singular impact of each condition on high perceived success, we cannot make a configurational hypothesis about the combined effect of the conditions. We therefore expect that all conditions are INUS conditions[2]. This means that our conditions of interest will form multiple configurations leading to an outcome, and thereby combining at least two conditions.

2.2.1. Balance between exploitation and exploration

This first concept represents the balance between the artistic (exploration) and the economic decisions (exploitation) that creative firms must achieve (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2010; Lampel et al., 2000). Scholars call successful organizations "ambidextrous": These organizations are efficient in their management of current business demands, while remaining sufficiently adaptive to changes in the environment to ensure long-term success (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).

In the literature different types of ambidexterity can be found. First, *temporal ambidexterity* where the balance between exploitation and exploration is achieved by having long periods of exploitation and short bursts of exploration within the organization (March, 1991). With this form there is a balance over time and not at one specific moment (Stadler et al., 2014). In this study we will not take temporal ambidexterity into account, because it has been found that firms operating in highly dynamic environments are more likely to pursue diverse contradictory tasks simultaneously instead of sequential (Jansen et al, 2006). Moreover, empirical evidence shows that simultaneous ambidextrous organizations outperform sequential ambidextrous organizations (Cannaerts, 2016; He & Wong, 2004; Lubatkin et al., 2006). A second widely research type of ambidexterity is *structural ambidexterity*. O'Reilly and Tushman (2013, p. 324) define it as "*an organizational form that differentiates exploitation and exploration into separate units and integrates these at higher*

[2] INUS conditions: Conditions being *i*nsufficient but *n*onredundant parts of different configurations which are themselves *u*nnecessary but *s*ufficient for the occurrence of the outcome (Fiss et al., 2013).

organizational levels". This design considers the task of ambidexterity as an organizational one. A third type, *contextual ambidexterity*, is defined as "*the behavioral capacity to simultaneously demonstrate exploitation and exploration across an entire business unit*" (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004, p. 209). The authors, among others, believe that the best firms are increasingly those who can simultaneously balance explorative innovation with exploitative innovation in an ambidextrous fashion (Chang & Hughes, 2012; He & Wong, 2004; Morgan & Berthon, 2008; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008; Raisch et al., 2009). This study takes contextual ambidexterity into account, because it is especially important at the level of the individual and this study analyzes the micro-level. Contextual ambidextrous individuals and organizations have the capability to switch between different mind and action sets in accordance with situational demands (Bledow et al., 2009).

However, in the theory of ambidexterity, so far, almost all of the recommendations put forward by conceptual and empirical works are designed for large, multiunit firms (Chang & Hughes, 2012). With few exceptions (e.g. Lubatkin, 2006), work on ambidexterity has failed to account for SMEs, which is actually the largest volume of companies within the creative industries (Bagwell, 2008; Miles & Green, 2008), and accordingly the fashion design industry.

Additionally, ambidexterity associates positively with subjective ratings of performance (Burton et al., 2012; Markides & Charitou, 2004). Therefore, this study envisions to find a positive link between the balance of exploitation and exploration in fashion firms and high perceived organizational success. This study cannot make any assumptions about the configuration of this balance with dominant logic and organizational life cycle, however we expect that balance is an INUS condition, and thus, it is to be expected sufficient for high perceived success in combination with the other conditions.

2.2.2. Dominant logic

A dominant logic comprises "*a mindset or world view or conceptualization of the business and the administrative tools to accomplish goals and make decisions in that business*" (Prahalad & Bettis, 1986, p. 491). A dominant logic increases an organization's efficiency by reducing the set of environmental stimuli and responses (Sinkula, 2002), thereby simplifying and accelerating decision making. This concept, however, can suffer from possibly toxic rigidity effects when environmental conditions change (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Bettis et al., 2003).

Spender speaks of an "*industry recipe*," a "*shared knowledge base that those socialized in an industry take as familiar professional common sense*" (Spender, 1989, p. 69). The industry recipe contains core beliefs about the relevant set of competitors and the appropriate way to compete. In this context, a link exists between firm-level and group-level competitive

activities, thus, an individual firm within the industry has a narrow range of strategic possibilities to consider (Porac et al., 1989). This logic becoming dominant could impede innovation. This could perhaps be why many companies cannot overcome internal and external barriers to innovate (Matthyssens et al., 2006). Industry recipes supply the industry rules of the game (Berghman et al., 2006), and most scholars agree that an obsolete dominant logic can create strategic path dependencies, limit innovation potential, and eventually cause strategic problems (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Bettis et al., 2003).

To summarize, a dominant logic can increase an organization's efficiency, but also strategic problems can appear under certain circumstances. Therefore, this study does not expect a single link between dominant logic and perceived success. In addition, this study cannot make any assumptions about the configuration of dominant logic with the balance between exploration and exploitation and organizational life cycle, but when present we expect it to be an INUS condition.

2.2.3. Organizational life cycle

An organizational life cycle is a specific phase in an organization's development. Many scholars see this concept as essential to understand success and failure (e.g. Lumpkin & Dess, 2001; Quinn & Cameron, 1983). In the research literature on creative industries, only a few authors discuss life cycle approaches as a way of understanding creative organizations more effectively (Hagoort, 2012). This study distinguishes four phases drawing on Hagoort's (2012) insights into life cycles in creative organizations: Firstly, the idea phase, in which the organization focuses on artistic leadership and ideas. In this stage, organizations learn mainly by trial and error. Secondly, the structure phase, in which the firm creates a division between the artistic and strategic activities. In this phase, the organization develops a strategic vision regarding both production and distribution. Next, when the organization is stable, the organization reaches the strategy phase, with new artistically-inspired, future-oriented initiatives. The last phase, the festival phase, revolves around teamwork and innovative projects. Hagoort's insights are similar to Greiner's (1997) life cycle model, which describes this life cycle as a sequence of crises. This research does not have an expectation regarding the link between organizational life cycle and perceived success. In addition, this study does not make any assumptions about the configuration of this life cycle with the balance between exploration and exploitation and the dominant logic, but when present we expect it to be an INUS condition.

2.3. Method

One of the key contributions of this study is the application of a set-theoretic method. QCA provides a unique set of tools to systematically examine similarities and differences of a set of comparable cases and identify structural conditions that lead to an outcome (Marx et al., 2013). Furthermore, set-theoretical approaches can process conjunctural, equifinal, and asymmetric causal complexity. Asymmetric causation implies that high perceived success can have different causes than low perceived success. Equifinality means that various scenarios can result in high or low perceived success. Conjunctural causation captures that case-specific factors affect high perceived success in combination rather than in isolation (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Applying QCA requires the mapping of cases in terms of their membership in sets of conditions. This process requires the transformation or calibration of the conditions according to three qualitative thresholds: full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership (Peer C. Fiss, 2007; C. Ragin, 2008). This study employs the most conventional type of QCA: Crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA). Therefore, the set membership score of the cases is either 1 (full membership) or 0 (full non-membership).

Another key feature of the QCA method is that it relies on Boolean algebra to compute a *"truth table"* which reports all the logically possible combinations of the conditions, including those that are empirically observed in our sample and those that are not (Greckhamer et al., 2007; Ragin, 2009). Since we investigate $k = 3$ conditions, the truth table has $2^k = 8$ rows or combinations of conditions (i.e. configurations). The researcher is now required to set a priori minimum thresholds for consistency and the frequency (parameters of fit) of cases per configuration in order to identify configurations that lead to high perceived success (Greckhamer et al., 2007). The two main parameters of fit range from 0 to 1. *Consistency* indicates the extent to which the results are in line with the statements of necessity and sufficiency. Furthermore, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) indicates the degree to which a given causal configuration is not simultaneously sufficient for both the occurrence and the non-occurrence of the outcome. Coverage sufficiency depicts how well the causal model explains the available empirical information. For necessary conditions, coverage expresses their relevance in terms of the condition set not being much larger than the outcome set, and the relevance of necessity (RoN) in terms of the condition being close to a constant (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 128, 139, 235-239). Following Ragin (Ragin, 2009), we set the minimum acceptable frequency to one case per configuration, because of the intermediate size of cases in this study. With respect to consistency, we identified all configurations that have a minimum raw consistency of > 0.85 and/or a PRI consistency of > 0.85 (Ragin, 2008,

2006). The different parameters of fit we used with strategies to address possible error sources are shown in Table 2.

Issue	*Definition*	*Strategy*	*Application*
Measurement errors	Sensitivity to changes in raw consistency levels	Raw consistency Robustness test	Use of two different raw consistency thresholds
Plausibility & tenability	Limited diversity & contradictions can trigger inferences that are implausible and/or contradictory	Enhanced Standard Analysis	Intermediate solution based on directional expectations and exclusion of contradictory rows and untenable assumptions
Causal relevance	Only parsimonious solution removes causally irrelevant conditions from solution term	Comparative presentation of parsimonious & intermediate solution	Parsimonious solution is causally interpretable and less sensitive to errors
Skewness	Skewed distributions can produce simultaneous subset relations, exacerbate limited diversity, and strongly distort parameters of fit	Skewness statistics	% of cases with membership > 0.5 in sets in reported. Skewness is problematic if the vast majority (> 85%) of the cases cluster in only one of the four possible intersecting areas of the XY plots with two digitals
Accuracy	Degree to which observations correspond to set relation	Consistency	Necessity: ≥ 0.95 Sufficiency: ≥ 0.85
Explanatory power	Empirical relevance of model	Coverage	Necessity: ≥ 0.8 RoN: ≥ 0.8 Sufficiency: Low coverage indicates low explanatory power

Table 2: Strategies to address errors and evaluate models. Based on Baumgartner (2015), Baumgartner and Thiem (2015), Fiss (2011), Ragin (2000), Schneider and Wagemann (2012).

Based on the thresholds for consistency and frequency of cases, the QCA methodology computes "*complex*", "*intermediate*", and "*parsimonious*" solutions (Ragin, 2009). The complex solution shows the configuration(s) that are sufficient for observing high perceived success without any counterfactual analysis. The intermediate and parsimonious solutions show the configurations sufficient for high perceived success based on the application of respectively easy and difficult counterfactual analysis, which allows to differentiate between core and peripheral conditions (Fiss, 2011; Ragin, 2008). Easy counterfactual analysis investigates whether (combinations of) conditions presumed to be sufficient for high perceived success are

also present (based on empirical instances) when high perceived success is not observed, or whether their inverse similarly leads to high perceived success. If this is the case, the (combinations of) condition(s) of interest is redundant and removed in the intermediate solution (Fiss, 2011). In a difficult counterfactual analysis, a researcher asks whether the removal of a condition makes a difference. For example, if theoretical or substantial knowledge links the presence, not the absence, of a condition to an outcome and an empirical instance of the absence of that condition is lacking, then the solution can be simplified by removing that condition in the parsimonious solution (Fiss, 2011). With regard to the difficult counterfactual analysis, we make assumptions only for those conditions for which theory and/or extant empirical evidence is rather clear that their presence should (not) lead to high perceived success.

As mentioned above, applying easy and difficult counterfactual analysis allows the differentiation between peripheral and core conditions. Core conditions are those that are part of both intermediate and parsimonious solutions, and peripheral conditions are those that are eliminated in the parsimonious solution and thus only appear in the intermediate solution (Ragin, 2008). According to Fiss (2011), core conditions can be considered as being more important for an outcome relative to peripheral conditions which may even be expendable or exchangeable. In line with prior studies (e.g. Fiss, 2011; Garcia-Castro & Casasola, 2009), we report the intermediate solution and denote the presence or absence of the conditions as follows: core conditions are denoted by ● (present) and ⊗ (absent) while peripheral conditions are denoted by • (present) and ⊗ (absent). Blank spaces in a solution indicate a situation in which the condition may be either present or absent (Fiss, 2011).

Furthermore, to account for different possible model specifications and to assess robustness, we calculated models using two different raw consistency thresholds, using R with packages QCA and SetMethods (Dusa & Thiem, 2014; Quaranta, 2013; Thomann & Wittwer, 2016). Tables A2 and A3 in appendix A at the end of this chapter report all models and illustrate their robustness. The directional expectations and parsimonious solutions are all provided as supplementary material.

2.3.1. Data collection

The first step consisted in four in-depth interviews with fashion industry experts to construct a dominant logic framework for the fashion design industry. The second step consisted in selecting the research population; this study divides fashion designers into four segments: The independent designers, the luxury fashion concerns, the middle market, and the retail chains (Schrauwen & Schramme, 2014). Independent designers and the middle

market segment are the most common segments in Belgium, and participants of these two groups come from a Flanders Fashion Institute's database, which lists 257 Belgian fashion designers. From this database, this study selects 50 cases following a most similar/most different strategy (Yin, 2008), which means that cases are similar in some points, but also differ on other points to come to a good mix of diverse cases. Nineteen cases respond positively to a request for an interview, all of whom this study subsequently interviews. To avoid sample bias, this study carries a non-response analysis that shows that 19 cases are a representative sample. The interview guideline is provided in appendix A at the end of this chapter.

The semi-structured interviews last between 40 to 90 minutes; the study keeps tape recordings and transcriptions. In addition to the formal interviews, the study collects additional data about the cases from financial reports, press documentation, and website information.

2.3.2. Calibration

A crucial aspect of QCA is the calibration of the data; Schneider & Wagemann (2012) argue that the research should explain the reasoning behind the selection of the cut-off point between 0 and 1 in csQCA.

2.3.2.1. Balance between exploration and exploitation

This explorative research expects that a balance between exploitation and exploration positively links to perceived organizational success. During the interviews, fashion designers answered questions about this concept in relation to their practice. For fashion designers, exploration involves being creative and experimenting with novel designs, techniques, and materials. Exploitation, however, has more to do with the designer continuing to offer best-selling fashion items, as well as having a business mindset and distributing their fashion pieces through different channels. Building on within-case knowledge, cases have full membership in the set (1) when the fashion designer shows a balance between exploitation and exploration.

> *"I like searching new things. I have knitted for example a dress in silk, which looks simple, but is quite innovative. I had to think a long time about it."* (Designer 17, example of exploration)

> *"In the shop they said that my tops are doing well, so, I thought, I will make more of these tops because it sells and gives me money to design more other things."* (Designer 8, example of exploitation)

> *"Being creative and designing is the most fun, but actually I have little time for it, or just some periods during the year. For the creative part, you have to be able to set everything aside for some time, which is not easy. Every day there are mails, clients,*

producers, there is a lot to do. I think only 15% of my time is creative. But, I like talking to clients and doing the business-side, so for me it is ok." (Designer 6, example of balance between exploration and exploitation)

"Making prototypes, product development, exploring, it takes a lot of time. But I also have to clean the shop, be there for clients, take a look at budgets, manage excels, arrange things with suppliers,…The percentage of designing is today maybe 5%, unfortunately not more…" (Designer 21, example of imbalance between exploration and exploitation)

2.3.2.2. Life cycle

Drawing on Hagoort's (2012) insights on life cycles in creative organizations, this study distinguishes four phases: An idea phase, a structure phase, a strategy phase, and a festival phase. The information to attribute cases to a set comes primarily from the interviews. Thus, based on within-case knowledge, cases are out of the set when being part of the idea phase; if cases start from the structure phase, they are in the set.

"I just worked on a small collection for a pop-up shop and now I'm preparing for a fashion fair. … I'm still looking and thinking a lot…. I'm also a graphic designer, so I'm just part-time working on my fashion label. Maybe in the future, when I'm more 'famous', I can work fulltime as a fashion designer." (Designer 12, in idea phase)

"Me and my partner are the only designers, and we make drafts and prototypes. But then, it goes to other people in our studio and they also do the daily management. Of course, in the beginning this was different… But we already exist for more than 20 years now…. These days we are quite known by the customers and also abroad, and they know our style and quality, but we still want to do new things." (Designer 28, in strategy phase)

2.3.2.3. Dominant logic

To unravel the dominant fashion industry logic, the study conducted in-depth interviews with four fashion experts. Combining the expert's insights with literature research (e.g. Jacobs et al., 2012) resulted in a framework of a dominant fashion-design industry logic. This framework represents a dominant way of thinking within the fashion industry about gaining success as a fashion designer, and consists of three categories: Strategy, finance, and marketing. Being successful in the fashion industry, following this dominant business logic, means that regarding strategy, the fashion designer (1) must have a good working relationship with the producer and provide that producer with extensive technical manufacturing information; (2) must have a business structure; (3) must have entrepreneurial and business

knowledge and skills, or support from someone who does; and (4) must have a strategy regarding online sales. For finance, being successful within this logic means (5) having an accountant or a business partner; and (6) having a clear financial plan with external funding or government support. Following the dominant logic on marketing, the fashion designer must (7) have a flagship store to meet clients or be present at fashion trade fairs; and (8) have a strong presence on social media.

The information to attribute cases to this set builds on within-case knowledge. The cross-over point for cases that follow the dominant logic is 5 out of 8 points. Thus, cases are in the set when they follow at least 6 out of 8 points of the dominant logic framework. The study conducts a successful robustness check by shifting the cross-over point, which didn't change the results of the analysis. Table A4 in appendix A at the end of this chapter provides an overview of the framework and the scores of the different cases.

2.3.2.4. High perceived organizational success in creative industries

Financial performance and business success are not synonymous for small businesses (Besser, 1999); especially not for those creative industries where artistic performance is crucial. Furthermore, financial data are not available for all of the cases because independent traders do not publish their annual accountings. Therefore, the outcome condition in this research is high perceived organizational success. In any case, subjective measures are acceptable indicators when other kinds of measures are unavailable (Dawes, 1999). According to Besser (1999), the measure of organizational success that this research uses is the fashion designer's own evaluation of his firm's success, that is, asking the designer to "please rate the success of your organization (by your own definition of success) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsuccessful and 5 being very successful." Cases are in the set when they show high perceived organizational success, thus a score of 4 or 5.

> *"At this moment I give myself 3 as a score. My motivation is good, but I still have to learn a lot. I'm a creative person, not a business person."* (Designer 21)
>
> *"I think it is a score of 4 for me. I'm on the right track, and my shop is doing well."* (Designer 13)
>
> *"Well, I would say a score of 3,5. It is a success for myself, because I'm doing the job I love, but I'm still a little one*." (Designer 15)

2.4. Results

Asymmetry is central in QCA, so this study performs two separate analyses: One for the presence of the outcome, and one for the absence of the outcome.

2.4.1. Results for high perceived success

The first step in QCA is the analysis of necessary conditions. This study sets the consistency threshold in 0.99 (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Only one condition fulfils this criterion (see table 3): Balance between exploitation and exploration (BAL), with a consistency of 1.00 and a relevance of necessity of 0.80. Due to the small number of cases, BAL will also be part of the analysis of sufficiency.

High perceived success			
Condition	*Consistency*	*Coverage*	*RoN*
BAL	1.00	0.82	0.80
LIFE + log	1.00	0.56	0.30

Table 3: Analysis of necessity for high perceived success (capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

The sufficiency test aims to identify configurations of conditions that are sufficient for the outcome. In the truth table below (table 4), each row represents one of the logically possible AND combinations between the conditions (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

Truth Table row	**Conditions**			**Sufficient for Success**	**Cases with membership in row**
	Balance	*Lifecycle*	*Logic*		
8	1	1	1	1	8
5	1	0	0	1	2
1	0	0	0	0	3
2	0	0	1	0	3
3	0	1	0	0	1
4	0	1	1	0	1
7	1	1	0	0	1
6	1	0	1	?	-

Table 4: Truth Table for analysis of sufficiency for success

The consistency threshold to include a truth table row into the minimization process is 0.85 (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). One logical remainder is present: Row 6, a combination of conditions for which no cases exist. After the minimization of the truth table, this study

reports the intermediate solution term. This solution term draws on easy counterfactuals and is less complex than the conservative solution term. The intermediate solution also gives the same result as the most parsimonious solution, meaning all conditions are core conditions. Table 5 shows the two intermediate solution paths. The overall solution consistency is 0.90 and the overall solution coverage 1.00. The latter indicates that the two configurations of conditions account for 100% percent of membership in designer's high perceived success.

The two solution paths (solution number 1 and 2) show that a balance between exploration and exploitation is essential for high perceived success, because it is present in both solution paths. High perceived success is achieved when this balance is present and the designer is still in the idea phase (solution 1), or a combination of this balance and following the dominant fashion business logic (solution 2).

Conditions	***Solutions***	
	1 *"Designers in the idea phase with a balance between exploration and exploitation"*	*2* *"Designers following the dominant logic and with a balance between exploration and exploitation"*
BALANCE	●	●
LOGIC		●
LIFE CYCLE	⊗	
Consistency	1.00	0.87
Raw coverage	0.22	0.78
Unique coverage	0.22	0.78
Solution consistency	0.90	
Solution coverage	1.00	
Solution PRI	0.90	
# cases	10	

Table 5: Configuration for high perceived success

Notes: N = 19. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

2.4.2. Results for low perceived success

For the analysis of necessary conditions for the negation of the outcome, the consistency threshold is 0.99. The results do not reveal any relevant necessary conditions. Table 6 shows the two intermediate solution pathways of the sufficiency analysis. Low perceived success is achieved when the designer doesn't has a balance between exploration and exploitation (solution 3). Low perceived success is also achieved when the designer in a more advanced stage of the organizational life cycle doesn't follow the dominant fashion business logic (solution 4).

Condition	***Solutions***	
	3 *"Designers without balance between exploration and exploitation"*	*4* *"Designers in a more advanced stage of the life cycle deviating from the dominant logic"*
BALANCE	⊗	
LOGIC		⊗
LIFE CYCLE		●
Consistency	1.00	1.00
Raw coverage	0.80	0.20
Unique coverage	0.70	0.10
Solution consistency	1.00	
Solution coverage	0.90	
Solution PRI	1.00	
# cases	9	

Table 6: Configuration for low perceived success

Notes: *N = 19. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.*

2.5. Discussion, limitations, and suggestions for further research

This study arrives to two major conclusions. The first conclusion concerns the set-theoretic approach. The configuration perspective, which builds on concepts from practice, clearly fits the research question: The study finds two configurational pathways for high perceived success. The analysis shows that balance is a necessary condition for high perceived organizational success, and is particularly necessary when the fashion design firm

is at an early stage in the life cycle (idea phase), or when following the dominant industry logic. Furthermore, no balance is sufficient for low perceived organizational success. These findings support previous studies regarding ambidexterity that conclude that the best firms are those which can simultaneously balance exploration and exploitation (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008).

The designers without balance perform on one hand a great deal of exploration but little exploitation although they have low perceived organizational success. These fashion designers attach great importance to the artistic dimension of their job, but tend to be unsatisfied with the exploitation side of their business. These designers feel that they need more business knowledge, or simply more time, to combine the exploration side of their business with the exploitation side. The reverse is also found in the cases: having little time for creativity and exploration because the business-side takes too much time and effort.

On the other hand, fashion designers express low perceived organizational success when deviating from the dominant industry logic in combination with being in a more mature firm. This contradicts the expectation (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Matthyssens et al., 2006) that breaking through the dominant industry logic would lead to organizational success. In this respect, the dominant logic is a mechanism to increase an organization's efficiency by reducing the set of environmental stimuli and responses (Sinkula, 2002). The study also finds that the industry is more tolerant towards young companies deviating from established industry patterns.

A second conclusion concerns policymakers and managers within fashion design firms. The pathways to high or low perceived success show that a balance between artistic and economic considerations is crucial. Going back to the cases this means that overall the balance can be found in having to spend too much time to economic considerations, the business, or commercial side, of fashion design firms need more support to achieve the proper balance.

Our findings for high perceived success can be best illustrated by two cases. The first case illustrates the configurational pathway of balance and being in the idea phase. This Antwerp based fashion designer (designer 4) started her business in 2012, after having an international career in business and finance. Her label is still young and she is seeking her place in the fashion world. She creates her dresses as a sculptor. Instead of drawings, she uses a miniature mannequin-doll for modeling her designs and turning an idea into an object. The realization of the final dresses is exclusively done by haute couture ateliers in Paris, artisans and fine craftsmanship in Belgium. Probably because of her business background she shows a good balance between exploring new ideas, materials and designs, and exploiting

her one-person business. This designer shows high perceived success, which is for her quality and innovation in her designs and being able to do what she loves.

The second case (designer 17) illustrates the configurational pathway of balance and following the dominant fashion business logic. This designer started her label in 2011, after graduating from the fashion academy La Cambre in Brussels and building up experience with Haider Ackermann and Vivienne Westwood. Her woman clothes are made in Belgium with high quality materials. She balances exploration and exploitation in the sense that she takes time to be creative and explore new materials and designs, but she also knows that her label needs the business to survive. Therefore she sees her flagship store as the perfect playground: being able to make highly creative designs, but also testing what sells well. This designers follows the dominant fashion business logic. She told me that she learned a lot about the business during her experience with other high-end designers. Although she finds herself not possessing very strong business skills, she is supported by an accountant, has good contact with her producers, is active on social media and goes to fashion fairs. She believes this is essential to let her label grow. She show high perceived success, being internationally recognized and already awarded.

To conclude, this study has some limitations. The QCA analysis has limitations regarding the complexity of the analysis. A crisp-set variant of QCA was chosen, which makes the findings less fine-grained. The small sample (19 cases) limited the amount of conditions suitable for analysis, and these conditions are not exhaustive. Future research should delve into other possible conditions leading to a successful organization in the fashion design industry. Another limitation is that apparently small changes in calibration or the choice of cut-off values regarding frequency and consistency thresholds can lead to significant changes in the solutions obtained. As a robustness check, we advanced this limitation by examining the impact of different cut-off values concerning frequency and consistency thresholds. However, we didn’t found any differences.

In chapter 5 we will discuss these results more in-depth.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Measurement and descriptive statistics of indicator variables

Condition	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases with set memebership > 0.5*
High perceived success	Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success / *a score from 1 to 5*	2	5	3.52	0.70	-0.24	3.99	47
BAL	Balance between exploration and exploitation based on in-depth interviews / balance = 1	0	1	0.63	0.49	-0.59	0.50	58
LOG	Following the dominant logic / score on a 8 point framework	2	8	5.63	1.71	-1.01	5.99	63
LIFE	Stage in organizational lifecycle/ Score 1 from structure phase	0	1	0.58	0.51	-0.35	0.50	58

Table A2: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for high perceived success

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.85	**BAL*life + BAL*LOG**	0.90	1.00	10
0.90	**BAL*life**	1.00	0.22	2

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: BAL -> Success

We don't have directional expectations for the conditions LIFE and LOG.

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table A3: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for low perceived success

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.85	**bal + log*LIFE**	1.00	0.90	9
0.90	Same as above			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: ~BAL -> ~Success

We don't have directional expectations for the conditions LIFE and LOG.

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table A4: calibration dominant logic

Case	Strategy				Finance		Marketing		Score
	Relation with producer	Having a business structure	Business skills or support	Strategy for online sales	Accountant or business partner	Financial plan with external funding/support	Flagship store/ fashion trade fairs	Strong presence in social media	
12	x	x			x	x	x	x	6/8
23	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8/8
7	x	x		x	x	x			5/8
4	x	x	x		x	x			5/8
16	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8/8
2	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8/8
9		x	x		x				3/8
22		x			x				2/8
20	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	7/8
1	x	x	x	x	x	x			6/8
5		x		x	x		x	x	5/8
25		x			x				2/8
17	x	x			x	x	x	x	6/8
6		x	x	x	x	x		x	6/8
28	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	7/8
8		x	x		x	x	x	x	6/8
21	x	x		x	x		x	x	6/8

Interview guide fashion

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the researcher & research topic
- Discuss confidentiality

GENERAL

- Introduction of the interviewed person
- Start and history of the firm

FIRM SPECIFIC

- Structure of the company
- Amount of employees
- Freelancers and interns
- Business partners
- Age

DOMINANT LOGIC

- Pricing
- Production
- Distribution
- Flagship stores and other stores
- Online sales
- Fashion fairs, fashion weeks
- Communication and PR

BALANCE

- Exploring new opportunities/new materials
- Innovation
- Time to be creative/ time for business
- Efficiency
- Following customer demands

GROWTH

- What is growth for your company?
- How did your company grow?

PERCEIVED SUCCESS

- Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success? 1= not successful/ 5= very successful

AT THE END

- Questions?
- Contact details?

CHAPTER 3

Study 2 – Multiple pathways to success in small creative businesses: The case of Belgian furniture designers

Abstract[3]

This research presents an exploratory comparative case study of 21 cases in the Belgian furniture design industry in regards to achievement of success. The study looks into two measures of success, namely business growth and high perceived success. The set-theoretic analysis of these data yields two major conclusions. Firstly, no business growth and low perceived success are both accomplished for 'part-time' designers with a clear product focus on furniture and low values for conservation. Secondly, part-time designers show low perceived success and low business growth. These findings enhance configurational understanding of the furniture design industry and show that entrepreneurs require individual support and advice.

Keywords: Furniture design industry; personal values, success; QCA

3.1. Introduction

The creative industries are a key driver of economic growth, and have become key economic resources (Scott, 1999; 2001; UNESCO & UNDP, 2013). Besides, in recent years, international research has increasingly covered Belgian designers and their work. To a large extent, this repercussion increase owes to promotion and visibility at shows like Milan's annual Salone del Mobile and the daring style of often young Belgian labels (Ceulemans, 2013). The fragmented furniture-design sector counts a large number of small enterprises and a small number of large enterprises, with a high level of self-employment (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2009). Likewise, in such small creative firms, the designer is the person who manages, in addition to being the founder of the business. He or she represents the firm's core resource and enjoys a high degree of decision-making authority (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2012). However, Jeffcut and Pratt (2002) state that research on the creative industries pays great attention to the macro-level. They suggest the need for a better understanding of what occurs at the micro-level, especially looking into particular variables that influence the performance of creative firms

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(Mellander, 2010). This research answers their call by exploring pathways to success through the micro-level. Information about which individual characteristics can explain variation in firm performance is scarce, although research in economics supports the notion that some general individual differences between CEOs have a relationship with variation in firm performance (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015). Rauch and Frese (2007) find evidence for a link between CEO entrepreneurs' personality characteristics and firm performance. However, empirical research has typically investigated relations of socio-demographic characteristics, functional background, and organizational tenure in their effect on organizational performance (Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015; Rost & Osterloh, 2010). Therefore, this study takes personal values into account. These variables reflect basic aspects of a person's character and can be desirable, very general goals that people pursue in life (Schwartz, 1994). Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) suggest that values, considering their central role in social life, deserve more research attention than they have received thus far.

The performance of organizations is also a major yet complex issue in management and organization studies (Loots, 2015). Especially in SMEs, success and performance are multi-dimensional issues (Murphy et al., 1996), which allow both objective and subjective measurement (Reijonen, 2008). Walker and Brown (2004) find that small business owners measure their success using both financial and non-financial factors, and that the non-financial lifestyle criteria are sometimes more important.

In this context, as a first contribution to the literature, this research looks into two different measures of performance, growth and high perceived performance. This study explores both pathways through the micro-level, by researching personal values and firm-specific variables like firm age, product focus, and designers' fulltime or part-time dedication. This approach suggests a configurational approach, which involves the simultaneous and joint consideration of these characteristics. A configuration perspective contributes as a meaningful addition to the well-known approaches of qualitative studies and econometric modelling in creative industries research. Finally, this study also contributes on the practical level by providing designers and policy-makers with a more tangible understanding of pathways for success in the furniture-design industry.

This study builds on an in-depth comparative study of 21 cases within the Belgian furniture design industry. Fiss (2007) states that organizations are clusters of interconnected structures and practices; in this vein, this study systematically compares the cases using a set-theoretic Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to discover patterns that hold reliably across the cases (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Although QCA is increasingly common in organization and

management science (Bakker et al., 2011), QCA is a novel approach in the research of management at creative firms. Set-theoretic approaches enable researchers to elucidate how factors combine into configurations of necessary and sufficient conditions underlying outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009), and so this approach identifies several models or mechanisms that explain a diverse set of comparable cases (Marx & van Hootegem, 2007).

3.2 Theoretical framework

This research seeks to explore configurational pathways to success in the furniture-design industry. The study investigates two types of success: business growth and high perceived success, through personal values and conditions that are typical for the furniture design industry (product focus and job rate) and a firm-specific condition, firm age. The conditions 'personal value' and 'firm age' build further on our previous study (Jacobs et al., 2016). In this study we found that designers in a more advanced stage of the organizational life cycle show low perceived success when deviating from a dominant business logic. To enhance our understanding about these conditions, we choose to work in this study with firm age, which we can detect more precise than the life cycle, and the spectrum of personal values that also comprise conformity values and risk-taking values, which we can link to following or not following a dominant logic, and which we can capture with a validated survey. The conditions 'product focus' and 'job rate' stem from our sector knowledge and previous studies in the creative industries (Bennett et al., 2014; Guiette et al., 2011). Although we can make expectations about the impact of each condition on business growth and high perceived success, we cannot make a configurational hypothesis about the combined effect of the conditions. We therefore expect that all conditions are INUS conditions[4]. This means that our conditions of interest will form multiple configurations leading to an outcome, and thereby combining at least two conditions.

3.2.1. Personal values

Over the past 30 years, Shalom Schwartz establishes a theory of personal values (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). He identifies a core set of ten values reflecting distinct but related motivational goals (Schwartz, 2012). The circular structure in Figure 4 portrays the total pattern of relations of conflict and congruity among the values. The values 'tradition' and 'conformity' appear in a single wedge because they share the same broad motivational goal. Conformity is

[4] INUS conditions: Conditions being *i*nsufficient but *n*onredundant parts of different configurations which are themselves *u*nnecessary but *s*ufficient for the occurrence of the outcome (Fiss et al., 2013).

more toward the center and tradition toward the periphery. This positioning signifies that tradition values conflict more strongly with the opposing values (Schwartz, 2012).

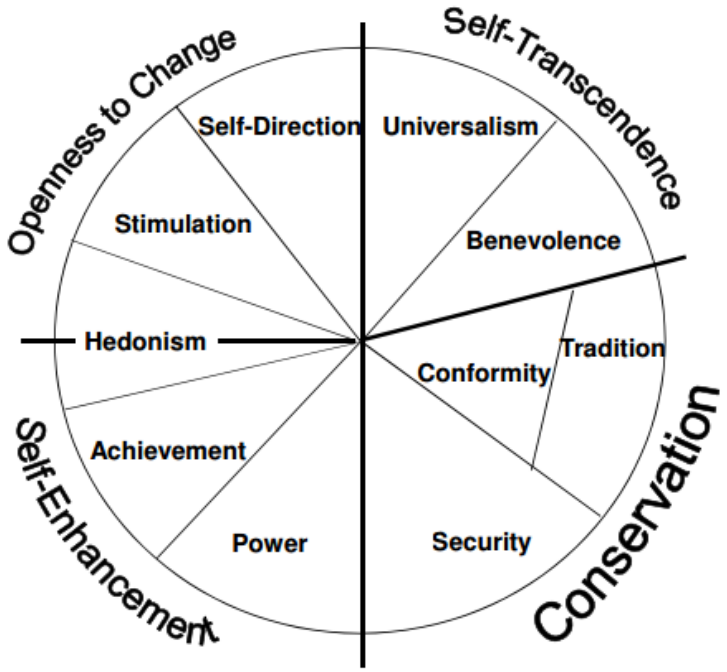

Figure 4: Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of value (Schwartz, 2012)

Values reflect basic aspects of a person's character: they are desirable, very general goals that people pursue in life. Values are universal, as seemingly people in nearly all societies from a survey of 80 countries hold them (Schwartz, 2012). From the age of 30 onwards, values are stable within individuals, but they vary across individuals (Bardi et al., 2009; Schwartz, 1994), that is, individuals and groups have different value priorities or hierarchies (Schwartz, 2012). Thus, although people may share the same values, their structure may vary (Camelo-Ordaz et al.., 2012). Values capture what people find important, where they focus their attention and build knowledge, the criteria they use to make decisions, and why people engage in certain actions (Huysentruyt et al., 2015; Schwartz et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 2000).

Evidence supports the view that Schwartz's value structure captures a two-dimensional motivational continuum: (a) conservation versus openness to change, and (b) self-enhancement versus self-transcendence (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). The first dimension, openness to change and conservation, captures the conflict between values that emphasize independence of thought, action, and feelings; and readiness for change and values that emphasize order, self-restriction, preservation of the past, and resistance to change. The second dimension, self-enhancement and self-transcendence, captures the conflict between values that emphasize concern for the welfare and interests of others and values that

emphasize pursuit of one's own interests and relative success and dominance over others. Hedonism shares elements of both openness to change and self-enhancement (Schwartz, 2012).

In relation to success, emphasizing on openness to change (vs. conservation) relates to generating creative and novel ideas (Kasof et al., 2007; Stephan & Roesler, 2010) and to engaging in risky behaviors. Furthermore, research demonstrates that businesses willing to take risks show better financial performance (Wiklund, 1999; Zahra & Covin, 1995). Thus, not having high conservation priorities seems to have a positive effect on business success. Regarding perceived success, however, previous research on fashion designers finds low perceived success for designers in a more advanced stage of their organizational life cycle that are deviating from an industry dominant logic (non-conformity; low conservation priorities) (Jacobs et al., 2016). Therefore, this analysis considers the higher order value *conservation* as personal value. This study envisions to find a positive link between a high personal priority for conservation and high perceived success. Contrary, the study expects to find a positive link between a low personal priority for conservation and business growth. Regarding the combination with other conditions, we expect that the personal value conservation is an INUS condition, as explained earlier.

3.2.2. Firm-specific variables

Researchers agree upon the fact that some general individual differences between managers relate to variation in firm performance (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003). This study explores configurational pathways to success taking into account personal values (e.g. conservation), and other characteristics typical of small businesses or self-employment in the furniture design sector.

Firm age. Within the context of creative industries and as regards performance, Camelo-Ordaz et al. (2012) find that as age increases, flexibility decreases, resistance to change rises, and values such as security become more relevant. Previous research in the fashion design sector shows similar results. Non-conformity, for more mature firms, is not advisable in regard to a positive perception about the success of their firm. Contrary, the fashion design sector is more tolerant toward young firms deviating from established patterns (Jacobs et al., 2016). Thus, this research envisions that firm age is an INUS condition in relation to the other conditions. We expect to find a positive link between firm age, business growth and high perceived success.

Rate of employment of the entrepreneur. Creative industries typically present a high rate of self-employment (Guiette et.al., 2011; Higgs et al., 2008; Markusen et al., 2008). The

study of Markusen and Schrock (2006) shows that, in the US, self-employment among designers represents the 32%. Additionally, in this group, the 21% is a self-employed designer as a secondary occupation. Also Throsby and Zednik (2011) found that a lot of artists, including designers, are spending various amounts of time working outside their creative sector. Of 45% of artists in their study who engage in non-arts work, about one-third are content with their present work pattern, but a majority would like to spend more time on the arts (Throsby & Zednik, 2011). We expect to find a positive link between being a fulltime designer, business growth and high perceived success. We also expect that rate of employment is an INUS condition regarding business growth and high perceived success, thus, it is present in combination with other conditions.

Product focus: focusing only on furniture design (or very closely related products), or having high diversification. Increasing levels of diversification should have positive effects on performance due to economies of scope and scale, market power effects, risk reduction effects, and learning effects. Related product diversification arguably provides performance advantages because the different product areas can leverage knowledge gained from each other, whereas unrelated diversification adds administrative burdens without economies of scope in developing competencies (Geringer et al., 2000). The results of extensive empirical analysis of both product and international diversification effects on performance are somewhat contradictory but tend to support these expectations (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Teece et al., 1997). Therefore, this study envisions a positive link between product diversity and business growth. Conversely, this study does not have any expectation regarding the link between product diversity and high perceived success. However, we expect product focus to be an INUS condition.

3.2.3. Business success

As mentioned in the introduction, success and performance are multi-dimensional issues (Murphy et al., 1996). Researchers often use employee numbers or financial performance, such as profit, turnover, or return on investment to measure success (Walker & Brown, 2004). However, many small business owners do not run their businesses to maximize financial performance. Instead, they run their businesses for other reasons, such as lifestyle (Jennings & Beaver, 1997; Walker & Brown, 2004). SMEs owners often present a satisfying behavior (Simpson et al., 2012). Success for many small-firm owners means the ability to sustain an acceptable level of income for themselves and their employees, through maintaining an optimum level of activity with which they can cope (Beaver, 2002). Managers of most small creative firms are individuals who focus more on sustaining a lifestyle orientated toward

involvement in creative output than on being financially successful (Chaston, 2008). Therefore this research looks both into business growth and high perceived success.

3.3. Method

This research uses a set-theoretic approach: qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). This approach starts from the idea that set relations, and not variables, best describe attributes of cases. Variables aim to capture a dimension of variation across cases and distribute cases on this variation. A set assesses whether, or to what degree, a case is a member of a set and then analyses the intersection between sets (Marx & Soares, 2015). Thus, this configurational approach facilitates understanding how distinct characteristics jointly cause an outcome.

To execute the more quantitative analysis of the qualitative data, a good balance is necessary between getting knowledge on the topic under investigation and sufficient cases. Therefore, Marx et al. (2013) present a benchmark table and show the minimum necessary cases to perform a QCA analysis for a given number of conditions. This research builds on 21 cases, and considers 4 conditions to guarantee a threshold of 1% for model acceptance, which is a 1% chance of accepting a model which could also have resulted from random data.

Furthermore, set-theoretical approaches can process conjunctural, equifinal, and asymmetric causal complexity. Asymmetric causation implies that high perceived success can have different causes than low perceived success. Equifinality means that various scenarios can result in high or low perceived success. Conjunctural causation captures that case-specific factors affect high perceived success in combination rather than in isolation (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Applying QCA requires the mapping of cases in terms of their membership in sets of conditions. This process requires the transformation or calibration of the conditions according to three qualitative thresholds: full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership (Fiss, 2007; Ragin, 2008). This study employs the most conventional type of QCA: Crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (csQCA). Therefore, the set membership score of the cases is either 1 (full membership) or 0 (full non-membership).

Another key feature of the QCA method is that it relies on Boolean algebra to compute a *"truth table"* which reports all the logically possible combinations of the conditions, including those that are empirically observed in our sample and those that are not (Greckhamer et al., 2007; Ragin, 2009). Since we investigate $k = 4$ conditions, the truth table has $2^k = 16$ rows or combinations of conditions (i.e. configurations). The researcher is now required to set a priori minimum thresholds for consistency and the frequency (parameters of fit) of cases per configuration in order to identify configurations that lead to high perceived success

(Greckhamer et al., 2007). The two main parameters of fit range from 0 to 1. *Consistency* indicates the extent to which the results are in line with the statements of necessity and sufficiency. Furthermore, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) indicates the degree to which a given causal configuration is not simultaneously sufficient for both the occurrence and the non-occurrence of the outcome. Coverage sufficiency depicts how well the causal model explains the available empirical information. For necessary conditions, coverage expresses their relevance in terms of the condition set not being much larger than the outcome set, and the relevance of necessity (RoN) in terms of the condition being close to a constant (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 128, 139, 235-239). Following Ragin (Ragin, 2009), we set the minimum acceptable frequency to one case per configuration, because of the intermediate size of cases in this study. With respect to consistency, we identified all configurations that have a minimum raw consistency of > 0.85 and/or a PRI consistency of > 0.85 (Ragin, 2008, 2006). The different parameters of fit we used with strategies to address possible error sources are shown in table 7.

Issue	*Definition*	*Strategy*	*Application*
Measurement errors	Sensitivity to changes in raw consistency levels	Raw consistency Robustness test	Use of two different raw consistency thresholds
Plausibility & tenability	Limited diversity & contradictions can trigger inferences that are implausible and/or contradictory	Enhanced Standard Analysis	Intermediate solution based on directional expectations and exclusion of contradictory rows and untenable assumptions
Causal relevance	Only parsimonious solution removes causally irrelevant conditions from solution term	Comparative presentation of parsimonious & intermediate solution	Parsimonious solution is causally interpretable and less sensitive to errors
Skewness	Skewed distributions can produce simultaneous subset relations, exacerbate limited diversity, and strongly distort parameters of fit	Skewness statistics	% of cases with membership > 0.5 in sets in reported. Skewness is problematic if the vast majority (> 85%) of the cases cluster in only one of the four possible intersecting areas of the XY plots with two digitals
Accuracy	Degree to which observations correspond to set relation	Consistency	Necessity: ≥ 0.95 Sufficiency: ≥ 0.85
Explanatory power	Empirical relevance of model	Coverage	Necessity: ≥ 0.8 RoN: ≥ 0.8 Sufficiency: Low coverage indicates low explanatory power

Table 7: Strategies to address errors and evaluate models. Based on Baumgartner (2015), Baumgartner and Thiem (2015), Fiss (2011), Ragin (2000), Schneider and Wagemann (2012).

Based on the thresholds for consistency and frequency of cases, the QCA methodology computes "*complex*", "*intermediate*", and "*parsimonious*" solutions (Ragin, 2009). The complex solution shows the configuration(s) that are sufficient for observing high perceived success without any counterfactual analysis. The intermediate and parsimonious solutions show the

configurations sufficient for high perceived success based on the application of respectively easy and difficult counterfactual analysis, which allows to differentiate between core and peripheral conditions (Fiss, 2011; Ragin, 2008). Easy counterfactual analysis investigates whether (combinations of) conditions presumed to be sufficient for high perceived success are also present (based on empirical instances) when high perceived success is not observed, or whether their inverse similarly leads to high perceived success. If this is the case, the (combinations of) condition(s) of interest is redundant and removed in the intermediate solution (Fiss, 2011). In a difficult counterfactual analysis, a researcher asks whether the removal of a condition makes a difference. For example, if theoretical or substantial knowledge links the presence, not the absence, of a condition to an outcome and an empirical instance of the absence of that condition is lacking, then the solution can be simplified by removing that condition in the parsimonious solution (Fiss, 2011). With regard to the difficult counterfactual analysis, we make assumptions only for those conditions for which theory and/or extant empirical evidence is rather clear that their presence should (not) lead to high perceived success.

As mentioned above, applying easy and difficult counterfactual analysis allows the differentiation between peripheral and core conditions. Core conditions are those that are part of both intermediate and parsimonious solutions, and peripheral conditions are those that are eliminated in the parsimonious solution and thus only appear in the intermediate solution (Ragin, 2008). According to Fiss (2011), core conditions can be considered as being more important for an outcome relative to peripheral conditions which may even be expendable or exchangeable. In line with prior studies (e.g. Fiss, 2011; Garcia-Castro & Casasola, 2009), we report the intermediate solution and denote the presence or absence of the conditions as follows: core conditions are denoted by ● (present) and ⊗ (absent) while peripheral conditions are denoted by • (present) and ⊗ (absent). Blank spaces in a solution indicate a situation in which the condition may be either present or absent (Fiss, 2011).

Furthermore, to account for different possible model specifications and to assess robustness, we calculated models using two different raw consistency thresholds, using R with packages QCA and SetMethods (Dusa & Thiem, 2014; Quaranta, 2013; Thomann & Wittwer, 2016). Tables B2-B6 in the appendix report all models and illustrate their robustness. The directional expectations and parsimonious solutions are all provided as supplementary material.

3.3.1. Data collection

No exhaustive list of furniture designers exists in Belgium to date. Therefore, the study used the database of Design Flanders. This database consists of 58 furniture designers in Flanders and Brussels. The study expanded this database with 5 more furniture designers via snowball sampling. Of all designers contacted, 21 cases responded positively to a request for an interview, all of whom this study subsequently interviewed. To avoid sample bias, this study carried a non-response analysis that shows that the 21 cases are a representative sample. The semi-structured interviews last between 40 and 90 minutes; the study keeps tape recordings and transcriptions. In addition to the formal interviews, the study collected additional data about the cases from financial reports, press documentation, and website information. The interview guideline is provided in the appendix of this chapter.

3.3.2. Calibration

A crucial aspect of QCA is the calibration of the data, with Schneider and Wagemann (2012) pointing to explicit arguments being necessary at the cut-off between 0 and 1 in csQCA.

3.3.2.1. Personal values: conservation

This study captures furniture designer's personal values with the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ). The research uses PVQ-21 (Schwartz et al., 2001, survey in appendix of this chapter). The PVQ presents respondents with gender-matched descriptions of a person in terms of his/her goals and aspirations. Respondents indicate on a 6-point scale how much the described person is like them. The PVQ-21 can present low measurement reliability owing to the use of only two items to measure each value (except for universalism) (Knoppen & Saris, 2009). To ensure high reliability nevertheless, this study relies on the higher-order values, and especially on the higher-order value 'conservation' for the analysis.

The study compares the results of the PVQ-21 for the furniture designers with the average results of a representative sample of Belgians in the most recent European Social Survey[5] (2014). The Belgian average for 'conservation' is 4.36. Cases are in the set (1) when their score for 'conservation' is higher than this Belgian average. The scores of the cases can be found in the overview of all the cases in appendix D at the end of this dissertation. The descriptives can be found in the appendix (B) at the end of this chapter.

[5] The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2001. Every two years, face-to-face interviews are conducted with newly selected, cross-sectional samples. The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations.

3.3.2.2. Firm-related conditions

The interviews provide substantive knowledge about the firm age, product focus, and rate of employment. For *firm age*, young cases are out of the set (0); cases are in the set (1) when existing longer than 5 years. For *rate of employment,* cases being a furniture designer as primary occupation are in the set (1), part-time furniture designers are out of the set (0). For *product focus*: cases that only design furniture or much related products are in the set (1), cases with a very diversified range of products are out of the set (0). The scores of the cases on these conditions can be found in the overview of all the cases in appendix D at the end of this dissertation. The descriptives can be found at the end of this chapter in appendix B.

3.3.2.3. Success

Financial performance and business success are not synonymous for small businesses (Besser, 1999); especially not for those creative industries where artistic performance is crucial. Furthermore, financial data are not available for all of the cases because independent traders do not publish their annual accountings. Therefore, a first outcome condition in this research is *high perceived organizational success*. In any case, subjective measures are acceptable indicators when other kinds of measures are unavailable (Dawes, 1999). According to Besser (1999), the measure of organizational success that this research uses is the furniture designer's own evaluation of his or hers firm's success, that is, asking the designer to *"please rate the success of your organization (by your own definition of success) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsuccessful and 5 being very successful."* Cases are in the set (1) when they show high perceived organizational success: a score of 4 or 5. The scores of the cases on these conditions can be found in the overview of the cases in appendix D at the end of this dissertation. The descriptives can be found at the end of this chapter in appendix B.

> *Score 3: "We can certainly not complain, we have customers enough. But maybe we still are in the shadows of some large companies, and we also have slightly less time to search for that extremely good product." (Designer 32)*
>
> *"Success also has to do with inner peace, I think. I'm quite content with what I'm doing. As I look back, I think, some things, maybe that was a little… But if you ask: do you want to change something then I say no. I do have made mistakes, but then I think that is typical. For myself, I don't think that I'm not successful. For me, my score is a 4. That's cum laude right?" (Designer 33)*
>
> *Score 2: "We are currently at a turning point. We notice that there is interest. But it should be said: we still have a long way to go. In the sense that, if we really want to be more commercial, let grow our company, we need to be more stubborn, I think. What I*

want to say is that there's still a lot of work and that is, I think, always. Maybe within 5 years I say: I had to give myself a score of 3. But I have the idea that there is still a lot of work. And that's a good thing too." (Designer 30)

As a second outcome condition, the study uses *business growth*. To measure this condition, this study uses two indicators: the change in number of employees and the change in sales over the last three years, or less when the firm is younger. The interviews and the analysis of the available financial reports provide information. Cases are in the set (1) when showing growth on the two indicators. The scores of the cases on these conditions can be found in the overview of all the cases in appendix D at the end of this dissertation. The descriptives can be found at the end of this chapter, in appendix B.

3.4. Results

Asymmetry is central in QCA. Asymmetry assumes that the explanations of an outcome cannot provide conclusions about the non-outcome. Therefore, two separate analyses take place for each outcome condition: one for the presence of the outcome, and one for the absence of the outcome. Furthermore, to account for different possible model specifications and to assess robustness, we calculated models using two different raw consistency thresholds, using R with packages QCA and SetMethods (Dusa & Thiem, 2014; Quaranta, 2013; Thomann & Wittwer, 2016).

3.4.1. Results for business growth

The first step in QCA is the analysis of necessary conditions. By definition, a necessary condition denotes that business growth or high perceived success can only be obtained if that condition is present (Fiss, 2007). Schneider and Wagemann (2012) posit that the consistency and coverage thresholds for considering a condition as a necessary condition need to be higher than 0.90 and 0.80 respectively. The relevance of necessity (RoN) should also be high.

As shown in Table B2 in the appendix of this chapter, none of the conditions passes these thresholds when business growth and no business growth are taken into account as outcome.

The sufficiency test aims to identify configurations of conditions that are sufficient for the outcome. In the truth table below, table 8, each row represents one of the logically possible AND combinations between the conditions (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

Truth Table row	Conditions				Sufficient for business growth	Cases with membership in row
	Job rate	*Conservation*	*Product*	*Firm age*		
11	1	0	1	0	1	4
9	1	0	0	0	1	1
12	1	0	1	1	1	5
10	1	0	0	1	0	4
3	0	0	1	0	0	5
4	0	0	1	1	0	1
14	1	1	0	1	0	1

Table 8: Truth Table for analysis of sufficiency for business growth

The consistency threshold to include a truth table row into the minimization process is 0.75 (Emmenegger et al., 2014; Ragin, 2000). After the minimization of the truth table, this study reports the *intermediate solution term*. This solution term draws on easy counterfactuals and is less complex than the conservative solution term. Table 9 shows the result *for the presence of the outcome growth (G)*. The solution consists of two configurational paths in this study, whereby the overall solution consistency is 0.90 and the overall solution coverage 0.82. The latter indicates that the two configurations of conditions account for 82% percent of membership in designer's business growth.

The analysis shows us that being a fulltime designer in combination with a low priority for conservation is sufficient for achieving business growth. This in combination with being a young designer (see solution 6), or when there is a full focus on the furniture product (solution 5). The analysis also confirms our expectations that the conditions are INUS conditions: each condition is present in combination with other conditions.

Conditions	***Solutions***	
	5 *"Fulltime designers with a focus only on furniture and a low priority for conservation values"*	*6* *"Fulltime designers that started less than 5 years ago, with a low priority for conservation values"*
CONSERVATION	⊗	⊗
JOB RATE	●	●
PRODUCT FOCUS	●	
FIRM AGE		⊗
Consistency	0.89	1.00
Raw coverage	0.73	0.45
Unique coverage	0.36	0.09
Solution consistency	0.90	
Solution coverage	0.82	
Solution PRI	0.90	
# cases	10	

Table 9: Configuration for business growth

Notes: N = 21. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

Table 10 shows the result *for the absence of the outcome growth (~G)*. The intermediate solution consists of two paths in this study, whereby the overall solution consistency is 0.82 and the overall solution coverage 0.90, so the two configurations of conditions account for 90% percent of membership in designer's non-business growth.

The analysis shows us that being a part-time designers leads to no business growth (solution 7). Also the combination of being a designer for more than 5 years and having a much diversified product range leads to no business growth (solution 8). The analysis confirms our expectations that the conditions firm age and product focus are INUS conditions. However, the condition job rate is no INUS condition for the absence of business growth, because it is sufficient on its own.

Conditions	***Solutions***	
	7 *"Being a part-time designer"*	*8* *"Being a designer for more than 5 years and having no focus on furniture alone"*
CONSERVATION		
JOB RATE	⊗	
PRODUCT FOCUS		⊗
FIRM AGE		●
Consistency	0.83	0.80
Raw coverage	0.50	0.40
Unique coverage	0.50	0.40
Solution consistency	0.82	
Solution coverage	0.90	
Solution PRI	0.82	
# cases	11	

Table 10: Configuration for no business growth

Notes: N = 21. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

3.4.2. Results for perceived success

As shown in Table B5 in the appendix of this chapter, none of the conditions passes the thresholds when high perceived success and low perceived success are taken into account as outcome.

The sufficiency test aims to identify configurations of conditions that are sufficient for the outcome. In the truth table below (table 11) each row represents one of the logically possible AND combinations between the conditions (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

Truth Table row	Conditions				Sufficient for high perceived success	Cases with membership in row
	Job rate	*Conservation*	*Product*	*Firm age*		
14	1	1	0	1	1	1
12	1	0	1	1	0	5
10	1	0	0	1	0	4
11	1	0	1	0	0	4
3	0	0	1	0	0	5
4	0	0	1	1	0	1
9	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 11: Truth Table for analysis of sufficiency for perceived success

Table 12 shows the result *for high perceived success (P)*. The intermediate solution consists of one configurational path in this study, whereby the overall solution consistency is 1.00 and the overall solution coverage 0.12. The latter indicates that the configuration of conditions accounts for 12% percent of membership in designer's high perceived success. This is very low, so we must be very cautious with these results.

The analysis shows us that designers with a high value priority for conservation show high perceived success (solution 9). The condition conservation is no INUS condition for high perceived success because it is sufficient on its own. However, this path explains only 1 case, so we will not make statements about this result.

Conditions	***Solution***
	9 *"Designers with a high priority for conservation values"*
CONSERVATION	●
JOB RATE	
PRODUCT FOCUS	
FIRM AGE	
Consistency	1.00
Raw coverage	0.12
Solution PRI	1.00
# cases	1

Table 12: Configuration for high perceived success

Notes: N = 21. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

Table 13 shows the results *for low perceived success (~P)*. The intermediate solution consists of two paths in this study, whereby the overall solution consistency is 0.82 and the overall solution coverage 0.69, so the two configurations of conditions account for 69% percent of membership in designer's low perceived success.

The analysis shows us that being a young designer while having a low priority for conservation values leads to low perceived success (solution 10). Also the combination of being a part-time designer while having a low priority for conservation values and a full focus on furniture design activities leads to low perceived success (solution 11). The analysis confirms our expectations that the conditions are INUS conditions.

Conditions	***Solutions***	
	10 *"Being a young designer with a low priority for conservation values"*	*11* *"Being a designer for more than 5 years and having no focus on furniture alone"*
CONSERVATION	⊗	⊗
JOBRATE		⊗
PRODUCT FOCUS		•
FIRM AGE	⊗	
Consistency	0.80	0.83
Raw coverage	0.61	0.38
Unique coverage	0.31	0.08
Solution consistency	0.82	
Solution coverage	0.69	
Solution PRI	0.82	
# cases	11	

Table 13: Configurations for low perceived success

Notes: N = 21. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.85. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

3.5. Discussion and conclusion

Drawing from this comparative case study, all conditions play an important role, with differences in being present or absent. Our expectations that the conditions are INUS conditions are confirmed, so the conditions play a role in combination with each other. The results suggest two major conclusions. A first conclusion concerns business growth. The analysis shows two pathways wherein fulltime designers with a low priority for conservation values are central. These two conditions appear in combination with a full focus on furniture products, or in combination with being a young designer. This confirms our expectation to find a positive link between business growth and a low personal priority for conservation. It is also in line with the research of Zahra and Covin (1995) and Wiklund (1999) who found that businesses willing to take risks, which are businesses with low priority for conservation, show better financial performance. However, this result contradicts the expectation that product diversity leads to business growth (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Teece et al., 1997). Moreover, design firms older than five years with diversified products show no business growth.

A second conclusion concerns the condition job rate. Being a part-time designer is sufficient on its own for no business growth, and as an INUS condition it is sufficient for low perceived success. On the other hand, being a fulltime designer is part of the two pathways leading to business growth. This is in line with our expectations and contributes to the literature on artistic and creative careers. Creatives often hold multiple jobs (Throsby & Zednik, 2011), which presents a challenge for those hoping to secure creative occupations as a first choice (Ashton, 2015).

This last finding concerns both policy makers and furniture designers. In order to achieve business growth, furniture designers must find stimuli and support to be powerful enough to be a designer as primary occupation. Looking back into the cases, most of the 'part-time' designers are so because of financial reasons. They cannot make a living out of design and therefore their primary occupations are elsewhere (higher education and other furniture or architecture firms). These pathways also stress the importance of having a clear product focus on furniture design, or related products like tailor-made interior objects. This advice may be of use for starting furniture designers when defining their strategy.

Our findings are best illustrated by three cases. The first case (designer 34) illustrates a configurational pathway to business growth: it is a fulltime designer with a full focus on furniture design and a low priority for conservation. The designer we interviewed started his firm in 2012 together with a friend. Since a year they both work fulltime for their design firm. They combine two essential qualities: one of them is trained as an architect and likes to think

through the entire design process and makes sure every object finds its place in a greater spatial frame. The other partner is a man of action, focusing on the material and the technical aspects. During the last year they ‘hired’ a freelance designer that helps them with the production, when necessary. Also their sales are growing. This firm designs high-end furniture, mostly side tables, combinations of steel and marble. Their products are featured in a lot of magazines, they had a gallery presentation and they collaborate with a well-known distributor and furniture shop. Besides their tables, they also design complete interiors, which is still the most profitable side of their business. In the future they want to focus even more on single furniture pieces.

In the analysis we found that being a part-time designer is sufficient for no business growth. However, in our sample we have one deviant case regarding this pathway. Designer 59 is a part-time furniture designer since 2013, but showing business growth. As main occupation, this designer is an architect and photographer. Designing furniture is a sidetrack for him. He has a fascination for re-purposing old or discarded materials which he applies in his furniture projects. Over the last two years he had increased sales due to some successful furniture projects. His dream is to own his own architecture design firm, to design large-scale projects. In his eyes furniture design will always be a side activity. His success can be explained by the way he chooses his projects: he only starts a project when he is certain about it and when he sees the full potential of it. His furniture projects are remarkable and get media attention. For his main occupation (architecture and photography) he combines different artistic and commercial skills, which also help him with his furniture projects.

A third case illustrates the pathway of being a young designer and having a low priority for conservation values that leads to low perceived success. Designer 55 studied interior design and interior architecture and graduated in 2014. At her graduation show she got a lot of attention for the furniture object she designed. This made her decide to start her own career as a furniture designer. However, at this moment she is still working 4 days a week in a graphic design bureau, because her own firm is not profitable enough to support her. She describes herself as a risk-taker because she decided immediately after graduation to start her own furniture design firm, while many other students started to work in a firm, not related to furniture design. She likes adventures and is willing to work hard to make her business profitable. She visits furniture fairs, makes new work and tries to get attention from press and design magazines. However, she expresses low perceived success, because at this moment she can spend just a little time at designing and she still has a long way to go.

Finally, this study has some limitations. The QCA analysis has limitations regarding the complexity of the analysis. A crisp-set variant of QCA was chosen, which makes the findings

less fine-grained. The small sample limited the amount of conditions suitable for analysis, and these conditions are not exhaustive. Future research should delve into other possible conditions leading to a successful organization in the furniture design industry. This concerns for example the condition ‘personal values’. We chose to use the higher order value ‘conservation’ for the analysis. However, getting a full value profile of the designers by taking into account the other higher values would have been useful and would have gave us a more detailed view of personal values in small-sized design firms.

These results are discussed more in-depth in chapter 5.

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Appendix B

Table B1: Measurement and descriptive statistics of indicator variables

Condition	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases with set memebership > 0.5*
High perceived success	Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success / *a score from 1 to 5*	2	4.5	3.21	0.78	-0.11	3.99	38
Business Growth	Change in number of employees + change in sales over the last three years / *a score from 0 to 2*	0	2	1.04	1.12	0.37	0.99	52
Conservation	Score on higher order value conservation (PVQ-21) / *6-point Likers scale*	1.67	4.83	3.20	0.77	-0.14	4.35	5
Product focus	Only designing furniture or related products = 1 / diversified range of products = 0	0	1	0.71	0.46	-1.02	0.50	71
Job rate	Being a fulltime designer = 1 / being a part-time designer = 0	0	1	0.71	0.46	-1.02	0.50	71

Firm age	Firms existing longer than 5 years = 1 / firms younger than 5 years = 0	0	25	7.00	5.68	1.74	4.99	52

Table B2: Analysis of necessity for business growth

	Business growth			**No business growth**		
Conditions	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
conservation	1.00	0.55	0.10	0.90	0.45	0.08
JOB	0.91	0.67	0.54	-	-	-
JOB*conservation	0.91	0.71	0.64	-	-	-
PRODUCT + age	0.91	0.62	0.45	-	-	-
job + AGE	-	-	-	1.00	0.62	0.45
job+ product	-	-	-	0.90	0.75	0.75

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Conditions meeting consistency threshold 0.90, coverage threshold 0.40, Relevance of Necessity (RoN) threshold 0.30. We could not identify necessary conditions or combination of conditions.

Table B3: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the presence of business growth

Raw consistency threshold	**Intermediate solution term**	**Solution consistency**	**Solution coverage**	**Case**
0.75	**PRODUCT*JOB*** conservation + **age*JOB*** conservation	0.90	0.90	10
0.85	**JOB*age*** conservation	1.00	0.45	5

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: AGE -> G, JOB -> G, PRODUCT -> G, ~CONSERVATION -> G

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table B4: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the absence of business growth

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.75	**AGE*product + job**	0.82	0.90	11
0.85	**AGE*job + CONSERVATION***product	1.00	0.20	2

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: ~JOB -> ~G, ~PRODUCT ->~ G

We made no expectations about the conditions age and conservation

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table B5: Analysis of necessity for perceived success

	High perceived success			Low perceived success		
Conditions	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
AGE+conservation	1.00	0.38	0.00	-	-	-
product+conservation	1.00	0.38	0.00	-	-	-
PRODUCT+AGE	1.00	0.40	0.01	0.92	0.60	0.11
JOB+conservation	1.00	0.38	0.00	-	-	-
JOB+AGE	1.00	0.40	0.01	0.92	0.60	0.11
JOB+PRODUCT	1.00	0.38	0.00	1.00	0.62	0.00
conservation	-	-	-	1.00	0.65	0.12

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Conditions meeting consistency threshold 0.90, coverage threshold 0.40, Relevance of Necessity (RoN) threshold 0.30. We could not identify necessary conditions or combination of conditions.

Table B6: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for high perceived success

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.75	**CONSERVATION**	1.00	0.12	1
0.85	**CONSERVATION***AGE+JOB*product	1.00	0.45	5

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: JOB -> P, ~PRODUCT -> P, CONSERVATION -> P

We made no directional expectation about the condition age.

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table B7: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for low perceived success

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.75	conservation***age** + **job***conservation*PRODUCT	0.82	0.69	11
0.85	**Product*age***conservation + **AGE*job***conservation*PRODUCT	1.00	0.15	2

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: ~JOB -> ~P, PRODUCT ->~ P

We made no expectations about the conditions age and conservation

Bold: parsimonious solution

PVQ-21

Personal values (females)

Name:

Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Tick the box to the right that shows how much the person in the description is like you.

How much is this person like you?	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
A Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her. She likes to do things in her own original way.						
B It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.						
C She thinks it is important that every person in the world should be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.						
D It's important to her to show her abilities. She wants people to admire what she does.						
E It is important to her to live in secure surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety.						
F She likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.						
G She believes that people should do what they are told. She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.						

How much is this person like you?	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
H It is important to her to listen to people who are different from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them.						
I It is important to her to be humble and modest. She tries not to draw attention to herself.						
J Having a good time is important to her. She likes to “spoil” herself.						
K It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free and not depend on others.						
L It's very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for their well-being.						
M Being very successful is important to her. She hopes people will recognize her achievements.						
N It is important to her that the government ensures her safety against all threats. She wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.						
O She looks for adventures and likes to take risks. She wants to have an exciting life.						
P It is important to her always to behave properly. She wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.						
Q It is important to her to get respect from others. She wants people to do what she says.						

How much is this person like you?	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
R It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote herself to people close to her.						
S She strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her.						
T Tradition is important to her. She tries to follow the customs handed down by her religion or her family.						
U She seeks every chance she can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure.						

Interview guide furniture

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the researcher & research topic
- Discuss confidentiality

GENERAL

- Introduction of the interviewed person
- Fulltime or Part-time?
- Start and history of the firm

FIRM SPECIFIC

- Structure of the company
- Amount of employees
- Freelancers and interns
- Business partners
- Age
- Product activities

DOMINANT LOGIC

- Pricing
- Production
- Distribution
- Flagship stores and other stores
- Online sales
- Fairs, Salone del Mobile
- Communication and PR

BALANCE

- Exploring new opportunities/new materials
- Innovation
- Time to be creative/ time for business
- Efficiency
- Following customer demands

GROWTH

- What is growth for your company?
- How did your company grow?

PERCEIVED SUCCESS

- Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success? 1= not successful/ 5= very successful

AT THE END

- Questions? Contact details?

CHAPTER 4

Designers' pathways to success: a configurational perspective

Abstract[6]

This study presents a comparative case study of 54 small-sized cases in the Belgian fashion and furniture design industry with regard to achievement of success. The study looks into both business growth and perceived success. From a strategy perspective, the configurational analysis explores the combination of different variables regarding success, namely entrepreneurial orientation, ambidexterity and job rate. Our application of fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) contributes to the exploration of a configurational theory of conditions that explains why some designers (do not) achieve business growth and perceived success. In order to achieve both business growth and perceived success, a fulltime occupation as a designer is essential, in combination with an entrepreneurial orientation mind set. No significant proof was found for simultaneously balancing exploration and exploitation to achieve business growth and perceived success. These findings enhance configurational understanding of the fashion and furniture industry and the development of a configurational theory of performance in the creative industries. They also show that designers require individual support and advice.

Keywords: fsQCA, success, ambidexterity, EO, design industry

4.1. Introduction

Worldwide, the cultural or creative industries, including design, is recognized as a key driver of contemporary economic growth, and creativity has become a key economic resource (Scott, 1999, 2001; UNESCO & UNDP, 2013). Besides, in recent years an increasing coverage of Belgian fashion and furniture designers and their work is seen in international niche magazines. To a large extent this increase is due to promotion and visibility at shows like Milan's annual Salone del Mobile, the daring style of often young Belgian labels, the legacy of the Antwerp Six, but above all the sheer talent of Belgian designers today (Ceulemans, 2013; Craik, 2014). The creative industries are fragmented and count a large number of small enterprises and a small number of large enterprises (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2009; Caves, 2000). The furniture and fashion design sector share this feature: it is made up of predominantly small

[6] A former version of this chapter has been presented and discussed at the 32nd EGOS Colloquium, Naples, July 7-9, 2016, Subtheme 30: The Re-emergence of the Configurational Perspective in Organization Studies.

businesses, with a high level of self-employment (Guiette et al., 2011). Likewise, in such small creative firms, the entrepreneur is the person who manages, in addition to being the founder of the business. He or she represents the firm's core resource and enjoys a high degree of decision-making authority (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2012; Walker & Brown, 2004). However, Jeffcut and Pratt (2002) state that in existing research on the creative industries, much attention has focused on the macro-level, and they suggest the need for a better understanding of what occurs at the micro-level, especially looking into particular variables which influence the performance of creative firms (Mellander, 2010).

Indeed, less is known about which individual characteristics can explain variation in firm performance, although research in economics supports the notion that some general individual differences between CEOs are related to variation in firm performance (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015). Furthermore, previous research suggests a link between CEO's skills to balance artistic and economic considerations (cfr. ambidexterity), entrepreneurial orientation (EO), personal values and firm performance (Jacobs et al, 2016b, 2016a; Kolsteeg, 2014; Rauch et al., 2009). Empirical research has, however, typically investigated relations of socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education), functional background, and organizational tenure in their effect on organizational performance (Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Huysentruyt et al., 2015; Rost & Osterloh, 2010).

The performance of organizations has also been a major yet complex issue in management and organization studies (Loots, 2015, Murphy et al., 1996). Especially in SMEs, success and performance are multi-dimensional issues (Murphy et al., 1996), which can be measured both objectively and subjectively (Reijonen, 2008). Walker and Brown (2004) found that small business owners measure their success using both financial as non-financial factors, and that the non-financial lifestyle criteria are sometimes more important.

Given this knowledge, this study adopts a configurational approach to examine the combinatorial effects of EO, ambidexterity and a specific context variable (designers' fulltime or part-time dedication) on business growth and perceived success. A configurational approach suggests that "*organizations are best understood as clusters of interconnected structures and practices*" (Fiss, 2007), that is, organizational fit and competitive advantage depend not on a single condition but instead on synergistic relationships between multiple attributes or conditions (Fiss, 2011; Ketchen & Snow, 1993; Miller, 1996). Hence, increased understanding of designers' growth and perceived success can be better achieved by identifying distinct configurations of conditions than by seeking to uncover relationships that hold across all designers. Following this line of thought, we employ a set-theoretic method, that is, fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), to analyse and identify

configurations of conditions that explain why some designers achieve more growth and higher perceived success, based on a sample of 54 independent small-sized furniture and fashion designers located in Belgium. The conditions of interest in this study are the designers' entrepreneurial orientation, his/her strategy concerning exploration and exploitation (ambidexterity) in combination with their job rate, namely if they work as a fulltime or part-time designer.

We contribute to the literature and practice in several ways. First, by applying the fsQCA method we are able to provide empirical evidence on the complex interrelations between EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate and how they jointly affect the business growth and perceived success of small-sized fashion and furniture designers. This approach is a meaningful addition to the well-known approaches of qualitative studies and econometric modelling in creative industries research, and it explores the construction of a configurational theory on performance in the creative industries. This approach is also an important contribution to the EO literature specifically, wherein several authors advocate the use of configurational models to research the EO domain (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Miller, 2011; Wales, 2016) and research into the relationship between EO and exploration and exploitation (Lisboa et al., 2011). Second, this study looks into two different measures of performance, growth and high perceived success, which is not common in creative industries research (Choi, 2012) and answers the call to research success as a multi-dimensional issue (Murphy et al., 1996; Walker & Brown, 2004). Third, when looking into ambidexterity, and more specific, into exploration and exploitation, we measure and analyse this variable at the level of the designer. By taking into account the individual level, we respond to scholarly calls to shed more light on exploration and exploitation at the manager level of analysis (Mom et al., 2007; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). In addition, we also contribute on the practical level by providing designers and policy-makers with a more tangible understanding of pathways for success in the furniture and fashion design industry.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we start with an overview of literature on EO, ambidexterity and job rate. We derive propositions in the third section of this paper. Next, we describe the fsQCA method, the research population, and the measurement and calibration of the conditions and outcomes investigated in this study. Afterwards, the results are shown based on a sample of 54 small-sized fashion and furniture designers in Belgium. Finally, we discuss the findings and end with a conclusion.

4.2. Literature review

The pathways to success for fashion and furniture designers are researched from a strategy perspective. The primary interest of strategic management researchers is to explain differential firm performance (Ireland et al., 2001). Strategic management researchers want to increase understanding about the determinants of organizational performance and explain how managers can create superior performance (Combs et al., 2005; Meyer, 1991). Based on strategy literature the joint relation of ambidexterity and entrepreneurial orientation will be taken into account. Previous research found that ambidexterity is an important condition relating to success in the creative industries (Guiette et al., 2011; Kolsteeg, 2014), and it builds further on our own research in the design sector (Jacobs et al., 2016b). The concept of entrepreneurial orientation is a widely researched concept in strategy research regarding performance (Miller, 2011), and it allows individuals to assess and enhance their entrepreneurial skills. Based on a specific characteristic of small-sized creative organizations, the concept of job rate (being a fulltime or part-time designer) will as well be examined. This concept has been researched in a previous study and we found it to be very important for business growth in design firms (Jacobs et al., 2016a).

4.2.1. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO)

The concept of EO is a widely researched topic in strategy literature. Based on Miller's (1983) definition of an entrepreneurial company as *"[a firm] that engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with "proactive" innovations, beating competitors to the punch"* (p. 771), EO has developed as a firm-level attitude which involves three dimensions that are used consistently in the literature (Miller, 2011; Rauch et al., 2009). These dimensions include innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Innovativeness reflects a tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes. Proactiveness refers to a posture of anticipating and acting on future wants and needs in the marketplace. Risk-taking is associated with a willingness to commit resources to projects where the outcomes are unknown.

Over het last decade, numerous studies have assessed the effect of EO on the performance of firms. Several studies provide evidence of a significant positive effect of EO on firm performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Zahra, 1991). However, other studies that link the individual dimensions of EO with firm performance show mixed findings. This raises questions about EO and its relationship with performance (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Empirical research for example has found that the effect of EO on performance may be different in

different types of environments. When we look at the environments and variables important for this study, there's still a remarkable amount of studies and evidence that supports the idea of the positive link between EO and firm performance. For example, Wiklund and Shepherd (2005) found that EO positively influences small business performance, and especially among firms in dynamic growth environments (Zahra, 1993), like the design industry.

Consistent with the original conceptualization and measure of EO by Covin and Slevin (1989) this study treats EO as firm's "*unidimensional strategic orientation*" (p. 79) that emanates from its founders beliefs and guidance, and is representative of its key decision making proclivity. Hence, EO is in this study measured at the individual level, the designer him/herself.

4.2.2. Ambidexterity

To target both commercial success and artistic expression to ensure long-run survival, designers need to balance artistic and economic considerations (Kolsteeg, 2014; Lampel et al., 2000). This tension, linked to the concept of ambidexterity, is a pull between 'exploration' and 'exploitation' (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; March, 1991). This balance is also a recurring theme in a variety of organizational literatures, and successful organizations are then so called 'ambidextrous': aligned and efficient in their management of today's business demands, while also adaptive enough to changes in the environment that they will still be around tomorrow (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).

In this research, as in study 1, *contextual ambidexterity* is taken into account: simultaneously balancing seemingly contradictory tensions (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Lewis, 2000; Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). Following Raisch and Birkinshaw (2008) and Chang and Hughes (2012) the best firms are increasingly those that can carefully balance explorative innovation with exploitative innovation in an ambidextrous fashion. Contextual ambidexterity is especially important at the level of the individual: the capability of individuals to perform contradictory activities and switch between different mindsets and action sets (e.g., switching from unconstrained creativity to scrutinizing the usefulness of ideas). Individuals can switch between different mind and action sets in accordance with situational demands (Bledow et al., 2009).

Additionally, empirical evidence suggests that under conditions of market and technological uncertainty, ambidexterity has a positive effect on organizational performance (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013), and is also positively associated with subjective ratings of performance (Burton et al., 2012; Cao et al., 2009; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Lubatkin, 2006; Markides & Charitou, 2004; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013).

However, within the theory of ambidexterity, so far, almost all of the recommendations put forward by conceptual and empirical works are designed for large, multiunit firms (Chang & Hughes, 2012). With few exceptions (e.g. Lubatkin, 2006), work on ambidexterity has failed to account for SMEs, which is actually the largest volume of companies within the creative industries (Bagwell, 2008), and accordingly the fashion and furniture design industry. They may operate differently and display different operating conditions and characteristics to large, multiunit firms such that generalizing current recommendations for ambidexterity into innovation strategies for these firms might prove incorrect (Chang & Hughes, 2012). Also Andriopoulos and Lewis (2009) acquaint that SMEs face greater challenges in managing tensions, contradictions, and tradeoffs associated with explorative and exploitative innovations than larger firms.

In this study we look at the individual level (manager level) of exploration and exploitation in small-sized design firms.

4.2.3. Firm-specific variable: job rate

Researchers agree upon the fact that some general individual differences between managers are related to variation in firm performance (Benmelech & Frydman, 2015; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003). This study explores configurational pathways to success taken into account EO, ambidexterity, and a characteristic typical connected with small business or self-employment in the furniture and fashion design sector: job rate. This is the *rate of employment* of the entrepreneur. Creative industries are typically characterized by a high rate of self-employment (Higgs et al., 2008; Markusen et al., 2008). The study of Markusen and Schrock (2006) shows that, in the US, self-employment among designers represents 32%. Additionally, in this group, 21% is a self-employed designer as a secondary occupation. Also Throsby and Zednik (2011) found that a lot of artists, including designers, are spending various amounts of time working outside their creative sector. Of 45% of artists in their study who engage in non-arts work, about one-third are content with their present work pattern, but a majority would like to spend more time on the arts (Throsby & Zednik, 2011).

4.2.4. Success

As mentioned in the introduction, performance (which we interpret as success in this study) is a multi-dimensional issue (Murphy et al., 1996). Researchers often use employee numbers or financial performance, such as profit, turnover, or return on investment to measure success (Walker & Brown, 2004). However, many small business owners do not run their businesses to maximize financial performance. Instead, they run their businesses for other reasons, such as lifestyle reasons (Jennings & Beaver, 1997; Walker & Brown, 2004). Small

business owners often present a satisficing behavior (Simpson et al., 2012). Success for many small-firm owners means the ability to sustain an acceptable level of income for themselves and their employees, through maintaining an optimum level of activity with which they can cope (Beaver, 2002). Managers of most small creative firms are individuals who focus more on sustaining a lifestyle orientated toward involvement in creative output than on being financially successful (Chaston, 2008). Therefore this research looks into business growth and perceived success.

4.3. Propositions

The previous sections indicate that a deeper understanding of designer's business growth and high perceived success can be gained by investigating the joint influence of EO, ambidexterity (exploration and exploitation), and job rate. To derive propositions, we now consider how these organizational conditions work together based on fsQCA as a set-theoretic method. Set-theoretic approaches allow that the relationships between these conditions and business growth and perceived success can be understood through the examination of subset relations (see Fiss, 2007; Fiss et al., 2013 for a discussion). This requires the formulation of implication hypotheses which link a condition with an outcome to form a proposition about the sufficiency and necessity of that condition to achieve the outcome (Thiem et al., 2015).

On the one hand, a necessary condition denotes that an outcome can only be obtained if the condition in question is present or absent (Fiss, 2007). In the context of this paper, the presence of necessary conditions would mean that business growth and perceived success can only be achieved if a particular condition is present or absent. Our literature review suggests however that there are no unequivocal theoretical reasons or empirical evidence to assume that the presence or absence of EO, ambidexterity or job rate is necessary in order to achieve business growth or perceived success. Hence, we expect that business growth and perceived success can be explained by multiple (i.e. conjunctural) (combinations of) conditions. On the other hand, a condition that is sufficient denotes that the condition can by itself produce the outcome, that is, it does not need to be combined with other conditions (Fiss, 2007). However, it is unlikely that any of our conditions is able to produce, on its own, business growth or perceived success.

The absence of any necessary or sufficient condition indicates that our conditions of interest will form multiple configurations combining at least two conditions. This has also been referred to as conditions being *i*nsufficient but *n*onredundant parts of different configurations

which are themselves *u*nnecessary but *s*ufficient for the occurrence of the outcome (i.e. INUS conditions; Fiss et al., 2013). Hence, we propose that[7]:

> *H1: EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's business growth.* (*H1: EO*EXPLOR*EXPLOIT*JOB -> G)*

And

> *H2: EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success. (H2: EO*EXPLOR*EXPLOIT*JOB -> P)*

4.4. Methodology

4.4.1. Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)

While an in-depth explanation of the fsQCA method is beyond the purpose of this study (see Fiss, 2011, 2007; Ragin, 2000, 2009; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012 for more information) we briefly explain the central features of fsQCA that pertain to the current study in this section. The configurational method is based on three assumptions. Assumption one, *asymmetric causation*, implies that business growth or perceived success can have different causes than no business growth and low perceived success. Assumption two, *equifinality,* means that various scenarios can result in high or low business growth and perceived success. Assumption three, *conjunctural causation*, captures that case-specific factors affect business growth and perceived success in combination rather than in isolation (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 89, 295-305, 307-312). Applying fsQCA requires the mapping of firms in terms of their multiple memberships in sets of organizational attributes or conditions. This process requires the transformation (also referred to as calibration) of the conditions according to three qualitative thresholds: full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership (Fiss, 2007; Ragin, 2008). For a continuous variable, decisions about full membership and non-membership involve an assessment of what values are generally considered high and low, respectively. The crossover point is the score that indicates maximum ambiguity, that is, a firm has a degree of membership 0.5 and also a degree of non-membership 0.5. Contrary to usual measurement scales, the crossover point establishes the difference in kind. Identifying the values of full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership is unequivocal when measurement scales suggest clear cut-off points, such as seven-point Likert scales, with 1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest possible score (Ragin, 2008). Otherwise, identifying

[7] The "*" sign denotes the logical "AND", while the forward arrow -> indicates "is sufficient for".

qualitative thresholds should be based on theoretical or substantive criteria external to the data (Ragin, 2008). In section 4.4.3 we provide more information about the calibration of the conditions and outcomes of interest in this study.

Another key feature of the fsQCA method is that it relies on Boolean algebra to compute a *"truth table"* which reports all the logically possible combinations of the conditions, including those that are empirically observed in our sample and those that are not (Greckhamer et al., 2007; Ragin, 2009). Since we investigate $k = 4$ conditions, the truth table has $2^k = 16$ rows or combinations of conditions (i.e. configurations). The researcher is now required to (1) set a priori minimum thresholds for consistency and the frequency (parameters of fit) of cases per configuration in order to identify configurations that lead to business growth and perceived success, and (2) specify the assumptions based on which difficult counterfactual analysis (see below) will be based (Greckhamer et al., 2007). The two main parameters of fit range from 0 to 1. *Consistency* indicates the extent to which the results are in line with the statements of necessity and sufficiency. Furthermore, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) indicates the degree to which a given causal configuration is not simultaneously sufficient for both the occurrence and the non-occurrence of the outcome. Coverage sufficiency depicts how well the causal model explains the available empirical information. For necessary conditions, coverage expresses their relevance in terms of the condition set not being much larger than the outcome set, and the relevance of necessity (RoN) in terms of the condition being close to a constant (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 128, 139, 235-239). Following Ragin (Ragin, 2009), we set the minimum acceptable frequency to one case per configuration, because of the intermediate size of cases in this study. With respect to consistency, we identified all configurations that have a minimum raw consistency of > 0.75 and/or a PRI consistency of > 0.75 (Ragin, 2008, 2006). The different parameters of fit we used with strategies to address possible error sources are shown in table 14.

Issue	*Definition*	*Strategy*	*Application*
Measurement errors	Sensitivity to changes in raw consistency levels	Raw consistency Robustness test	Use of three different raw consistency thresholds
Plausibility & tenability	Limited diversity & contradictions can trigger inferences that are implausible and/or contradictory	Enhanced Standard Analysis	Intermediate solution based on directional expectations and exclusion of contradictory rows and untenable assumptions
Causal relevance	Only parsimonious solution removes causally irrelevant conditions from solution term	Comparative presentation of parsimonious & intermediate solution	Parsimonious solution is causally interpretable and less sensitive to errors
Skewness	Skewed distributions can produce simultaneous subset relations, exacerbate limited diversity, and strongly distort parameters of fit	Skewness statistics	% of cases with membership > 0.5 in sets in reported. Skewness is problematic if the vast majority (> 85%) of the cases cluster in only one of the four possible intersecting areas of the XY plots with two digitals
Accuracy	Degree to which observations correspond to set relation	Consistency	Necessity: ≥ 0.9 Sufficiency: ≥ 0.75
Explanatory power	Empirical relevance of model	Coverage	Necessity: ≥ 0.6 RoN: ≥ 0.8 Sufficiency: Low coverage indicates low explanatory power

Table 14: Strategies to address errors and evaluate models. Based on Baumgartner (2015), Baumgartner and Thiem (2015), Fiss (2011), Ragin (2000), Schneider and Wagemann (2012).

Based on the thresholds for consistency and frequency of cases, the fsQCA methodology computes "*complex*", "*intermediate*", and "*parsimonious*" solutions (Ragin, 2009). The complex solution shows the configuration(s) that are sufficient for observing business growth and perceived success without any counterfactual analysis. The intermediate and parsimonious solutions show the configurations sufficient for business growth and perceived success based on the application of respectively easy and difficult counterfactual analysis, which allows to differentiate between core and peripheral conditions (Fiss, 2011; Ragin, 2008).

Easy counterfactual analysis investigates whether (combinations of) conditions presumed to be sufficient for business growth and perceived success are also present (based on empirical instances) when business growth or perceived success is not observed, or whether their inverse similarly leads to business growth or perceived success. If this is the case, the (combinations of) condition(s) of interest is redundant and removed in the intermediate solution (Fiss, 2011). In a difficult counterfactual analysis, a researcher asks whether the removal of a condition makes a difference. For example, if theoretical or substantial knowledge links the presence, not the absence, of a condition to an outcome and an empirical instance of the absence of that condition is lacking, then the solution can be simplified by removing that condition in the parsimonious solution (Fiss, 2011). With regard to the difficult counterfactual analysis, we make assumptions only for those conditions for which theory and/or extant empirical evidence is rather clear that their presence should (not) lead to business growth or perceived success.

As mentioned above, applying easy and difficult counterfactual analysis allows the differentiation between peripheral and core conditions. Core conditions are those that are part of both intermediate and parsimonious solutions, and peripheral conditions are those that are eliminated in the parsimonious solution and thus only appear in the intermediate solution (Ragin, 2008). According to Fiss (2011), core conditions can be considered as being more important for an outcome relative to peripheral conditions which may even be expendable or exchangeable. In line with prior studies (e.g. Fiss, 2011; Garcia-Castro & Casasola, 2009), we report the intermediate solution and denote the presence or absence of the conditions as follows: core conditions are denoted by ● (present) and ⊗ (absent) while peripheral conditions are denoted by • (present) and ⊗ (absent). Blank spaces in a solution indicate a situation in which the condition may be either present or absent (Fiss, 2011).

Furthermore, to account for different possible model specifications and to assess robustness, we calculated models using three different raw consistency thresholds, using R with packages QCA and SetMethods (Dusa & Thiem, 2014; Quaranta, 2013; Thomann & Wittwer, 2016). Tables C5-16 in the appendix report all models and illustrate their robustness. The truth tables, directional expectations, complex and parsimonious solutions are all provided as supplementary material.

4.4.2. Sample

No exhaustive list of independent fashion and furniture designers exists in Belgium to date. Therefore, this study uses the databases of Design Flanders and Flanders Fashion Institute. They consist together of 315 designers in Flanders and Brussels. The study expands

this database with 5 more furniture designers via snowball sampling. From this group of 320 designers an initial selection of 90 small-sized cases was made, following a most similar/most different strategy (Yin, 2008). From this group, 40 cases responded positively to a request for an interview, all of whom were subsequently interviewed by the authors. The semi-structured interviews had a duration of 40 to 90 minutes, and are tape-recorded and transcribed. In addition to the formal interviews, the authors collected additional data about the cases from financial reports, press documentation and website information, and also survey data was collected.

In a next step an online survey (in appendix) was sent to a group of 50 fashion and furniture designers which didn't respond to the request for an interview, and to the 40 interviewed designers. Survey data on several indicators of business growth, perceived success, EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate were collected. This resulted in 58 responses. We dropped four cases because they didn't meet the selection criteria of being small-sized. This brings the total sample for this study on 54 cases (28 surveys from the interviewed cases, and 26 additional surveys).

4.4.3. Measures and calibrations of set memberships

As mentioned earlier, the application of fsQCA as a set-theoretic method requires the calibration of our conditions according to three qualitative thresholds: full membership, the crossover point, and full non-membership (Fiss, 2007; Ragin, 2000). The descriptives of the conditions can be found in the appendix at the end of this chapter.

4.4.3.1. Business growth (Dataset 1)

One of the outcomes of interest in the current study is business growth, which we assess through three items regarding growth of (i) turnover, (ii) sold products, and (iii) amount of employees. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate whether their turnover, sold products and amount of employees at this moment are increased, decreased or remained the same compared to 3 years ago (or less if they are less long existing). Next, the score on these three items was calculated. Designers with a score of 3 are considered as fully in; designers with a score less than 3 but higher than 0.99 as more in than out; designers with a score less than 0.99 but higher than 0 as more out than in; and designers with the score of 0 as fully out of the set membership of designers with business growth.

4.4.3.2. Perceived success (Dataset 2-4)

The second outcome of interest in the current study is perceived success. Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1= totally not successful, 5=very successful)

whether they find their business successful, by their own definition of success. Next, they could also clarify what they mean by success. Based on their answers, three different perspectives on perceived success were identified: a business focus, product focus and personal focus. Table 15 and 16 show the decision process to point a case to one of the perspectives of perceived success. The result of this decision process is shown in table C2 in the appendix.

Perspective	Description
Business	Growth, being financially stable, sell enough, being profitable, core business, investing in my company
Product	Creating added value, customer satisfaction, innovating my products, being close to the customer, impact on society
Personal	Work-life balance, able to roll out my own projects, personal achievement, being independent, being creative, doing my thing, building my dream, only do what I like

Table 15: Description of the different perspectives on perceived success

Score	Criteria
0	Fully out of the set; no mentioning of the perspective
0.2	One time the perspective is mentioned, but other perspectives are mentioned more
0.4	Two times the perspective is mentioned, but other perspectives are mentioned more
0.6	Another perspective is mentioned twice, but the current perspective is mentioned the most
0.8	Another perspective is mentioned 1 time, but the current perspective is mentioned the most
1	Fully in the set; only this perspective is mentioned

Table 16: Criteria to point cases to a perspective on perceived success

This resulted in three different datasets for perceived success: business focus (N=20), product focus (N=17) and personal focus (N=17). We use 5, 2.99 and 1 as thresholds for full membership, crossover point, and full non-membership. This means that we consider designers with a score of 5 as fully in; designers with a score less than 5 but higher than 2.99 as more in than out; designers with a score less than 2.99 but higher than 1 as more out than in; and designers with a score of 1 as fully out of the set membership of designers with high perceived success.

4.4.3.3. EO

EO is defined in line with earlier studies in terms of the degree of the designers' innovativeness, proactiveness, and willingness to take risks (e.g. Chirico et al., 2011). We use the nine-item EO scale proposed by Miller (1983) and Covin and Slevin (1989) to capture each individual dimension. This scale is the most commonly employed EO measure and has exhibited high levels of validity and reliability in numerous studies (see Covin & Wales, 2012; George, 2011 for a discussion). Next, we calculated the average score on these nine items. Since respondents' answers are based on a seven-point Likert scale, we use 7, 4.01, and 1 as

thresholds for full membership, crossover point, and full non-membership. This means that we consider designers with a score of 7 (“very important”) as fully in; designers with a score less than 7 but higher than 4.01 (“important or little important”) as more in than out; designers with a score less than 4.01 but higher than 1 (“little unimportant or unimportant”) as more out than in; and designers with a score of 1 (“very unimportant”) as fully out of the set membership of EO.

We also correlated EO with the concepts exploration and exploitation as these concepts can seem related. However, no correlation between the concepts was found (see table C17 in the appendix of this chapter).

4.4.3.4. Exploration

As mentioned earlier, exploration is measured at the individual level. Therefore, we use the five-item exploration scale proposed by Mom et al. (2007) based on the features by which March (1991) characterizes the construct of exploration. This scale has exhibited high levels of validity and reliability. Next, we calculated the average score on these five items. Respondents’ answers are based on a five-point Likert scale, and we use 5, 3.99, and 1 as thresholds for full membership, crossover point, and full non-membership. This means that we consider designers with a score of 5 (“very much”) as fully in; designers with a score less than 5 but higher than 3.99 (“neutral”) as more in than out; designers with a score less than 3.99 but higher than 1 (“little”) as more out than in; and designers with a score of 1 (“very few”) as fully out of the set membership of exploration.

4.4.3.5. Exploitation

Also exploitation is measured at the individual level. Therefore, we use the six-item exploration scale proposed by Mom et al. (2007) based on the features by which March (1991) characterizes the construct of exploitation. This scale has exhibited high levels of validity and reliability. Next, we calculated the average score on these six items. Since respondents’ answers are based on a five-point Likert scale, we use 5, 3.99, and 1 as thresholds for full membership, crossover point, and full non-membership. This means that we consider designers with a score of 5 (“very much”) as fully in; designers with a score less than 5 but higher than 3.99 (“neutral”) as more in than out; designers with a score less than 3.99 but higher than 1 (“little”) as more out than in; and designers with a score of 1 (“very few”) as fully out of the set membership of exploitation.

4.4.3.6. Firm-specific variable: job rate

Job rate is measured by asking the respondents if they work fulltime or part-time as a designer. This is a dichotomous condition, meaning that 1 is the threshold for full membership,

or being a fulltime designer, and 0 is the threshold for full non-membership, or being a part-time designer. Table C1 in the appendix summarizes the underlying measures of each condition, the calibration thresholds for each fuzzy set and the most important descriptives.

4.5. Results

4.5.1. Analysis of necessity

By definition, a necessary condition denotes that business growth or perceived success can only be obtained if that condition is present (or absent) (Fiss, 2007). An argument for necessity is supported when it can be demonstrated that instances of (no) business growth or (no) perceived success overlap substantially with a subset of instances of the condition in question. Schneider and Wagemann (2012) posit that the consistency and coverage thresholds for considering a condition as necessary need to be higher 0.90 and 0.80, respectively. The relevance of necessity (RoN) should also be high.

As shown in table C3 in the appendix, none of the conditions passes these thresholds when business growth and no business growth are taken into account as outcome. Also dataset 3 and 4 (perceived success with a product focus and personal focus) show no necessary conditions (table C4 in appendix). However, necessary conditions are found for high and low perceived success with a business focus (table 17). For designers with a business focus to achieve perceived success it is necessary to show high rates of exploration or exploitation or entrepreneurial orientation. When a low rate of entrepreneurial orientation is present, a designer with business focus shows low perceived success.

Dataset 2: perceived success business focus (N=20)		**Perceived success**			**Low perceived success**		
	Condition	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
	EO+exploit	0.91	0.84	0.79	-	-	-
	EO+explor	0.91	0.81	0.76	-	-	-
	eo+EXPLOR+exploit	0.90	0.75	0.66	-	-	-
	eo+EXPLOR+EXPLOIT	0.91	0.77	0.69	-	-	-
	EO+EXPLOR+EXPLOIT	0.91	0.84	0.80	-	-	-
	exploit	-	-	-	0.91	0.74	0.77
	eo	-	-	-	0.92	0.80	0.83
	explor+EXPLOIT	-	-	-	0.94	0.70	0.70

Table 17: Analysis of necessity for perceived success (business focus) *(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)*

4.5.2. Configurations for business growth

The results shown in table 18 represent the three configurations of conditions (i.e. solution 12, 13, 14) found to be sufficient for fashion and furniture designer's business growth. The overall solution consistency is 0.80 and the overall solution coverage 0.67. The latter indicates that the two configurations of conditions account for 67 percent of membership in designer's business growth. This value is substantive, yet it also indicates that our configurations contain other elements not taken into account in this study that relate to business growth (Fiss, 2011).

The three solutions show that at least two conditions need to be present or absent in order to achieve designer's business growth. This means that the presence or absence of a single condition is insufficient to obtain this outcome. In combination with our finding that none of our conditions are necessary for business growth, we confirm hypotheses H1 in which we predicted that EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's business growth. However, it is the negation of exploitation that is an INUS condition for business growth.

Conditions	Solutions		
	12 *"Fulltime designers with a focus on entrepreneurial orientation"*	13 *"Fulltime designers with a low rate of exploitation"*	14 *"Fulltime designers with a high rate of exploration"*
EO	●		
EXPLORATION			●
EXPLOITATION		⊗	
JOB RATE	●	●	●
Consistency	0.83	0.81	0.82
Raw coverage	0.59	0.49	0.78
Unique coverage	0.07	0.03	0.03
Solution consistency	0.80		
Solution coverage	0.67		
Solution PRI	0.74		
# cases	34		

Table 18: Configuration for business growth

Notes: *N = 54. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.75. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.*

With respect to the first solution for the presence of business growth, labelled "Fulltime designers with a focus on entrepreneurial orientation" (solution 12), we find that fulltime designers achieve higher growth if they exhibit a high level of entrepreneurial orientation. Solution 13 indicates that higher growth can also be achieved (i.e. equifinality) if fulltime designers exhibit a low level of exploitation. Solution 14 indicates that higher growth is achieved when being a fulltime designer and show a high level of exploration. In the different solutions we couldn't find a balance between exploration and exploitation, reflected in high levels of both (see section 4.2.2). More important for business growth is rate of employment: all of the solutions account for fulltime designers.

Table C6 in the appendix shows the result for the absence of business growth. Low business growth is achieved when all the conditions are absent. The solution coverage is rather low, so we have to be careful with this results.

4.5.3. Configurations for perceived success business focus

The results of the sufficiency analysis are shown in table 19. They represent the four configurations of conditions (i.e. solution 15-18) found to be sufficient for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success with a focus on business. The overall solution consistency is 0.90 and the overall solution coverage 0.86. The latter indicates that the four configurations of conditions account for 86 percent of membership in designer's high perceived success.

The four solutions show that at least two conditions need to be present or absent in order to achieve designer's perceived success. This means that the presence or absence of a single condition is insufficient to obtain this outcome. However, we also found that the presence of exploration or exploitation or entrepreneurial orientation is necessary. We therefore only partially accept hypothesis 2, stating that all the conditions are INUS conditions for the presence of the outcome.

With respect to solution 15, labelled "Designers with a high rate of exploration and a low rate of exploitation", we find that designers achieve higher perceived success if they exhibit an imbalance of ambidexterity. A balance between exploration and exploitation is also not found in the other pathways to perceived success with a focus on business. Solution 17 and 18 show both the importance of being a fulltime designer, with entrepreneurial orientation and exploration being present or absent.

Conditions	Solutions			
	15 *"Designers with a high rate of exploration and a low rate of exploitation"*	16 *"Part-time designers with a focus on entrepreneurial orientation and a low rate of exploitation"*	17 *"Fulltime designers with a low rate of exploration and no focus on entrepreneurial orientation, and a high rate of exploitation"*	18 *"Fulltime designers with a high rate of exploration and a focus on entrepreneurial orientation"*
EO		●	⊗	•
EXPLORATION	●		⊗	•
EXPLOITATION	⊗	⊗	●	
JOB RATE		⊗	●	●
Consistency	0.94	0.83	0.99	0.96
Raw coverage	0.69	0.21	0.37	0.52
Unique coverage	0.05	0.02	0.06	0.08
Solution consistency	0.92			
Solution coverage	0.85			
Solution PRI	0.74			
# cases	14			

Table 19: Configurations for perceived success business focus.

Notes: N = 20. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.90. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

In table C8 (appendix) we report the three configurations of conditions found to be sufficient for the absence of designer's perceived success with a focus on business. However, the overall solution PRI is rather low (PRI=0.23), so we have to be careful interpreting these results.

4.5.4. Configurations for perceived success product focus

The results shown in table 20 represent the two configurations of conditions (i.e. solution 19 and 20) found to be sufficient for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success with a product focus. The overall solution consistency is 0.76 and the overall solution coverage 0.72. The latter indicates that the four configurations of conditions account for 72 percent of membership in designer's high perceived success.

The two solutions show that two conditions need to be present or absent in order to achieve designer's perceived success. This means that the presence or absence of a single condition is insufficient to obtain this outcome. In combination with our finding that none of our conditions are necessary for perceived success with a focus on business, we confirm hypothesis H2 in which we predicted that EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success.

These solutions also show the importance of being a fulltime designer. Remarkably solution 19 is the same path as solution 12 with regard to business growth. This means that by following this path a designer with product focus can achieve business growth and perceived success.

Conditions	Solutions	
	19 *"Fulltime designers with a focus on entrepreneurial orientation"*	20 *"Fulltime designers with a low rate of exploration"*
EO	•	
EXPLORATION		⊗
EXPLOITATION		
JOB RATE	●	●
Consistency	0.86	0.74
Raw coverage	0.70	0.52
Unique coverage	0.20	0.03
Solution consistency	0.76	
Solution coverage	0.72	
Solution PRI	0.62	
# cases	12	

Table 20: Configurations for perceived success product focus.

Notes: N = 17. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.90. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

In table C10 (appendix) we report the three configurations of conditions found to be sufficient for the absence of designer's perceived success with a focus on product. However, the overall solution PRI is rather low (PRI=0.43), so we have to be careful interpreting these results.

4.5.5. Configurations for perceived success personal focus

The results shown in table 21 represent the five configurations of conditions (i.e. solution 21-25) found to be sufficient for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success with a personal focus. The overall solution consistency is 0.89 and the overall solution coverage 0.78. The latter indicates that the four configurations of conditions account for 78 percent of membership in designer's high perceived success. The solutions show that at least two conditions need to be present or absent in order to achieve designer's perceived success. This means that the presence or absence of a single condition is insufficient to obtain this

outcome. In combination with our finding that none of our conditions are necessary for perceived success with a personal focus, we confirm hypothesis H2 in which we predicted that EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's perceived success.

These solutions also show the importance of being a fulltime designer and of exploration. Remarkably solution 21 is the same path as solution 12 with regard to business growth, and solution 19 with regard to perceived success with a product focus. This means that by following this path a designer with product focus of personal focus can achieve business growth and perceived success.

Conditions	**Solutions**				
	21 *"Fulltime designers with a high rate of entrepreneurial orientation"*	22 *"Designers with a focus on entrepreneurial orientation and a high rate of exploration and exploitation"*	23 *"Fulltime designers with a high rate of exploration and exploitation"*	24 *"Part-time designers with a high rate of exploration, a low rate of exploitation and no focus on entrepreneurial orientation "*	25 *"Fulltime designers with a low rate of exploration and exploitation"*
EO	•	•		⊗	
EXPLORATION		●	●	●	⊗
EXPLOITATION		•	•	⊗	⊗
JOB RATE	●		●	⊗	●
Consistency	0.87	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.96
Raw coverage	0.59	0.48	0.39	0.10	0.49
Unique coverage	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.04
Solution consistency	0.89				
Solution coverage	0.83				
Solution PRI	0.78				
# cases	15				

Table 21: Configurations for perceived success personal focus.

Notes: N = 17. The frequency cut-off was set at 1. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.90. Black circles indicate the presence of a condition, and white circles indicate its absence. Large circles indicate core conditions, small ones refer to peripheral conditions. Blank spaces indicate 'do not care'.

In table C12 (appendix) we report the configuration of conditions found to be sufficient for the absence of designer's perceived success with a personal focus. However, the overall solution PRI is too low (PRI=0.00), so we cannot interpret this result properly.

4.6. Discussion and conclusion

To shed more light on the interrelationships between EO, ambidexterity and job rate and their effect on business growth and perceived success, we applied the fsQCA methodology (Fiss, 2011, 2007; Ragin, 2009). Drawing from this comparative case study, all conditions play an important role, in different kind of configurations and with differences in being present or absent. As such we can confirm hypotheses H1 and H2 in which we predicted that EO, exploration, exploitation and job rate are INUS conditions for fashion and furniture designer's business growth and perceived success.

Four major conclusions can be drawn from our study. First, business growth and perceived success with a business and product focus is achieved through an imbalance between exploration and exploitation, in combination with having a fulltime occupation as designer and/or other conditions. From the literature review, however, we expected to see the importance of simultaneously balancing exploitation and exploration (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). This balance is only found for perceived success by designers with a personal focus (solution 11 and 12).

Second, being a fulltime designer (job rate) is an important condition in most of the pathways for business growth and perceived success, always in combination with the presence or absence of other conditions. This is in line with previous research (Jacobs et al., 2016) and contributes to the literature on artistic and creative careers. Creatives often hold multiple jobs (Throsby & Zednik, 2011), which presents a challenge for those hoping to secure creative occupations as a first choice (Ashton, 2015).

A third major conclusion concerns the combination of a high focus on entrepreneurial orientation and being a fulltime designer as solution path. Following this path leads to business growth and to perceived success when the designers follows a product and personal focus. We present this solution as main pathway to success for fashion and furniture designers. It confirms the findings of a positive link between EO and firm performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Zahra, 1991, 1993).

A last major conclusion concerns the condition exploration. For the majority of the solution paths for perceived success by designers with a personal focus its presence is essential. The importance of exploration in these paths is in line with the findings of Chaston (2008) and Walker and Brown (2004) who state that managers of most small creative firms are individuals who focus more on sustaining a lifestyle oriented toward involvement in creative output than on being financially successful.

These conclusions can best be illustrated with cases to honour the rich qualitative data that was gathered. The first case (51) is a typical case representing the ideal pathway of being a fulltime designer and having a high focus on entrepreneurial orientation. This designer is a product and furniture designer in Antwerp. Collaborating with internationally renowned brands, his work includes furniture, kitchenware and timber outbuildings. He studied product development and furniture design. Eager to learn more about materials and techniques, he earned additional degrees in metalwork and carpentry. An internship at a big design firm provided further insight into the full course of a production process: from the first sketch to the final product. In 2010, this designer decided to start his own business, immediately as a fulltime designer. As an independent designer, he has worked for a variety of clients since then: from furniture manufacturers to a cookware company. He is also the owner of a couple of award-winning concepts. This designer focuses on the added value of a product. How can it improve someone's daily life? He has a strong entrepreneurial focus which can be seen in his proactive and risk-taking behaviour. As a young designer he started immediately as a freelancer, worked on his portfolio, took part in competitions, searched for clients and decided to work as a business-to-business designer. For his designs, he gets a fixed fee or royalties on the sales. In the meantime he sometimes must make compromises regarding the designs and materials with his manufacturers. However, he sees himself more as a furniture designers than as an artist. To remain some freedom, he decided to combine multiple projects with different manufacturers, which he chooses himself. This all is reflected in his success today: his business is growing and he shows high perceived success with a focus on the product.

The second case, on the contrary, is also a successful designer with a high focus on entrepreneurial orientation, but she works as a part-time designer. This designer (9) started her label in 2008. She is specialized in tailored suits for women. This designer is an architect, and during a hobby training 'sewing', she discovered that she wanted to do something more with that skill. Contrary to the previous case, she is a part-time fashion designer, she still works as an architect. However, she also shows business growth and perceived success, with a clear product focus. Her focus on entrepreneurial skills are the basis for this success. She followed a mentoring program during the start-up of her business, and conducted herself a market research about the chances of starting this profession. She has a strong focus on product quality and service to her clients. She sees her clients at home (she has no store) and has a very personal contact with them. Also after the suit is ready, the clients can contact her. She designs the suits herself, but they are produced in a studio in Germany. Her flexible working hours as designer, the fact that she doesn't have a lot of competitors, and the fact that she only sees her clients by appointment make it possible for her to work part-time and still have business growth.

The third case highlights the importance of an imbalance between exploration and exploitation to show business growth and perceived success. This designer (13) studied painting and restoration and after her studies she started immediately as a freelance art restorer. In the following years she took evening courses in pattern drawing, stitching and design. She graduated in 2007 and got good feedback on the presentation of her collection, and so she decided to start working fulltime as a fashion designer. She makes women clothing and her first collections were distributed through different shops. After a few years she started her own shop, and since last year she also designs male collections. Designer 13 is successful as a designer: she displays business growth and is very focused upon the business side of her fashion firm. She translates perceived success into the possibility to pay everyone and everything at the end of the month. However, she doesn't has a strong focus on entrepreneurial orientation (she doesn't like taking risks for instance) and she doesn't show a balance between exploration and exploitation. Her exploitation skills are much stronger than her exploration skills. For her, exploration is the designing of a new collection. She invests more time in exploitation. Besides her own shop, she has an online shop and she distributes to other shops. This shops she found by active prospection. She finds herself having a commercial mindset. She designs clothes that are not too high-flown and that sell well. The production of the prototypes and the clothing is also done in a manufactory in Poland.

The fourth case deviates from this finding. Designer 5 shows that a balance between exploration and exploitation can also lead to perceived success. This designer has a background in history. As a hobby, and out of interest, she studied pattern making and the design of theatre costumes. In 2007 she started her label together with a friend. They were focused on children clothing, made from old fabrics. In 2009 they also started with women clothing and tailored-made clothing. She works fulltime for her label and upon today, she is the creative brain of the firm. She finds herself and the label successful on a personal level, in the sense that they get adequate recognition and appreciation from the field and their customers. However, her label shows no business growth today. The designer tells us that they are already about five years in an unfavorable climate, and for the time being they wait and want to keep the business right. She is happy as it is now. It is therefore no surprise that she doesn't show a high focus on entrepreneurial orientation. The interview and survey show that there is a balance in the field of exploration and exploitation: both aspects score high. The exploitation is mainly characterized by three things: the children's collection is divided among a number of shops in Flanders, for the tailored-made clothing they work with the patterns of the current and past collections, and the shop/studio for women clothing is situated in a good location in Antwerp. For this designer exploration means the development of new fabrics and prints, new collections and the research into shapes.

In conclusion, combining a configurational way of thinking with fsQCA as method of analysis suggests that focusing on the joint and interdependent effects of multiple growth and perceived success predictors is particularly fruitful to develop an integrative model of designer's business growth and perceived success that is broad in scope yet parsimonious in its solutions. The use of fsQCA enables further empirical exploration of configurations of conditions that explain more profoundly designer-level and firm-level outcomes (Fiss et al., 2013). In addition, the detection of causal asymmetry by fsQCA can contribute to a more accurate understanding of relationships between variables.

The findings of this study are also from importance for policy-makers and the designers themselves. In order to achieve business growth and perceived success, designers must find stimuli and support to be powerful enough to be a designer as primary occupation. Looking back into the cases, most of the part-time designers have other jobs to secure their financial situation. This advice may be of use for fashion and furniture designers when defining their strategy.

4.6.1. Limitations and further research

Like any study, this study is subject to a number of limitations. First, like any methodology, fsQCA has its limitations in its own right. One limitation is that apparently small changes in calibration or the choice of cut-off values regarding frequency and consistency thresholds can lead to significant changes in the solutions obtained (Fiss et al, 2013). As a robustness check, we advanced this limitation by examining the impact of different cut-off values concerning frequency and consistency thresholds, and we found that in some situations fewer or more solutions emerged that are however not different from those reported. Another limitation is that although core and peripheral conditions give an expression of the relative importance of conditions, an exact figure of how much more or less important a condition is for an outcome to occur is not computed by fsQCA.

Second, our study has a cross-sectional research design. This means that we cannot explore causality. Future studies may replicate the models with longitudinal data that accounts for potential variances in the conditions and outcomes over time. For this purpose, Garcia-Castro and Arinõ (2013) have recently developed a novel approach to apply set-theoretic methods to panel data.

Finally, we focused on the variables that from literature and our experience in the fashion and furniture industry seemed most important for business growth. Future studies could examine whether other variables have different combinatorial effects as those we find in this study. The results of this study will be discussed more in-depth in the next chapter.

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Appendix C

Table C1: Measurement and descriptive statistics of indicator variables

Set	*Condition*	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases with set memebership > 0.5*
1: Business Growth (N= 54)	**Growth**	Combination of 3 indicators: (1) growth in amount of employees; (2) growth in turnover; (3) growth in sold products / *a score from 0 to 3 on 3*	0	3	1.54	1.18	-0.16	0.99	70
	EO	Seven-point Likert scale with items derived from Covin & Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) / *average score*	1	7	4.31	0.96	0.45	4.01	50
	Exploration	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.66	0.64	0.07	3.99	39
	Exploitation	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.69	0.57	0.20	3.99	28

	Condition	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases with set membership > 0.5*
	Job rate	Do you work fulltime or part-time as a designer? / *1= fulltime; 0= part-time*	0	1	0.70	0.46	-0.87	0.5	70
2: Perceived success business focus (N= 20)	**Perceived success**	Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success / *a score from 1 to 5*	1	5	3.20	0.61	-0.10	2.99	90
	EO	Seven-point Likert scale with items derived from Covin & Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) / *average score*	1	7	4.02	0.66	0.09	4.01	40
	Exploration	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.81	0.58	-0.15	3.99	50
	Exploitation	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.72	0.44	-0.47	3.99	30

	Condition	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases wit set membership > 0.5*
	Job rate	Do you work fulltime or part-time as a designer? / *1= fulltime; 0= part-time*	0	1	0.65	0.49	-0.58	0.5	65
3: Perceived success product focus (N=17)	**Perceived success**	Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success / *a score from 1 to 5*	1	5	3.18	0.95	-0.74	2.99	76
	EO	Seven-point Likert scale with items derived from Covin & Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) / *average score*	1	7	4.63	1.02	0.32	4.01	59
	Exploration	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.48	0.67	0.47	3.99	23
	Exploitation	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.72	0.59	0.43	3.99	23

	Condition	*Question/measure*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Skew*	*Crossover point calibration*	*% cases with set membership > 0.5*
	Job rate	Do you work fulltime or part-time as a designer? / *1= fulltime; 0= part-time*	0	1	0.71	0.47	-0.83	0.5	71
4: Perceived success personal focus (N= 17)	**Perceived success**	Indicate on a five-point Likers scale how you perceive your own success following your own definition of success / *a score from 1 to 5*	1	5	3.53	0.62	-0.83	2.99	94
	EO	Seven-point Likert scale with items derived from Covin & Slevin (1989) and Miller (1983) / *average score*	1	7	4.35	1.12	0.21	4.01	53
	Exploration	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.67	0.66	0.01	3.99	41
	Exploitation	Five-point Likert scale with items derived from Mom et al. (2007) / *average score*	1	5	3.63	0.71	0.35	3.99	29

	Job rate	Do you work fulltime or part-time as a designer? / *1= fulltime; 0= part-time*	0	1	0.76	0.44	-1.14	0.5	76

Table C2: Results for perspectives perceived success

CASE	BUSINESS	PRODUCT	PERSON	MAIN FOCUS
1	0,1	0,1	0,8	PERSON
2	0,0	0,2	0,8	PERSON
3	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
4	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
5	0,0	0,2	0,8	PERSON
6	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
7	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
8	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
9	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
10	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
11	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
12	0,0	0,4	0,6	PERSON
13	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
14	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
15	0,0	0,2	0,8	PERSON
16	0,0	0,8	0,2	PRODUCT
17	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
18	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
19	0,7	0,1	0,2	BUSINESS
20	0,2	0,0	0,8	PERSON
21	0,8	0,0	0,2	BUSINESS
22	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
23	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
24	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON

CASE	BUSINESS	PRODUCT	PERSON	MAIN FOCUS
25	0,2	0,8	0,0	PRODUCT
26	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
27	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
28	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
29	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
30	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
31	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
32	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
33	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
34	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
35	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
36	0,6	0,4	0,0	BUSINESS
37	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
38	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
39	0,6	0,2	0,2	BUSINESS
40	0,0	0,3	0,7	PERSON
41	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
42	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
43	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
44	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
45	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
46	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
47	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
48	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
49	0,0	0,0	1,0	PERSON
50	1,0	0,0	0,0	BUSINESS
51	0,2	0,6	0,2	PRODUCT
52	0,8	0,2	0,0	BUSINESS
53	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT
54	0,0	1,0	0,0	PRODUCT

Table C3: Analysis of necessity for business growth

		Business growth			No business growth		
	Conditions	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
Dataset 1: business growth	EXPLOR+JOB	0.92	0.65	0.37	-	-	-
	EXPLOIT+JOB	0.91	0.64	0.37	-	-	-
	eo+JOB	0.90	0.61	0.30	-	-	-
	EO+JOB	0.93	0.64	0.34	-	-	-
	explor+exploit+JOB	-	-	-	0.90	0.42	0.41

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Conditions meeting consistency threshold 0.90, coverage threshold 0.40, Relevance of Necessity (RoN) threshold 0.30.

Table C4: Analysis of necessity for perceived success

		Perceived success			Low perceived success		
	Conditions	Consistency	Coverage	RoN	Consistency	Coverage	RoN
Dataset 2: perceived success business focus	EO+exploit	0.91	0.84	0.79	-	-	-
	EO+explor	0.91	0.81	0.76	-	-	-
	eo+EXPLOR+exploit	0.90	0.75	0.66	-	-	-
	eo+EXPLOR+EXPLOIT	0.91	0.77	0.69	-	-	-
	EO+EXPLOR+EXPLOIT	0.91	0.84	0.80	-	-	-
	exploit	-	-	-	0.91	0.74	0.77
	eo	-	-	-	0.92	0.80	0.83
	explor+EXPLOIT	-	-	-	0.94	0.70	0.70
Dataset 3: perceived success product focus	EO	0.90	0.83	0.78	-	-	-
Dataset 3: perceived success personal focus	EO+explor+exploit	0.91	0.83	0.67	-	-	-
	EO+EXPLOR+exploit	0.92	0.85	0.71	-	-	-

Table C5: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the presence of business growth

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.75	**EO*JOB + exploit*JOB + EXPLOR*JOB**	0.80	0.67	34
0.80	**exploit*EO*JOB + EXPLOR*EO*JOB**	0.83	0.53	11

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: EO -> G, JOB -> G, EXPLOR -> G, EXPLOIT -> G

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C6: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the absence of business growth

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	**explor***exploit***eo*job**	0.80	0.25	8
0.80	Same as above			
0.75	Same as above			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Directional expectations: EO -> ~G, JOB -> ~G, EXPLOR -> ~G, EXPLOIT -> ~G

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C7: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the presence of perceived success (business focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	**EXPLOR***exploit + exploit***EO***job + EXPLOR*EO***JOB** + explor*EXPLOIT*eo*JOB	0.92	0.85	14
0.80	Same as above			
0.75	Same as above			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C8: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the absence of perceived success (business focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	**exploit***job + EXPLOR*exploit + **explor***eo*JOB	0.75	0.95	17
0.80	same			
0.75	same			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C9: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the presence of perceived success (product focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	EO***JOB** + explor*JOB	0.76	0.72	12
0.85	same			
0.75	same			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C10: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the absence of perceived success (product focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	**explor*EXPLOIT***JOB + **EXPLOR***exploit***job** + explor*exploit***eo**	0.74	0.76	10
0.85	same			
0.75	same			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C11: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the presence of perceived success (personal focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	EO*__JOB__ + __EXPLOR__*EXPLOIT*EO + explor*exploit*JOB + EXPLOR*EXPLOIT*JOB + EXPLOR*exploit*eo*job	0.89	0.83	15
0.85	same			
0.75	same			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C12: Analysis of sufficiency with robustness test for the absence of perceived success (personal focus)

Raw consistency threshold	Intermediate solution term	Solution consistency	Solution coverage	Case
0.90	**EXPLOR*EXPLOIT*JOB**	0.77	0.60	2
0.85	same			
0.75	same			

(capital letters = presence of the condition/ lower-case letters = absence of the condition)

Bold: parsimonious solution

Table C13: Truth table for the outcome business growth

EXPLOR	EXPLOIT	EO	JOBRATE	GROWTH	*NO GROWTH*	Consistency	*Consistency*	PRI	*PRI*	Number of cases	*Number of cases*
1	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.84	*0.52*	0.75	*0.25*	7	*7*
1	1	1	1	1	*0*	0.81	*0.55*	0.69	*0.28*	5	*5*
0	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.80	*0.57*	0.68	*0.32*	6	*6*
1	0	0	1	1	*0*	0.80	*0.65*	0.63	*0.37*	2	*2*
0	1	1	1	1	*0*	0.79	*0.61*	0.65	*0.35*	4	*4*
0	0	0	1	1	*0*	0.77	*0.64*	0.60	*0.38*	9	*9*
1	1	0	1	1	*0*	0.76	*0.68*	0.57	*0.42*	1	*1*
0	1	0	1	0	*0*	0.75	*0.69*	0.54	*0.44*	4	*4*
1	1	1	0	0	*0*	0.65	*0.67*	0.48	*0.52*	1	*1*
1	0	0	0	0	*0*	0.62	*0.74*	0.41	*0.59*	3	*3*
1	0	1	0	0	*0*	0.61	*0.71*	0.43	*0.57*	2	*2*
0	0	1	0	0	*0*	0.56	*0.71*	0.39	*0.57*	2	*2*
0	0	0	0	0	*1*	0.47	*0.80*	0.27	*0.72*	8	*8*

Table C14: Truth table for the outcome perceived success (business focus)

EXPLOR	EXPLOIT	EO	JOBRATE	PERCEIVED SUCCESS	*LOW PERCEIVED SUCCESS*	Consistency	*Consistency*	PRI	*PRI*	Number of cases	*Number of cases*
1	1	1	1	1	*0*	1.00	*0.68*	1.00	*0.00*	3	-
1	0	0	1	1	*1*	0.99	*0.75*	0.96	*0.00*	2	-
0	1	0	1	1	*1*	0.99	*0.84*	0.91	*0.00*	3	-
0	0	0	1	0	*1*	0.98	*0.83*	0.86	*0.00*	2	-
1	0	1	1	1	*1*	0.96	*0.75*	0.83	*0.00*	3	-
1	0	0	0	1	*1*	0.90	*0.96*	0.26	*0.73*	1	*1*
1	0	1	0	1	*1*	0.89	*0.86*	0.55	*0.45*	1	*1*
0	0	1	0	1	*1*	0.82	*0.85*	0.40	*0.48*	1	*1*
0	0	0	0	0	*1*	0.73	*0.93*	0.10	*0.77*	4	*4*

Table C15: Truth table for outcome perceived success (product focus)

EXPLOR	EXPLOIT	EO	JOBRATE	PERCEIVED SUCCESS	*LOW PERCEIVED SUCCESS*	Consistency	*Consistency*	PRI	*PRI*	Number of cases	*Number of cases*
1	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.94	*0.70*	0.84	*0.16*	1	*1*
1	1	1	1	1	*0*	0.94	*0.66*	0.84	*0.13*	1	*1*
0	1	1	1	1	*1*	0.88	*0.77*	0.63	*0.33*	2	-
0	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.86	*0.71*	0.67	*0.28*	4	*4*
0	1	0	1	1	*1*	0.84	*0.89*	0.33	*0.56*	1	*1*
0	0	0	1	1	*1*	0.79	*0.87*	0.36	*0.61*	3	-
0	0	1	0	0	*0*	0.68	*0.70*	0.48	*0.52*	1	-
1	0	1	0	0	*1*	0.64	*0.81*	0.34	*0.66*	1	-
0	0	0	0	0	*1*	0.57	*0.90*	0.10	*0.78*	2	*2*
1	0	0	0	0	*1*	0.55	*0.99*	0.02	*0.97*	1	*1*

Table C16: Truth table for outcome perceived success (personal focus)

EXPLOR	EXPLOIT	EO	JOBRATE	PERCEIVED SUCCESS	*LOW PERCEIVED SUCCESS*	Consistency	*Consistency*	PRI	*PRI*	Number of cases	*Number of cases*
1	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.99	*0.68*	0.99	*0.00*	3	-
1	1	1	1	1	*1*	0.99	*0.77*	0.99	*0.00*	1	-
1	1	0	1	1	*1*	0.99	*0.78*	0.99	*0.00*	1	-
0	0	1	1	1	*0*	0.99	*0.64*	0.98	*0.00*	2	-
1	1	1	0	1	*0*	0.99	*0.50*	0.98	*0.02*	1	-
0	0	0	1	1	*0*	0.99	*0.64*	0.96	*0.00*	4	-
1	0	0	0	1	*0*	0.99	*0.57*	0.97	*0.03*	1	-
0	1	1	1	1	*0*	0.98	*0.71*	0.93	*0.00*	2	-
0	0	0	0	0	*0*	0.73	*0.65*	0.56	*0.43*	2	-

Table C17: Correlations

Correlations

		EO	EXPLOR	EXPLOIT
EO	*Pearson corr*	1	0.15	0.05
	Sig.		0.26	0.73
	N	54	54	54
EXPLOR	*Pearson corr*	0.15	1	0.21
	Sig.	0.26		0.12
	N	54	54	54
EXPLOIT	*Pearson corr*	0.05	0.21	1
	Sig.	0.73	0.12	
	N	54	54	54

Websurvey (in Dutch)

Naam

Naam (jijzelf)*

Naam (bedrijf)*

Bedrijfsgegevens

Ik ben een...*

- Mode-ontwerper
- Meubelontwerper
- Beide

In mijn bedrijf of zelfstandige activiteit ben ik...*

- hoofdzakelijk bezig met meubel en/of mode-ontwerp
- heb ik nog vele andere producten/diensten te bieden

Indien je nog vele andere producten/diensten te bieden hebt, graag even verduidelijken welke:

In welk jaar heb jij je bedrijf of zelfstandige activiteit opgestart?*

Volgende situatie past het beste bij mij:*

- Ik ben voltijds aan de slag als ontwerper
- Ik ben ontwerper in bijberoep en combineer mijn activiteit dus met iets anders

Indien je je activititeit als ontwerper niet voltijds uitoefent, graag verduidelijken wat je andere activiteit is:

Balans tussen innoveren en verkopen als designer

In welke mate heb je jezelf het afgelopen jaar geëngageerd voor werkgerelateerde activiteiten die als volgt omschreven kunnen worden:*Verplicht

	Zeer weinig	Weinig	Neutraal	Veel	Zeer veel
Het zoeken naar nieuwe mogelijkheden op vlak van producten/diensten, processen of markten					
Het evalueren van verschillende opties omtrent producten/diensten, processen of markten					
Het focussen op een sterke vernieuwing van producten/diensten of processen					
Activiteiten die veel aanpassingsvermogen van jou vergen					
Activiteiten waarvoor je nieuwe vaardigheden of kennis moet opdoen					
Activiteiten waarvoor kennis nodig is die je zelf al hebt opgebouwd					
Activiteiten voor bestaande klanten met bestaande producten/diensten					
Activiteiten waarbij het voor jou duidelijk is hoe je ze moet aanpakken					
Activiteiten met een focus op voornamelijk korte-termijn doelen					
Activiteiten die je gemakkelijk kan uitvoeren door je huidige kennis te gebruiken					
Activiteiten die duidelijk passen binnen het bestaande beleid van je bedrijf					

Ondernemerschapsoriëntatie

In het algemeen leg ik een sterk accent op...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
de marketing van reeds gekende producten of diensten	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	onderzoek en ontwikkeling, technisch leiderschap en innovatie

Hoeveel nieuwe producten of diensten heeft je bedrijf de laatste 5 jaar (of sinds het ontstaan) op de markt gebracht? *Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Geen nieuwe producten of diensten	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Zeer veel nieuwe producten of diensten

Hoeveel nieuwe producten of diensten heeft je bedrijf de laatste 5 jaar (of sinds het ontstaan) op de markt gebracht? *Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
De veranderingen in mijn producten of diensten zijn minimaal	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	De veranderingen in mijn producten of diensten zijn gewoonlijk vrij drastisch

In het omgaan met concurrenten...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
beantwoord ik gewoonlijk de acties die zij initiëren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	initieer ik zelf acties die zij beantwoorden

In het omgaan met concurrenten...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
is mijn bedrijf zelden de eerste in het introduceren van nieuwe producten, diensten, enz.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	is mijn bedrijf vaak de eerste in het introduceren van nieuwe producten, diensten, enz.

In het omgaan met concurrenten...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
vermijd ik liever de competitie	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	ben ik zeer competitief

Over het algemeen heb ik een sterke neiging in mijn bedrijf om...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
projecten met een laag risico , met een zekere en normale opbrengst, uit te voeren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	projecten uit te zoeken met een hoog risico, en dus ook met de kans op hoge opbrengsten

In het algemeen geloof ik...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
dat het beter is om gradueel te exploreren, via voorzichtig en toenemend gedrag	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	dat harde, duidelijke en brede handelingen nodig zijn om doelstellingen te bereiken

Wanneer ik geconfronteerd word met onzekere situaties en ik beslissingen moeten nemen voor mijn bedrijf...*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
heb ik eerder een afwachtende houding om de kans op 'prijzige' of verkeerde beslissingen te minimaliseren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	neem ik een harde, soms agressieve, houding aan om de kans op mogelijke opportuniteiten te vergroten

Groei en succes

Omschrijf aub kort wat jij verstaat onder succes van je bedrijf, en waarom jij het al dan niet succesvol vindt

Hoe succesvol vind jij zelf je bedrijf, naar je eigen definitie van succes?*Verplicht

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totaal niet succesvol	○	○	○	○	○	Zeer succesvol

Ik verkoop ten opzichte van 3 jaar geleden (of sinds je oprichting, indien je geen 3 jaar kan terug gaan):*Verplicht

- ○ Meer producten
- ○ Minder producten
- ○ Hetzelfde

Het aantal medewerkers/personeelsleden is in vergelijking met 3 jaar geleden (of sinds je oprichting, indien je geen 3 jaar kan terug gaan):*Verplicht

- ○ Duidelijk gestegen
- ○ Duidelijk gedaald
- ○ Hetzelfde gebleven

Mijn totale omzet is in vergelijking met 3 jaar geleden (of sinds je oprichting, indien je geen 3 jaar kan terug gaan):*Verplicht

- Duidelijk gestegen
- Gedaald
- Hetzelfde gebleven

Ter afronding

Alvast hartelijk bedankt om bovenstaande vragen in te vullen! Ik ga dit alles nu finaal verwerken, het einde van mijn doctoraat komt namelijk in zicht. Graag nodig ik jullie in het najaar uit voor een presentatiemoment. Ik zal dan de belangrijkste resultaten met jullie bespreken en ook jullie feedback hieromtrent nog meenemen in de finale rapportage van mijn onderzoek. Mijn doel is om jullie, de mode- en meubelontwerpers, ook iets terug te kunnen geven, in de vorm van advies en/of reflectie.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

In general, this dissertation can be categorized as a strategic management PhD with a focus on performance in small-sized design organizations. This dissertation set out to explore different strategic pathways to success. Answering this question, in the context of three empirical studies, led to a surprising journey that shed light on different configurational pathways underlying business growth and perceived success. The results of the empirical studies do not only make important contributions to the academic literature, but also provide practical guidelines for designers and policy-makers. In this concluding chapter, I summarize the main results of each study, I elaborate on a meta-level on the three studies and their contributions to theory, I make a first attempt to a configurational theory of success, I reflect on some issues, highlight implications for practice and I suggest some future research paths.

5.1. Summary of results

During three empirical studies, the following research question and sub-questions were answered:

What are the different pathways to success for small-sized creative organizations?

- *What are the different pathways to success regarding perceived success?*
- *What are the different pathways to success regarding business growth?*
- *What are the different components of the pathways leading to success for small-sized creative organizations?*

In the first study, 19 independent small-sized fashion designers were analyzed regarding dominant logic, a balance between exploration and exploitation and their organizational life cycle, leading to high perceived success. The study found two pathways for high perceived success. Firstly, the analysis showed that a balance between exploration and exploitation is a necessary condition for high perceived success. This balance is particularly important when the fashion designer is at an early stage in the organizational life cycle (solution no. 1)[8], or when the fashion designer follows a dominant fashion business logic (solution no. 2). Furthermore, no balance is sufficient for designers' low perceived success (solution no 3). These findings support previous studies regarding ambidexterity that conclude that the best

[8] The same solution numbers are used as in the corresponding studies 1, 2 and 3.

firms are those which can simultaneously balance exploration and exploitation (e.g. Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). Secondly, more mature fashion designers express low perceived success when deviating from the dominant industry logic (solution no. 4). This contradicts the expectation that breaking through the dominant industry logic would lead to organizational success (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Matthyssens et al., 2006). In this respect, the dominant logic is a mechanism to increase an organization's efficiency by reducing the set of environmental stimuli and responses (Sinkula, 2002).

In the second study, 21 small-sized furniture designers were researched, regarding their pathways to business growth and high perceived success. Personal values, firm age, product focus and job rate were taken into account. The results suggested two major conclusions. A first conclusion concerns business growth. The analysis shows two pathways wherein fulltime designers with a low priority for conservation values are central. These two conditions appear in combination with a full focus on furniture products (solution no. 5), or in combination with being a young designer (solution no. 6). This confirms our expectation to find a positive link between business growth and a low personal priority for conservation. It is also in line with the research of Zahra and Covin (1995) and Wiklund (1999) who found that businesses willing to take risks, which are businesses with low priority for conservation, show better financial performance. This result contradicts the expectation that product diversity leads to business growth (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Teece et al., 1997), but confirms the finding of van den Born and Van Witteloostuijn (2013) that a focus strategy is important for freelancers. Moreover, design firms older than five years with diversified products show no business growth (solution no. 8). A second conclusion concerns the condition job rate. Being a part-time designer is sufficient on its own for no business growth (solution no. 7), and as an INUS condition[9] it is sufficient for low perceived success. On the other hand, being a fulltime designer is part of the two pathways leading to business growth (solution no. 5 and 6). This is in line with our expectations and contributes to the literature on artistic and creative careers. Creatives often hold multiple jobs (Throsby & Zednik, 2011), which presents a challenge for those hoping to secure creative occupations as a first choice (Ashton, 2015).

In study 3 fashion and furniture designers were researched together, which resulted in 54 analyzed cases. In this final study, exploration, exploitation, entrepreneurial orientation and job rate served as the strategic conditions leading to business growth and/or perceived success. Perceived success was split into three categories: designers with a focus on business, product and personal success. From this study, four conclusions could be drawn. First, business growth and perceived success focussing on business and product is achieved

[9] INUS conditions: Conditions being *i*nsufficient but *n*onredundant parts of different configurations which are themselves *u*nnecessary but *s*ufficient for the occurrence of the outcome (Fiss et al., 2013).

through an imbalance between exploration and exploitation, in combination with having a fulltime occupation as designer and/or other conditions (solution no. 15 to 18 and 20). From the literature review and study 1, however, we expected to see the importance of simultaneously balancing exploitation and exploration (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). This balance is only found for perceived success by designers with a personal focus (solution no. 22, 23 and 25). Second, being a fulltime designer (job rate) is an important condition in most of the pathways for business growth and perceived success, always in combination with the presence or absence of other conditions (solution no. 12 to 14, 16 to 21, and 23 to 25). This is in line with the results from study 2. A third major conclusion concerns the combination of a high focus on entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and being a fulltime designer as solution path. Following this path leads to business growth and to perceived success when the designer follows a product and personal focus (solution no.12, 19 and 21). This solution is presented in study 3 as main pathway to success for fashion and furniture designers. It confirms the findings of a positive link between EO and firm performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Zahra, 1991, 1993). A last major conclusion from study 3 concerns the condition 'exploration'. For the majority of the solution pathways for perceived success with a personal focus its presence is essential (solution no.22, 23 and 24). The importance of exploration in these pathways is in line with the findings of Chaston (2008) and Walker and Brown (2004) who state that managers of most small creative firms are individuals who focus more on sustaining a lifestyle oriented toward involvement in creative output than on being financially successful.

5.2. Meta-level analysis and contributions to theory

Chapters two, three and four have each spelled out different solution pathways to success in small-sized design firms and the contributions made to the respective literatures. In this section I reflect at a meta-level on the three studies and put forward the main implications for theory.

5.2.1. The balancing act

In study 1 and study 3 the concept of *ambidexterity* was put forward. The argumentation was made that creative organizations need to balance artistic and economic considerations (Kolsteeg, 2014) targeting both commercial success and artistic expression to ensure long-run survival (Lampel et al., 2000). This tension, which links to the concept of ambidexterity, is a pull between *exploration* and *exploitation* (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; March, 1991). Gibson and Birkinshaw (2004) coin the concept of contextual ambidexterity, which was analyzed in

this study, and they argue that the best firms are those that can carefully balance exploration with exploitation simultaneously (Chang & Hughes, 2012; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). Additionally, empirical evidence suggests that ambidexterity has a positive effect on organizational performance (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013), and is also positively associated with subjective ratings of performance (Burton et al., 2012; Cao et al., 2009; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Lubatkin, 2006; Markides & Charitou, 2004; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013).

Yet, within the theory of ambidexterity, so far, almost all of the recommendations put forward by conceptual and empirical works are designed for large, multiunit firms (Chang & Hughes, 2012). With few exceptions (e.g. Lubatkin, 2006), work on ambidexterity has failed to account for SMEs, which is actually the largest volume of companies within the creative industries (Bagwell, 2008), and accordingly the fashion and furniture design industry. They may operate differently and display different operating conditions and characteristics to large, multiunit firms such that generalizing current recommendations for ambidexterity into innovation strategies for these firms might prove incorrect (Chang & Hughes, 2012). Moreover, study 3 measured and analysed ambidexterity at the level of the designer. By taking into account the individual level, this study responded to scholarly calls to shed more light on exploration and exploitation at the manager level of analysis (Mom et al., 2007; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008). In sum, this dissertation contributed to the theory of ambidexterity by looking for empirical evidence in small-sized firms at the individual level.

However, the results regarding success are mixed. In line with the literature, we found in study 1 that a balance between exploration and exploitation is necessary for high perceived success. Also study 3 found that a balance between the two is sufficient as an INUS condition (so in combination with other conditions) for perceived success by designers with a personal focus. Contrary, study 3 found that an imbalance is present in different solutions paths leading to business growth and perceived success by designers with a focus on business and product. Going back to the cases and the different studies, it is for the designers personally important to find a balance between the artistic and economic side of their business, while this isn't the case regarding business growth and perceived success on a more business level. Reflecting on this, for individuals it is challenging to excel at both exploration and exploitation (Gupta et al., 2006), which results in tensions between the two practices. Moreover, creatives start from artistic values (Lampel et al., 2000) and thus tend naturally more to exploration. Individuals typical responses to tensions or paradoxes are defensive, wanting to eliminate the tension (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Lewis, 2000; SæTre & Brun, 2012). This explains the finding that the designers in our study want to balance exploration and exploitation and thus show high perceived success, although an imbalance seems better for business growth. Ebben and Johnson (2005) suggest that smaller firms' performance suffers when they implement

complex, ambidextrous strategies, which can explain the advantage of an imbalance between exploration and exploitation regarding business growth.

In this study, we measured ambidexterity at one point in time, and we took contextual ambidexterity into account. However, several scholars have suggested the concept of "*sequential ambidexterity*", or cycling through periods of exploitation and exploration (e.g. Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998; Nickerson & Zenger, 2002; Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003). Managing organizations for the simultaneous pursuit of exploitation and exploration may thus be a task of dynamic rather than static alignment (Raisch et al., 2009; Siggelkow & Levinthal, 2003; Westerman et al., 2006). It is possible that designers alternate between the two tasks during certain periods or have to make a trade-off between them. Moreover, under certain conditions, the balance between exploration and exploitation could be achieved at the level of the broader social system rather than at the level of individual organizations (Gupta et al., 2006). For example, designers focusing on exploration, while exploitation is being carried out by another firm or individual. Therefore, an analysis across multiple levels could be fruitful (Raisch et al., 2009).

5.2.2. The fulltime designer

In study 2 and 3 we put forward the concept of *job rate*: being a fulltime or part-time designer. This concept resulted in being from great importance to business growth and perceived success. Having a fulltime occupation helps to achieve business growth and perceived success. Moreover, being a part-time designer is sufficient for no business growth. These findings contribute to the literature on artistic and creative careers. Also other studies find evidence that a big group of creatives holds different jobs, and that the creative one is not the main occupation (Ashton, 2015; Comunian et al., 2011; Crawford, 2009; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Markusen & Schrock, 2006; McRobbie, 2002). Forty-three per cent of creatives who undertake additional work do so in arts-related fields, while 32 per cent undertake work in unrelated areas (Bridgstock, 2005). These multiple jobs are often described as portfolio careers, or protean careers, in which individuals are involved in multiple work and/or development activities simultaneously (Ashton, 2015; Hall, 2004; Inkson, 2006; Pollard, 2013; Umney & Kretsos, 2015) and, as such, there exists a multiplicity of career pathways and trajectories. A portfolio/protean career is not the same for every creative. For some, it means working within the arts, combining creative practice with a teaching role or another creative role, for others it covers a number of unrelated occupations and places of work (Ashton, 2015; Fanthome, 2013).

Conditions of portfolio working, a protean career and multiple job-holding (Throsby & Zednik, 2011) present a challenge for those hoping to secure creative occupations as a first

choice (Ashton, 2015), and they require creatives to shift and adapt to diverse opportunities and to work in multiple roles (Hall, 2004; Inkson, 2006). It means dealing with uncertainty, setbacks, and constantly shifting opportunities. Creatives have to have a strong personal compass, a sense of what makes them tick, what they are good at, and what network of enterprises, persons or projects will best sustain their career (Gruber, 1988; Zwaan et al., 2010).

However, some authors state that having a multi-job career isn't always negative for success. Throsby and Zednik argue that creatives increasingly see these other activities as useful new assets in their career portfolio, an evolving patchwork of projects, jobs, educational experiences and skills (Throsby & Zednik, 2011). For creatives, success increasingly requires meta-competencies such as broad creative skills, commercial acumen, and the ability to work across multiple media platforms (Bain & McLean, 2013; Bridgstock, 2011; Haukka, 2011; McRobbie, 2004; Mietzner & Kamprath, 2013). Ultimately, today's artists increasingly take responsibility for their careers; they are proactive and self-directed, anticipate change, and transform their skills and attitudes to accommodate such change (Inkson, 2006). As Bridgstock (2005) notes, this portfolio of skills allows artists to switch from seeking employment security to security in employability. In this sense, Bridgstock (2011) argues that it is critical for arts training institutions to help students develop an entrepreneurial artist identity, which involves being able to identify creative opportunities consistent with core values and purpose, and then generating ventures or enterprises, finding collaborators, and pursuing these opportunities. She argues that artists must approach their career strategically.

5.2.3. The entrepreneurial designer

The concept *entrepreneurial orientation* (EO) was one of the researched conditions in study 3. This study made a contribution to the EO literature by researching the concept in a configurational way, which is requested by several authors (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011; Miller, 2011; Wales, 2016). This resulted in the combination of a high focus on EO and being a fulltime designer as a pathway to business growth and perceived success. However, previous research linking EO and performance shows mixed findings (Johan Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Empirical studies have shown inconsistent results (Rauch et al., 2009) and didn't found a significant relationship (e.g. Covin et al., 1994; Lisboa et al., 2011; Zahra, 1991). Prior studies have also suggested that the effect of EO on performance varies across different types of environments (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Parkman et al., 2013; Zahra, 1993; Zahra & Covin, 1995). This dissertation contributes to this stream of research by suggesting that the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance in small-sized designer organizations is

positive. However, by using a configurational method, other pathways to performance were found without the presence of EO.

Study 3 also investigated the relationship between EO and ambidexterity, suggested by Lisboa et al. (2011). EO is a strategic orientation that reflects a firm's willingness to break away from the tried-and-true (Johan Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005) and pursue new market opportunities and the renewal of existing areas of operation (Hult & Ketchen, 2001). Moreover, entrepreneurship represents an environment conducive to capabilities development and competitiveness building. Exploitative and explorative capabilities can be viewed as the internal value creating mechanisms that allow an entrepreneurial firm to gain a competitive advantage (Lisboa et al., 2011; Zahra et al., 2006). In study 3 evidence for this relationship was found regarding perceived success. The presence of both EO, exploration and exploitation seems important for being a successful designer, focusing on personal success. When focussing on business success it is the presence of EO, exploration and being a fulltime designer, or the presence of EO, the absence of exploitation and being a part-time designer that leads to success.

5.2.4. To conform or not to conform?

In study 1 and 2 the concepts ‘dominant logic’ and ‘conservation’ (personal values) were researched. The dominant logic in study 1 represents the dominant way of doing business in the fashion industry. The concept conservation from study 2 was all about having, or not having a conservative mindset as designer. This can be linked to being likely to conform or deviate from existing logics, in other words, (not) taking risks. We found different solutions paths regarding these concepts. As seen in study 1, being conform to the dominant logic (in combination with other conditions) leads to high perceived success. Contrary, in study 2 we found that deviating from a conservative mindset leads to business growth. Thus, there are mixed findings regarding conformity and the two outcome conditions in this dissertation.

These findings, however, confirm both the findings from existing literature on dominant logics. One the hand most scholars agree that an obsolete dominant logic can create strategic path dependencies, limit innovation potential and cause strategic problems (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Bettis et al., 2003). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that businesses willing to take risks (not being conservative) show better financial performance (Wiklund, 1999; Zahra & Covin, 1995). This institutionalization of a dominant logic can produce cognitive blinkering that results in ‘competency traps’ (Shipton, 2006), a situation where useful competencies become outdated through never being challenged, revised or abandoned (Hislop et al., 2014). In other words, breaking through the dominant industry logic leads to organizational success (Bettis & Prahalad, 1995; Matthyssens et al., 2006).

On the other hand, a dominant logic increases an organization's efficiency by reducing the set of environmental stimuli and responses (Sinkula, 2002), thereby simplifying and accelerating decision making. Not conforming to the logic leads to ambiguity. This ambiguity can hinder the ability of individuals to attend to all aspects of their environment (March & Olsen, 2010; Ocasio, 1997; Thornton, 2002) and thus cause low perceived success. Being conform to the logic helps to remedy this problem by focusing the attention of organizational actors on a limited set of issues and solutions that are consistent with the prevailing logic (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In this regard, the capability to unlearn established knowledge, behaviors or values can be a significant catalyst to and a facilitator of change (Hislop et al., 2014).

5.3. Towards a configurational theory on success in small-sized creative organizations

The notion of configuration (that the whole is best understood from a systemic perspective and should be viewed as a constellation of interconnected elements) is arguably one of the central ideas of organization studies (Fiss et al., 2013), and the central idea in this doctoral dissertation. A configurational method was used (QCA) that accounts for the complexity of such interconnected elements. Using this method resulted in outcomes that are jointly and synergistically rather than individually and in a linear fashion. However, this brings a challenge regarding theory: the need to develop theory that can account for the complexity of configurations, a complexity that grows exponentially as more elements are added to the system (Fiss et al., 2013). The challenge of the configurational approach is further complicated by the fact that much configurational theorizing tends to be informed by a logic of consistency – that is, by the idea that all elements of a configuration are equally important and present necessary conditions for either its existence or effectiveness. Most empirically observed configurations are likely to contain not only indispensable parts but also inconsistencies and trivial elements (Fiss et al., 2013).

In this dissertation, the explicit application of the configurational approach and QCA demonstrated the existence of different potential configurations for success in small-sized creative organizations. These pathways show different necessary and sufficient relations to the outcome conditions, and contain core and peripheral conditions. We forward two configurations as a starting point for formulating a configurational theory on success in small-sized creative organizations. The first configuration is the combination of being a fulltime designer and having an entrepreneurial mindset, in combination with an imbalance between exploration and exploitation (figure 5). This configuration leads to business growth and high perceived success regarding a business and product focus. The second configuration is the

combination of being a fulltime designer and having an entrepreneurial mindset, in combination with a balance between exploration and exploitation (figure 6). This configuration leads to high perceived success by designers with a personal focus. By forwarding these pathways, a conversation can be started by which a configurational approach may reshape the ways in which we theorize organizations in the creative industries.

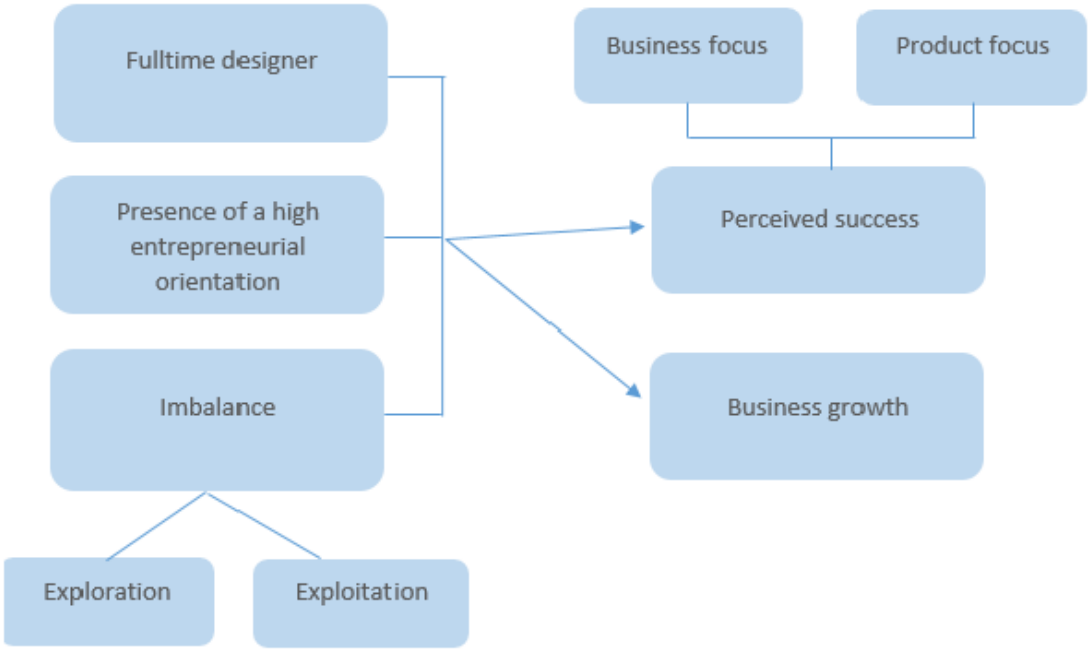

Figure 5: Configurational pathway to business growth and perceived success (focus on business and product)

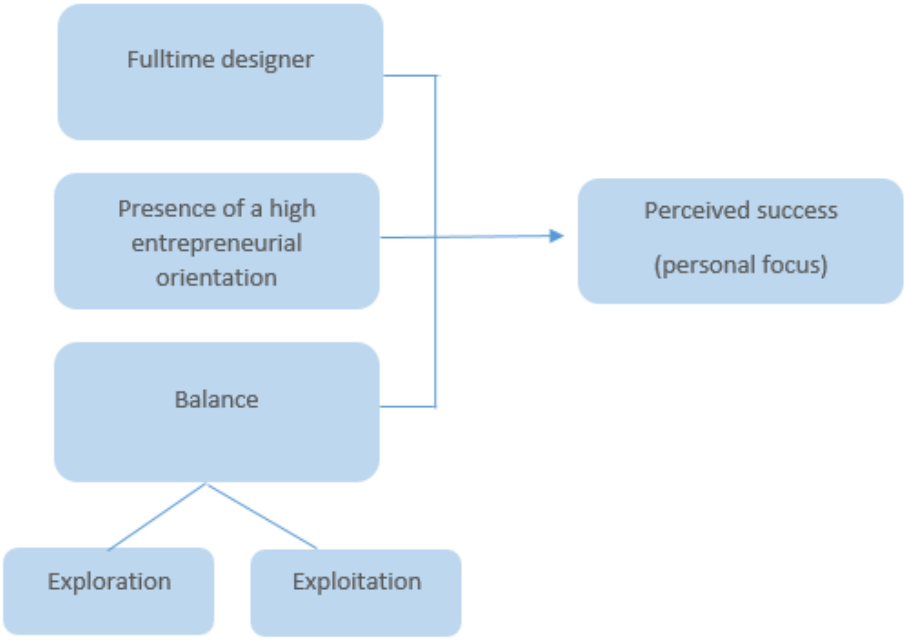

Figure 6: Configurational pathway to perceived success (personal focus)

5.4. Some reflections

5.4.1 …on pathways to success

The goal of this dissertation was to explore configurational pathways to success in small-sized creative organizations in the design industry. This means that we looked into different 'strategy' conditions regarding performance. Both concepts 'strategy' and 'performance' need some reflection. Our sample consists of self-employed creatives. Their motives to become self-employed are not financially, nor very strategic. They became self-employed because they want autonomy, and the possibility to create something of their own. In this light strategy is seen as a direction the designers pursue over time, not necessarily intended, following Mintzberg (1985) and Bailey and Johnson (1995). In other words, we looked *ex post* at successful trajectories. By doing this, we hope to help and inform future self-employed designers to start a business or current designers to enhance their performance.

Reflecting on 'performance', we must be explicit again about the fact that many creatives and other small business owners do not run their businesses to maximize financial performance or growth (Jennings & Beaver, 1997; Walker & Brown, 2004). Success for many small-firm owners means the ability to sustain an acceptable level of income for themselves and their employees, through maintaining an optimum level of activity with which they can cope (Beaver, 2002). Also autonomy, as a driver for being self-employed, is associated with being small: expecting to experience more freedom when there is little to be concerned about (van Gelderen & Jansen, 2006). Especially in the creative industries, another dominant influence for staying small is the widely prevailing philosophy of "*arts for art's sake*." This view encapsulates the ongoing dilemma of the creative person, should they produce output which is personally satisfying, or generate output for which there is market demand? (Caves, 2000; Chaston, 2008).

In my opinion, it is still very relevant to look for successful strategic pathways by small-sized designers. Even though they want to stay small, or they don't necessarily have high financial or economic goals, successful pathways can help them manage market, business and employment uncertainty, and enhance their perceived success.

5.4.2. … on the method

In this dissertation the configurational method, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), has a central place. It is seen as the best approach to the research questions addressed and to analyze the joint impact of the different conditions on performance. In recent years, QCA has gained popularity and has spread beyond its home base of comparative sociology and

political science. With growing popularity and profile comes greater critical attention (Fiss et al., 2014). These critical remarks and possible limitations also deserve attention. A first limitation is that small changes in calibration or the choice of cut-off values regarding frequency and consistency thresholds can lead to significant changes in the solutions obtained, which concerns the validity and reliability of the analysis (Fiss et al., 2013; Rohlfing & Schneider, 2014). To improve the quality of the analysis in this dissertation the impact of different cut-off values was examined and indeed, in some situations fewer or more solutions emerged that are however not different from those reported. Regarding calibration and consistency targets, the researcher must definitively move slowly, and keep on rethinking all the actions during the analysis, so be a conscious thinker, reflecting between theory and data (Cambré, 2015).

Second, although core and peripheral conditions give an expression of the relative importance of conditions, an exact figure of how much more or less important a condition is for an outcome to occur is not computed by fsQCA.

Third, Collier (2014) argues the use of QCA software. He states that too many scholars use QCA as a technical tool and rely too heavily on the software, while they appear to abandon key foundations of the set-theoretic comparative method. In this dissertation the software package in R was used, an open source package not easy to use, which allows the researcher to think about and rethink every step in the analysis and interpret consciously the output. QCA requires not mechanical application of formal rules, but both good practice and the 'wisdom' that comes with continued use (Fiss et al., 2014:4). Besides, at the end of each study I went back to some cases to show the close engagement with the cases.

Finally, it obviously is important as a configurational researcher to further promote and use standards of good practice in QCA, as done, for instance by Schneider and (2012) Wagemann (2012), by Rihoux and Ragin (2009) and Fiss (2007). The methodological challenges and critiques led to a better and more robust QCA (Vaisey, 2014). More conceptual configurational thinking can add to or elaborate on current theories and even help to close some gaps or develop content for some missing pieces in organization theory (Cambré, 2015).

5.5. Implications for practice[10]

This dissertation also had the goal to provide designers and policy-makers with useful knowledge for their practice and consultancy work. The practical implications are grouped around three themes: (1) stimulating a fulltime occupation, (2) enhancing entrepreneurial orientation and (3) finding a good balance between exploration and exploitation. The practical implications are formulated as suggestions that can be given to starters or present designers in the field of fashion and furniture.

To stimulate and help designers to work as a fulltime designer:

- Start young, while you still have limited responsibilities;
- Make sure your product is good and qualitative;
- Being a fulltime designer means you also have the time to discover your world step by step;
- It gives you more motivation;
- You can focus better on your designs;
- Others take you more seriously, it is good for your professional image;
- Make use of the (free) support and advice that is available for starters and creative entrepreneurs;
- Research all funding opportunities;
- Show your portfolio to experts;
- Determine your goals;
- Build a network, see other designers.

To enhance the entrepreneurial orientation of designers:

- Start with a good business plan;
- Planning is everything: it's not entirely the plan, but the planning;
- Be pro-active and take steps to attain your goals;
- Collaborate with others and find inspiration;
- Dare to fail and learn from your mistakes;
- Dare to sell yourself, pay attention to your PR campaign.

To obtain an optimal balance between exploration and exploitation:

- Creativity/exploration comes first, it is the ground for your business;

[10] On October 19th 2016, a valorization workshop took place with 16 designers and sector experts regarding the results of this dissertation. The implications for practice are based on their findings and advice.

- Be open about the business side of your firm, question it and discuss it with others;
- Work in a collective to share exploitation;
- Outsource the things you're not good at;
- Start the business with someone else: one person is dealing with the business side, the other one is dealing with the creative side;
- Divide exploration and exploitation in different periods, and do one at the time.

5.6. Future studies

There are a number of avenues for further research that directly follow from the work presented in this dissertation. To conclude this dissertation, the most interesting future research topics are highlighted. First, regarding the balance between exploration and exploitation, adopting time could be an important research lens. This will allow for a deeper exploration of the dynamic processes underlying the emergence of ambidexterity. For example: what are differences between situations in which designers address exploitation and exploration simultaneously and those situations in which they alternate between the two capabilities? Also the other conditions in this dissertation would benefit from a longitudinal approach to analyze potential variances in the conditions and outcomes over time. For this purpose, Garcia-Castro and Arinõ (2013) have recently developed a novel approach to apply set-theoretic methods to panel data.

Secondly, in this study we explored a selection of strategic conditions leading to business growth and high perceived success. This selection was based upon practice and theoretical knowledge about the creative industries and especially the design sector. Because of the sample size, we were limited in the amount of conditions that could be analysed. Of course, other conditions can play an important role regarding performance in small-sized creative organizations. To highlight one of them, the social capital of designers would be an interesting future research path. Social capital, or knowing whom, is seen as an important predictor of career development and business success (van den Born & van Witteloostuijn, 2013). It involves relevant personal and business networks (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). As more and more designers unite in a network in Flanders (Guiette et al., 2011), it would be useful to analyse the impact and composition of this network on their performance.

Thirdly, our studies highlighted the precarious employment status of creatives and the impact of job rate on success. Future research should focus on employability and the career trajectories of self-employed creatives. What are the critical success factors to start and maintain a fulltime occupation as designer? And what is the impact of holding multi-jobs on someone's career in the creative field? Also research into arts training institutions can be

fruitful. How can they help to develop an entrepreneurial artist identity which involves being able to identify creative opportunities consistent with core values and purpose, and then generating ventures or enterprises, finding collaborators, and pursuing these opportunities?

Finally, in this study performance was researched as a multi-dimensional concept, looking for joint conditions leading to success in creative sectors. Although there are many studies researching the linear impact of strategic variables on firm performance, studies analysing these variables in a configurational way are scarce. More conceptual configurational thinking in strategic management research can add to or elaborate on current theories and even help to close some gaps or develop content for some missing pieces.

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Appendix D

Overview of all the cases

Case	Sector	Source	Gender	Age firm	Growth	Perceived success	Life cycle	balance study 1	Logic	Conser-vation	Jobrate	Product Focus	EO	Exploration	Exploitation
1	fashion	Interview+survey	female	10	3	4	structure	yes	follow		fulltime		4.67	4.00	4.17
2	fashion	interview	female	18	0	4	strategy	yes	follow		part-time		5.67	4.00	3.50
3	fashion	survey	female	20	1	4					fulltime		5.00	4.60	4.33
4	fashion	interview	female	2		4	idea	yes	deviant						
5	fashion	Interview+survey	female	8	0	4	strategy	yes	deviant		fulltime		2.44	4.00	4.67
6	fashion	Interview+survey	female	11	3	3	structure	yes	follow		fulltime		3.55	4.60	3.83
7	fashion	interview	female	20		3	strategy	no	deviant						
8	fashion	Interview+survey	female	3	1	3	structure	yes	follow		fulltime		3.89	3.60	4.00
9	fashion	interview+survey	female	8	2	4	idea	yes	deviant		part-time		5.00	2.60	3.67
10	fashion	survey	female	3	2	3					fulltime		6.67	3.60	4.67
11	fashion	survey	female	6	3	4					fulltime		5.89	3.60	4.50
12	fashion	interview+survey	female	3	2	3	idea	no	follow		part-time		4.22	4.40	3.83
13	fashion	interview+survey	female	8	3	4	structure	no	follow		fulltime		3.67	3.20	4.00
14	fashion	survey	female	12	0	4					fulltime		4.56	3.60	3.17
15	fashion	interview+survey	female	11	3	3.5	structure	yes	follow		fulltime		3.55	4.60	3.83
16	fashion	interview	female	6		2.5	idea	no	follow						
17	fashion	Interview+survey	female	6	2	4	structure	yes	follow		fulltime		5.33	4.20	3.67
18	fashion	survey	female	2	2	3					fulltime		4.89	4.60	3.17
19	fashion	survey	male	1	0	3					part-time		3.00	2.60	3.50
20	fashion	interview	female	15		3	structure	no	follow						
21	fashion	interview	female	5		3	idea	no	follow						

Case	Sector	Source	Gender	Age firm	Growth	Perceived success	Life cycle	balance	Logic	Conser-vation	Jobrate	Product Focus	EO	Exploration	Exploitation
22	fashion	interview	female	2		3.5	idea	no	deviant						
23	fashion	Interview+survey	female	13	3	4	strategy	yes	follow		fulltime		4.11	3.40	3.33
24	fashion	Interview+survey	female	22	0	3	strategy	no	deviant		fulltime		4.22	3.40	4.50
25	fashion	Interview+survey	female	4	0	2	idea	no	deviant		part-time		3.22	2.80	3.50
26	fashion	survey	male	14	0	4					fulltime		3.67	4.00	3.83
27	fashion	survey	male	15	1	3					fulltime		3.89	3.20	3.67
28	fashion	interview	female	20			strategy	yes	follow						
29	furniture	survey	female	1	3	4					fulltime		4.89	4.60	3.83
30	furniture	Interview+survey	male	4	3	3				3.17	fulltime	focus	3.67	3.60	3.17
31	furniture	survey	male	1	2	1					part-time		4.00	3.60	3.80
32	furniture	Interview+survey	male	10	2	3				4.00	fulltime	focus	5.22	3.60	2.83
33	furniture	Interview+survey	male	25	2	4				2.00	fulltime	focus	5.33	4.00	3.00
34	furniture	Interview+survey	male	3	3	3				4.17	fulltime	focus	3.78	3.00	3.83
35	furniture	Interview+survey	male	2	2	3				3.17	fulltime	focus	4.22	2.60	3.83
36	furniture	survey	female	2	1	3					part-time		2.89	3.80	3.50
37	furniture	survey	male	18	3	4					part-time		5.11	5.00	5.00
38	furniture	survey	female	17	2	3					fulltime		5.77	4.40	4.00
39	furniture	interview+survey	male	3	0	4				2.00	part-time	focus	2.89	3.20	2.67
40	furniture	survey	female	13	0	3					part-time		4.44	3.20	3.17
41	furniture	interview	male	3	0	2				3.50	part-time	focus			
42	furniture	Interview+survey	male	10	2	2				3.67	fulltime	focus	3.78	2.80	3.67
43	furniture	survey	male	3	3	4					fulltime		5.11	3.60	3.67
44	furniture	survey	male	2	2	2					part-time		4.00	4.00	3.33
45	furniture	Interview+survey	female	3	2	3				3.50	part-time	no focus	4.78	4.00	2.67
46	furniture	survey	male	2	2	4					part-time		5.00	4.00	3.83

Case	Sector	Source	Gender	Age firm	Growth	Perceived success	Life cycle	balance	Logic	Conser-vation	Jobrate	Product Focus	EO	Exploration	Exploitation
47	furniture	Interview+survey	female	12	1	4				3.50	fulltime	no focus	3.22	3.60	2.83
48	furniture	survey	female	4	1	3					fulltime		3.55	2.60	4.33
49	furniture	Interview+survey	male	5	2	4				2.83	part-time	focus	3.89	4.40	3.33
50	furniture	interview	female	7	2	4				3.00	fulltime	focus			
51	furniture	Interview+survey	male	4	2	4				3.33	fulltime	focus	5.11	3.40	3.17
52	furniture	Interview+survey	male	10	0	3				3.83	fulltime	no focus	3.78	3.40	3.83
53	furniture	survey	male	13	2	4					fulltime		5.00	2.80	4.00
54	furniture	survey	male	10	3	4					fulltime		3.33	3.80	3.83
55	furniture	Interview+survey	female	1	0	3				1.67	part-time	focus	3.78	3.60	3.67
56	furniture	Interview+survey	male	4	0	3				2.83	fulltime	focus	3.78	3.20	3.00
57	furniture	survey	male	7	3	4					fulltime		6.67	4.80	2.83
58	furniture	survey	male	16	3	4					fulltime		5.89	4.80	5.00
59	furniture	Interview+survey	male	3	3	3				2.67	part-time	focus	3.55	3.60	2.67
60	furniture	interview	male	15	0	4				4.83	fulltime	no focus			
61	furniture	survey	male	2	1	3					fulltime		3.78	2.80	4.50
62	furniture	survey	male	4	1	3					fulltime		3.89	3.20	3.17
63	furniture	interview	male	10	0	4.5				3.83	fulltime	no focus			
64	furniture	survey	male	5	0	2					part-time		3.55	2.60	3.50
65	furniture	survey	male	14	0	4					fulltime		4.00	3.40	3.83
66	furniture	Interview+survey	male	10	0	4				3.17	fulltime	no focus	4.67	4.00	4.17
67	furniture	interview	male	3	0	2.5				2.50	part-time	focus			

Appendix E

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

What is QCA?

QCA is a case-oriented approach that examines relationships between conditions and an outcome using set theory: a branch of mathematics or of symbolic logic that deals with the nature and relations of sets. A set-theoretic approach to modeling causality differs from probabilistic methods, which examines the independent, additive influence of variables on an outcome. Regression models, based on underlying assumptions about sampling and distribution of the data, ask *"what factor, holding all other factors constant at each factor's average, will increase (or decrease) the likelihood of an outcome.*" QCA, an approach based on the examination of set, subset, and superset relationships, asks "*what conditions—alone or in combination with other conditions—are necessary or sufficient to produce an outcome*."(Kane et al., 2014)

Necessary conditions are those that exhibit a superset relationship with the outcome set and are conditions or combinations of conditions that must be present for an outcome to occur. In assessing necessity, a researcher "*identifies conditions shared by cases with the same outcome"* (Ragin, 2008, p. 20). *Sufficient conditions* exhibit subset relationships with an outcome set and demonstrate that "*the cause in question produces the outcome in question"* (Ragin, 2000, p. 92).

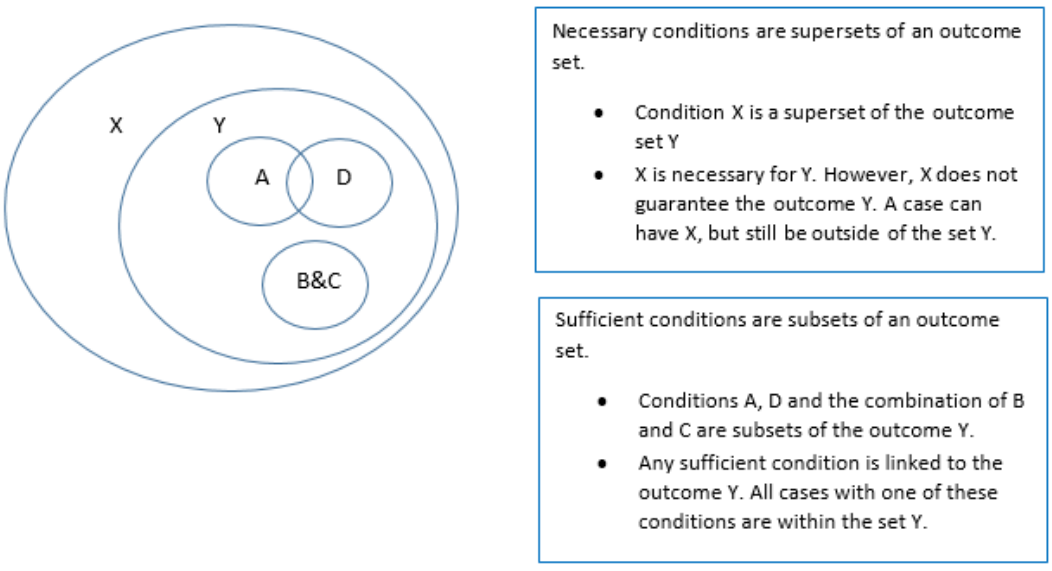

Figure 7: Necessary and sufficient conditions and set-theoretic relationships

The configurational method is based on three assumptions. Assumption one, *asymmetric causation*, implies that the explanation for the non-occurrence of the outcome cannot automatically be derived from the explanation for the occurrence of the outcome. Assumption two, *equifinality,* means that various scenarios can result in the same outcome. Assumption three, *conjunctural causation*, captures that case-specific factors affect the outcome in combination rather than in isolation (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012: 89, 295-305, 307-312).

When conducting a QCA, the following Boolean operations are used:

Operator	**Symbol**
AND	*
OR	+
NOT	~
Sufficiency relation	→
Necessary relation	←

Table 22: QCA operations (based on Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 69)

QCA refers to both a specific research approach and an analytic technique (Ragin, 2008, 2000, 2009). Figure 8 characterizes this distinction. Although this figure depicts steps as sequential, like many research endeavors, these steps are somewhat iterative. Below the figure, the essential steps of QCA as an approach and QCA as an analytic technique are described.

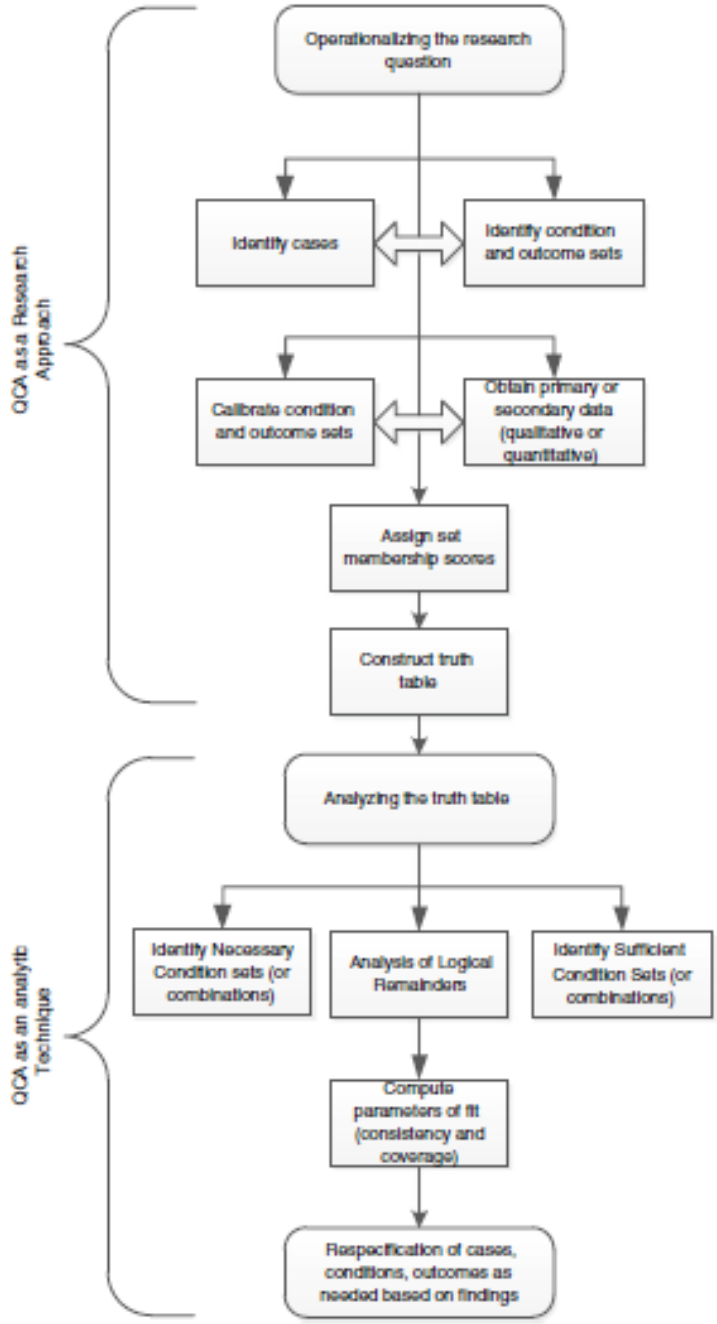

Figure 8: QCA as an approach and as an analytic technique (Kane et al., 2014)

Operationalizing the research question

QCA frames research questions differently than traditional qualitative and quantitative methods. Research questions appropriate for a QCA approach seek to identify the necessary and sufficient conditions required to achieve the outcome (Kane et al., 2014).

Identify cases

Berg-Schlosser and De Meur (2009) offer strategies and best practices for choosing cases. Unless the number of cases relies on an existing population, the outcome of interest

and existing theory drive case selection, unlike variable-oriented research (Ragin, 2008, 2000), in which numbers are driven by statistical power considerations and depend on variation in the dependent variable. For use in causal inference, both cases that exhibit and do not exhibit the outcome should be included (Berg-Schlosser & De Meur, 2009).

Identify conditions and outcome sets

Selecting conditions relies on the research question, conceptual model and number of cases similar to research methods. Ideally, for a case study design with small or intermediate number of cases, one should aim for fewer than five conditions because in QCA a researcher assesses all possible configurations of conditions. Adding conditions to the model increases the possible number of combinations exponentially (i.e. 2^k, where k=the number of conditions) (Marx et al., 2013; Kane et al., 2014).

Calibrate conditions and outcome sets

Calibrations refers to 'adjusting' so that the data match or conform to dependably known standards and it is a common way of standardizing data in sciences (Ragin, 2009). Calibration requires the researcher to make sense of variation in the data and apply expert knowledge about what aspects of the variation are meaningful. Because calibration depends on defining conditions based on 'dependably known standards', QCA relies on expert substantive knowledge, theory, or criteria external to the data themselves (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). In QCA, one can use "crisp" set or "fuzzy" set calibration. Crisp sets, which are similar to dichotomous categorical variables in regression, establish decision rules defining a case as fully in the set (i.e., condition) or fully out of the set; fuzzy sets establish degrees of membership in a set. Fuzzy sets "differentiate between different levels of belonging anchored by two extreme membership scores at 1 and 0" (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 28) [14]. In creating decision rules for calibration, a researcher can use a variety of techniques to identify cutoff points or anchors. For qualitative conditions, a researcher can define decision rules by drawing from the literature and knowledge of the context. For conditions with numeric values, a researcher can also employ statistical approaches. Ideally, when using statistical approaches, a researcher should establish thresholds using substantive knowledge about set membership (thus, translating variation into meaningful categories) (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

Obtain primary and secondary data

Data sources vary based on the study, availability of the data, and feasibility of data collection; data can be qualitative or quantitative, a feature useful for mixed-methods studies and systematically integrating these different types of data is a major strength of this approach.

Qualitative data include documents and descriptions, interviews, and archival data; quantitative data consists for example of surveys. Any type of data can be used to inform the calibration of conditions (Kane et al., 2014).

Assign set membership scores

Assigning set membership scores involves applying the decision rules that were established during the calibration phase. To accomplish this, the researcher should use the extracted data for each case, apply the decision rule for the condition and discuss the discrepancies in the data sources (Kane et al., 2014).

Construct truth table

After completing the coding, the researcher creates a truth table for analysis. A truth table lists all of the possible configurations of conditions, the number of cases that fall into that configuration, and the 'consistency' of the cases. Consistency quantifies the extent to which cases that share similar conditions exhibit the same outcome (Ragin, 2008, 2000, 2009; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012).

Analyzing the truth table

Analyzing the truth table is conducting QCA as an analytic technique. The use of computer software to conduct truth table analysis is recommended and several software options are available, including Stata, fsQCA, Tosmana and R (Kane et al, 2014). A truth table analysis first involves the researcher assessing which conditions are individually necessary or sufficient for achieving the outcome, and then second, examining whether any configurations of conditions are necessary or sufficient. Additionally, the researcher examines the truth table to assess whether all logically possible configurations have empiric cases. When configurations lack cases, the problem of limited diversity occurs. Configurations without representative cases are known as logical remainders, and the researcher must consider how to deal with those. The analysis of logical remainders depends on the particular theory guiding the research and the research priorities. How a researcher manages the logical remainders has implications for the final solution, but none of the solutions based on the truth table will contradict the empirical evidence (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Once all the solutions have been identified, the researcher mathematically reduces the solution (Ragin, 2014). In reality it is the software that reduces the solution by using the Quine-McCluskey algorithm (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). Finally, the researcher computes two parameters of fit: coverage and consistency. Coverage determines the empirical relevance of a solution and quantifies the variation in causal pathways to an outcome (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). When coverage of a causal pathway is high, the more common the solution is, and more of the outcome is

accounted for by the pathway. Consistency assesses whether the causal pathway produces the outcome regularly ("the degree to which the empirical data are in line with a postulated subset relation," (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 324)); a high consistency value would indicate that all cases in a causal pathway produced the outcome. A low consistency value would suggest that a particular pathway was not successful in producing the outcome on a regular basis. A causal pathway with high consistency and coverage values indicates a result useful for providing guidance; a high consistency with a lower coverage score also has value in showing a causal pathway that successfully produced the outcome, but did so less frequently (Kane et al., 2014). At the completion of the truth table analysis the researcher can go back to the cases to illustrate the findings of the analysis.

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