Co-creating Experience-Based Innovation
- A Social Media Experience

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1 Executive Summary

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Title: Co-creating experience-based innovation: a social media experience.

**Background:** Since entrepreneurs are resource constrained and focused on their immediate products they tend to ignore their context and how it affects their business. Social media is perceived as an opinionated environment without having enough insights for the entrepreneur.

**Purpose:** To explore how start-ups can scale up their business by co-creating experience-based innovation with influential customers on social media.

**Method:** This exploratory research is based on an inductive approach, where data are gathered through observation of the nature of social media communities. Hereby, two different case studies are conducted; Inayah’s online community and three influential bloggers. Grounded theory is used as a method to explore how experiences are created and shared.

**Theory:** co-creation, innovation, entrepreneurship, lead-users

**Findings:** High level of engagement, visual content, inspiration and medium affect different dimensions of the perceived co-created experience. This impact, however, differs according to the individual customers’ expectations. In addition, issues that appear minor for the company, may quickly damage the overall experience of the customer.

**Conclusions:** Experience based co-creation is highly affected by the online users’ expectation. The major aspects influencing the start-up in scaling up, from a co-creation of experience-based innovation perspective, can be split up in two parts; customer relationship management and the validity of the visual content that both form the perceived experience of the online users.

**Recommendations:** Based on our empirical data we have noticed that the bloggers can help the start-up company in 5 different areas; creating awareness, improve customer satisfaction, increase product value based on experience, improve brand reputation and product improvement.

**Further research:** Our findings revealed that online users’ emotional attachment to products based on their experience is an important area. Hence, the topic for further research is the relationship between co-creation and emotional attachment to products.

**Keywords:** Experience, Co-creation, Bloggers, Social media, Modest fashion
2 Key Terms

**Hijab**: the modest wear of Muslim women, usually implying covering hair and modest arms and legs covering. In our modern world, Muslims refer to the head scarf alone as a “hijab”.

**Modest fashion**: fashions for women who wish to be dresses modestly, meaning not showing the sexual attractiveness of their body.

**Hijabi**: A Muslim woman who dresses according to the Islamic interpretation of modesty; Hijab.

**Muslim fashion**: fashions for Muslim women

**Islamic fashion**: fashions for Muslim women

**Lead user**: in accordance with Von Hippel’s definition; an innovative consumer that is ahead of the majority of consumers with respect to a trend and has a vested interest in finding a solution to their need because no solution yet exists.

**Online user**: the user of an online social networking platform.

**Online Community**: in accordance with Perkins’ (2015) definition; “A community is an engaged and connected group of individuals in pursuit of mutual interests or a shared commonality”.

**Audience**: the online viewers or users that use social networking sites or social media to follow a Youtube channel or Instagram account of another user or a company.

**Vlog**: the video version of a blog, usually involving a blogger or vlogger’s experiences with a product or a place etc.

**Blog**: a site where a writer communicates thoughts, observations, opinions and experiences textually and visually with pictures and videos. A blog often has images and links to other websites.

**Vlogger**: a person doing a vlog

**Blogger**: the writer of a blog

**Haul**: a haul means to gather a lot of stuff for little money. You tubers usually refer to their latest shopping of many items, which they will be reviewing, as a haul.

**Tagging**: Commonly used in blogs and social media sites, site authors attach keyword descriptions (called tags) to identify images or text within their site as a categories or topic. Web pages and blogs with identical tags can then be linked together allowing users to search for similar or related content. If the tags are made public, online pages that act as a Web-based bookmark service are able to index them. Tagging can also identify someone else in a post, photo or status update that is shared or tagging someone in a post to make sure that they see that post.
Furthermore, it should be mentioned that we in the paper would use the following terms synonymously:

• Vlogger, blogger, lead user and influencer will be referring to the same group of people, which are representing all these terms.

• User, online user, customer, online customer and consumer will refer to the same group of people representing all these terms.

• Modest fashion, Islamic fashion or Muslim fashion, are also going to be used synonymously, since we noticed that online articles and discussions do so as well.
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Readers guide and Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1: Introductory chapter
In this chapter, the motivation and thoughts behind this thesis will be presented. Furthermore, the problem statement that has guided the research is outlined together with the research philosophy, delimitations and weaknesses.

Chapter 2: Theory chapter
This chapter will present previous research in the field of co-creation focusing on 4 areas: experience based co-creation, start-ups, co-creation on social media and co-creation with lead users.

Chapter 3: Methodology chapter
This chapter presents the methodological considerations behind the research. The scientific research method, methodological approach and data collection method are outlined.

Chapter 4: Analysis chapter
This chapter will provide a case story based on our data collection. Our empirical analysis is based on the case story. The empirical part ends with in an empirical framework summarizing our empirical findings. In addition, this chapter presents an analysis of the theoretical findings to end with a theoretical framework. The two frameworks will be synthesized and discussed in order to highlight our findings.

Chapter 5: Conclusion chapter
This chapter presents the main conclusions drawn from the research, as well as the implications and recommendations for the industry. Lastly, further future research possibilities are also presented.

Figure 1: Structure of Thesis
### 5 Introduction

Along with the growth of the e-commerce market (Centre for Retail Research, 2015), online sales show a promising development indicating a great potential for new online business to emerge and flex their muscles (Smith, 2014). Most notably, shopping online and through mobile devices have become a norm, paving the way for online marketing on social media (O'hara, 2015). In addition, social media platforms have developed capabilities catering for easier and cheaper marketing for companies and shopping opportunities for consumers. In this context, social media platforms have gained a tremendous influence on businesses, particularly in the fashion world; where brands have become more conscious about courting and engaging their audiences. Furthermore, influencers seem to have a major role to play; since any recommendation, a review or an endorsement of a product affects the company’s image and the empowerment of today’s consumers (Independent, 2015). This can both be seen as an opportunity for especially small businesses to benefit from but also a threat of causing viral damages due to negative e-Word-of-Mouth (eWOM). Within the fashion world, a new growing phenomenon referred to as “Modest fashion” or “Islamic fashion” has evolved, drawing attention to a huge market opportunity, which is not yet saturated. This phenomenon, also considered a revolution, is happening on many different levels, with Islamic fashion wear boutiques, fashion shows, online retailers but most notably in the front-line; online modest fashion bloggers portraying inspirational outfits, tutorials and product reviews (McLaughlin-Duane, 2015). Hence, one cannot disregard the influence of online bloggers on the online consumers and their purchase behaviour. Based on research, nearly nine out of ten consumers (84%) make a purchase of a product after reading about it in a blog (Corporate Eye, 2014). Most notably, consumers between 18-34 ranked blogs as the most important source of information to make purchase decisions. Generally speaking, blogs play a significant role at every stop along the marketing and sales funnel. In this context, this paper intends to explore the Social Media world, most notably within the sphere of modest fashion, in order to discover how start-ups can utilize it to scale up their business by fostering the co-creation of experiences with their products for their online consumers.

### 6 Problem Statement

Start-ups are resource constrained due to their focus on their immediate products. Hence, knowledge from peripheries is secondary in nature from a start-up’s point of view. However,
knowledge from peripheries might sometimes be very relevant for the business to survive and scale up. In our master thesis we want to take a look at one of these peripheries’ knowledge; the blogosphere world. Social media is perceived as an opinionated environment without having enough insights for the start-up. There is little evidence to show that start-ups are able to use the insight created in the social media world. We would like to explore whether the social media peripheries are the co-created material for lasting insights for start-ups scaling up. This led us to the following research question (RQ):

*How can start-ups scale up their business by co-creating experience-based innovation with influential consumers?*  
- *A Social Media experience*

### 7 Research Philosophy

Philosophy of science is the study of assumptions, foundations, and implications of science. Since we are dealing with the social networks and the nature of the activities by its members, we consider the observing perspective of social sciences. Hence, the phenomena are interpreted according to their function within the system e.g. theory. Realism and constructivism are the overall ontological positions that explain the real existence or the overall understandings, e.g. paradigms, of reality that are in strong contrast to each other. We take a constructivist position viewing reality as socially constructed and subjective in contrast to realism that views reality as objective and can be measured by numbers and statistics (Rasmussen, 2006). Speaking of the epistemological position, which concerns our approach to the reality (the method); objectivists tend to focus and rely on quantitative data, as they believe that they, by observations, surveys, samples and numbers, can prove a statement and generalize causalities. Subjectivists on the other hand, believe that it is important to understand the individuals’ points of view, emotions, paradigms etc., and therefore are more into “qualitative” data; primarily, interviews and observations. Hence, we take the latter stance, as we are interested in understanding the nature of bloggers and social media communities, and the causalities between the two through observation. Furthermore, the formation of a theory is referred to as the “inductive” approach and the testing of a theory or a hypothesis as the “deductive”
approach. Since we are contributing to the existent literature with new insight, we will take the inductive approach. In this matter, there should be distinction between two types of variables; the “independent variable”, which is relatively unchangeable and the “dependent variable” that is influenced by former. In our project, we see the social media communities and their nature as the dependent variable, whereas the bloggers are the independent variable having the major influence on the formation of the former.

According to Pierre Bourdieu” (Bourdieu, 1991), it can be easily observed that language and social life are bound together and impossible to untie. He states: “In some branches of linguistics there is a tendency to think of the social character of language in an abstract way, as if it counted a little more than that language is a collective treasure shared by a community (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 1). This statement interests us, since we in the beginning of the research journey; we were exposed to so many new “insider” terms used by social media members and bloggers, which we weren’t aware with. Therefore, we wish to conduct an exploratory study, which concerns getting a new insight into a phenomenon; namely the nature of social media communities and the power of the bloggers.

8 Delimitations and Weaknesses

A limitation of this paper is that we disregard how co-creation may influence the start-up internally. This is due to the fact that start-ups usually consist of a small team where the members or employees are relatively dynamic; having different tasks and different roles in an organisation. Hence, start-ups are relatively used to changing business strategies and adjusting to changes in their environment. Also, due to the start-up’s very dynamic nature, and their main aim being the survival of the company; we do not imagine that they have excess time or resources to focus on co-creation internally with employees or other stakeholders and therefore more relevant for bigger companies. Hence, the external co-creation is more relevant at this step, because it will give a bigger effect for the start-up to scale up. Since we act as consultants for Inayah, we are interested in advising them to be aware of the influence of the blogosphere field on their business potential. The aim is to keep it as easy, simple, and cost-efficient as possible for the start-up to benefit from co-creation theory and grow. We are furthermore only interested in studying the online communities and the behaviour of online users from the perspective of two social media channels; Instagram and YouTube. We could
have studied blogs, or other platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, but we have found out that there was more activity on YouTube and Instagram. Hence we chose to observe the activity and discussions on Inayah’s YouTube and Instagram channels. Furthermore, a limitation is that we have only chosen 3 bloggers to gather data from and taken a small snapshot i.e. sample of their communication and content. But at the same time, we made sure to view things from different perspectives in order to reach different answers, which is what we learned from grounded theory. Hence, the challenges of this paper primarily lie in the generalizability of the concepts, as we have taken into account that we specifically took one start-up business to build a case on. Hence, the scope of this study is very limited and cannot be overall. We also experienced challenges when collecting data from the bloggers, since we cannot know for sure which products they were paid to review and which products they are giving their honest feedback and opinion about. Therefore, the challenge is in the credibility of the reviews. Furthermore, the literature in the area of co-creation speaks a lot about the importance of customer engagement and involvement in the value-creation process but limited literature touches the area of choosing the right customers to co-create with. Thus, we faced a gap of concrete guidelines on identifying and choosing the most capable influencers to co-create with.

9 Literature review

In the following, we will be reviewing the literature about co-creation, which shaped our understanding of the field of co-creating experience-based innovation with influencers. We have limited our choices of the literature to review, based on the following criteria:

1) co-creation of experience-based innovation
2) co-creating with lead users
3) co-creation in online social media communities
4) co-creation for start-ups
Main idea:
The paper brings innovation into the realm of practices by shifting the focus from the outcome to the process – i.e. from innovation as a new artefact to innovating as a set of co-creating practices. It sees an open business model as an important framework for companies to become efficient and create value from innovation. This is due to the networked nature of innovation leading to co-creation as a collaborative domain combining ideas, knowledge and technology. It is argued that any innovation is a change in customer participation, activities and capabilities to create value in their interactions with firms. Furthermore, innovation is seen as a continuous and interactive process involving the interplay among groups of actors, which are interrelated in a dense network. Those actors contribute to innovation, which is socially and culturally co-structured and constantly re-structured by all. The process involves negotiating knowledge, actions, tools, languages and artefacts.

The outcome of the research shows that the literature on innovation and co-creation from the three perspectives; technology-driven, customer-driven and service-driven, portrays innovation as a co-creation process within open, social and technological networks in which actors interact and integrate their resources to respond to a complex set of sought-after benefits. The integration of innovation, practice and the emerging co-creation research is proposed with the outcome being the development of a business model towards web-based co-creation, “the 5 co-s” model, involving: co-ideation, co-valuation, co-design, co-test and co-launch. The authors’ insight is that managers should influence co-creation opportunities by contributing to script practices and consider options of co-creation activities by being involved in designing and responding to co-creation initiatives as well. This is with the aim to maximize their opportunities for valuable collaboration, as innovators are carriers of practice.

Discussion:
Authors argue that the existing literature on the respective 3 perspectives of innovation of co-creation (technology-driven, customer driven and the service-driven) provide the multi-faceted conceptualization of the picture, wherein the outcome is; “innovation is understood as a co-
creation process within social and technological networks in which actors integrate their resources to create mutual value” (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012). What we agree with authors on is that the technology-driven perspective is the eye-opener, shifting the focus from innovation within the firm to innovation within a network between the firm and their external partners, including customers. This is evident in the visual online platforms, where innovation has become both easy and low-cost to test and create.

Another idea that the paper highlights is the customer-driven perspective on innovation from co-creation, where the community-based innovation and the principles of collective intelligence, stress the power of large groups of people when it comes to innovation in a dense network. Not only is it important that the creation of innovation is within a large group, the service-driven perspective argues about innovation being a “continuous interactive process aiming at creating value” (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012). Hence, we understand that not only is co-creation with other actors important for innovation, this particular process should be continuous. We also understand that innovation is resulted by a co-creative process involving resourceful actors. The question is though; which actors are relevant contributors in the co-creation process? Our question is answered by (Kristensson & al., 2008), who argue that user involvement leads to innovative ideas, as it’s beneficial for capturing the latent need of important customers to NPD. Hence, the relevant actors to co-create with are the consumers. In addition, (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012) claim that the life cycle of products and innovation is shorter than ever before, (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012). Also, we are told that co-innovation is important for NPD, as the old R&D (internally) is too slow and costly to stay ahead of competition, since innovation has gone through an evolutionary process (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012). Hence, we can conclude that for a business to stay ahead of competition; innovation is important for NPD and this happens by involving users in the co-creation process. Furthermore, the business should have a sustainable strategy with continuous co-creations, as the life cycle of products and innovation is short. This perspective also talks about innovation as “a joint value creation with customers and other partners based on a wide integrated network approach”. When reflecting on the word “joint” we think about sharing. Although, what we see in this model is that it’s more about exploiting the knowledge from the innovators and not share benefits of the outcome. Sharing is thus not seen in the practice of the 5 co-s model. We are against exploiting the consumer for own benefits as this will harm the ‘continuous’ long-term relationship between company and innovator. This is due to the fact, that typically those innovators have a great effect on the success of the outcome due to their spread of WOM.
We agree with (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012) on the fact that teaching and learning tools, and resources are important when co-creating value with customers. However, our critique here is the lack of tools for start-ups with limited budgets. Web tools and systems are usually resource-intensive and time-consuming to manage, and thus more suitable for larger companies. We therefore wonder if there might be other solutions for managers of start-ups to foster their co-creation opportunities.

Another aspect is whether it is realistic that there doesn’t exist any risks with this approach? And if so, then how do we overcome those risks? Also, we do lack knowledge about the actual challenges in the practicing process that might appear. When taking the perspective of Eric Ries and looking at the case with a critical “Lean Startup” mentality (Ries, 2011); we noticed that the authors present the analogs\(^1\) of several MNCs (multinational corporations), but how about critical antilogs\(^2\)?

Furthermore, authors talk about engaging consumers in co-creation and how the companies can benefit from it without considering the advantages of the co-creating consumers. Whether and how to motivate the consumers to contribute in this process at all is an important area lacking a proper insight. The only thing we get a hint of from the authors is the following explanation;

“...for an individual to be a creative participant and a designer, that individual needs to possess the right expertise/knowledge, interest/passion and effort and capacity to work. In this case the practice of “calling for competition” is seen as a well-suited approach for fostering user empowerment”. We disagree with the authors here in this point, since we believe the case is not that simple. The company needs stronger arguments and more benefits to offer the consumers in return for their creative ideas and hard work. Especially, if the company wishes to maintain the potentially fruitful collaboration and nurture it for enhanced and sustainable innovation and value creation, they need to take the consumer interests into account. Our reflections in this case are the following:

How can we maintain good ties after co-creating with customers? How about the post co-launch phase? Are our customers missing out the credits for their efforts? Are they fully satisfied with that?

**Our conclusion**

The authors moved the spotlight to the actual multifaceted process of co-creation. We conclude that innovation is a co-creative process consisting of a dense network of creative actors and therefore firms need to include consumers to innovate. Community-based innovation is both

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1 Proof that something has been tried and worked in the market - Eric Ries, 2011, The Lean Startup
2 Proof that something doesn’t work in the market - Eric Ries, 2011, The Lean Startup
powerful and important bearing in mind that the life-cycle of innovation and products is short. However, engaging co-creators (by providing tools, education and support) is a resource-intensive process. We therefore wonder what the alternative tools to foster co-creation are for start-ups.

Collaboration & Co-creation
(Bhalla, 2010)

Main idea
Bhalla explains that the essence of customer collaboration & co-creation takes base in 4 areas, namely; 1) active participation and involvement of customers, 2) balancing expert opinion with personal judgment, 3) connecting and 4) networking. The last step is particularly interesting since it’s about mutually shared expectations and less formalities. (Bhalla, 2010) presents a 4-footed “listen-engage-respond internally-respond externally” framework (figure 1) (Bhalla, 2010, p. 22). When engaging customers its very important to weigh the opportunities on social media platforms and aim for “best practice”. Here, 4 factors are important to consider:

1. Intent; why engage customers?
2. Control; who controls the interaction agenda?
3. Participation base: do all members have a role?
4. Incentives for participation: how is participation rewarded?

Figure 2: Framework for building co-creation capability (Bhalla, 2010)
Furthermore, author suggests 3 domains to nurture and motivate customer engagement, namely: relationships (self, family, community etc.), causes and values (ethical, human, moral, religious, political and social etc.) and brand (associate through material and symbolic artefacts). When speaking about collaborators author suggests two options: professionals (developers, engineers, scientists, students etc.) and creative consumers (brand passion, early adopters, innovators). Author also speaks about the different classifications of consumers from respectively Everett Roger’s model (1995)\(^3\), pointing at the 2.5% innovators and 13.5 % early adopters. He adds that Eric Von Hippel’s model\(^4\) (1988) presents the concept of lead users. Just like innovators and early adopters, lead users are also ahead the majority. The two key differences between lead users and early adopters are that lead users are ahead of the majority with respect to and important trend and they have a vested interest in finding a solution to their need because no solution yet exists. Furthermore, Bhalla explains the importance of rewards and promises when collaborating with consumers and considers the potential advantages the company could offer the co-creating consumers. He stresses that customer value isn’t a function of product features and attributes. It’s a function of customer interactions and experiences. Bhalla draws a model to stress the levels of implementation and sums up the characteristics of firms incorporating co-creation at different levels, both internally and externally, based on multiple factors\(^5\).

**Discussion**

An interesting case the book mentions is U.S. president B. Obama’s “listening campaign” strategy during the elections, in which he focused on being a good listener to the crowd before communicating anything. By involving his potential voters and actively showing them recognition, he managed to create a sense of ownership for the voters who then celebrated Obama’s victory when he won the elections as their own. This proves Bhalla’s hypothesis that customers are willing to reward a company with their time, effort and creative energy in response to the company’s desire to listen to and recognise them. But what it also proves is that the voters i.e. the consumers need to feel the sense of ownership and reward before rewarding the company.

Furthermore, Bhalla talks a lot about the importance of customer value and consider it an investment in ensuring the ongoing relevance of the company. He adds: “Marketing is the whole business, seen from the customer’s point of view, concern and responsibility must therefore

\(^3\) See Appendix 1  
\(^4\) See Appendix 2  
\(^5\) See Appendix 3
permeate the entire organisation” & “Marketing is everybody’s business. Companies need to move from marketing as a function to marketing as a state of mind” (Bhalla, Collaboration and Co-creation, 2010). We highly agree with the author on this point, which is why we believe there should be more focus on maintaining the relationship between the company and its collaborative and co-creative consumers. He also stresses that value isn’t static or constant, rather increased with add-ons by consumer (e.g. iPhone apps). Meaning that the fruits to harvest are not only short-termed but also long-termed if fostering the consumers’ chances to continuously develop and create value. Hence, we agree with Bhalla on the fact that it’s all about customer platforms not products and that the customer must be viewed as the; consumer, producer, collaborator, competitor & more. Bhalla’s discussion on the so-called innovators or lead users is of particular interest to us, since we believe that there is more potential in this area to be exploited for companies. However, we lack a more in-depth understanding of the nature of those groups of consumers. Another factor worth looking into is the fact that companies’ approach to implementing collaboration and co-creation differs. Some companies based their whole business concept and strategy on co-creation, being completely transparent to their stakeholders, particularly their consumers, such as Threadless.com whose idea is to collect creative consumers with the potential of building their own small businesses through their platform. Other larger companies such as Starbucks are still hesitating and very careful in being transparent as they fear the risk of losing control over their business. Prahalad & Ramaswamy have an opinion on transparency and state that it might be intrusive (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). What we also concluded from Prahalad & Ramaswamy is that including input in all phases of the co-creation process is overwhelming. We therefore advocate a selective strategy. In another article, Ramaswamy et al. advocate co-creation to be controlled with defined boundaries and not completely open (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010). Another recent study by Heidenreich et al. explain that co-created services reveal customer involvement resulting in higher; complexity, expectation, and disappointment and therefore co-creation could possibly end up as a failure (Heidenreich & al., 2015). Hence, Heidenreich et al. suggest; “managers should carefully weigh the risks and benefits of providing co-created offerings and evaluate which co-creation level best fits their overall business model. That is, firms should evaluate their knowledge, skills and resources to determine their co-creation potential” (Heidenreich & al., 2015, s. 290). Therefore, we advocate that the optimal solution is to make a selective and controlled strategy.

Our conclusion
It is noteworthy to reflect on Bhalla’s discussions and insight to collaborating and co-creating with the consumers as we believe there isn’t one single perfect formula for implementing collaboration and co-creation in a company. We also believe, as mentioned earlier that since co-creation is a relatively new concept in the business world, the analogs and antilogs of predecessor companies is a rarity, causing some companies to fear unknown risks and losses. In short, there seems to be a lot of potential in the area of co-creation with consumers as long as the company; listens, engages and responds both internally and externally. Along with understanding, the company needs to provide the right tools for the consumers to co-create but they also need to keep their promises of rewarding the consumers in order for the collaboration to be successful. Also, the optimal solution to avoid waste, risks and disappointments is to make a selective and controlled co-creation strategy instead of an open transparent one. In short, customers are voluntarily willing to reward the company with their creative energy in response to the company’s desire to listen and recognize them. This means that they require feeling the firm is their own and therefore feel rewarded with the firm’s success. The value of the co-creative consumers is not constant by itself but increased with continuous development by them. The true value is in the platforms, e.g. experiences, rather than the products. The level of implementation of co-creation as a business strategy differs from company to another based on business concept. A selective and controlled co-creation strategy is more careful than full implementation of co-creation.

**Brand Together: How Co-Creation Generates Innovation & Re-energizes Brands**
*(Ind & al., 2012)*

**Main ideas**
The book suggests a need for openness implying a willingness to embrace diversity and create together throughout the company, meaning both internally and externally. This also implies the transparency of the company.

The authors present 4 key principles to create “sympathy” with the consumer.

1. Focus on people: which happens by encouraging the consumer to co-create the following key factors; 1) the ability to socialize, 2) the process being exciting and fulfilling, 3) building self-esteem, 4) learning and 5) contributing to support a good cause.
2. Building trust: This step is a lengthy process and takes time. Though, if created, people become willing to share their ideas. This is achieved by transparency, honesty and openness.

3. Learning together gradually, implying learning together with the customer, innovating together and experimenting small changes.

4. Building consensus for change; which is the willingness to change internally, in the organisation, and a high level of involvement & participation.

Authors argue that in order to create trust in a community, time and less restrictions need to be given to boost innovation and creativity. Once trust is achieved, the group’s contribution to a task is quick (Ind & al., 2012).

**Discussion**

The first critical issue here is the issue of transparency. The book argues that co-creation and collaboration has to be completely implemented in all aspects of company culture, structure and processes. Though it recognizes that some company concepts are fully based on the co-creation idea while others are not. Recalling from earlier, threadless.com can be mentioned as a business, which is fully built on the collaboration and co-creation idea as it is sourcing a platform to connect product developers and consumers. Others were pushed towards co-creation by critiques, such as Dell, using co-creation to improve their products through a community they called “Idea storm”.

The book argues that in order to maintain success in the future, taking the booming of social media and the critiques of products discussed online, a company must incorporate the transparent co-creation strategy. This is critical, as we see the question of the co-creation implementation highly dependent on which kind of product we have in question, to which kind of market it is selling, and the consumer behaviour of the target group. Some products are directed towards the older generation, where the target group hardly ever uses social media and technology, as an example.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether it is realistic and manageable to be completely transparent, as it requires a lot of resources (time, money and people) to implement co-creation in the whole organization. Also, the constant input and feedback from endless consumers might get overwhelming to handle and consider, not mentioning the high level of product customization to the individual consumer. What was really inspiring for us though, was the book’s idea that customer value is not a function of product features and attributes, but a function of customer interactions and experiences. This idea is advocated by Prahalad & Ramaswamy stating that value shifted from the
product to the experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers-New Approach to Value Creation, 2004). Author also mentions companies like Electrolux and Apple’s critiques of the co-creation concept. Electrolux is critical about co-creation as they believe consumers might be able to give input on the present, but lack the knowledge and reference frame of product development to contribute to its viability in 5 or 10 years. Also, when consumers are asked about a problem, they tend to point at the effect and not at the cause for a problem. Apple also rejects the co-creation principle as they prefer using its internally developed expertise. However, they still are customer oriented as they facilitate the place (retail stores and showrooms) for customers to see products and ask questions without feeling pressured to buy. Apple prefers understanding consumer behaviour by research instead of asking them directly.

**Our conclusion**
Co-creating value with consumers might save the company time, resources and money. However, the issue of transparency and the level of implementing co-creation might be dependent on the concept of the business and the capabilities of the organisation, as Bhalla mentions. It is also questionable whether the constant input from and customization for customers might get overwhelming, especially for less capable companies; start-ups. Though, the idea of customer value being a non-static function of customer interactions and experiences, which is increased with add-ons by the consumer, is an interesting concept worth further investigation. The potential risk of engaging customers in co-creation is the consumer’s lack of knowledge and prediction about product developments, and the tendency of pointing at the effects and not the causes of the problems. Some firms still prefer limited involvement of customers and prefer understanding consumer behaviour instead of engaging them. We believe that understanding consumers is the first step to successful engagement of customers.

**Customer Co-creation: A Typology and Research Agenda**
(O’Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008)

**Main ideas**
Authors’ hypothesis is that customer co-creation strengthens company capabilities and competitive advantage through access to customer competencies, which then are being added to company
capabilities. This happens through releasing control of New Product Development (NPD) activities leading to creative and successful offerings.

In order to bridge the asymmetry, companies should provide customers with tools to enable them to contribute to NPD. Consumers’ empowerment and ability to contribute to NPD is motivated by psychological needs, which can be met via creative contributions, and has been enhanced by technological advances and online platforms. These imply; information how-to sites, online design tools, blogs and co-creation communities (connecting consumers and manufacturers), which consequently enable consumers to create offerings equal to or surpassing traditional NPD offerings. Authors argue that the collaborative NPD has been largely viewed from the perspective of the firm’s ability to learn. Co-creation adds by suggesting that NPD also depends on the firm’s ability to teach. Collaborators, which are the high latitude consumers, have made great contributions to software development aided by the open source movement due to freedom of contribution. Customer co-creation impacts 6 domains of inquiry; organisational culture, organizational learning, organisational dynamics, resources and capabilities, customer valuation and brand communities. The book contributes with a typology of 4 types of customer co-creation, which are recognizing the different levels of customer empowerment; 1. Collaborating, 2. Tinkering, 3. Co-designing & 4. Submitting.

Discussion

The article sees customer co-creation as an opportunity to strengthen companies’ capabilities and competitive advantage through consumers’ competence, knowledge and creativity. (Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010) support this view, which also highlight that the co-creative strategy benefits the business in three areas; competitive advantage, position of ecosystem and a dynamic strategy. But it also mentions potential threats to companies, implying losing control and ownership of products and brand to the co-creative consumers, who feel the ownership of the products they co-created. Thus, what we miss in the article is a clear guidance to how the company should approach in case they lose control because of the open NPD initiative and how to avoid this situation to begin with. As authors already stressed, co-creation initiatives might create new organisational stakeholders, who might be opposing NPD-related changes, which is a question of ownership struggle. Authors then add that the new typology presented lays the ground for a new logic of NPD, opening the doors for consumers to join the development team. Hence, companies should develop strategies for
identifying and harnessing ideas, skills and talents among their customers. Once again our concern is whether this strategy holds for all types of companies and whether it is particularly realistic for start-ups and SMEs to incorporate such strategies. Authors stress that the benefits of co-creation are; decreased time to market, increased product creativity and reduced development costs. This view is similarly shared by Lovelock & Young (Lovelock & Young, 1979) arguing that service productivity is dependent on consumer understanding and interaction. They though add that marketing tools for engaging customer and change their behaviour is needed. When it comes to the above-mentioned areas, we agree with the author, as we believe that by utilizing social media networks and having strong ties to some influential consumers, we get the feedback and input needed to develop the right product and launch it into the right market instead of the lengthy and resource-intensive consumer behaviour analysis and market research. The latter method might, in the end, not even be as efficient. We don’t disagree with the author about the idea of including the consumer in the NPD process. On the contrary, we see this as a fruitful collaboration saving the company, even the new start-up, a lot of resources associated with old-fashioned traditional NPD processes. What we are critical about though, is the idea of complete transparency and the potential of losing control. We though understand the importance of “channelling the innovation” as O’Hern and Rindfleisch put it, and the great potential and benefits that implies for the company.
Conclusion
Customer involvement in the process of NPD might result in a fruitful outcome saving the company time and resources, but also boosting creativity and innovation and strengthening their capabilities and competitive advantage. The idea is to utilize and add the consumers’ capabilities to the companies’ by co-creating with the consumer. A critical factor that companies must bear in mind though, is whether a complete open NPD process might lead in the company losing the control of the process. Also the ‘consumer ownership’ issue can be an obstacle in case the company wishes to make changes the customer doesn’t agree on. Hence, we advocate the authors’ idea of “channelling the innovation” and recognise its importance for the potential of the company.

Co-creating Unique Value with Customers – New Approach to Value Creation
(Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004)

Main ideas
This article states that companies need to adapt to co-creation for value creation due to several factors, most notably: information access, global view, networking (blogs, social media etc.) and the so-called “thematic consumer communities”, experimentation (which is easy and cheap on the web) and finally activism, which is about actively providing feedback to each other and to company consumers. The authors developed a model, DART, with building blocks of co-creation; Dialogue (implying interactivity, engagement and propensity to act both ways) Access (info and tools, implying access to data on processes, decision, quality etc.), Risk assessment (refers to probability of harm to customer or society), and Transparency (meaning firms can no longer assume the non-transparency of prices, costs and profit margins). According to this view, markets can be viewed as a set of conversations between the customer and the firm. It is argued that the opportunities for value creation are greater for companies embracing the concept of personalized co-creation experience. Personalized co-creation differs from the concept of “customers as innovators”. Authors talk about the opportunity of “mass customization” implying large-scale production and hence low cost production, while targeting a single customer at a time. This is claimed to be a challenge that contemporary business leaders must face though. In short, Prahalad and Ramaswamy opine that the interaction between the consumer and company, is critical for potentially creating value, due to the fact that no one can predict the individual consumer experience. Hence, it is the obligation of a company to create a robust experience environment. In general, the authors’ challenge the view of the market being a place for exchanging products and services as an aggregation of consumers, as
the co-creation view opines that all points of interaction between the company and the consumer are opportunities for both value creation and extraction. Within this framework, the ultimate concept in customer segmentation is one-to-one marketing.

**Discussion**

(Füller, Muhlbacker, & Matzler, 2009) support Prahalad & Ramaswamy the idea that social networks is an influential key factor encouraging value co-creation by stating; “Consumers are empowered through internet-based co-creation in virtual communities” (Füller, Muhlbacker, & Matzler, 2009, p. 71). Füller et al. further add that the decreasing costs of IT change the economics of decision-making, shifting power and leading to de-centralised organisations. They further elaborate that the level of empowerment partly depends on their creativity and lead-user characteristics (Füller, Muhlbacker, & Matzler, 2009). Another author also makes a statement on the subject by expressing that the customer has a big influence on service productivity (Katri, 2003). Hence, we do acknowledge that a challenging consumer, due to several world-changing factors, which are shifting the power from the producer to the consumer, today meets businesses. But what we also are recognizing, is that it’s a specific portion of those consumers who are taking the lead and setting the agenda.

“The future belongs to those that can successfully co-create unique experiences with customers.” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation., 2004, p. 12)”. This quote truly caught our attention when thinking about how future business strategies should be formed. Would it then mean that companies not implementing the co-creation mindset in their business strategy would fail? Does that concern all kinds of businesses despite their target groups and products? These questions remain unanswered so far.

“Consumers have to also learn that co-creation is a two-way street. The risks cannot be one-sided. They must take some responsibility for the risks they consciously accept.” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation., 2004, p. 13). This phrase also caught our attention, as we see a great potential in sharing the risk with the consumers in return of more influence and involvement. This goes especially to start-ups, which are less capable of taking high risks, as this will clearly reduce the risks related to NPD. As authors stress; co-creation is demanding, as it requires time-intensive dialogues among other things. Also, it allows a high degree of customer input into product design. Furthermore, transparency is also an issue opening up for massive customer interaction, which might get intrusive. Another issue is that co-creating experiences leads to heterogeneous demands and a high level of customization, which is
hard to deal with. All this leads the company towards individual centred demand. The challenge is how demand forecasting would work in this situation. Authors further add that in the new co-creation space, businesses have partial control over the experience environment and the networks they build to facilitate co-creation experience. It is argued that the aim of co-creation is to create methods to attain an intuitive understanding of co-creation experiences in order for companies to co-shape consumer expectations and experiences. It is further added that in this situation consumers and companies are seen as collaborators and competitors at the same time; collaborators, as in co-creating value together and competitors as in extracting economic value. Hence, the market becomes inseparable from the value creation process.

“Eventually, the roles of the company and the consumer converge towards a unique co-creation experience or an experience of one” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, The Future of Competition: Co-Creating Unique Value With Customers, 2004, s. 16). This phrase, however sounding utopian, shows a picture of a reality where not only the influence on the shape of the business is shared 50-50 between the consumer and the company, but also a win-win situation with no losers in the game.

**Conclusion**

Theory states that businesses that do not incorporate co-creation based on the principles of DART, would struggle to succeed and those incorporating them successfully would lead. Consumers are empowered by their big influence on service productivity. Hence, the aim with co-creation is to enhance intuitive understanding of customer co-creation in order for businesses to co-shape consumer expectations and experiences. The good opportunity about co-creation is that the risks are also shared between the company and consumer – not only the ideas. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to consider that co-creators can be seen as both collaborators and competitors at once, due to the co-feeling of ownership and the extraction of value.

**Collaborative Innovation as the new Imperative - Design Thinking, Value Co-creation and the Power of Pull (Leavy, 2012)**

**Main ideas**

Levy opines that institutions must learn to become powerful pull platforms; helping individuals to gain leverage they could never achieve on their own and, as a result, develop their talents more
rapidly than they could as independent agents. Corporate leaders need to learn to adopt the revolutionary thinking and practices required to stimulate and propel the innovation that remains latent in and around most organizations. According to author; more stakeholders are willing to play an active role in the value creation process. This though requires that management learns to use the new tools of engagement, namely: design thinking (intuitive existent capacities, often overlooked by problem-solving practices), value creation e.g. co-creation (innovation through collaboration with user) and the “power of pull”.

Author believes that co-creation may apply to any businesses, large or small, whose customers have experiences and interactions. He promotes the DART model of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers-New Approach to Value Creation, 2004), stating that it’s the firm’s responsibility to ensure their policies are in accordance with the DART principles. He further elaborates on DART highlighting the challenge in creating an effective engagement, due to the shift from “the power of push” (mass production) to the “power of pull” (firm pulling together and mobilizing resources). Author presents the “Pull principle” by Hagel (Hagel, Brown, & Davison, 2010), which operates on 3 levels: access (about finding people and resources), attract (pulling new people and resources) and ability (to pull from within ourselves the insight and performance required to fully achieve the potential).

Author explains that the transition to co-creation for a company is likely to be an evolutionary process; starting with individual initiatives and local experimentation to far-sighted leadership. It’s also said that, from the experience of the pioneers, the full embrace of the co-creation principle will eventually involve a “complete transformation of the capabilities and culture of the enterprise in conceiving, designing and executing value” (Levy, 2012). Furthermore, firms seeking to co-create with customers should apply this mindset to the engagement between management and all co-creators. Author concludes that the early movers in the world of pull will set the agenda, leaving those clinging to the transactional world of push, struggle.

Discussion
Levy takes a significantly different perspective to co-creation, stating that co-creation can be applied by all businesses despite their size. Though, he highlights that the co-creation principle, taking base on the DART principle by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers-New Approach to Value Creation, 2004), needs to be strategically implemented in the company culture and apply to all relationships between
management and stakeholders. This would particularly be relevant to start-ups in our opinion, due to the typically smaller team and limited resources to hire professionals. What we really liked is author’s highlight of the idea that design thinking is intuitive in all stakeholders (based on human nature), and that we rather need to learn exploiting it to reach “prosperity” according to the “Power of Pull” model by (Hagel, Brown, & Davison, 2010). This draws attention to a potential that has been overlooked and wasted due to the narrow-minded “power of push” principle. Companies need to give up the “receiving” exploiting mindset and start “giving” to the consumer an equal amount of value. Levy’s idea of helping the customer in gaining leverage is a very interesting approach to co-creation that few other authors in the area have spoken about. Shifting the focus from the company gains to the individual consumer’s gains makes the company appear trustworthier. This is interesting, especially if the company wishes to build and maintain a trust-relationship in shorter time and more effectively. Author further adds that the early movers that understand the power of pull will lead the future, and those who stick to the “power of push” would struggle. Does that mean that well-established companies, which reject the principle of pull would fail and lose market share in favour of the newcomers? Does that also include large and powerful MNCs? We are not too sure about this hypothesis. However, the 3-footed principle of pull is very interesting. Most notably, the access to the right co-creators is an area we think is worth looking further into. Also attracting this particular group of customers and building trust with them is considerate along with the ability to benefit from and exploit the co-creation potential. We find the combination of design thinking, value creation/co-creation and the “power of pull” quite harmonious and useful. However, it might be a little overwhelming in practice for small businesses and start-ups, which in reality have most of their focus on surviving instead of exploiting potential and overlooked value. Our concern is whether this might appear too hypothetical for start-ups to implement the principles fully. Especially, when even larger, capable and well-established companies are showing scepticism towards adopting co-creation into the company strategy and culture.

Conclusion
Design thinking, co-creation with the consumer and the “power of pull” are supposed to go hand in hand. Furthermore, it is equally important to make sure to find the right people to co-create with as it is for the potential co-creators to find your business easily as well, as it is to learn to extract the potential value. For that to happen, the company needs to consider the gains of the co-creators before the company. In general, we think that Levy had significantly added noticeable points to the
importance of not only including the consumer, but also benefitting the consumer. Though, we still lack more evidence on whether the discussed theories would apply successfully to start-ups considering their limited capabilities and resources.

**Competing through Co-creation; Innovation at 2 Companies**  
(Ramaswamy, 2010)

**Main idea**
Business and society are moving towards experience-based view of co-creative engagement among individuals and institutions. Ramaswamy talks about the “human network effect” which implies; co-creating sustainable ecosystems, business networks, products and services, and markets and brands. This is based on the idea that the future is about collaboration and teamwork and making decisions with a replicable process that offers; scale, speed and flexibility. He stresses that we are entering a new generation of productivity and growth, powered by web 2.0 collaboration and network technologies. Co-creative companies have developed engagement programs to create greater value by fostering more rewarding experiences for their customers. His research involves the company, Cisco, and their success with creating “mini-CEOs”, which is a pool of talents leading the creative value work. This helped them to innovate and act rapidly on opportunities.

**Discussion**
Author advocates the co-creative eco-system by citing Orange “in an online world where everything is one click away…Orange has had to adapt to interact with customers and benefit from their empowerment everywhere in the ecosystem...call it 360-degree co-creation” (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010). This clearly alerts to addressing the optimal option to cope to this phenomenon. As Peter Drucker puts it; “The best way to anticipate the future is to create it. Even better, co-create it” (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010).

In order to gain competitive advantage, author advocates building a co-creative enterprise as a business concept, through generating sustainable growth. Furthermore, in order to sustain R&D or manage innovation through co-creation, it requires that leaders in any organisation guide the building of co-creative management capabilities inside their organisations. The success of Cisco though, required the company to go through a management makeover involving 750 executives!
The outcome is that leaders of business units who formerly competed for resources and power now share responsibility for each other’s success. We are inspired by Cisco’s strategy as we think it might benefit a company to have a pool of innovative consumers leading and managing the co-creative process of value creation. A good opportunity is to choose those representatives among users that are highly influential in online communities, as they usually have a very strong effect on their audiences, the end users. Matthing et al., supports the view of sub-managers stating that it’s a good idea to create a customer advisory panel (2006, Developing successful technology-based services).

**Conclusion**

The co-creative eco-system is about 360-degree co-creation with the consumers. In order to gain competitive advantage and generating sustainable growth, building a co-creative enterprise as a business concept is an option. Company should have a pool of innovators leading and managing the co-creative process as “mini-CEOs”. At the same time, these mini-CEOs act as advisors for the company.

**Lead Users and Early Adopters on the Web; the Role of New Technology Product Blogs**

*(Droge & al., 2010)*

**Main points**

The article talks about the blogosphere world and its major effects on the brands and the NPD. (Droge & al., 2010) argue that bloggers are setting the agenda with or without the company’s intervention. This is especially due to the fact that blogs make a great part of communicating information about the products. Blogging is significant to NPD managers due to the shift of focus from being separate from to being immersed in the virtual communities (Droge & al., 2010). People voluntarily join new product blogging communities. If the manager of that product is not present, an entirely new product marketing agenda can be set by the community. Blogs can position the value proposition of the product in a prime target audience’s mind, which can be advantageous or catastrophic for the NPD manager. By connecting to blogs, NPD managers can co-create value. Customer input to NPD processes is advocated, especially by lead users and early adopters. In addition, some blogs are more influential than others and therefore selectivity is necessary.
Usefulness of blogs can range from tracking a blogger’s community to advertising on influential blogs. NPD managers can also establish relationships with a blog community and co-create value.

Discussion

We agree with authors on the argument that co-creating with bloggers is beneficial to the company as bloggers are contributors to setting the agenda. What we already have known from earlier articles, is that the active customer saves the company time, money and resources and secures customer loyalty (Slywotzky & Morrison, 2001). What we thought, until now, lacked insight to is which user or active customer to choose to co-create with. (Droge & al., 2010) answer from this article gives a hint on considering influential bloggers and more specifically lead users or early adopters. This statement, is supported by (Bogers & al., 2010), who argue that lead users face and predict needs that mainstream users face much later. Also, (Kristensson & al., 2008) supports this idea as they claim that user involvement leads to innovative ideas, as it’s useful for capturing the latent need of important customers to NPD. Furthermore, Matthing et al. elaborates on the matter suggesting that a good option is to choose lead users to co-create with based on their Technology Readiness (TR), since users with high TR score are highly creative both quality and quantity-wise (Matthing & al., 2006). This supports (Droge & al., 2010)’s idea that the company should have a selective strategy for choosing influential users. Returning to (Bogers & al., 2010), they go even further to stating that users are both innovators and entrepreneurs, as they commercialize their innovations online. They then become “user-entrepreneurs” and give rise to industries, markets and niches through social contexts and user communities affecting the future organisation and giving rise to a dominant design (Bogers & al., 2010). This also supports (Droge & al., 2010)’s argument that influential bloggers are setting the future agenda. (Droge & al., 2010) further add that NPD managers can also establish relationships with a blog community and co-create value. An important insight from (Slywotzky & Morrison, 2001) on this matter suggests that a company should assist the consumer with constant upgrading, e.g. a developmental long-term relationship. This is due to their notion that facilitating tools for customers to help themselves is important (Slywotzky & Morrison, 2001).

Conclusion

We can conclude from the above discussion that co-creating with influential bloggers is both a benefit for the NPD of the company but also a necessity to secure customer loyalty on virtual
communities. A solution here is to choose the right influencers carefully but also helping those users continuously through maintaining long-term relationships with them.

Value Co-creation and Purchase Intention in Social Network Sites: the Role of Electronic Word-Of-Mouth and Trust – a Theoretical Analysis
(See-To & Ho, 2014)

Main idea
The article focused on the relationship between eWOM\(^6\), value co-creation and purchase intention on Social Networking Sites (SNS). Authors argue that trust has an impact on purchase intention, nonetheless on online purchasing. In addition, they state that trust is a prerequisite of value co-creation, because trust is affected by eWOM, which in the end has an impact on the customers’ willingness to co-create with a company. The authors have different propositions which are answered by following findings; positive eWOM enhances trust, negative eWOM reduces trust, eWOM has an impact on purchase intention, trust generated from eWOM increases purchase intention, the consumer-learning process is one of the processes in value co-creation and eWOM is a source for consumers to learn about the product (See-To & Ho, 2014). All in all, the article gave insight for practitioners to utilize the resources on social media to build up their product images. Also, they encouraged developing a strategy using SNS as a platform aiming at improving their value co-creation processes with customers. They also gave an insight on how to apply the concept and encourage consumers for repeating purchases, and moderating the role of the participants in SNS, which impacts eWOM. In conclusion, eWOM affects purchase intention through several channels in the value co-creation process. Also, the message source in SNS moderates on the impact of eWOM.

Discussion
Authors argue that trust has an impact on purchase intention, which we obviously agree on. They further state that trust is affected by eWOM. According to Prahalad & Ramaswamy; eWOM is as influential as marketing (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2002). This is a threat that bloggers are experts in knowing how to benefit from, we can conclude from earlier discussions. The matter is also

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\(^6\) Definition of eWOM by Henning-Thurau et al. (2004); “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet”. 
discussed by (Hennig-Thurau & al., 2004), arguing that eWOM is expected to be more powerful (than traditional marketing) due to its user-friendliness, even for beginners and not only for experts in the area. It also provides information on almost every area of consumption, they add. (See-To & Ho, 2014) argue that eWOM is a source for consumers to learn. (Hennig-Thurau & al., 2004) elaborates on that argument revealing that eWOM providers can be grouped based on motivations; consumers’ desire for social interaction, desire for economic incentives, concern for other consumers and enhance own self-worth. They further continue that platform operators can develop programs that appeal to the basic motives that drive eWOM behaviour (Hennig-Thurau & al., 2004). (Bijmolt & al., 2010), agree that eWOM affects the business. However, they claim that CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and customer engagement is challenging and resource-intensive, hence an agent functioning as a “mini-CEO” is needed to manage, engage and understand customers. Prahalad & Ramaswamy add their insight that there is a difference between consumer vision and firm vision, which creates a gap. Hence, co-creation is necessary to solve this gap. They also state that “The conflict is in the point of exchange of the product” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2002). Firms can reduce uncertainty and risk by the co-creation process. However, it’s a demanding and time-consuming process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers- New Approach to Value Creation, 2004). They further add that it’s best to outsource tasks to experts with a better understanding. We therefore wonder whether it is a possibility that it is best to outsource the tasks of co-creating contents that results in positive eWOM to the experts in the area; influential bloggers. See-To and Ho (2014), claim that trust is a prerequisite for value co-creation, which can be reflected on the insight from Ojasalo (2003) stating that the challenge with co-creating with customer is that the customer is unpaid for his work and contribution meaning they are free actors. That also means they are uncontrollable, which might have a negative effect on the business; causing delays, working unproductively or spreading wrong or negative WOM (Ojasalo, 2003). An answer to that dilemma might be Prahalad & Ramaswamy’s statement; “Companies must embrace the notion that consumers can become partners in the co-creation of experiences” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2002). Another insight from Lee et al. (2012) suggest that the new customer preferences in terms of product values are; safety, love, experience.

**Conclusion**
The insight from both See-to and Ho (2014) and Henning-Thurau et al. (2004), gave us the idea to expose a potential of engaging bloggers to manage and engage online users in co-creating content leading to positive eWOM outcomes. Many of those online users are willing to engage unpaid as
the reward for them is intangible; being praised and confirmed by others, belonging to a community etc. And since creating and controlling content resulting in positive eWOM aiming at influencing purchase decision is a resource-intensive task we suggest to outsource it to the experts; influential bloggers.

A Dynamic Market Conceptualization for Entrepreneurial Marketing:
the Co-creation of Opportunities
(Whalena & Akakaa, 2015)

Main idea
Authors are looking at entrepreneurial marketing’s (i.e., marketing for entrepreneurs’) potential, focusing on the interface between opportunity and development of value creation. They stress that opportunity co-creation should be the foundation for advancing entrepreneurial marketing. Taking base in the conceptualization of the service ecosystems, they determine that opportunities, value and markets can be united to create an ecosystem. An opportunity, or a market imperfection, is a social construction based on the value considerations of others (Whalena & Akakaa, 2015).

It is also added that value is individually determined through an experiential interpretation, and distinguished from exchange or possession. Because of this, an ecosystem perspective extends the viability of opportunity development. Another notion is that the communication of value propositions is essential to opportunity co-creation. Hence, entrepreneurs can share their intentions as they develop value propositions with real market actors or after the initial development occurs. Also, developing value propositions can be construed as one phase of opportunity co-creation. They interestingly add that through S-D logic, in a mutually beneficial service exchange intended to co-create value, either member of an exchange could create the original idea for an opportunity. This is, as they explain, because value is phenomenologically determined, and, thus, what is considered valuable to one actor may not be considered as such by another.

Discussion
The insight we get by authors, of value being individually determined in addition to the idea of the ecosystem that they present is very inspiring, as we associate it with a mosaic system, where all pieces are put together to get us closer to the “perfect whole”. It will also eliminate waste, as we imagine, if putting this theory into practice, that all actors will focus on what they are good at and outsource the tasks to the experts that have the competencies to solve them optimally. They
continue by explaining that any actor could also lead the development of a value proposition and each value-creating actor could be viewed as the entrepreneur or the customer, or both. This is of particular interest to us, as we are wondering whether a start-up company can be built on the idea of sharing, both tasks and benefits, through outsourcing the management of areas in their business, where they have less capabilities, in order to focus on the areas with their highest capabilities.

**Conclusion**

Opportunities, value and markets can be united to create a sustainable ecosystem. Value propositions is a co-creating phase that can be shared with others to co-create market opportunities. Entrepreneurs can share their value propositions (e.g. ideas) with other real market actors, such as entrepreneurs or consumers, in order to outsource tasks to experts and save costs.

**Managing Customer Information and Knowledge with Social Media in Business-to-Business Companies (Kärkkäinen & al., 2011)**

**Main ideas**

The study touches the role and possibilities of Web 2.0 and Social Media\(^7\) in sharing and creating customer information, focusing on knowledge, especially from the innovation perspective of business-to-business companies. A great contributing factor to successful innovation and NPD lies, according to author, in the good in-depth understanding of customer and market needs. Inter-organisational and intra-organisational cooperation is one of the other major success factors in innovation.

Web 2.0 based tools and technologies emphasize the power of users to select, filter, publish and edit information, as well as to participate in the creation of content in social media\(^8\). Authors argue that various types of collaborative web tools and approaches, such as social media\(^9\) (blogs, social

\(^7\) The difference between the open-source web 2.0 based tools and social media network tools is allowing creation and exchange of User Generated Content (UGC). Social media has different types of applications; collaborative productions (wikipedia), social content communities (youtube, Flickr), blogs, microblogs (twitter), social networking sites (linkedin and facebook), social workspaces (SharePoint) and virtual social worlds (Second League - gaming) (Kärkkäinen & al., 2011).

\(^8\) “Web 2.0 is a collection of open-source, interactive and user-controlled online applications expanding the experiences, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes. Web 2.o applications support the creation of informal users’ networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing/refining of informational content” (Kärkkäinen & al., 2011).

\(^9\) Social media can be defined as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Furthering this, social
workspaces and networking tools etc.), can enable and significantly increase the collaboration and
the use of the distributed knowledge both within and outside the company borders as well as
support the transition to more open innovation processes. Web-based technology can enable a shift
from a perspective of merely exploiting customer knowledge by the firm to a perspective of
knowledge co-creation with the customers. The use of social media in B2C contexts differs from
the use in B2B (crowd-sourcing applications were not discovered in B2B). Though it’s still useful
for B2B in the innovation process and customer information and knowledge creation process. The
potential and possibilities of social media, differ according to the different innovation phases, and
should therefore be analysed particularly.

**Discussion**

Within the scope of collaboration and co-creation, we agree with authors in the statement that web 2.0 tools, particularly social media, are useful. Especially when considering the low costs associated with using Social Media as marketing channels, compared to traditional marketing channels. Despite the general scepticism, by academics and businesses, towards the use of Social Media in B2B markets, authors argue, through an extensive literature review and the results of their study that social media offers significant possibilities and benefits to the B2B sector. This concerns both the innovation process and the related customer information and knowledge management, which gave birth to Knowledge Management 2.0 (KM 2.0).

Studying co-creation and innovation from a B2B perspective is interesting, as we somehow see collaborative co-creating users, as potential business partners instead of just consumers. Hence, what caught our attention even more, is that few studies have been made on B2B and social media, from a co-creation perspective, even though author argues that social media for KM 2.0 have been applied beneficially in various B2Bs. Furthermore, authors add; “In the first innovation process phase customers can be regarded as a resource, i.e. the source of ideas, in the second phase customers can be regarded as co-creators (or co producers), and in the final phase customers can be regarded as (end) users”. What we are sceptical about in this phrase, is the assumption of the co-creating customers or partners to be satisfied with their role in the process and their share of the outcome. Even though authors are advocating open innovation and the involvement of the customer, and are recognizing the significant power of today’s competitive consumer, we see very little evidence on how this solution is favouring the co-creative customers. We are therefore

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media are often referred to as applications that are either fully based on user created content, or in which user-created content or user activity have a significant role in increasing the value of the application or the service. (ibid.)
wondering whether successful co-creation is still about the company exploiting value from the consumer instead of a win-win collaboration. And if so, whether this would hold in the long-term.

**Conclusion**

Web 2.0 tools and Social Media are useful low-cost tools for information, knowledge and innovation creation but also as marketing channels. The notion of using Social Media in B2B markets makes sense, especially if considering collaborative users as business partners. The scepticism towards authors’ theories is related to the idea of exploiting consumer when seeing him as knowledge creators and co-creators and finally end users that don’t own a share of the co-created value.

10 Describing the Literature Review

We have strived to read as much literature as possible aiming at adding to our knowledge within the sphere of co-creation. More specifically, we have aimed at being enlightened in the area of co-creation between start-ups and influencers within the blogosphere world in the sphere of social media. To our surprise, very little literature have touched the area of co-creation as a strategy for start-ups to scale up through influencers on social media.

In accordance to our problem formulation and research question, we have mapped the literature upon 4 poles, which are representing the topics to be covered in the analysis and discussion in order to answer our research question. These are the following:

Co-creation for start-ups: as our diagram shows, literature covering this area is very limited and almost non-existent. Most of the literature on co-creation doesn’t consider the situation and limitations of capabilities for start-ups, which mainly strive to survive their business. Most of the co-creation strategies that are discussed, though less costly than mainstream marketing strategies, require more time, money, people and other resources and capabilities that entrepreneurs typically lack, and hence suits MNCs.

Co-creation with non-influential consumers: As the diagram shows, extensive literature covers the area of co-creating with non-influential consumers. Additionally, they even mention the challenges related to the extensive time and resources to be spent on co-creating value with many consumers
and the overwhelming input they need to adjust to (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) (Ind & al., 2012), among others.

Co-creation with influential consumers: In this category, we are specifically addressing consumers that are influencing many other consumers. We are here thinking of influential users who communicate their feedback on their experiences with products to their audiences on social online platforms; specifically blogs and social media channels. Hence, it means that not all lead users can be classified as influencers on online social platforms. Some companies might classify the creative and innovative users that can contribute to NPD more than their peers as lead users (Matthing & al., 2006). Though, these lead users might not necessarily be influencers online. The users we classify as influencers are seen as opinion leaders that influence mainstream online users’ choices and purchases of products.

Social media: Despite our research about both the blogosphere world and social media-based influencing, we chose to focus on co-creating innovation-based experiences through social media channels, due to the notice of significantly more activity and engagement by online users on social media channels compared to blogs.

It should be kept in mind, when looking at our literature mapping that the perception of co-creating value here is co-creating innovation-based experiences with the influential consumers. This is mainly based on the literature insight by (Bhalla, Collaboration and Co-creation, 2010), (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), (Ind & al., 2012), (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010) and (See-To & Ho, 2014), among others, arguing that the value has shifted from the physical product to the experience, which is strongly linked to the S-D logic discussed by (Whalena & Akakaa, 2015) and aim for Innovation through NPD with consumers touched upon by (Kärkkäinen & al., 2011).

11 Literature diagram
Figure 3: Literature mapping diagram

- **Influential consumers**
  - Ramaswamy 2010: Competing through co-creation
  - Rogers et al., 2010

- **Non-influential consumers**
  - Bhalla, 2010

- **Social Media**
  - Droge et al., 2009

- **Startups**
  - Eric Ries, 2011

- **Literature**
  - Whalen & Akkaka, 2015
  - Ramaswamy, 2010
  - Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012
  - Kärkkäinen et al., 2011
  - See-To & Ho, 2014
  - Brian Levy, 2012
  - Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004
12 Our Reflections on and Insight to the Literature Review

Literature in the area of co-creation speaks a lot about the importance of customer engagement and involvement in the value-creation process but limited literature touches the area of choosing the right customers to co-create with. Hence, we faced a gap of tools in order to identify and choose the most capable influencers to co-create with. Furthermore, we also lacked insight on how to practically motivate the co-creators and maintain a sustainable collaboration with them. What caught us was the statements “Eventually, the roles of the company and the consumer converge towards a unique co-creation experience or an experience of one” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers—New Approach to Value Creation, 2004). This phrase, however sounding utopian, draws us a picture of a reality where not only the influence on the shape of the business is shared 50-50 between the consumer and the company, but also a win-win situation with no losers in the game. Which gave us an idea for how the relationship to the bloggers should be shaped, in practice. On the backdrop of our reflections we propose to develop the 5-co’s model adding a 6th co, related to the post-launch phase of co-created value; the co-ownership, since we believe, following (Ind & al., 2012) and (Bhalla, 2010) that the co-creators need to feel rewarded, which will only happen if they have a sense of ownership over the brand. To make sure that happens we believe that the co-creators practically should own a financial share of the co-created value.

13 Method

In this chapter the framework and method used to conduct the research and analysis will be presented. Our choice of research methods of data collection and analysis will be outlined.

13.1 Research Design

The case study design entails an intense analysis of a single case, and is concerned with the complexity and particularity of the case in question. A case can be a single community, a single school, a single person, a single event, a single organization etc. (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In order to answer our research question in the best possible manner, we have chosen to work with multiple cases, and hence apply a multiple-case study design. This approach allows us to compare and contrast our findings derived from each of the cases, find interrelationships, and provide as wholesome a conclusion as possible. According to Knights and McCabe (1997) the case study
provides a vehicle through which several qualitative methods can be combined, thereby avoiding too great a reliance on one single approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Our first case study investigated the online community of Inayah and focused on collecting dynamic data in form of conversation between online users. The second case study investigated three influential bloggers and focused on collecting static data in form of statements and opinions of the bloggers.

13.2 Method of Data Collection

In the following, the two chosen method of empirical data collection will be described and evaluated.

13.2.1 The application of method

Answering our research question requires a deep understanding of online users and bloggers, and hence requires an immersive engagement with online community and bloggers to understand and derive answers and conclusions. To do this we have chosen to use a relatively new method of data collection that fulfils the requirements; grounded theory. There are various versions of grounded theory and the one used in this project is the grounded theory by Straus and Corbin (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The argument for choosing grounded theory as method for collecting data is because this method allows the data to speak and guide the researcher through the process. In most qualitative research methods, data is used as evident or justification for a preconceived theory in mind. But in grounded theory data is not just a tool of justification, data is more a representation of reality.

In grounded theory data can be “interviews, observational field notes, videos, journals, memos, manuals, catalogs, and other forms of written or pictorial materials” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, s. 58). Since our research is in the field of social media our data consisted of:

1. Youtube videos of the bloggers and company.
2. Pictures posted on Instagram and blogs
3. Textual data including comments on Instagram and Youtube.
4. Memos of researcher’s thoughts and questions during or after the data collection.

13.3 Analytical Procedure

Grounded theory was applied on both case studies in order to gather data that can be analyzed.
13.4 Dynamic data: Inayah’s online community\textsuperscript{10}

This case study aimed to understand the online users experience by capturing their interaction and expression of opinion about their experience. Since our data derived from interaction the data was dynamic in its nature. To enable and simplify the comparison between our dynamic and static case studies we decided to set an equal timeframe for both cases. Our data collection was limited to collect data from last 9 months. In total for the dynamic data we collected 30 A4 (appendix 4) pages of dynamic data including 5 Instagram posted pictures with their related comments and 2 Youtube videos with their related comments.

13.5 Static data: Product review videos by 3 influential bloggers\textsuperscript{11}

This case study aimed to observe and analyze the statements of the bloggers about their experiences.

This study is static because we only observe a one-way communication from the blogger to the audience. Like our dynamic case study, we limited the data collection for the last 9 months. The material for this case study was primary product reviews also called “Haul-videos” in total 3 haul videos. A single “Where I get my products from” video and a blogpost with outfit matching and comparison including 15 pictures and text. In total the video material used as data source was 61 minutes and 8 seconds. The data for the static case study are found in appendix 5.

13.6 Microanalysis

In grounded theory data go through micro examination meaning that every word or sentence is examined separately and in detail. This approach is called microanalysis and defined as “The detailed line-by-line analysis necessary at the beginning of a study to generate initial categories (with their properties and dimensions) and to suggest relationships among categories; a combination of open and axial coding” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, s. 57). Microanalysis is all about “take data apart and work with the pictures, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and other segment of the material.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, s. 58). The microanalysis was used to

\textsuperscript{10} Appendix 4
\textsuperscript{11} Aooendix 5
code ideas from the online user and bloggers about their experience as described in the next section.

13.7 Coding

Coding is “the analytical processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form a theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, s. 3). There is three different codings in grounded theory; open, axial and selective. All three codings were used in order to build the empirical framework.

13.7.1 Open coding

Open coding was used to generate data in the beginning of the process. It is very important to point out that our coding was focused on ideas and not concepts, since concepts do not help us to create new insight. We started creating codes for dynamic data. What we where searching for was codes that could give us insight and help us to answer our research question. The codes were created by going through the data and noted every idea down on a “post-it”. The coding process was done separately by the researchers to ensure high level of creativity. During the coding process the researchers were separated to avoid communication. After both researchers finished the coding process the codes where compared. Similar codes that both parties had coded were seen as valid codes. Not similar codes were seen as redundant. The same approach was applied on static data.

13.7.2 Axial coding

The purpose of axial coding as described by is to “begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). After the collection of the open codes next was to sort the codes based on what they spoke about. Codes speaking about the same topic where clustered into a category. Once a category was defined it was described based on the codes it was build upon.

13.7.3 Selective coding

In the selective coding the categories were integrated into themes. Once two or more categories were collected into a theme the theme were described. To simple the overview of themes, categories
and codes all three were collected in mind-maps to keep a clear overview. The mind-map for
dynamic data is in figure 3 and for static data in figure 4. The themes that emerged from
the integration of the categories was the keystones for building our empirical framework.
Figure 4: Mind-map of Dynamic Data including free codes, categories and themes
Figure 5: Mind-map of Dynamic Data including free codes, categories and themes.

Practicality is described by product functionality, durability, and proper coverage and fitting.

Blogger's inspirational role

Coding of Static Data

Behavior

Usability concern
- Hard to match
- Easy usage
- Practical

Fabric description
- Fabric
- Fabric texture
- Fabric mix (design)

Durability, appearance and texture
- Thin
- Comfort
- Light weight
- Quality = long term investment

Proper fit and proper coverage
- Soft
- Coverage
- "Long fitting"
- "Layering"

Fitting and description non-compliance
- Design vs. figure
- Fitting comparison - model vs. blog

Product characteristics
- "Smart" fitting
- Cheap
- Worth the high price
- Expensive

Criticality of style and looks
- Discount
- Cheap look
- Elegance
- Luxury brand
- Wow item
- Luxury product
- Cozy
- Smart look

Emotional attachment to artefacts
- Love product
- Feelings-driven attitude
- Love style
- Irresistible
- Need Drives Desire
- "Must have"
- Positively impressed
- Joy (have fun)

Product aesthetics/sensitivity

Sales increases consumption
- Inspiration leading to demand

Seasonal styles
- Seasonal shopping

Sales increases impulsive purchase
- Item associated with makeup look
- Item associated with occasions
- Item connected to occasions

Visualizing product in-use associated with occasions, situations, actions and matchings

Justification of choices and the expression of "why" and "how"

Choice
- favorite collections and colors
- favorite shops

Styling tips
- Asking for advice
- Sharing experience

Room for creativity
- Hard to match print
- Bloggers and product diversity

Creative outfit
- Recommendation

Love color
- Love product
- "on-trend"

Passion
- "Must have"

Basic covering product
- Positively impressed
- "Joy (have fun)"

Influential color
- Color matching skin tone
- Color alignment

Matching clothes with skin color
- Makeup match with item color

Playful colors
- Color variety
Memos
During the process of coding a lot of thoughts and questions emerged based on the analysis of data. These thoughts and questions were registered as memos. Memos are fieldnotes and defined as “the researcher’s record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110). When using grounded theory two operations are absolutely essential; the first is asking questions and the second is making comparison. During the coding process questions emerged among other because some codes could be interpreted in different ways. Besides questions, thoughts, interpretations etc. were all noted as memos in a systematic way appendix 6. Making comparison was another analytical tool applied in order to observe the same subject from a different perspective. In addition, making comparison was helpful to define and sharpen the different categories and themes based on similarities and differences.

Case story
After all the free codes, categories and themes were defined next was telling a case story based on the coding. This case story paved the way for analyzing the data and create a new insight to be used in building the empirical framework. The mix between the method of case study and grounded theory assisted us in gaining valuable and new insight in the field of experience based co-creation which will be presented in the case story and empirical framework.

14 Methodology
14.1 Justification
14.1.1 E-commerce and Online Expenditure
E-commerce is the fastest growing retail market in Europe, which is expected to reach £185.44 billions in 2016 (Centre for Retail Research, 2015). Online sales have increased about 20% year over year for more than 100 retailers, indicating a potential for new online businesses to emerge and succeed (Smith, 2014). Most notably, since 2014, the consumer shopping behaviour have evolved to a state, where shopping online and through mobile devices has become a norm. In addition, social media platforms are playing a big role as they have developed capabilities catering easier shopping options for consumers (O'hara, 2015) and hence greater marketing and growth opportunities for businesses in return.
In this context, it is worth considering that online social media platforms have gained a tremendous influence on businesses, particularly in the fashion world, post-recession. The reason behind is that brands and retailers have become more conscious about how to court their customers by engaging them, in order to retain them in the future. Consequently, the rise of social media appears to be the answer. As firmly put by the in the Independent; “Whether it’s a recommendation, a written review, or an endorsement by a celebrity or an influencer, the more informed the customer, the more empowered they are” (Gonsalves, 2015). They further add that this opportunity is particularly valuable for smaller scale businesses, which can’t afford conducting a traditional market research, and hence can connect to their customer base immediately. As a consequence, the businesses are forced to quickly react to feedbacks and dissatisfactions by customers in online communities in order to avoid viral damages (Gonsalves, 2015).

14.1.2 The Modest Fashion Industry

Within the fashion world, and more precisely the modest fashion industry, a “new” phenomenon named “Islamic fashion” has evolved, which has been drawing attention to a huge market opportunity, not yet saturated. The 2014-15 Thomson Reuters State of the Global Islamic Economy Report forecasts that expenditure on Muslim clothing will reach US$488 billion by 2019 (McLaughlin-Duane, 2015).

The majority of Muslim women wish to dress modestly and decently in public. However, an increasing number wish to be fashionable and stylish too. This desire along with the needs and requirements that lie therein has not been properly met by the fashion industry over the past decades. Along with the prosperity of many Muslim countries, this issue has been an eye-opener for businesses worldwide. The Global Muslim population is the second largest in the world, and more than 60 percent of this group is under 30. This large youth population is growing at an alarming rate, resulting in a specialized and fast-growing offshoot of the modest fashion industry (McLaughlin-Duane, 2015). New ways of hijab styling, new designs of veil-kinis, head-to-foot swimsuits and modest wedding gowns are coming out each season. Dubai, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur all host Islamic-fashion shows. This is spreading beyond the Islamic world too. Currently London, Paris and even America are hosting similar events as well (McLaughlin-Duane, 2015).

A clear definition of what “Islamic Fashion” is can’t be dictated, as it is highly dependent on the individual’s ideology and perception of what is religiously appropriate dressing. However, Islamic fashion for women is widely understood as covering the hair and the body, which implies modest
arms and legs covering (McLaughlin-Duane, 2015). These women are usually referred to as “hijabi women” or “hijabis”.

The booming modest fashion market along with the rising number of newly established businesses within the industry, are supporting the fact that there is an increasing demand on modest fashion clothing, mainly among the upper-class Muslim population, on a global basis. This group of women are cosmopolitan, mainly in their 20’s and 30’s and demanding fashion and modernity (Khan, The National, 2015). It is no secret that there is a modest fashion revolution going on, led by Muslim women from all over the world (Saber, 2015). This revolution is happening on many different levels with Islamic fashion wear boutiques, Islamic haute couture, and most notably on the front-line; fashion bloggers portraying inspirational modest yet fashionable outfits (Saber, 2015).

Bearing in mind, the growth in demand for online commerce along with the booming of the modest fashion industry; new online retailers, within the segment of modest fashion for Muslim women, are likely to evolve and flex their muscles.

14.1.3 Online Influencers Boosting Online Sales

During our online research about online retailing and the booming modest fashion industry; the phenomenon of “bloggers” and “online social media platforms” and “online communities” popped up repetitively showing a remarkable interdependence of the three respective variables; online businesses, the blogosphere world, and online social communities. We therefore decided to explore the respective influential factors further.

Along with the rise of the online commerce and the modest fashion industry; one cannot disregard the influence of online bloggers on the online consumers and their purchase behaviour. Based on research, nearly nine out of ten consumers (84%) make a purchase of a product after reading about it in a blog (Corporate Eye, 2014). Most notably, consumers between 18-34 ranked blogs as the most important source of information to make purchase decisions. The research also found that 25% of the respondents indicated that they made a purchase each month based on blog content. Additionally, nearly 46% use blogs for pre-purchase product investigation, and 43% use blogs for inspiration. Hence, blogs play a significant role at every stop along the marketing and sales funnel and are said to be the third most influential digital resource (31%) (Redsicker, 2013).

Online consumers are looking for honest advice and while bloggers are usually seen as trustworthy people blogging about their personal experiences with brands and giving free advice, they are considered influential. It is further argued that businesses that find the right blogs to connect with
their target audiences, while providing useful and interesting content for their audience, will benefit
great times (Redsicker, 2013).
In the light of the great potential the e-commerce offers, along with the booming of the modest
fashion industry and the expansion of the solutions that the social media caters for businesses,
bloggers and online users to build and foster online communities; a great interest to further
investigate this area has evolved. More specifically, and in accordance with our research question,
our interest is drawn towards the blogosphere world and start-ups can utilize the blogosphere world
and social media to benefit and foster or scale up their business.

14.1.4 Lead users
After digging deeper into the nature of the blogosphere world and social media sites, our next
important reflection was; who are these bloggers, also known as online influencers, and why do
they have such a remarkable influence on the online customers?
Based on the literature on the nature of co-creation, previously introduced in our “literature review”
section, our assumption is that for a business to benefit from co-creation, they are encouraged to
engage with customers with high co-creation potential based on innovation behaviour in order to
co-create value (Bhalla, 2010).

Since bloggers are considered influential consumers that are acting as opinion leaders and
trendsetters, blogging about the newest products and sharing the shortcomings of products along
with their uncovered needs with the online community, we will categorise them as lead users, in
accordance with the model of Von Hippel. Hence, we are particularly interested to research the
nature of those lead users, or bloggers, within the sphere of Islamic fashion e.g. modest fashion.

14.1.5 Online communities
Moreover, and as we are interested in the blogosphere world, it stroked us to find out how and why
bloggers have an influence on the online users, which pulled us towards ‘online communities’ on
social media sites, being it the platforms where businesses, bloggers and online consumers connect.
To understand the nature of online communities, we strived to find a clear definition, which was the
following;

“A community is an engaged and connected group of individuals in pursuit of mutual interests or a
shared commonality” (Perkins, 2015).
There exist three types of online communities for businesses; Business-to-Business (B2B) communities, employee-to-employee (E2E), and business-to-consumer (B2C). Obviously, our interest here falls on the latter, due to our variables being the modest fashion retailers catering for female Muslim online consumers and the blogosphere world’s influence therein.

The reasons behind online communities being interesting for our explorative research are the following advantages for businesses:

**Access**: implying building a connection to consumers and discovering trends and inspiration.

**Savings**: implying lower-cost marketing and market research by tracking customer behaviour.

**Consistency**: implying ease of distribution and ability to be consistent and timely in building the audience relationship.

**Speed**: implying to reach the community quickly.

It is further argued, “If managed properly, communities can forge stronger bonds between customers and brands. Building this connection, however, is not a passive process” (Perkins, 2015).

The notion is that word of mouth has become more powerful than ever as new ways to broadcast opinions and personal reviews are built every day. Therefore, and since the main aim with the online community is to gather people around a specific idea, we decided to dig deeper into the matter and observe what idea and which topics the community is gathered around.

### 14.2 Delimitation of Study

Based on the fact, introduced earlier, that around 60% of the Muslim population globally is below 30 years, along with the fact that Muslim women between 18-34 lead the Muslim fashion revolution; we chose to investigate bloggers within this scope.

Furthermore, and given the fact that the European world is leading the fashion industry (Ditty, 2015), it appeared to us that within the borders of Europe, the UK seems to be the dominant first-mover when it comes to Islamic fashion brands and modest fashion bloggers. This can be seen by the number of Muslim hijabi bloggers and the amount of their online audiences following them on common and active social media channels; Youtube and Instagram. The reason for choosing these two social media channels is because the level of activity, is significantly higher than on Twitter, Facebook etc. Furthermore, it's important to stress that we in the beginning of our explorative research focused on online blogs, which are the sites where bloggers write and post pictures of
themselves and their experiences with products, among other things. However, we discovered that most bloggers have shifted their focus away from their blogging sites and towards social media channels, most notably Youtube and Instagram, leaving very little content posted on their blogs. We also noticed that the activity on their social media channels is significantly higher than it is on their blogs, which might explain their behaviour. Hence, we are in the following going to focus on the social media platforms that these bloggers, also referred to as “vloggers” operate.

I addition to the above mentioned, our choice of bloggers is furthermore based on following criteria:

- Size of online audience: we assume that a blogger is an influencer/lead user based on the size of their audience. We therefore chose bloggers with a minimum of 400,000 total members as followers and subscribers.
- Location; in order to make the exploration and analysis more comprehensive, we chose all three bloggers from the UK.
- Segment; we are particularly interested in exploring the segment of Muslim hijabi women who wish to dress modestly and cover their hair and body including arms and legs. Hence the bloggers we chose are covering these criteria as well.
- Age group; since we are interested in the segment of Muslim modern women in the age of 18-34, we chose the bloggers aged within this scope. This is based on the intention that we are interested in identifying and understanding the different elements of greatest interest to and most widely discussed by women within this age frame.

Furthermore, and in order to understand the connection between the influence of the leading bloggers and the online customers on the online businesses, we chose to explore the online community of a newly-established Islamic fashion retailer; Inayah, which was launched back in 2012 (Inayah.co). From the moment it debuted 4 years ago, the company became one of the leaders of the market (Bizdb.co.uk, 2016). The reason why we chose Inayah is the fact that it is the most popular and spoken about Islamic Fashion brand internationally on Youtube and Instagram. It is well-known and extensively mentioned among modest fashion bloggers and also located in Europe, whose e-commerce market is growing, as mentioned earlier. Even though Inayah doesn’t clearly states it, we get the impression that the brand targets modern Muslim women, particularly in their 20s and 30s, looking for trendy, modest and practical everyday
wear. This impression is based on their style, designs, models and engagement on social media channels; Youtube, with over 20,000 subscribers and Instagram with 311,000 followers and Facebook with almost 350,000 likes. They also operate on twitter with around 3000 followers only. We chose to investigate how Inayah’s online customers engage with fellow online customers on their Instagram and Youtube channels specifically, as the activity in the respective channels is significantly higher compared to their other channels.

15 Case story

In accordance with our delimitations and in order to investigate the social media field within the scope of the Islamic fashion i.e. modest fashion industry and understand how modest fashion is discussed online, and the online consumers’ preferences and purchase behaviour, we decided to do two different case studies; a static case study and a dynamic case study.

It should be noted that we in this chapter will be switching from the APA method of referencing to using footnotes aiming at making it more reader-friendly, and avoid distractions.

The static case study aims at understanding the Muslim hijabi bloggers’ behaviour towards fashion in terms of feedback based on their experience with a product.

For our static case study, we have chosen three of the most famous Muslim hijabi fashion bloggers, measured by the amount of their online audiences on Instagram and Youtube. The static case study aims at identifying the main elements of interest to bloggers, whom appears to be influential trendsetters. We will observe and listen to their communication and specifically look for the bloggers’ interest and topics of discussion within the sphere of modern fashion. The data derived from our study will be characterized as “static data” since we are only looking at a “one-way” communication, namely from the bloggers towards their audiences. Hence, based on the choice criteria in our ‘delimitations’ section; we chose the following 3 bloggers;

1. Habiba Da Silva: Habiba is a young 21-years old British lifestyle, beauty and fashion blogger with Brazilian and Lebanese roots (Habibadasilva.com, 2016). Habiba blogs and vlogs with hijab tutorials, make-up tutorials, lookbooks with different outfits, and shopping hauls. Habiba has 115 videos on Youtube. She also posts pictures on Instagram with ‘outfits of the day’ and selfies portraying her makeup and outfit. Habiba’s community forms
466,000 members in total; roughly 98,000 Youtube subscribers, and 368,000 Instagram followers.

2. Dina Tokio: Dina is a 26 years old fashion designer and blogger with British and Egyptian roots, whom is very passionate about fashion and lifestyle (Tokio, 2010). Dina’s community forms 1,144,000 members in total; roughly 322,000 Youtube subscribers and 826,000 Instagram followers. Dina has 313 Youtube videos in total, which is a mix of tutorials, lookbooks, shopping hauls and everyday vlogs about her lifestyle and experiences.

3. Amena: Amena is a 32 old mother, blogging about fashion, lifestyle and beauty. Amena is of Indian roots and also lives in the UK. Amena’s community forms 677,000; roughly 301,000 Youtube subscribers and 378,000 Instagram followers. Amena has 219 Youtube videos with makeup tutorials, hijab tutorials, lookbooks, hauls etc.

Habiba, Dina and Amena were chosen because they are internationally recognized and followed by Muslim hijabi online users and are seen as pioneers in the modern Muslim fashion blogosphere. Habiba is the youngest of our bloggers, she is 21 and has been blogging for 3 years. Besides of being a blogger, Habiba has just finished a bachelor degree in English and Creative Writing. Habiba appeals mostly to late teens and women in the beginning of their twenties, typically in high school or college. This can be seen by the topics she blogs about and her fashion style that can be defined as simple, relaxed, young, quick and cute. She likes simplicity in her style and this is why she most of the time uses plain colors and tries to suggest simple methods to match outfit and makeup. She is also often seen wearing hoodies and jumpers. Habiba strives to help her community in giving advice for them to make a safe and quick choice.

This is not the case for Dina, who loves expressing her creativity with colors, patterns and sizes. She is a self-confident and brave woman when it comes to fashion. Dina has just launched her first fashion collection targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims. Dina’s target group is broad, since she has the biggest audience compared to the other chosen bloggers. With her creativity and funky style, she is an inspiration primarily for women in their late twenties, who want inspiration to balance modesty and fashion. One thing that make Dina special as a blogger is that she shops from brands such as H&M, Boohoo, Zara that everyone can afford, but manages to create her own bold
and unique style, where she for instance tends to buy oversized shirts and blouses. Her matching abilities and creativity is what make the garment special.

Amena uses the same strategy as Dina; when it comes to buying affordable clothes and style it in an elegant and inspiring way. In the field of modern Islamic fashion, most bloggers are either teenagers or tweens. Amena is special of her kind, because she is above 30, and both an active blogger, a businesswoman and a mother to three children. Therefore, she is a good representative for a typical modern, modest, cosmopolitan career woman that has a family and at the same time is self-conscious with a need to keep looking fashionable.

By comparing the topics and elements discussed in the blogosphere world with the topics and elements discussed in the online communities, we will be able to see a potential connection between bloggers and online communities, and explore whether a blogger has a direct effect on the online user within the segment, and how. By understanding the bloggers and their preferences, a company is enabled to adapt to trends and react to challenges in their business, in areas usually addressed by the bloggers and in that way satisfy the customers more.

15.1 Dynamic Case Study

The following study is based on observations of the online communities of Inayah and their engagement and communication on Inayah’s YouTube and Instagram channels. The dynamic case study is hierarchically built. Every part is representing a theme identified in the data. Herein, we integrated the categories, which form the theme. The codes identified in the beginning of the process are used as argumentation for the categories to tell the story. There will be a short description for every theme as an introduction.

15.1.1 Customer expectations

Customers have individual expectations for the company. The customers expect the shopping process to be convenient, the possibility for offline shopping, equal opportunities for internationals, inspiration, and application guides. These factors are dimensions affecting the perceived overall experience.

1. Convenient online and offline shopping for all customers
When observing the needs that seems to be uncovered for the online users, we identified 3 topics of particular significance due to their repetitiveness during the discussions among online users and the company; offline shopping i.e. physical shops, online shopping and equal opportunities for all customers; both local and international.

The users talk a lot about their enquiries of fashion shows and more international and local branches in terms of physical shops. Some of them are asking “Where’s the location”\(^\text{12}\) of the shop, while others tag a friend and writes “I want to go”\(^\text{13}\) or “let’s go please”\(^\text{14}\). However, there are also local customers who miss more branches nearby; “I like their line! But you’re not in London!”\(^\text{15}\). For the international users’ the desire to visit the physical shop is expressed with disappointment; “I wish you have a branch in USA!” and “Would love to get the same opportunity as the sisters near/ in London”\(^\text{16}\). Furthermore, some users recommend Inayah to even do a fashion show; “You guys should really have a fashion show”\(^\text{17}\).

Memo: could the reason for online users’ demand for more physical shops be that they wish to “feel the product” in terms of texture, fitting etc.?

2. Equal Opportunities for All Customers

Furthermore, and in regards to the sales event in the physical shop, the online users’ are asking for online options for accessing the sales opportunities; “will the sale be online too anytime”\(^\text{18}\) and “any online sales or new outlet pieces?”\(^\text{19}\). We also noticed that that international users where demanding attention, as they were asking about their opportunities and tagging Inayah; “What about the international customers?? @inayahc”\(^\text{20}\) and “Where in indonesiaaaa”\(^\text{21}\).

3. Convenient Product, Experience and Process

\(^{12}\) (appendix 4, line 29)
\(^{13}\) (appendix 4, line 26)
\(^{14}\) (appendix 4, line 31)
\(^{15}\) (appendix 4, line 75)
\(^{16}\) (appendix 4, line 89)
\(^{17}\) (appendix 4, line 717)
\(^{18}\) (appendix 4, line 41)
\(^{19}\) (appendix 4, line 51)
\(^{20}\) (appendix 4, line 84)
\(^{21}\) (appendix 4, line 80)
While observing, we noticed that there was a demand from online users for discounts on products; “For first time buyers do u guys offer discounts @inayahc\(^{22}\)”\(^{\text{22}}\), wherein Inayah responds with ”Hi, unfortunately we do not, however all customers can benefit from our reward points programme to discount future purchases :\(^{23}\)”\(^{\text{23}}\). Another user is dissatisfied even with the sales price of a scarf; “5 DOLLA HIIABS JUMP ON IT. prob still expensive tho”\(^{24}\).

Another issue that caused a lot of discussion when it comes to convenient shopping is the limited supply. Inayah directly communicates in their sales post; “Limited Stocks. By appointment only at our London HQ”\(^{25}\). This resulted in dissatisfaction from customers writing “Fully booked”\(^{26}\) and “Pretty useless as everything is out of stock. You need to opt your game”\(^{27}\). Apart from that, several users complain about lack of stock for their sizes “When are your crepe tops coming back in stock? I have been waiting what feels like ages to order clothes from your store but size medium in a lot of things is always out of stock”\(^{28}\). Inayah replies with a promise of a time-frame for restocking and a suggestion of making use of their ‘wish-list’ solution; “Hi Sarah, we aim to restock our crepe tops in all sizes in approximately 3-4 weeks time! Kindly add the item to your wish list so that you are notified once the goods are restocked before they sell out’\(^{29}\).

**Memo:** It seemed to us that there is a connection between the demand for a physical shop and the concerns about the sizes and fitting. One user explains; “It is a guessing game and I too have had to return items. Including having to purchase an xsmall once because of design and material. I pray one day they open a shop.”\(^{30}\) and “Hey, usually I use size 36 (EU). You only have xsmall/small or medium/large available. Will the xs/s fit me? Do I have to pay for the shipping back if I want to return it?”\(^{31}\).

The process of ordering, payment and delivery of Inayah’s products seemed to cause a lot of confusion, lack of user-friendly procedure and disappointment. Consequently, a lot of customers have expressed their dissatisfaction with the purchasing process. One user shares; “I've just added

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\(^{22}\) (appendix 4,line 438)  
\(^{23}\) (appendix 4,line 463)  
\(^{24}\) (appendix 4,line 708)  
\(^{25}\) (appendix 4,line 20)  
\(^{26}\) (appendix 4,line 52)  
\(^{27}\) (appendix 4,line 707)  
\(^{28}\) (appendix 4,line 691)  
\(^{29}\) (appendix 4,line 691)  
\(^{30}\) (appendix 4,line 553)  
\(^{31}\) (appendix 4,line 525)
so much clothes in my basket and eventually I wanted to check out, but you guys don't have PayPal makes you guys degrade from a 10 to a -6533. So freaking disappointed” 32. Another user writes “got so excited about a dress on sale, ready to check out to see shipping to the U.S is as much as how much the dress is costing me”33. There is even confusion about order procedure ; “ How to order ?”34 and payment "I just placed my order! I am based in the U.S. but my order was in pounds? That was confusing”35.

Shipping price and payment options are though not the only problems; maintenance of the homepage seems to be the major issue for Inayah; “When I want to go to your website they told me that it is in "maintenance" :(36. Another widely discussed area is responding to questions and queries. Which a lot of users commented about; “I emailed you when you first posted and I didn't even get a response”37; “As salaamu alaikum, I emailed at around 8ish and haven't got a response and then emailed again a couple of hours after and got a response saying fully booked :(“ 38. Others express their confusion with failed promises; “hi, on one of your responses you said you will be in touch with everyone who responded by Sunday … but I haven't heard anything back… so I'm a bit confused”39.

Memo: it seems like the online users are demanding immediate response since they tag the company by name when asking questions.

Memo: it seems that users communicate with other users and share their advice “you can just google to convert it. If you type in the price … it'll convert for you” 40.

4. Users demand inspiration for multiple usage options

Inayah tries to inspire suggesting different occasions; “you can wear this carefree look for a special occasion such as Eid or dressed for a summer season style”41.

32 (appendix 4,line 525) 33 (appendix 4,line 703) 34 (appendix 4,line 467) 35 (appendix 4,line 699) 36 (appendix 4,line 778) 37 (appendix 4,line 62) 38 (appendix 4,line 64) 39 (appendix 4,line 102) 40 (appendix 4,line 102) 41 (appendix 4,line 259)
Users clearly express their interest in inspiration and matching tips. A user tags a friend and recommends; “wear this on eid!” or ”really good for work wear pun” or ”This will look so good on you”. Another is even happy to be confirmed on her ideas on matching “Literally the 3 colors I had in mind for Eid lol I have to wear white nude beige and or that lightish pink.”. Some even express their opinions suggesting a change in the product; ”different print for the cardigan though...maybe a bit more glam for a formal event”. Some are so inspired to; ”I'm buying the whole outfit”.

When it comes to matching, users tend to ask questions on the post on product usage; “Would kimonos look as nice worn with abayas?” and ”can the deep brown drape abaya be worn without the belt?”. Some are thankful for the inspiration and see it as a help for their clothing challenges “Your posts have helped me a lot because I'm a new hijabi sister. And it is a little hard at the beginning to find long tops and such. I live in the US”. Others are giving suggestions on how to match “ I would get a shorter kimono to go with a simple black dress like this”.

15.1.2 Product Characteristics

When looking at the feedback on product characteristics, the online users seemed to be very interested in the tangible values of the product e.g. the fitting, the comfort, the look and the product in-use in general. But they were equally aware and interested in the intangible elements related to aesthetics that add value to their experience and influence their judgement of the brand and the products, e.g.; the quality of the video tutorials, look-books, pictures, music, models etc.

1. The tangible product values; the look, style, and product in-use

In terms of the tangible value of the product, it seemed very important for the online customers that the product is easy and comfortable in-use. As one user puts it; “Does the Badic Denim Abaya have
generous flare for movement? Please reply!"\(^{52}\). Another user gives her feedback on a product in-use; "...I got two though and they are great for nursing mommies!". Apart from that, it seemed important for some users that the item can be used in multiple ways, since they asked Inayah about it where Inayah responded; "yes if you would like to you can wear the Brown Drape Abaya without a belt"\(^{53}\). Other users suggest usage options to their peers; "really good for work wear pun"\(^{54}\).

Fitting is another extensively discussed area where the online users express their concerns about the fitting of the garment relative to their figure; "how fitted is the Basic Denim Abaya (sale) around the stomach? I'm a size 8 body, slim everywhere except tummy... I usually order 54/56 in Medium from you which is perfect, however bearing in mind it is of viscose mix I'm worried it will cling around the stomach and make me look pregnant... certain clothes can make me look it, as I'm tubby around my tummy but skinny everywhere else!"\(^{55}\). Inayah interferes and advises with the sizes; "Salaam :) we would advise going for one size up in that case!"\(^{56}\). Another user also explains her concern with the fitting of the item to her size relative to the model and advice her peer user; "I always order larger because I worry about my belly too lol. At least then if you are having a bad belly day the abaya conceals it and if you do have a flat stomach day you can always use a belt to tighten and emphasise the waist. I'm a small UK 10 5ft 9 and always order a large...Hope this helps sis. sometimes the super skinny models look like they have a belly in the pic... so me with my non model figure push for the larger sizes"\(^{57}\).

Other users are interested in the look of the garments and express their opinion in that regard; "love this look"\(^{58}\) and "very chic and classy"\(^{59}\) or even tagging and friend and expressing "nice clothes.. look"\(^{60}\) and "love how simple n elegant inayah is..."\(^{61}\).

And finally, instructions on how to style the product seems also to be demanded "Nice but I wish there is further instructions on how to achieve these looks"\(^{62}\)

2. **Intangible Values of the product in terms of features**

\(^{52}\) appendix 4,line 637
\(^{53}\) appendix 4,line 722
\(^{54}\) appendix 4,line 363
\(^{55}\) appendix 4,line 719
\(^{56}\) appendix 4,line 722
\(^{57}\) appendix 4,line 736
\(^{58}\) appendix 4,line 415
\(^{59}\) appendix 4,line 162
\(^{60}\) appendix 4,line 245
\(^{61}\) appendix 4,line 361
\(^{62}\) appendix 4,line 1097
Interestingly, Inayah directly communicates in one of their posts; “Embody a unique, contemporary and classic aura in this graceful ensemble. Inspired by simplicity and ease, and a touch of sophisticated glamour, adding a luxe touch to your occasional look”. In another post they express “Infusing elegance, luxury and modesty for minimal perfection. The versatility of this outfit means you can wear this carefree look for a special occasion such as Eid or dressed for a summer season style.”

**Memo:** is Inayah using metaphors when writing in an attempt to add intangible value to their products?

After watching some of Inayah’s hijab tutorials on youtube, we explored that many users are praising the tutorials “Thank you so much for these clear, easy, and beautiful tutorials” and even demanding more tutorials covering their specific needs such as “can u do hijab tutorials for people who wear glasses pls.”

What really caught our attention, when watching the video tutorials and lookbook videos of Inayah on Youtube, is that there were many users who were aware of and commenting on the details that formed their experience with Inayah; the music “What is the music playing?”, the quality of video “This video is so well made”, “The editing is absolutely flawless” and “…Who’s the cinematographer?”, model “Who is the inayah model? She is so pretty masha Allah”, “The model looks like a doll anyway, really nice” and “the model is gorgeous”, stylist (who also happens to be a popular blogger) “is nabilabee doing the hijab?” another user also asks “is she nabila bee?” and a third user replies “yh lol thats her..nabilabee”.

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63 (appendix 4, line 259)
64 (appendix 4, line 1080)
65 (appendix 4, line 794)
66 (appendix 4, line 855)
67 (appendix 4, line 1166)
68 (appendix 4, line 1150)
69 (appendix 4, line 1186)
70 (appendix 4, line 883)
71 (appendix 4, line 851)
72 (appendix 4, line 859)
73 (appendix 4, line 915)
74 (appendix 4, line 815)
75 (appendix 4, line 819)
15.1.3 Feedback

Customers are not afraid of expressing their honest opinions and experiences, negative and positive, towards products. We even observed that they tended to place comments with complains and dissatisfactions on random posts by Inayah, not directly related to their query.

1. Customer opinions towards products

When Inayah post a picture on Instagram the online audience tend to express their opinion towards the product posted. The customer’s expression towards a product is either positive or negative. Some customers are general in their positive expression using words like: “Love Love love”, “love this” or “love it”. When customers like a specific thing about the product they tend to use the words “love” or “like” followed by what they specifically like. For examples when a customer likes the print of a scarf “love the last scarf print”, or when they like the colors and the colour combination “I like the colors” or just love the design “I love her design”. On the other side the, negative feedback on a product is also seen from the customer when disliking a detail;“different print for the cardigan though...” and dissatisfied with sizes "You're a small yet you have to order a large (says everything about Inayah's sizing!)”.

2. Customers evaluating Inayah based on their overall experience

Again, customer’s opinion can be split up in two. Some are positive while others are negative when they evaluate the company. Some customers are positive towards the company because they like the company’s Instagram account “like this account” without clarifying what they like specifically.

As mentioned before we have noticed that there is a lot of customer dissatisfaction towards the company in the areas of responding, order process and procedure, prices, technical issues etc. It seems that this has a great influence on the judgment of the customer on the company overall. As one online user states “I've just added so much clothes in my basket and eventually I wanted to check out but you guys don't have PayPal makes you guys degrade from a 10 to a -6533. So freaking disappointed “.

What we have noticed is that the amount of negative feedback is much larger than the positive feedback when it comes to the company, based on our observation of Inayah’s Instagram. The customer’s negativity towards the company is in the following areas: communication; “Still waiting

\[^{76}\text{(appendix 4, line 333)}\]
\[^{77}\text{(appendix 4, line 742)}\]
\[^{78}\text{(appendix 4, line 695)}\]
to be contacted @inayahc⁷⁹, technical “Website is down @inayahc ;(⁸⁰, or another uses says “When I want to go to your website they told me that it is in "maintenence" ;(⁸¹, limitations “Its fully booked I really wanted to go but I saw the post late⁸²” and pricing “Gorgeous kimono but sooo expensive”⁸³.

### 3. Attributes affecting the customers experience

Customers are not only interested in the product, but are also interested in the products attributes. One way of expression is being curious and as questions about things related to the product, like for examples who is the hijab stylist in a hijab tutorial: “is she nabila bee?⁸⁴, “ is nabilabee doing the hijab?”⁸⁵ and “Is that nabilabee?”⁸⁶. Another attributes which is remarkable is the model Inayah’s uses for pictures and videos. Customers and online users are very interested in the model and this is seen when a customer directly ask “Who is the Inayah model?”⁸⁷. Using a good-looking model has a great effect on the audience. We find it very interesting that most of the comments in a Youtube video is a directly praising of the model, here are some examples: “she so pretty mashalah”; “the model is so preeeettttyyy⁸⁸, “really gorgeous that model!”⁸⁹ and “You look like a doll darling ❤️”⁹⁰. Other attributes affection the customer experience is the creativity in filming “The editing is absolutely flawless masha'Allah. I love this so much!”⁹¹ and they maybe explain why another user asks “Who's the cinematographer ?”⁹². Music also have an effect on the overall experience, and it seems the the users like it and therefore askes for the name of the song “What is that song called?”⁹³.

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⁷⁹ (appendix 4,line 90)
⁸⁰ (appendix 4,line 620)
⁸¹ (appendix 4,line 778)
⁸² (appendix 4,line 60)
⁸³ (appendix 4,line 171)
⁸⁴ (appendix 4,line 815)
⁸⁵ (appendix 4,line 915)
⁸⁶ (appendix 4,line 948)
⁸⁷ (appendix 4,line 883)
⁸⁸ (appendix 4,line 903)
⁸⁹ (appendix 4,line 875)
⁹⁰ (appendix 4,line 919)
⁹¹ (appendix 4,line 1150)
⁹² (appendix 4,line 1186)
⁹³ (appendix 4,line 1174)
15.1.4 Communication Touch points

As observed, Inayah is utilizing both Instagram and Youtube to connect with their online customers to both market their products through visual content but also to answer queries. They further have a customer service to answer queries. Customers connect to Inayah through the same channels, but they also connect and engage with their friends and other users on Inayah’s channels.

1. Inayah connects to customers through different channels

Inayah is very active on social media primary on Instagram. The company has on average one daily post with products, giveaways or inspiring quotation. So social media I first of all used to promote products to customers. Many customers prefer to ask questions on Instagram and expect a personal answer like this customer who asks “I know I’ve asked before but do you ship to Myanmar and do you have the option of cash on delivery?” and Inayah answers “Hi, yes we ship worldwide :) we only accept payments for delivery via our website”.

The social media is also channel where the company give styling advices to customers “Hi, yes it has enough room for movement and yes if you would like to you can wear the Brown Drape Abaya without a belt :)”.

Besides their social media, Inayah is using phone as a communication channel as well. Inayah posted a picture on Instagram telling that they are going to have an end of season sales event but only with registrations and by appointment. For all those who where lucky to get an appointment, Inayah contacted them by phone to confirm participation. We know that Inayah contacted the customers by phone because one of the customers asked “Has @inayahc started contacting people via phone yet?”.

Another touch point between the customers and company is customer service. Often when customers complain about problems with product delivery, technical issues or other problems on Inayah’s Instagram the company make sure to guide the customer to customer service to take care of their problem. Payment is one of the topics the customers keep asking about and some customer even get annoyed when they can not complete a payment like this customer “I wanted to check out but you guys don't have PayPal ... So freaking disappointed” and again Inayah refer the customer to

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94 (appendix 4,line 166)
95 (appendix 4,line 200)
96 (appendix 4,line 680)
97 (appendix 4,line 88)
98 (appendix 4,line 696)
the customer service “@beautevilxo Hi, unfortunately we don't accept PayPal but you may use the debit card linked to your PayPal or pay via bank transfer too, by contacting customer.care@inayahcollection.com :)”99. Customer service is also the responsible in cases of technical issues “Hi ladies, we are sorry to hear you are having trouble with our website please email customer.care@inayahcollection.com”100.

2. Interaction between users by sharing experience, advising and tagging

Customers tend to have conversations in form of sharing experience, advising and helping other customers. Another ways of communication between the users is by tagging friends in order to involve them either to get their opinion or to recommend them a product they find suitable for them. Customer tends to interact online without having a previous relation. There are various reasons why customers interact online. Most of the time the interaction between customer starts when a customer is in need of information or experience. This customer (@dewdropsandsunshine) was asking about the fitting of an item because she was uncertain about the size: “I'm a size 8 body, slim everywhere except tummy (waaaaah!) I usually order 54/56 in Medium from you which is perfect, however bearing in mind it is of viscose mix I'm worried it will cling around the stomach and make me look pregnant!”101.

Two customers assisted her with advices based on experience to help her out. The first advice was “@dewdropsandsunshine I have the drape Abaya in large and I have a tummy. I should have gotten the Medium as it is very roomy. I got two though and they are great for nursing mommies!”102. The second advice was “@dewdropsandsunshine I always order larger because I worry about my belly too…”103.

Memo: The previous examples show how customer interaction is based on a need and build on sharing of experience and helping other users.

When users have a relation either in real life or virtual the interaction starts with a tag. Tagging mean that one user involves another by mentioning their name in for example a comment. What we

99 (appendix 4,line 726)
100 (appendix 4,line 671)
101 (appendix 4,line 688)
102 (appendix 4,line 702)
103 (appendix 4,line 736)
have observed is that customers use tagging to various purposes. Recommendation is one type of using tagging. Customers tag their friends to recommend them a product because they think it will suits them “This will look so good on you @ayeshaxali”\textsuperscript{104}. Another use of tagging is to involve friends and get their attention “@waselataher check out there stuff”\textsuperscript{105} and “@sissa_nisa@meryc0711 nice clothes ...look”\textsuperscript{106}. Another variation of involvement is by asking other about their opinion “@dahliaiqbal something like this would be nice eh?”\textsuperscript{107}. In some cases we have also noticed that the customers use the tagging as a call to action like for example “@_nxbs_ lets go please”\textsuperscript{108} or “@supershwa5i check the account”\textsuperscript{109}.

15.2 Static Case Study

The following study is based on observations of the three bloggers, Habiba, Dina and Amena, and their communication through videos with product reviews on YouTube. However, as mentioned in our delimitations section, we have included one blog from Amena, where the content seemed relevant to our study.

Just like our dynamic case study, the static case study is hierarchically built. Every part is representing a theme identified in the data. Herein, we integrated the categories, which form the theme. The codes identified in the beginning of the process are used as argumentation for the categories to tell the story. There will be a short description for every theme as an introduction.

15.2.1 Practicality

Practicality is described by product functionality, i.e. how handy and easy to use a product is and durability, i.e. how long it lasts. In addition proper coverage and fitting, which is often related to modesty issues, also play a major role in their judgement of a product.

1. How handy an item is, easy in-use and easy to match
We have observed that three topics appeared to be of particular importance to our bloggers, when speaking about how the product is used. These are product functionality; practical in-use, easy to use, and easy to match.

In her haul video, Dina speaks about shoes that aren’t easy to match; “[...] they looked like really cool.. with outfits online.. but.. when you get them they actually look really cheap and nasty.. but...I’m sure they’ll look nice with an old white outfit [...]”\(^{10}\), a shirt that is easy to match “[...] Its so handy, all year round... when you can’t be bothered thinking if what to wear.. go with one of these with nice skinny jeans, sandals and you’re done.. [...]”\(^{11}\), and a third item both challenging in terms of coverage and in-use “[...] basically with a jumpsuit.. I find it quite difficult to wear something on top of it to cover the behind...and... problem is, when you wanna go to the toilet its such a mission [...]”\(^{12}\).

Our second blogger, Amena, also speaks about how handy an item is “[...] you don’t have to layer it.. so this comes in handy next summer as well [...]”\(^{13}\), easy to use “[...] very easy to style[...]” and easy to match “[...] you can just throw it on whatever you are wearing.. most of these capes go on almost all of the trousers I ever have... whether with casual shoes or with heels.. you can dress them up and down so easily [...]”. When talking about a long, loose, and opaque long-sleeved shirt, Amena expresses her relief in cheerfulness “[...] you don’t have to layer it.. so this comes in handy next summer as well [...]” (2:30)\(^{14}\). Once again in Amena’s blog\(^{15}\), she talks about other easy-to-match and easy to wear garments “[...] Sometimes a girl’s gotta have a cosy poncho day! When I’m out and about with errands, it’s a really easy and practical item to wear [...]”.

Apparently though, the ability to be creative “[...]a nice top to pair with a long sleeved top underneath to make a creative outfit [...]”\(^{16}\) and match the outfit with makeup “[...] It is a rich colour that I would have so much fun matching with a lip colour [...]” and with her own skin tone “The mustard colour is so under appreciated in my opinion, it is a great autumn colour and so flattering to our skin tones”\(^{17}\) also are issues of importance for Amena.

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\(^{10}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 04:45)
\(^{11}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 08:50)
\(^{12}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 11:10)
\(^{13}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 03:20)
\(^{14}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 02:30)
\(^{15}\) (Amena, 2015)
\(^{16}\) (Amena, 2015)
\(^{17}\) (Amena, 2015)
Last and not least, we observed our third blogger, Habiba, while talking satisfied about the easiness in-use of a hijab “[…] its really comfy.. really easy to use […]” 118.

Memo: Is Dina willing to face the challenges of the items, because it is hard for her to find an alternative with the same functionality?

Memo: Did Amena sound so cheerful about the garment being practical and not having to layer it due to a kind of relief?

Memo: Whom does Amena mean when she says “our skintone”?

2. Durability, appearance and texture
Dina talks about her preferences in regards to products that last longer as being more of a long-term investment “[…] I just thought that I would buy myself a few of those 9 carat real gold bands and have them for life instead of wasting money on… just fake jewellery all the time.. I never get sick of wearing plain gold bands all the time […]” 119 and also her willingness to pay more for a durable item “[…]this actually cost me 60 pounds but I know it’s gonna be in my wardrobe for a long time[...]” 120.

Dina also talks about a pair of shoes that are highly priced but adds that the price is justifiable due to the better material ”I really like them.. and.. they’re genuine leather.. so the 75 pounds is justifiable because its leather not plastic” 121.

In her vlog, Amena is impressed with a ‘better’ fabric texture “[…] It’s really good quality as well actually.. it feels very similar to the ‘Topshop’ one[...]” 122 and rubs another item lovingly 123 “[…]it feels lovely when touching it[...]” and “[…]it’s so soft[...]”. She also talks about the durability of a product with satisfaction “[…] I also really like it because it is a long-term piece of clothing for me… I’ll be able to wear it in the Spring as well[...]” 124.

118 (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015)
119 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 13:03)
120 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 14:10)
121 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 06:25).
122 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 04:30)
123 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 08:20).
124 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 09:00)
In regards to the importance of appearance, Amena writes “[...]that makes an outfit classy [...]” praising a luxurious looking item in her blog\textsuperscript{125}. Habiba, as mentioned in a previous example, recommends a cheap alternative in her vlog “[...] If you’re looking for a cheap product that doesn’t look cheap [...]”.\textsuperscript{126} She later reviews a skirt praising it for the durability of it compared to another “[...]the material is a lot better than the ebay one.. the ebay ones.. I have to repurchase them every month because they get ruined very quickly[...]”\textsuperscript{127}.

\textbf{Memo:} it seems that the ‘norm’ is for the bloggers to feature and review ‘affordable’ products, and justify the choice of ‘expensive’ items.

\textbf{Memo:} we wonder what the bloggers’ perception of quality is, since they sometimes define or explain why a certain item is of good quality whereas other times they don’t.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{Proper fit and proper coverage}

We noticed that the bloggers’ taste and style differs a lot when it comes to fitting and body shapes. To our surprise, Dina is often looking for oversized garments to change her upper body shape; “I just love how oversized boxy things change the shape completely of your upperhalf, so that you don't look like a human up top but you look like a bubble or a square”\textsuperscript{128}, and generally likes very loose fitting “[...]It is nice and fitted around the arms on your upper back from behind. Loose and flattering from the front”\textsuperscript{129}. Dina seems to often end up buying items in larger sizes. Amena, on the other hand, prefers garments with a ’flattering’ fit that suits curvy women to hide 'imperfections’ “[...] I love the fitting of them.. its actually a veeery flattering fit.. because it folds above the belly bottom .. and if you are a curvy girl.. where it sits on the hip its very flattering in your stomach and thigh and bum.. area”\textsuperscript{130}. Amena also speaks about the material affecting the fitting in a flattering way “[...] this is the kind of wool that is really flattering to wear because it doesn’t retain a lot of volume”[...]\textsuperscript{131}.
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{125} (Amena, 2015)
\textsuperscript{126} (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 10:25)
\textsuperscript{127} (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 12:15)
\textsuperscript{128} (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 07:55)
\textsuperscript{129} (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 07:22).
\textsuperscript{130} (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 04:00)
\textsuperscript{131} (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 06:00)
Furthermore, the bloggers also express the importance of coverage when they choose the garment, which seems to be a top priority. This is clearly expressed when Dina speaks positively about a shirt “it’s long and covers my bum”\(^{132}\), while with a jumpsuit she expresses her challenge in covering the behind, “With the jumpsuit it is hard to wear something to cover the behind[...] therefore I bought it in size 14 so it’s not tight on my butt”\(^{133}\). And also, the need to layer a shirt with “[...] a long layering top underneath to cover all of my areas” is expressed by Dina.

Habiba, similarly to Dina, likes to use layers to get her desired fitting, which is why she likes comfortable figure hugging garments layered up to cover her figure “[...] This is so figure hugging. This is why you should have to wear something on top if you would not show your figure – that is what I typically do”\(^{134}\). She mentions another product in terms of layering to get a proper coverage for a hijabi “this is not full sleeve, so you have to wear a top underneath if you are a hijabi”\(^{135}\). In the extension of proper fitting it is also very important that the clothes suit the body shape.

When Dina shows her new jump-suit she says: “[...] I love jumpsuits.. but.. I don’t think they suit me at all. They don’t suit my figure. I’ve got a very rectangular figure [...]”\(^{136}\).

In addition, finding a garment that fits nicely, has a nice colour and cover the body properly is a “jack-pot” according to Amena, which is why Amena shouts “Youhoo” when the garment is thin and versatile stating “[...] it is not see through.. ironically you don’t have to layer this [...]”\(^{137}\).

**Memo:** As we can understand from Dina, Habiba and Amena; layering is their most used method to achieve proper coverage.

**Memo:** we observed that the type of clothes that Islamic Fashion bloggers are looking for are two types, basics and layering clothes. For example, Amena recommends a garment for layering “[...] This is one of those jackets that is light. If you want to layer with this, it will be very easy to do [...]”\(^{138}\).

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\(^{132}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 09:13)

\(^{133}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 11:30)

\(^{134}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 12:45)

\(^{135}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 11:10)

\(^{136}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 11:27)

\(^{137}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 03:10)

\(^{138}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 08:48)
15.2.2 Product characteristics

Appearance, in terms of style look, packaging can both be value-adding characteristics or subtracting value of the product

1. Value addition through looks, price, style and packaging

What we also noticed is that the bloggers are willing to pay more for a product when the material is expensive and the product lasts longer.

Dina talks about her willingness to pay more for a pair of shoes “[…] They’re like fully leather so the seventy pounds is justifiable[…]” due to the better material. Another example, previously used, is Dina’s statement “[…]this actually cost me 60 pounds but I know it’s gonna be in my wardrobe for a looong time[…]”.

Whereas, in regards to spontaneous buying she says “…And they were like only 15 pounds so. there you go”.

Habiba, in her haul though, talks about her purchase of an expensive product stating “[…]. Yes. A little bit pricy but definitely worth it[…]”.

Amena on the other hand, expresses her temptation of pyjamas “[…] one of those luxuries in life that you sometimes have to say yes to […]”.

2. Criticality of style and looks

Habiba recommends a cheaper alternative without the ‘cheap look’ in her vlog; “[…] if you are looking for a product that doesn’t LOOK cheap[…]”. In her other vlog, she talks about some of her favorite scarves stating ; “[…]. they are the most elegant looking scarves you can ever find[…]”.

Dina though, expresses her disgust regarding an item ” […]. They actually look really cheap and nasty […]”. She also expresses her concern about a style “[…]. I think it looks kinda silly […]”.

139 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 06:40)
140 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 14:30)
141 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 03:45)
142 (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 17:15)
143 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 07:23)
144 (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 00:50)
145 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 04:50)
146 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 11:10)
Amena, in her blog, writes about a garment’s appearance that adds value to the outfit “[…] It’s a luxurious accessory that makes an outfit classy […]”\(^{148}\).

**Memo:** it appears that the bloggers seek the, luxurious and elegant look and would rather avoid the “cheap look”.

### 15.2.3 Emotional attachment to artefacts

Customers’ feelings and emotional attachments to a product, highly influences their experience with the product, which goes for both the bloggers and the online users. Their emotional attachment is often influenced by aesthetics and needs.

#### 1. Need Drives Desire

Dina in her haul says: “[…] Then I bought something we all need in our wardrobes.. […]” and then she adds with a funny voice indicating it’s a common thing that the viewer understands “[…] most Muslim girls anyway... it’s a long black shirt.. literally long sleeves.. long to the floor.. with bottoms all the way down […]”\(^{149}\).

Amena in her haul says; “[...] It’s a maxi dress... it has lining aaall the way to the bottom.. so ‘ding ding ding’... jackpot for a hijabi[…]”, she says with a cheerful voice indicating excitement and a big smile on her face\(^{150}\). She later comments a poncho “[...] Sometimes a girl’s gotta have a cosy poncho day!”. Amena also mentions an item that appeared to be very desirable for her community. She literally says “[...]I have posted pictures wearing this and you have all enquired after it[...]”\(^{151}\).

Habiba, on the other hand, recommends scarves that are suitable for an elegant, yet easy, look when the need is to find a ‘to go’ scarf; “[...] they’re the most elegant looking scarves you can ever find if you’ve got something to go to and you want a scarf that really looks elegant.. like you haven’t tried hard.. these are the ones [...]”\(^{152}\).

\(^{148}\) (Amena, 2015)

\(^{149}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 18:30)

\(^{150}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 04:15)

\(^{151}\) (Amena, 2015)

\(^{152}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 01:20)
2. Feeling-driven attitude

As we observed, the factors amplifying the attitude and desire of the bloggers towards items are among other things; colours, feelings, quality and texture.

Dina in her haul expresses her “feeling” towards a product due to the “colour”: “[…] really feeling this bright blue colour.. loving it […]”153. She later picks up a pair of flowery sandals and expresses her disappointment stating that she doesn’t ‘feel’ them154. She also mentions that she ‘feels’ a certain item gives her a whole other look, which is desirable for her155.

In her vlog, Amena says about a dress: “[…] It’s really good quality as well actually.. it feels very similar to the ‘Topshop’ one[…]”156. And then she laughs at herself as she realizes she has taken her hands up as if she is grabbing something invisible and says: “why am I doing this… like I’m grabbing the dress”. Later on, she grabs another item and says “[…] it feels lovely when touching […]”, while rubbing the fabric157.

3. Product aesthetics and their Sensitivity

The word “love” is the most used word by the bloggers mainly to describe their positive experience with a product. They use the word love to emphasize what they mostly like about a product. Love appears in many contexts, shades and even intensities depending on what the blogger wants to communicate. Sometimes the word even appears in undefined contexts. Especially in regards to things that the bloggers like extraordinarily due to a specific attribute. When the bloggers like a product, without describing something special and fancy about it, they use the word love in a simple way “I just love it”158. When bloggers find a product special, their use of the word love is totally different. The fascination and love of a product becomes very clear, like when Dina expresses her love for a colour “I really feel that blue colour […] I am really loving it, loving it […]”159.

The repetition of the word love in a sentence to emphasize a huge love of a product is also used by Habiba “I absolutely love it, love it, looove it”160, and in this context Habiba is loving the fitting of the product. Other product attributes the bloggers like is;

153 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 04:00)
154 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 05:00)
155 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 14:55)
156 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 04:30)
157 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 08:20)
158 (Amena, 2015)
159 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 03:55)
160 (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 12:00)
• Fabric; for instance Amena stresses; “I love when such a mixture of fabric is used [...]”\(^{161}\)
• Design and style; where Dina mentions ”[...]I love any footwear that is pointy [...]”
• Fitting and coverage; as Dina says “[...] I love that it is long and covers my bum, and that it has a quirky cut at the bottom [...]”\(^{162}\)
• Usage; Dina mentions ”And why i love them is because you don’t always want to show your toes”\(^{163}\).

In other contexts, the bloggers use the word love when they speak about an impression ”[...] for me, it was love at first sight with this gilet [...]”\(^{164}\). Or, a look they visualize for an occasion “[...] I love that look for the summer [...]”\(^{165}\).

Habiba looks very passionate in her haul video, as if she is ‘in love’ with a pair of shoes, where she says ”look at them” with a very soft voice caressing the shoes in a caring way ”[...] I mean LOOK AT THEM. I don’t even know where to begin [...]” and then she smells the shoe and closes her eyes and groans in an affectionate ”aahhhh” and then she adds ”I love it”\(^{166}\).

Memo: It shows that love isn’t limited to the product itself, but may be related to the attributes of it, which the bloggers ‘love’.

15.2.4 Bloggers’ Inspiring Role

Bloggers inspire the online users in many different ways. That includes their creativity in matching garments, colours and makeup. But also in terms of tips and advice on using products in new ways.

1. Colour alignment

We have noticed that the word “colour” has been mentioned extensively in all the bloggers’ vlogs and blogs. It appears to be a very influential factor in their choices. Dina, for instance, mentions the word in several contexts;

- **Love**: “Love the colour [...]”\(^{167}\) and “I love the colour, look at the colour. I love it”\(^{168}\)

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161 (Amena, 2015)
162 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 01:54)
163 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 02:51)
164 (Amena, 2015)
165 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 10:00)
166 (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 15:05)
167 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 03:20)
- **Feeling:** “really feeling this blue colour”\(^{169}\)
- **Liking:** “So I bought these.. because I like the colour”\(^{170}\)
- **Mood:** “I really like blue lately so I bought these blue ones”\(^{171}\)
- **Preference:** “the khaki colour is obviously better”\(^{172}\)
- **Matching:** “I LOVE the colour.. I just think it looks stunning with greys and other pastels”\(^{173}\)
- **Something she is looking for:** “this jumper.. So I mainly bought it because of the colour.. since I’ve been looking for lilac jumpers”\(^{174}\)

Amena also talks about colours in different contexts;

- **Matching**\(^{175}\): “I mean.. you can see the pertinence to the colours that I’m wearing now.. Its going to go on so many clothes that I have”, “I was drawn into this .. because of this mauve colour.. I could imagine the makeup look and the hijab that I was gonna pair with it”\(^{176}\), “It is a rich colour that I would have so much fun matching with a lip colour”
- **Matching with makeup**\(^{177}\): “it’s a nice mixture of peach and pink.. I can immediately think of a good makeup look to wear with this”
- **Desire**\(^{178}\): “As soon as I saw it I knew that I had to have it because of the colour”
- **Functionality**\(^{179}\): “I love having colours that frame my hoojab”
- **Preferences**\(^{180}\): “I am digging the more neutral colours, so my first purchase is the khaki fur lined cardigan from Boohoo”
- **Matching skin tone**\(^{181}\): “I love..the fact that the colour is so flattering to my skin tone” and “The mustard colour is so under appreciated in my opinion, it is a great autumn colour and so flattering to our skin tones”

\(^{168}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 14:25)  
^{169}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 04:05)  
^{170}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 01:35)  
^{171}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 06:22)  
^{172}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 11:56)  
^{173}\) (Amena, 2015)  
^{174}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 19:20)  
^{175}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 06:20)  
^{176}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 03:15)  
^{177}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 04:30)  
^{178}\) (Amena, 2015)  
^{179}\) (Amena, 2015)  
^{180}\) (Amena, 2015)
• **Emotional attachment**: “..it was love at first sight with this gilet... can be worn with so many neutral colours”\(^{182}\)

Habiba: in her vlog also mentions colour many times and in different contexts;

- **Preferences**\(^{183}\): “they do them in different colours.. but I always wear them in either black or brown”
- **Colour changing behaviour**\(^{184}\): “Even though I’m not so into colours.. but these are really beautiful colours.. they’re so vibrant”
- **Beauty**\(^{185}\): “this is like a tan, caramel colour..its beaauuutiful.. I really really like this”
- **Attractiveness**\(^{186}\): “this colour is SOOO gorgeous.. its like the most gorgeous hijab colour I’ve ever seen.. literally”
- **Matching skin tone**\(^{187}\): “I love this colour.. I think its very complimenting for medium skin tones”.
- **Favourite colour**\(^{188}\): “I love.. neutral colours... and then purple my favorite actual colour”
- **Love**\(^{189}\): “Its such a nice colour.. I absolutely love this colour”
- **Mood**\(^{190}\): “Recently.. I’m in love with khaki and this kind of colours”

2. **Styling tips, experiences and advice**

Habiba mentions in vlog; “I have been requested to do this quite a lot”\(^{191}\), referring to the request from her audience to do a haul video. It appeared to us that the bloggers have two ways to inspire and advise the audience. Either they speak directly to the audience like Habiba does; “If you want a chiffon scarf – definitely check out Voilechic”\(^{192}\) or indirectly by thinking loudly while speaking to the camera. This type of inspiration is most frequent. The think loud inspiration occurs from all

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\(^{181}\) (Amena, 2015)
\(^{182}\) (Amena, 2015)
\(^{183}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 01:17)
\(^{184}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 01:55)
\(^{185}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 02:50)
\(^{186}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 04:55)
\(^{187}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 05:35)
\(^{188}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 07:45)
\(^{189}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 13:55)
\(^{190}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 14:30)
\(^{191}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 00:05)
\(^{192}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 01:20)
three bloggers. An example of this indirect inspiration is seen when Dina shows and describes a shirt to end up giving styling tips “It is so handy all year around.. especially in summertime […] you literally just go with one of these, nice skinny jeans, sandals and you are done!”\(^{193}\).

We also noticed that when bloggers recommend a product, they always have a link in the video description, which is something Amena stresses in her haul video “and I will be linking all of these products in the description”\(^{194}\). What we also have noticed in the extension of recommendation is that bloggers are not only recommending products to help the audience, but also to promote brands. This is the case when Habiba speaks about where she gets her hijabs from. She describes a hijab and says; “Check out Voilechic. I will put their website below…they are really, really nice”\(^{195}\).

Memo: It appears that the bloggers see themselves as a source of inspiration by the online users and they inspire their audience by sharing their knowledge and experience about it.

3. Bloggers and product diversity

Using products in a new way is important for the bloggers. When speaking of using products in a new way, we have noticed that the bloggers have two ways of doing it.

First, bloggers like to find garments, which are fashionable and trendy and they try to modify it using layers as to make it modest; i.e. suitable for hijabi Muslim women to wear. This is seen in Amena’s blog where she compares how a garment looks on a model and how she wears it. In that way Amena shows how a product looks like, when it is layered, and how it looks like on the model.

Secondly, bloggers have their own personal style, which is defining them, but they are also always experimenting with new garment to create creative outfits. When bloggers choose a new product, it is important that they are able to be creative with it. For example, Dina was motivated to try printed trousers because they where on sales; “Why I bought them? I think they where on sales and I just thought: let’s try some printed trousers”, adding in the end; “I can make them work, hopefully.”\(^{196}\).

Another example we observed, is when Habiba finds a nice product and use it for another purpose “It is basically a neck scarf but I wear it as a hijab”\(^{197}\).

\(^{193}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 09:00)
\(^{194}\) (Amena, 2015)
\(^{195}\) (Da Silva, Where I get my favourite hijabs?, 2015, 05:35)
\(^{196}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 19:05)
\(^{197}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 11:20).
4. Bloggers’ role in influencing behaviours

Seasonal, on-trend, sales’ and ‘discounts’ all tend affect bloggers’ purchases.

Dina’s vlog is named; ‘Huge Spring/Summer Haul’, and she mentions in the beginning that she has been shopping for spring and summer. In addition, she literally states several times that different garments are “nice for the summer”, or “handy for the summer”. Dina also shops spontaneously; “[...]I don’t know why I bought them.. I guess I just bought them because they were on sale [...]”.

Amena’s haul also states the season; ‘Autumn Haul – Clothing’ and she begins her vlog with “happy Autumn” and expresses her love for this season and the clothing and makeup styles that implies; “I’ve always been a winter kinda girl.. a hat girl.. I love the Autumn/Winter makeup trends” and then she starts rubbing a soft warm cape and says that she loves capes. She later points at her clothes and says; “I’m really embracing the ‘autumnal vibe’ right now”. Also, she holds a pyjamas and explains "this garment is good for snowy days with tea and a movie".

Regarding ‘trends’, Amena also mentions in her blog; “The theme of this haul is very much, the on-trend cosy fake furs”.

Habiba was also tempted to buy a specific product due to the fact that it was on sale “I just wanted a lash curler.. and this one was on sale.. so”.

Habiba mentions that she in the recent period is “in love with khakis and this kind of colours”, afterwards she grabs a khaki jacket and talks about how she would match it.

15.2.5 Mapping and Visualizing of Product Absorption

As observed, bloggers and users are interested in visualizing products in-use due to its inspirational role. Bloggers often tend to justify their choices of products and explain how they would use them.

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198 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 00:30)
199 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 10:10)
200 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 08:50, 10:20, 12:00 )
201 (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 18:45)
202 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 00:50)
203 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 00:50)
204 (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 07:50)
205 (Amena, 2015)
206 (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 01:30)
207 (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 14:30)
1. Visualisation of Occasions

We discovered that our bloggers tend to connecting items to real-life situations and visualizing them in-use. They also mention the potential challenges they may face with them, for which occasions, situations or actions to use them and how they would match them with their outfits and makeup.

Dina is concerned about a challenge with a jumpsuit imagining it to be unpractical in-use; “the only problem is, when you wanna go toilet it’s such a mission”\textsuperscript{208}. She later talks about a pair of shoes and imagines that she would need them for a ’smart look’ in summer\textsuperscript{209}. Afterwards, she grabs a pair of shoes and says “because you don’t always wanna show your toes in the summer”\textsuperscript{210}.

Amena, on the other hand, picks up a dress and explains that she wore a similar one for ‘Eid’\textsuperscript{211}. She later picks an overall cosy looking pyjamas, while laughing with her husband, and discussing with him that she should wear it ”for snowy days.. with tea.. and a movie”\textsuperscript{212}. In her blog, once again, Amena talks about an item related to an action; “I love prancing around in these cosy pyjamas”\textsuperscript{213}.

Habiba also imagines an item connecting it to an occasion, as she says she is saving a jacket for her holiday\textsuperscript{214}.

2. Justifications in Terms of “Why” and “How”

In addition to delivering inspiration for the audience, it appeared to us that the bloggers seem to be expected to share their approaches, favourites and justification of choices. We get this impression as the bloggers always try to explain “why” and in some cases “how” they did something in a certain way. In order to do that the bloggers often start by a description of the product followed by a justification or explanation for buying it. Examples of justifications can be sales, colour, comfort, etc. An example of that is, when Dina speaks about her new sandals: “And why I love them is because you don’t always wanna show your toes in the summer, but you still want them to be cool,
airy and fluffy. I bought them because of that”215 or as in another example “And I bought it because I thought it will look really nice with my Adidas slides”216. When the bloggers go more in detail, they begin to explain their approach, the “how”, either by telling how they did it or how the viewer should do it.

For instance, a lot of Habiba’s viewers have been asking for the approach to get the same skirt as Habiba uses. Hence Habiba says “Everybody always ask me where I get my skirts from”217 and starts explaining where and how she got it.
16 Literature Analysis

In this chapter, we will outline the most relevant theories on co-creation for our case study, and use them to form our theoretical framework.

16.1 Co-creating Experience-based Innovation

What we have concluded from reviewing the literature on co-creation is the shift away from the firm-centric view (exploiting the customer for the firm’s sake) and towards the customer-centric view (involving and listening to the customer).

For a business to stay ahead of competition; innovation and NPD are important (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012). Moreover and due to the shortened life-cycle of innovation, which is a co-creative process consisting of a dense network of creative actors, firms need to include creative consumers to innovate (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012). We therefore take the stance of (O’Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008), stressing that the benefits of co-creation are; decreased time to market, increased product creativity and reduced development costs. This is mainly due to the technological development that has opened the doors online for; 1) cheap and easy innovation experimentation and 2) activism, which is about actively providing feedback to each other and to company consumers. However, we consider Innovation and NPD in relation to co-creation of the experience with the product instead of the actual (physical) product, since literature on both NPD and on the S-D logic shows that consumers nowadays weigh the experience more than the physical product (Ind & al., 2012). Thus, and since consumers are empowered by their significant influence on service productivity, the aim with co-creation is to co-shape consumer expectations and experiences. Hence, and as Prahalad and Ramaswamy put it; “The future belongs to those that can successfully co-create unique experiences with customers.” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 12).

(O’Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008) argue that in contrast to collaborative NPD, co-creation suggests that NPD also depends on the firm’s ability to teach and not only on the firm’s ability to learn. This stems with (Bhalla, 2010) notion, that the company should; listen, engage and respond both internally and externally to its co-creative stakeholders; in our case the consumers. We advocate Bhalla’s hypothesis that customers are willing to reward a company with their time, effort and creative energy in response to the company’s desire to listen to and recognise them. Though, the consumers need to feel the sense of ownership and reward before rewarding the company (Bhalla, 2010). Furthermore, we also agree that its important to weigh the opportunities and aim for “best practice” in accordance with Bhalla’s 4 factors about customer engagement; 1) Intent; why engage
customers? 2) Control; who controls the interaction agenda? 3) Participation base: do all members have a role? 4) Incentives for participation: how is participation rewarded?

In addition, since the idea is to utilize and add the consumers’ capabilities to the companies’; the value of the co-creative consumers isn’t constant but increased with continuous development; customer interactions, experiences and add-ons (Bijmolt & al., 2010) (Ind & al., 2012).

16.2 Social Media Platforms

Web 2.0 tools and Social Media are useful low-cost tools for information, knowledge and innovation creation but also as marketing channels. (Ind & al., 2012) and (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) support the idea that social networking is an influential key factor encouraging value co-creation. However, as (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) stress; co-creation is demanding, requires time-intensive dialogues, has a high degree of customer input due to its transparent nature and might therefore get intrusive. Also, co-creating experiences leads to heterogeneous demands and a high level of customization (Ind & al., 2012), which is resource-intensive task to handle for a start-up. The challenge is also how demand forecasting would work in this situation. For this, the optimal solution to avoid risks is to make a selective and controlled co-creation strategy. In this matter, (Droge & al., 2010) suggests influential bloggers, and more specifically lead users or early adopters, to solve this challenge. This idea is supported by (Bogers & al., 2010) and (Füller, Muhlbacker, & Matzler, 2009), arguing that the empowered lead users face and predict needs that mainstream users face much later.

Furthermore, (Slywotzky & Morrison, 2001) add that the active customer saves the company time, money and resources and secures customer loyalty. Hence, the insight from both (See-To & Ho, 2014) and (Hennig-Thurau & al., 2004), gave us the idea to expose the potential of engaging bloggers to manage and engage online users and co-creating content with them leading to positive eWOM outcomes. This is a great option since many non-influential users are willing to engage online unpaid as the reward for them is non-tangible; being praised and confirmed by others, belonging to a community etc. (See-To & Ho, 2014). Positive eWOM is important as it enhances trust by the customers whereas negative eWOM reduces trust. However, negative eWOM is also an asset for the company to react and adapt their product to. Hence, since creating and monitoring content resulting in positive eWOM aiming at influencing purchase decisions is a resource-intensive task, we suggest to outsource this task to the experts; influential bloggers. Our learning from (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010) about the
co-creative eco-system, suggests the use of so-called “mini-CEOs” to lead and manage the co-creative process and advise the company. Hence, since the aim is co-creating experience-based innovation in the form of online content; the influential lead users, the bloggers, on social media are the experts in the area of creating successful and appealing content and engage the users.

16.3 Lead Users

Following Hippel’s concept of lead users (1988), which are the innovative users that are influencers ahead of the majority, predicting the latent needs of consumers and set the future trends (Bhalla, 2010) and (Ind & al., 2012); the aim is to co-create unique and innovative content to enhance the customer experience with the product. What we also concluded is that co-creation should be a continuous process, and should therefore preferably be performed with the same co-creators, in order to save resources on education, procedure, processes etc. Also, it’s equally important to give them tools, but also limited options and supervision, since the idea is to manage and channel their creativity and avoid losing control. However, following the scepticism of (Kärkkäinen & al., 2011) towards exploiting consumers, by seeing them as knowledge creators and co-creators and finally end users and not own a share of the co-created value, it proves that it is important not only to include the lead users, but also benefit by rewarding them with a sense of ownership over the brand (Bhalla, 2010) & (Ind & al., 2012). Thus, we advocate (Bogers & al., 2010) insight that users are both innovators and entrepreneurs, as they already commercialize their innovations online and become “user-entrepreneurs” giving rise to new markets through social contexts and user communities. The latter stems with our interest in getting access to the lead users’ own social media communities as the aim is also expanding the start-up’s customer base, therefore we see the leading bloggers in the respective area of modest fashion to be the optimal candidates for this task.

16.4 Co-Creation for Start-ups

Summing up; co-creating value with influencers might save the company resources. However, engaging those co-creators (by providing tools, education and support) is a resource-intensive process, and therefore the level of implementing co-creation might be dependent on the concept of the business and the capabilities of the organisation (Ind & al., 2012). We therefore take the party of (Heidenreich & al., 2015) when suggesting; “managers should carefully weigh the risks and benefits of providing co-created offerings and evaluate which co-creation level best fits their overall business model. That is, firms should evaluate their knowledge, skills and resources to
determine their co-creation potential”. Therefore, we advocate that the optimal solution is to make a selective and controlled strategy, where it’s all about “channelling the innovation” as (Heidenreich & al., 2015, p. 290) put it, when it comes to start-ups.

The insight we get from (Whalena & Akakaa, 2015), of value being individually determined, in addition to the idea of value and markets to be united to create a sustainable ecosystem, is very inspiring, as we associate the relationships between the start-up, the bloggers and the online users it with an eco-system, where all contributions, without waste, are collected together forming a “perfect whole”. (Hagel, Brown, & Davison, 2010) have a similar view, presenting the principle of “the power of pull”, which implies that the firm pulls together and mobilizes resources from different co-creative actors.

This is particularly interesting to start-ups, which can share their value propositions, e.g. ideas, with other real market actors, in our case being the lead users, give them the tools, promise them rewards and eventually outsource tasks to them to scale up.

Based on the above discussion, we have developed a theoretical framework for co-creating experience-based innovation with lead users for start-ups, visualized in the model below. As we can see, we see the optimal co-creation approach for start-ups is based on a 3 footed triangle, implying a co-creation between start-up and lead users and lead users and online users. The start-up is expected to provide the lead users with tools, such as education, products and guidelines and also rewards aiming at continuous motivation. As a second step, the bloggers are expected to both engage the online users and also create inspiring content for them. As a result, the online users are expected to create positive eWOM to improve company reputation as the first priority, but also the negative eWOM is beneficial feedback for the company to improve their products and processes. Furthermore, this process is aiming at creating customer loyalty, which can be measured by looking at the positive eWOM about the products. In that way, we see all three parties, company, bloggers and online users as co-creators.
17 Theoretical Framework

Based on the above discussion, we have visualized our findings in a theoretical framework model below. According to our understanding of literature, the optimal co-creation approach for start-ups involves combining 3 different actors; the company, the influencers and the online users. We see co-creation as an inter-play between those three actors, in which every actor contributes to and enriches the creation of value.

The orange cells identify the activities where the influencers have the major role to play, whereas the green cells shows the activities where the online users have the major role to play and likewise, the blue cells show the activities where the company has the major role to play.

The heart of value creation is experience-based innovation. Since the life-cycle of innovation is short, the company needs to find a cost-efficient solution to continuously create experiences. This happens by creating an eco-system where innovative knowledge is created and channelled to the right place. What we also discovered from literature is that value lies in the visual content online,
which is usually shared on social media. The visual content is a means to create and share new knowledge among online users, which is therefore an easy way to create innovation. Though, not all online users create valuable knowledge, only a small portion, which are the influencers on social media are considered the bearers of innovation. The company is expected to provide those influencers with tools, such as education, products and guidelines and also rewards aiming at continuous motivation. Since listening to the online customers and making sure they are engaged and their expectations met is important for the company to succeed, the company needs help from the influencers on social media; which are the experts in creating valuable visual content but also engaging the online users. These could be hired as small managers or mini-CEOs to improve the online customer’s experience with the product, aiming at fulfilling the customer’s expectation of the product experience. Their key tasks being to both create content and also manage the flow of information in the form of eWOM. In effect, it is expected to reach customer loyalty. The online customers are interested in both user-to-user interaction but also engagement. In effect, the online customers, when being listened to and engaged, are willing to reward the company with engaging other users and with positive eWOM. Positive eWOM is also considered a form of experience and knowledge sharing.

18 Empirical Analysis

In the following, we will analyse the empirical data, gathered by observing the discussions on Youtube and Instagram, which we presented earlier in our Case Story chapter.

18.1 Dissatisfaction Related to the Purchasing Process

When studying the dynamic data, we noticed that most of the negative feedback on Inayah emerged from dissatisfaction caused by disorders in the purchasing process. If we look at the reasons for dissatisfaction (it-problems, expensive products, unavailable products, size and fitting issues), it appears that most of them are referring to external factors discouraging the customers from buying and hence limiting the sales of the company. In order to scale up the business the company needs to improve its weaknesses. However, we are in the following sections only focusing on the areas in which the bloggers can contribute positively to scale up the business. Hence, we are neglecting to discuss areas such as maintenance of homepage, payment, shipping and other IT-related issues.
18.2 Customer Uncertainty

The unavailability of physical stores has triggered a form of disappointment among both domestic and international customers; “Why can't they have a branch in the U.S?”\textsuperscript{218} and “I need a branch to be here too.”\textsuperscript{219}

There can be many reasons why customers demand physical stores, where they can feel, see and try the product before they buy it. But we think the demand for stores is also an indication that the current online shopping procedure does not fully meet customer expectations. The level of risk associated with shopping from Inayah can explain the reason why the customer is not feeling comfortable to shop online. This goes especially for international customers, since there is a high risk connected to buying an Inayah product due to; expensive products and shipping prices, complicated and expensive return policies and most importantly; the uncertainty about the sizes and fitting of the product. Since Inayah does not have standard sizes, fitting is an area many customers discuss online and some customers express their dissatisfaction clearly; “It would be great if they had a standard size for all, but if this isn’t possible for whatever reason (and bearing in mind they don’t have a shop) Inayah should make and effort to say so.”\textsuperscript{220} This confusion makes it harder to make a decision because if an international customer buys a product, which does not fit, she has to go through a lengthy and costly process with postage and customs to return it to the company. If the company decreases or eliminates the uncertainty connected to fitting from the beginning of the process it will decrease the risk of buying an improper product and in that way decrease customer dissatisfaction, returns and consequently the service load as well. In this matter, bloggers can easily help Inayah to decrease the dissatisfaction connected to fitting and sizes through product reviewing. When bloggers like Amena, Dina and Habiba review a product they usually show the product, put it on, describe it, point out why it is a good product, which details they like and dislike and how they are going to use it. This will help the customer to feel safer in their choice. In addition, those bloggers have either a normal body shape or curvy and not a skinny model figure. Hence, this matches most of Inayah’s complaining customers who describe themselves as ‘curvy’ or non-model figures. Bloggers give a more realistic picture of how the garment is going to look and fit on a non-model body. As Amena puts it “Bearing in mind for a normal size [...] this is a size 6 and in ‘petite’ and I am definitely not that small” and as a customer complain “Also sometimes the super skinny models look like they have a belly in the pic so me with my non model figure push for the larger sizes”\textsuperscript{221}. Furthermore, as another

\textsuperscript{218} (appendix 4, line 77)
\textsuperscript{219} (appendix 4, line 82)
\textsuperscript{220} (appendix 4, line 759)
\textsuperscript{221} (Amena, 2015, s. 2:35)
example, Amena had a long blog with comparison pictures between models wearing the garment and herself wearing the garment. In that way Amena shows how the garment fits and also how it can be layered elegantly. Bloggers, like Amena, will be great to review Inayah’s products to show the fitting and other factors such as size and material. The blogger contribution will definitely decrease the risk level because the customer will feel more safe in their choice. In the big picture, the blogger will have multiple effects on the business including; lower costs related to expanding the online business, instead of new physical stores, less dissatisfaction based on fitting and other application issues. All of this will lead to a better reputation and more satisfied customer that will spread positive eWOM and shop again loyally.

18.3 Expanding Customer Base Through Medium

As mentioned in our ‘Dynamic data’ section, we have noticed that the medium used to communicate a message has a huge impact on the customer’s experience. When we speak about the medium we refer to; how the message is communicated and who is communicating the message. Based on our data, the competencies of mediums such as the models, cinematographer and the blogger used in the video have a significantly positive influence on the customer behaviour; as is seen from this comment from an online user “Love the editing and the collection itself 👌 I want everything” indicating that she wants to buy every promoted product. Hence, we can conclude that a combination of good quality videos along with using a popular blogger as a medium to promote the company’s products will both affect the company’s brand awareness and in that case also extend the company’s customer base. The latter is connected to accessing the communities of the blogger, since every popular blogger has an audience that the company would benefit from accessing. In that case the blogger will operate as an intermediary that connects the company to new potential customers. Actually, the blogger will not only operate as a passive intermediary, rather, the blogger will be the active ambassador who translates the company’s message to the audience and make the products relevant for the online user. Bloggers tends to justify every product they buy or present for the audience and explain the reason for its relevance and benefits. This method will increase the company’s brand awareness tremendously because the company will be exposed for large audiences through the bloggers. In addition, and because the audience trusts the blogger, the product will be “quality approved” when the blogger vouches it.
18.4 Visual Content Inspiration

For online users, especially in the modest fashion industry, visual content seems to be the favourite medium of communication. This is proved by our observation that a large number of Inayah’s online users are requesting more inspiring visual content, especially tutorials, which is seen in the following customer comments; “Thank you so much for these tutorials. They definitely helped me out!” and “all of them inspired me to do some variations of those styles!” When we look and compare how much the customers are demanding more tutorials and how many tutorials the company have on its Youtube channel we can see that there is a huge gap. The level of demand from the customers is larger than what the company offers at the moment. Inayah has 10 videos total including 6 tutorials. The company is more focused on Instagram where they upload pictures daily. A reason that the company focuses more on Instagram than Youtube could be time and money. For Instagram the company only need to upload a photo, while they have to use significant more time and money on editing a video. At this point we can say that Inayah is currently focusing on pictures and neglecting the demand for more tutorials. We think in the long term neglecting what the customer is demanding can impair the company’s brand image. One way to solve this problem is, as touched upon earlier, by cooperating with a blogger, who is specialised in vlogging, to make new tutorials for the company’s new products. From the company’s point of view this will increase the product value because the customer will both get a product and a tutorial inspiring them on how to apply the product. The perceived value will be higher, when a customer buys a product knowing that they also can find a tutorial on application, of for instance a hijab, in different ways. In that way the blogger will add value to the product, triggering the attraction of new customers, while keeping the existing ones and thereby helps in creating customer loyalty.

18.5 Influencing Customer Choice

Different cases in our data point in the direction that both online users and bloggers tend to decide on an outfit on the basis of factors such as colors, actions or occasions, where they are going to wear the clothes. It seems like when customers can visualize an outfit they are more likely to buy it. But not every customer has the ability to visualize based on occasion or colors and maybe this is the reason why the customers are hungry for inspiring content. A very interesting example from the

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223 (appendix 4, line1031)
224 (appendix 4, line1035)
data shows that customers appreciate it, when the company helps with combining garments and therefore ease their choices, which is seen in this comment from a user on a post with new products “I’m buying the whole outfit”\textsuperscript{225}. Thus, bloggers are masters when it comes to visualization and combination of garments in creative, authentic and inspiring ways. Like Amena says about one pyjamas; “for snowy days.. with tea.. and a movie” and “I love prancing around in these cosy pyjamas”\textsuperscript{226}.

\section*{18.6 Engagement and eWoM}

As is the case in the offline world, feedback in the form of eWOM indicates brand loyalty and has a huge impact on other customers’ impression of the brand, since it’s a form of know-how exchange between the blogger and the online audience but also in customer-to-customer contexts. For instance this comment on a ‘sales’ post; “Hi @inayahc When are your crepe tops coming back in stock? I have been waiting what feels like ages to order clothes from your store but size medium is always out of stock :/”\textsuperscript{227}. It caught us that it’s very obvious to spot a dissatisfied customer, since negative feedback is often long and descriptive and sometimes out of the post’s context. Conversely, comments on a good shopping experience weren’t shared online. Feasibly, the reason that positive customers do not post their feedback is the lack of engagement by Inayah and lack of customer loyalty. We therefore wonder whether the reason for the negative feedback is an attempt to “revenge” over the company for not meeting their expectations, in order to increase their own satisfaction. Bloggers, however, are used to engage their audiences to give feedback; “Let me know if you have tried any of the stuff I have purchased or you have any of the stuff I have purchased and what you think of them and if you recommend anything”\textsuperscript{228}. Another aspect is peer-to-peer customer interaction, as appears between two online users where the first user complain about her body shape and the other replies with support and praise: “@mrs_sai_ali I’m sure you wouldn’t swap your four children for the world sis mA you look so young and slim in your dp”\textsuperscript{229}. This shows that the online users in the community of Inayah are willing to spend their time supporting, acknowledging, praising and helping their peers.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{225} & (appendix 4, line 354) \\
\textsuperscript{226} & (Amena, 2015, s. 7:45) \\
\textsuperscript{227} & (appendix 4, line 691) \\
\textsuperscript{228} & (Da Silva, 2015, s. 21:52) \\
\textsuperscript{229} & (Appendix 4, line 736) \\
\end{tabular}
\end{footnotesize}
19 Empirical Framework
Figure 7: Empirical framework
Mapping the data into a model provided us with a simple overview that helped in identifying different relationships between phenomena. When connecting the different variables new relationships have emerged giving us valuable insight to how the different activities and factors add or subtract value from the co-created experience. The result is a pattern, which we wish to describe in the following.

We have placed the different factors that relate to a main category.

The direction of the arrows show, how one factor influences, connects to or leads to another factor. Since co-creating experience-based innovation is the centre which all factors adding or distracting value leads to, we marked it in red. Our findings showed that inspiration is a major category that the online users demand and the bloggers are good at creating. However, several factors play a role when inspiring the users. Apart from aesthetics, implying pictures and videos that satisfy the viewer, the medium highly affects how the value of the experience is perceived for the consumers. Being inspired creates the spark for taking action, which in our case is the customer going through the purchasing process. The purchasing process also plays a very important role in regards to the value of the experience. We noticed that customers had some kind of preconception of their expectations about the purchasing process; namely being easy and convenient.

If the process goes well, the customer experience would be positive. On the contrary, if the customer meets only one single unexpected challenge related to the purchasing process, which slows down or complicates the process it will lead to their whole overall experience being dissatisfying. Recalling a comment from a customer addressed earlier in our “dynamic case study section”; “I've just added so much clothes in my basket and eventually I wanted to check out but you guys don't have PayPal makes you guys degrade from a 10 to a -6533. So freaking disappointed.”

Hence, the change of customer attitude can be clearly seen in their negative feedback. Others express the lack of an optimal experience through uncertainty and asking for advice on application. In this case either the company or other users usually engage and assist the customer with explanation, solutions or personal advice.

Visual content has a great influence on customers and their buying behaviour, which is closely related to visualization. Customers, and most notably bloggers, tend to visualize the usage of the item in regards to an action or an occasion in which they are going to use the outfit.
Visual content, in the form of tutorials, product reviews and inspiring look-books have the goal of inspiring customers to match outfits and also helping customers to make an easier choice. This is often very appreciated by the customers, who praise and thank the company or the blogger for posting such content and usually ask for more of it. When talking about feelings, the data showed that customers tend to express their emotional attachment to a product they love or detachment of a product they dislike. Bloggers are especially good at expressing their honest feeling towards the products without restraints. However, feelings seem to have a close relation to the overall evaluation which also highly influences the overall experience with the product.

20 Synthesis

The purpose of this study was to create insight to the existing literature on co-creating experience-based innovation by investigating the blogosphere field and its influence on the start-up companies’ potential for scaling up. By analysing the empirical dynamics found in the data gathered from discussions on social media, we created an empirical framework to be synthesised with the theoretical framework. By merging the knowledge from the empirical framework and the theoretical framework what comes out is the final knowledge, to be discussed and to answer our RQ in the conclusion. After creating a conclusion, we address our implications based on that knowledge for the start-ups to utilise it and scale up, taking into account the limited capabilities and resources of start-ups.

In regards to theory by (Bhalla, 2010), on the importance of listening to the customers as the first phase in his “listen-engage-respond internally and externally” cycle; we have in our empirical analysis been focusing on the “listening” part of co-creation. We were very inspired by former president Obama’s successful strategy of listening to his audiences before taking action and his victorious outcome of the “listening” campaign. We therefore chose to observe and explore passively what was going on in the social media platforms; Youtube and Instagram, and what the elements forming the experience of online users were like, without engaging directly with the bloggers, the online user, nor the company.
20.1 Findings

The elements influencing the co-created experience according to our empirical findings were; expectations, convenience, uncertainty, expert knowledge, inspiration, advice, inspiring content, easy and convenient purchasing process, attributes such as the medium, aesthetics, uncertainty, emotional attachment and attitude towards product, peer-to-peer interaction and acknowledgement in a supportive community where feelings and thoughts are shared, which all pointed towards the fact that the customers weren’t satisfied with products being pushed towards them and demanded to be heard and their opinions and queries taken into account, quickly.

This clearly confirms the theory by (Bhalla, 2010), (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers-New Approach to Value Creation, 2004), (See-To & Ho, 2014), and (Ind & al., 2012), among others that companies can no longer ignore the level of power shifted to the consumers. Hence, our empirical findings actually showed that the audiences of Inayah are demanding to be heard, acknowledged and their queries and dissatisfaction taken into account. Otherwise, they wouldn’t hesitate to complain and express their dissatisfaction publically on the company’s Youtube channel or Instagram account on random posts that doesn’t necessarily have to anything to do with their query. The online users within the audience of Inayah are demanding physical stores both nationally and internationally, they are complaining about sizes and fitting being unsuitable for them, limited supply of items, inconvenient purchasing process, expensive shipping and are demanding more inspiring content in terms of tutorials and outfit matching. They seem to be impressed by aesthetics; namely beautiful colour combinations, beautiful models and video quality. They also seemed to notice that Inayah was using a popular blogger as the stylist in one of their videos, which they recognised and created an excited discussion among each other about. Hence we can conclude that the medium is very important for the perceived value of the experience.

What our empirical findings also showed was that the bloggers indeed had a huge influence on the online customers in their audiences and were seen as the experts sharing their personal experiences of products, advice and inspiration regarding modest fashion. They sort of were the translators of mainstream fashion into modest fashion, helping to make easier choices for their viewers.

The modest fashion bloggers are interested in sharing advice, inspiration and own experiences with products along with engaging their community members to grow their community. Bloggers typically show their recent seasonal purchases in a shopping haul video on Youtube. They express
their opinions about the product carelessly and explain the application, matching options, advantages and disadvantages with it. It appears that bloggers have a huge influence on the choices of online consumers in terms of product purchasing, since the online users see a blogger as a person who is similar to them; a virtual friend. The bloggers are usually average-looking people, with an average life-style. They share the same challenges in life as online users. Hence, they appear trustworthier for the online users who see themselves in the blogger.

Habiba, Dina and Amena are very focusing on expressing their impressions, feelings and experiences with the product and they seem to be very attracted to or prioritising appearance, fitting, modest coverage, comfort, handiness and durability of the product. They seem tempted to buy expensive products if the quality is good or if it’s a luxurious product. At the same time they are also tempted to do spontaneous purchases on sale due to the low prices. All three bloggers are very good at communicating professionally while still being down to earth making them appear as a virtual friend for their followers. Though, this friend is an expert in the field and therefore they seek advice and knowledge from her. Hence, those bloggers appear as role models that the online users in their community are looking up to. At the same time, they are very good at engaging their audiences, which often appears in the lengthy and interactive discussions among the online users, and with the blogger herself, on their different posts on both Youtube and Instagram.

Inayah is a small modest fashion start-up, which is challenged in satisfying their online customers through the social media channels; Youtube, but mostly Instagram. Inayah is struggling with answering queries from their online consumers, especially on their Instagram posts. They seem to be limited in terms of capabilities and seem to offer much less than what their audiences are demanding in terms of inspiring visual content, which creates a gap. Though, they keep promising to create more inspirational videos, but as far as we observed; months pass post the promise and nothing really happened.

It appears that Inayah is trying hard to react to and meet the customer expectations, but they also seem limited in resources and capabilities to do so. The areas of challenge for Inayah to satisfy their customers are; maintenance of technical issues that troubles the purchasing process, enough supply both nationally (more physical stores) and internationally (physical stores and cheaper shipment), slow and inefficient reply on customer queries, enough inspiring content, and more acknowledgement and support of customer inputs (customer engagement). Since we are focusing on
the bloggers’ contributively role to improve Inayah’s position, we, in this paper, focused on the last two points, wherein the bloggers can easily interfere and improve the situation with their competencies. This is due to the fact that these influential bloggers are the experts in the field of creating inspiring visual content and engaging their online audiences.

Hence, and based on our data we have observed that Inayah is facing several challenges that are limiting their upscale potential. Most of the challenges are related to creating content that adds value to the experience and customer relationship management both with existing and potential new customers. All in all, it seems to us that customers and company have different interests and vision, which is resulting in an expectation gap.

20.2 Discussion

In the following, we will discuss our findings based on the co-creation theories, earlier presented in our literature analysis. We will start by discussing the theory we disagree with, based on our empirical findings, followed by the theory, which was evidenced by our empirical findings. Lastly we will add our own new insight to the co-creation literature, within the area of co-creating experience-based innovation for start-ups, followed by a new framework demonstrated in a model and a discussion of the new insights that we have presented.

20.2.1 Disagree with theory

Customer loyalty was much highlighted in literature, most notably by (Slywotzky & Morrison, 2001). However, our empirical findings didn’t show any evidence on the existence of significantly active customers saving the company resources to secure customer loyalty. Though, there were few examples where some users interacted with other users to help them with their queries. But we wouldn’t argue that those customers were ensuring customer loyalty and expected to be relied on by company to continuously answer all the queries from other users.

In regards to the company listening to the customer; this aspect was evident on a very low level. Inayah did however ask about some few customer’s queries and dissatisfaction with several things, but in at a very low degree. It appeared that the company was limited in resources to catch up with all the customer queries, which was reflected on the level of answers to questions. This had led to several situations where the engagement was taking a negative course.
20.2.2 Agree with theory with add-ons

We agree with theory that the value of the influencer is non-static and increased with add-ons, as this was evident in our data in two different areas; the first being that the influencer affects the perceived value of the experience, which is heterogeneously dependent on the individual customer’s needs and expectations. And the second being that the value of the blogger herself is increased along with the increase of content, amount of likes, views and engagement in their posts; namely the validity of the blogger by the online users.

In regards to the eco-system spoken about by (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010), what was evident in the data was that the positive input by online users created a positive flow of eWOM, hence supporting the argument of hiring mini CEOs to manage and foster the positive flow of eWOM.

We agree with theory that user-to-user engagement and eWOM is both an opportunity and a threat that companies should benefit from or cushion the negative effects of. As was evident in our data, we noticed that it didn’t take a lot for a user-to-user engagement to take a negative course in case a customer adds a negative comment and the company doesn’t reply quick enough before another user jumps in to amplify the negative comment followed by new negative comments from other users. This then causes a spread of negative eWOM and increasing the risk of uncertainty for new customers, since eWOM affects purchase intention through several channels in the value co-creation process. In regards to the continuous co-creation of experiences stressed by (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012), our findings showed that Inayah is scarce in this area. The bloggers on the other hand have a strong ability to continuously engage with customers and create new experiences for them, both through creating content and engagement. This might be strongly connected to the fact that the bloggers were perceived and communicated as virtual friends that the users could relate to and associate themselves with. This is very evident in their expressions; Dina is almost shouting “hey guuuuuuyiiiiis\(^{231}\), whereas Amena is speaking cheerfully while smiling “Salam aleikum my lovelies\(^{232}\) and Habiba “hi guys I hope you are well\(^{233}\).

\(^{231}\) (Tokio, HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!, 2015, 00:00)
\(^{232}\) (Amena, AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena, 2015, 00:00)
\(^{233}\) (Da Silva, BIG FAT HAUL | Zara, TK Maxx, Arabian Oud, Superdrug, Inglot, Jo Malone, 2015, 00:00)
20.2.3 New insight

By synthesizing our empirical framework and the theoretical framework, we have gathered the dynamics offered by the empirical insights in a new framework presented below:

Apparently, no existing theory talks about the dynamics forming the customer experiences in a practical level. Our main insight is related to which factors affect co-created experience-based innovation, bearing in mind that the perceived value of the experience is highly subjective. We therefore assume that the aim is influencing the perceived i.e. the subjective individual value of the experience by customers.

Having the same approach as our previous cell models, we have in this model made the cells of highest influence by online users blue, whereas the cells of highest influence by start-ups are green.
and the cells of highest influence by bloggers orange. We will in the following explain the different dynamics of the cells influence on each other and on the perceived value of experience for online users, but also bloggers.

**Online Users**

We see the perceived co-created experience for the consumers as a big pot where the main ingredients adding value to the dish are; inspiring visual content, visualisation, emotional attachment, attitude, customer expectations, tutorials and guidelines, product attributes, medium, aesthetics, product characteristics, user engagement with company, convenient shopping process, recognition, uncertainty, risk, easiness and a high level of customization. The challenge here though, is the combination of these ingredients and most notably taking customization of experiences and its subjectivity into account.

It shows that visual content in the form of tutorials implying advice, tips and how-to guides etc. is very demanded when shopping online, affecting the co-created experience. Visualization of product in-use for different occasions is an important ingredient to the co-created experience, as customers demand that the usage of the product is explained and visualized and associated to different actions, situations, places, and occasions etc. This is an area the bloggers are very good at fulfilling. However, online users have different levels of visualisation. Visual content tends to trigger the visualization leading to emotional attachment, especially when the medium is a person the user can relate to and associate herself with.

**Bloggers**

Emotional attachment does play a major role as well, since the consumers and bloggers often express feelings, both positive and negative, without really explaining why they have or don’t have an emotional attachment to a product. Emotional attachment triggers the attitude of the blogger and the user towards the product. Attitude towards products also is a noticeable and very influential factor when observing the activity in online communities. Both bloggers and consumers often express intense love or dislike towards a product. Sometimes though, bloggers and online users do not explain the reasons for their love or dislike of a product. It therefore surprised us that theory doesn’t look at feelings in terms of co-creation and is more concerned with the motivation of consumers for co-creating experiences from a cognitive perspective. However, data shows that the emotional part plays a major role on the overall experience. That goes for both user and blogger. It
is evident that emotional attachment increases the willingness to co-create and spread positive eWOM. The value of the experience is made of different components related to the physical product but also its attributes, herein aesthetics. As an example the look of the model and the video editing in some situations received more attention than the physical product, which is evident in the comments by online users. Another important attribute influencing the perceived value is the medium used to communicate the message. In this matter using a popular blogger as the stylist in a tutorial or using a beautiful model to portray the products also triggers the emotional attachment and attitude towards the product making the online users express love and affection. Attributes, the medium and aesthetics, have a great influence on the perceived value of the customer experience and triggers engagement and eWOM.

The Start-up

However, and since online users appeared to be somewhat lazy, they expect, an easy shopping process and quick reply on their queries on the exact spot of their comment by engaging with the company. Apart from that they demand the product being convenient in-use in terms of practicality and matching. In the fashion world, practicality and matching are associated with easiness. In general, the customers demand an easy choice, which is why they are searching for inspiration and advice to make and easy choice with less complexity and saving time as well.

Fulfilling the customer expectations is an area not enough focused on by theory but was evident in the findings as a major player in the overall experience of the customer. This is due to the fact that one single area with the product experience, in which the expectation is not met, makes the customer’s overall experience negative, which results in creating negative eWOM. What was mostly noticeable was how much a small complication with the purchasing process, for instance, would influence the overall experience so much that many customers would spread negative eWOM on random posts to express their dissatisfaction with the product. This is especially challenging, since customers, as data showed, expect a high level of customized experience with the product.

Expectations may be connected to the offerings from other companies of a better experience. For instance, Asos, is a fashion brand that provides live-showing videos portraying models doing a catwalk in the garments may contribute to creating a baseline in the market making consumers expect the same level of experience with other brands.
Engagement and acknowledgement, as stressed earlier is also an expectation that the consumers have, as they need their queries to be answered individually and will otherwise cause negative eWOM.
Customization is also an expectation that online users have and an influential factor since customers do expect a heterogeneous individual treatment, which was evident in our data. This task however is clearly resource-intensive.
Easiness in use is also a highly influential factor, since customers within the modest fashion sphere have specific requirements for product characteristics; namely colour, coverage, easy matching, comfort and in general an easy and quick choice which is handy and durable. What also appeared in the data is that expectations that are not met, for instance related to the purchasing process, may trigger Uncertainty, leading to the feeling of risk-taking for the customer, most notably in regards to quality, fitting, and extra costs related to shipping back and forth.

21 Conclusion

The literature on co-creation and innovation have been focusing a lot on NPD with consumers aiming at creative input from innovative consumers (Bhalla, 2010), (Ind & al., 2012), (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012), (O’Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008). Furthermore, most literature seems to target larger companies and multinationals, whereas there is very limited literature on how start-up companies with limited budgets and capabilities could utilize the theory with successful results, helping them to scale up. We aimed to fill this gap by creating insight to help start-ups benefit from the concept of co-creation of innovation and scale up their businesses. However, and bearing in mind the limitations of the start-ups, the literature also enlightened us with the insight that the optimal solution for efficient, limited and controlled co-creation is to co-create with lead users, i.e. innovative consumers with high influence on social media communities.
Furthermore, and even though some of the literature claim to have shifted the focus from the outcome to the process (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012), they failed to give a comprehensive and practical understanding of how experience-based innovation is co-created with the influential consumers and, which dynamics influences the perceived value of the customers’ experiences. This gap we also aimed to help fill in. Hence, we framed a research question on how start-ups can scale up their business through co-creating experiences with influential consumers.
Our research question was;
How can start-ups scale up their business by co-creating experience-based innovation with influential consumers?

- A Social Media experience

Hence, and in order to be able to answer our research question, we decided to explore the blogosphere field to investigate how the knowledge co-created in social media platforms can benefit the start-ups. We chose to limit the study to two very active social media platforms; Youtube and Instagram, wherein the aim was to observe the activity in the discussion on both the channel of a modest fashion start-up; Inayah and also on 3 popular modest fashion bloggers; Habiba, Dina and Amena, which all three have large and interactive audiences. The aim was to explore the dynamics that influence both the bloggers’ and the online users’ experience with products.

In accordance with our research question, there are several variables forming co-creation of experiences;

1. Co-creating experience-based innovation
2. Online users and their demands
3. The credibility of bloggers
4. Start-ups and their limitations

1. In employing the first part of our research question, theory provided suggestions well suited for exploring the diverse aspects of co-creation, and their importance from an entrepreneurial point of view. (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012) contributed with the argument that for a business to stay ahead of competition; innovation and NPD are important. (Russo-Spena & Mele, 2012) enlightened us with the idea that due to shortened life-cycle of innovation, which is a co-creative process consisting of a dense network of creative actors, firms need to include creative consumers to innovate. (O’Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008) contributed by stressing that the benefits of co-creation are; decreased time to market, increased product creativity and reduced development costs. (Ind & al., 2012) argue that consumers nowadays weigh the experience more than the physical product and that the value of the co-creative consumers isn’t constant but increased with continuous development; customer interactions, experiences and add-ons. Prahalad and Ramaswamy enriched us with their quote; “The future belongs to those that can successfully co-create
unique experiences with customers.” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation., 2004). Nonetheless, (Bhalla, 2010) adds that the company should; listen, engage and respond both internally and externally to its co-creators. Furthermore, our empirical findings showed that the experience is heterogeneous and lies in the perceived value of the individual customer. This perceived value is highly influenced by the individual customer’s expectations about the experience. Further more, the data showed that bloggers’ value is in creating a good experience for the online users is not constant but increased along with the amount of viewers, likes, discussion and subscribers on Youtube and amount of likes, discussions and followers on Instagram.

2. In employing the second part of the research question, theories by (Ind & al., 2012) and , created an understanding of online users on social media and their influence on co-creating value. Füller et al. (20120) and (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, Co-creating unique value with customers-New Approach to Value Creation, 2004) agree on the notion that social networking is an influential key factor encouraging value co-creation. However, Prahalad & Ramaswamy stress; co-creation is demanding and requires time-intensive dialogues with a high degree of customer input. A good experience for the online users also implies being engaged in online discussion, acknowledged by others and belonging to a community (See-To & Ho, 2014), (Bhalla, 2010), (Perkins, 2015). (Ind & al., 2012) contributed with the insight that co-creating experiences leads to heterogeneous demands and a high level of customization in addition to the challenge of demand forecasting. (Bogers & al., 2010) and (Ind & al., 2012), argue that the empowered lead users face and predict needs that mainstream users face much later.

Our empirical findings enrich the literature with the concrete demands and expectations by online users, which trigger their heterogeneous, perceived value of the experience. It appeared that inspiring visual content, visualisation, emotional attachment, attitude, customer expectations, tutorials and guidelines, product attributes, medium, aesthetics, product characteristics, user engagement with company, convenient shopping process, acknowledgement, uncertainty, risk, a high level of customization, general an easy, quick and optimal choice, were all important dynamics in the formation of the heterogeneous experience of the online users.
3. The third part of the research question was enlightened by (Droge & al., 2010), (Bogers & al., 2010) and (Ind & al., 2012); arguing that the empowered lead users face and predict needs that mainstream users face much later. (See-To & Ho, 2014) and (Hennig-Thurau & al., 2004); exposed the potential of engaging bloggers to manage and engage online users and co-creating content with them leading to positive eWOM outcomes. (Ramaswamy, Competing through co-creation: innovation at two companies, 2010) contributed with the co-creative eco-systems implying hiring influencers to be mini CEOs. The empirical findings exposed that the usual content by bloggers, which imply continuously creating inspiring content and engaging them in discussions boosting eWOM, is very praised and demanded among online users. This leads to the bloggers gaining a lot of credibility among the online users.

4. The last part of the research question was partly given insight to by (Ind & al., 2012) who suggesting that the level of implementing co-creation might be dependent on the concept of the business and the capabilities of the organisation. (Heidenreich & al., 2015) adds by suggesting weighing the risk and choosing a co-creation level that suits the company’s business model. O’Hern and Rindfleisch (2008) stress the importance of “channelling the innovation” as a controlled strategy. (Whalena & Akakaa, 2015), talking specifically about entrepreneurial marketing suggest that value is individually determined and that value and markets should be united to create a sustainable ecosystem. Our findings however reveal that start-ups, due to their resource limitations, aren’t capable of managing and controlling the flow of eWOM and co-creating the experiences with online users.

All in all, it appeared in our findings that online customers and Inayah have different interests and vision, which is resulting in an expectation gap and reflected on the experience. This is very much related to theory by (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2002) on the difference between company and consumer vision, and that “the conflict is in the point of exchange of the product” which creates a gap. Furthermore, both customers and bloggers seem to be highly influenced by visualization, which is reflected on their experience with a product. The credibility of bloggers is based on the validity given by consumers to them in terms of likes, comments and requests on their content. Hence, the major aspects influencing the start-up in scaling up, from a co-creation of experience-
based innovation perspective, can be split up in two parts; customer relationship management and the validity of the visual content that both form the perceived experience of the online users.

22 Implications

From a company perspective, online users are the independent variable, since the aim of start-ups is satisfaction of their online customers, for them to purchase their products and become loyal. However, and from the perspective of the consumers the bloggers appeared to be the independent variable since they are seen as the modest fashion gurus, who set the trends and give the advice needed. Therefore, the whole co-creation strategy should be built on the backdrop of the nature of online communities, where the bloggers are the dominant players. Based on this notion, we will list the following implications of our study for the industry to benefit from:

- Co-creation is important, since today’s empowered consumer has shortened the life cycle of innovation due to their demand of fast launch of products, and fast reaction to queries, wherever they may be placed, among other things.

- Our findings reveal that start-ups, due to their resource limitations, aren’t capable of managing and controlling the flow of queries and eWOM, resulting from posting the visual content on social media, and co-creating the experiences with online users. The capability and resource needed is creativity and time, which the start-ups don’t have excess of. This clearly reflects an expectation gap between customers and company. However, since co-creation can be costly; a start-up should utilize a limited and controlled co-creation strategy to avoid risks and excessive costs.

- Our insight to the literature in regards to start-ups and co-creation is therefore more concerned with outsourcing tasks and channelling the co-created value and branding together on a higher level relative to creating experience-based content together. We therefore suggest that co-creation of experience-based innovation with the influencer should be focused on the front-end phases of the value chain, namely branding and marketing. This
implies the bloggers creating inspirational visual content in the form of videos on Youtube videos and photos on Instagram, based on the guidelines and tools given to them by the start-up. Furthermore, we expect the influencer to foster positive eWOM by engaging and monitoring the activity and discussions online.

- Bloggers are the biggest influencers and shapers of online communities, and are seen as those predicting the latent needs of consumers and setting the standards for future trends through the content they launch. Bloggers are therefore seen as lead users by companies. Bloggers are not only influential because they create online content and portray themselves in videos and pictures, but also due to their credibility gained by the validity given to them by the online users, since the online users associate themselves with the blogger and consider her a virtual friend sharing the same challenges in life. The popularity of bloggers is based on creativity and innovative ideas on lifestyle issues; matching clothes with other garments and makeup, styling scarves in different ways, creating creative outfits, creating how-to guides for product application (i.e. tutorials), and describing the pros and cons of the products based on their personal experiences.

- The capabilities of bloggers and the value of their position can’t be simply replaced, copied or improvised by companies. Companies are simply not capable of copying the competencies of the bloggers themselves and creating as huge, loyal and as active audiences. Even if they succeed it would take them much longer to do so, which is not optimal to waste resources on. Therefore, start-ups should simply outsource the parts they are less capable of doing to bloggers aiming at satisfying their own community on the first level and getting access to new customers through the bloggers’ communities as well. Furthermore, in order for the start-up to benefit optimally from co-creation and scale up they need to maintain a relationship with the bloggers to continuously create value-adding experiences.

- In the big picture, the bloggers will have multiple effects on the business including; lower costs related to expanding the online business, instead of expanding through new physical stores, less dissatisfaction based on fitting and other application issues. All of this will lead
to a better reputation and more satisfied customers that will spread positive eWOM and shop again loyally.

23 Recommendations

- Based on our empirical data we have noticed that the bloggers can help Inayah in 5 different areas; awareness, attractiveness, customer satisfaction, increase product value based on experience, improve brand reputation and product improvement. From the company’s perspective when a blogger communicates about the company this means the company will automatically get awareness. While looking at Inayah’s weaknesses and the bloggers’ strength; we saw a great opportunity to cover the weaknesses of Inayah through the strengths of the bloggers; namely Inspiring content, and engagement.

- Because every blogger will appear as a brand ambassador, i.e. the medium, for Inayah and communicate the company to their online audience the result will be company getting a lot of awareness that will lead to product attractiveness by the online users in their community.

- In the big picture, the blogger will have multiple effects on Inayah’s business including; lower costs related to creating visual content, answering queries and attracting new customers. This may reduce the need from the online users for physical stores and eliminate the uncertainty and feeling of risk, related to fitting, sizes and application among other things, when shopping online. Also, using a blogger that the online users interested in modest fashion already are fond of, will add value to their experience with Inayah’s products. All of this will lead to a better reputation and more satisfied customers that will spread positive eWOM and shop again loyally. Furthermore, and since the value of the bloggers is not constant, but increased with add-ons and continuous development; we expect that the inspiring content the bloggers would make will have added value with time, as they gain more likes, comments, followers and subscriptions. Apart from that, we observed that bloggers are good at making it easier for their viewers, they always link to the products they review and generally create a smooth process for the consumer to purchase an item, even though it’s not their own brand.
Hence, it’s recommended to use the bloggers as Inayah’s intermediary and co-creative actors. Intermediary in terms of reaching for their online audiences, and co-creators in terms of creating visual content; inspiring lookbooks, product reviews, tutorials, outfit pictures, etc. Furthermore, and since it was clearly evident that the online users also demand the sense of belonging to a community and be heard, acknowledged and advised through user-to-user and also user-to-company communication we also recommend outsourcing the task to the influencers of engaging their audiences on the community with discussions to create positive eWOM, which is the first priority. In addition, the negative eWOM is beneficial feedback for the company to improve their products and processes. The latter stems with out notion that reacting to negative customer comments expressing dissatisfactions, should be highly prioritised and taken seriously, since that can not only affect the existent viewers within the audience but also the new ones.

In this context, we suggest Inayah to give the guidelines and tools to the bloggers to manage their community. In this way, they can manage and channel co-creation in accordance with their goals and strategy and avoid complete transparency and openness leading to never-ending input from consumers.

In order for Inayah to truly benefit from this co-creation strategy explained above, they need to maintain a good relationship to the bloggers to continuously create value-adding experiences for their consumers. This will happen by rewarding the bloggers and giving them a sense of ownership over the brand, which motivates them contribute to its growth and success.
Further research

The existing literature on co-creation focuses on establishing a theory to simplify the co-creation concept and deals mostly with the prerequisites of the actual co-creation activity. However, what is lacking is the concrete practical “how-to” approach to co-creating with customers and what challenges and opportunities that may lie herein. Our findings aimed at giving the reader an insight on how the co-created experience of the online user actually is co-created, what the dynamics influencing it are, how the flow of knowledge can takes different courses, and how issues that might appear minor for the company, may quickly damage the overall experience of the customer. Furthermore, our findings revealed that online users’ emotional attachment to products based on their experience is an important area worth further investigation.

In order to co-create an experience-based value, emotional attachment does play a major role. We observed that sometimes the consumers and bloggers express feelings, both positive and negative, without really explaining why they have or don’t have an emotional attachment to a product. However, it is evident that emotional attachment increases the willingness to co-create and spread positive eWOM. Since most of the literature on co-creation talks about motivation, which is the cognitive reason for co-creation, we believe that researching emotional attachment is an important prerequisite prior to motivation. Hence, the topic for further research is the relationship between co-creation and consumers’ emotional attachment to products.
25 Bibliography


Tokio, D. (05.05.2015). *HUGE SPRING | SUMMER Haul!* Hentet 12.01.2015 fra https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXEAbjb77M0


Appendices
Appendix 1: Diffusion of Innovations mode by Everett Rogers (Berger, 2011)

Appendix 2: Lead User Bell Curve Diagram (Von Hippel, 2004)
### Appendix 3: Degree of implementation of co-creation (Bhalla, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of co-creation</th>
<th>Light</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range of collaboration</td>
<td>Listen only</td>
<td>Listen + Engage</td>
<td>Listen+Engage+Respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of collaboration</td>
<td>Connect with ideas only</td>
<td>Connect with ideas+select ideas</td>
<td>Connect with ideas+ develop ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer empowerment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer ideas</td>
<td>Mainly invited</td>
<td>Invited and generated through engagement</td>
<td>Generated mainly through ongoing engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of ideas</td>
<td>Company decides</td>
<td>Customers provide inputs, final decision rests with company</td>
<td>Customers vote and collaborate with the company in selecting which ideas to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of ideas</td>
<td>Company leads</td>
<td>Company leads; occasionally customers participate in refining value</td>
<td>Company and customers collaborate to co-create value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration platform</td>
<td>Company websites, occasionally customer communities</td>
<td>Company websites; occasionally dedicated physical collaboration spaces; customer communities</td>
<td>Company websites dedicated websites and/or dedicated physical collaboration spaces, customer communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Dynamic coding

Inayah – picture on Instagram

3,721 likes
1w

inayahc

End of Line & Sample Sale Prices:

HIJABS £3
OLD LINE MIDIS £15
NEW LINE MIDIS £20
OLD LINE MAXI DRESSES AND ABAYAS £15
NEW LINE MAXI DRESSES & ABAYAS £25-£30
OLD OUTERWEAR £15
NEW OUTERWEAR £20
OCCASION WEAR 50% off

Limited Stocks. By appointment only at our London HQ. Please see our previous post for further details

k_agurahallo wir mussen da shoppen@_ddae
shayda.97@shumana_bgm
shazanarazali@nanasetankecik kedai ni dkat ngan you tak bae?
rayoonaa88
txsminx98@iram.a.mahmood omd I want to go
samiahnoor
payaamhasans
nanasetankecik@shazanarazali idk. Where's the location?
vinemicicek30Hepsı benıım olsun@beyzaa_eroğlu
zulakhaa@_nxbs_ lets go please
@rubia_sh

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

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@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

@official_gown

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@official_gown
mohimaislam@rabia_azizz omg ...where?? I need one ..I gave a wedding g coming up

rabia_sh My dress is in there too I need a branch to be here too

@somecreativemind@looking_the_otherway

manalawaza What about the international customers? ?? ?? @inayahc

dehryn@wasiela @wasielanoor ahhh

zyanbhaleem @inayahc I was one one of the firsts to email you but still haven't received any call..I was looking forward to buy some occasional, day to day and hijabs..

yasminl30 @inayahc Has @inayahc started contacting people via phone yet?

shamim12 Why dose it have to be at the hq... I live so far away @inayahc

salma89khan Still waiting to be contacted @inayahc

r.b_86 @inayahc Hi, on one of your responses you said you will be in touch with everyone who responded by Sunday but the appointment booking details went up yesterday and I also received the details via email yesterday too and I emailed back with my details straight away but I haven't heard anything back so I'm abit confused how people emailed by Sunday?

inayahc @r.b_86 Hi, yes, so we will ensure everybody is contacted by Sunday, i.e everyone who booked an appointment with us :) we hope this helps

clarify @salma89khan @yasminl30 @zyanbhaleem

inayahc @shamim12 We would love to know which city you are located in :)

shamim12 Love up north in Dewsbury @inayahc and would love to get the same opportunity as the sisters near/ in London

shamim12 Live*

r.b_86 @inayahc thank you for your reply also some people have mentioned that they have got a reply saying fully booked but I replied within 15 mins of receiving booking details but haven't had any reply yet?
Embody a unique, contemporary and classic aura in this graceful ensemble. Inspired by simplicity and ease, and a touch of sophisticated glamour, adding a luxe touch to your occasional look.

Grey Golden Leaf Kimono
White Georgette Hijab
White Crepe Top
White Tapered Trousers

www.inayahcollection.com
aysche@vuslatkuyumcu bence süper! Kendim için seni ayakkabılan(!) için tagledim

vuslatkuyumcu@aysche ahahahaha
aysche@inayahc very chic and classy.
elhafizah@sarina.shafiee beli!!
kaneez_alihow much is kimono ??
niksmadGoodness gracious. This is so beautiful. I know I've asked before but do you ship to Myanmar and do you have the option of cash on delivery?
dewdropsandsunshineWould kimonos look as nice worn with abayas?

rozebaydilli@suemsim so schön
nourbeautyorbeaux
a_akdoush@selmaacihana cok zarif
suemsim@rozebaydilliooh ja
maryoom_ox@zahoor86
sinthia6Love love love this outfit.
sunayaya@aneesa_b@sadiyyabadat
hamnamaqsoodCan i have the price of it plz
hamnamaqsoodCan i have the price of it plz
claussafsl the kimono on your website? I cant find it
sihamcp@shazma09
tislam204Ooh love this @hayati_61108@jujubeans7@yeayaza
hayati_61108Nice! @tislam24@yeayaza
malik.nimra@salma_f_ahmed omg bhnaa yh chye
selmaacihanaFaut qu'ils aient une boutique à Lyon laaa @akidoush
a_akdoush@selmaacihana grv
avakarim93@yoyo_sa3ed
nonahamad@al_budoor1
yeayazaI know. Very cute! @hayati_61108@tislam24@jujubeans7
supershwa5iCute!! 7beet @ghaffi
ghaffi@supershwa5i check the account .. I love her design 🌷
maryamallawati@zmlawati
amoolahy@91muna... You
inayahc@clauassafs Hi, yes, if you search 'grey golden' it will come up :) x
inayahc@hamnamaqsood@rabias_cakes@umayma8@mum_646@hijabbynsHi, for full price details and to place an order kindly visit our website www.inayahcollection.com :) x
inayahc@niksmadHi, yes we ship worldwide :) we only accept payments for delivery via our website x
inayahc@dewdropsandsunshineHi, yes you can :) x
n_bashiti@nostalgicpalestine
monati1@om_yyn
deniphone@amina.hamza assâ så fint
ima.al@affifi fah
asmhbgmats@gizemelmacii ya kaftan
3athaba@m3alle
noshi_28@toomah25
Minimal Eid Look: Infusing elegance, luxury and modesty for minimal perfection. The versatility of this outfit means you can wear this carefree look for a special occasion such as Eid or dressed for a summer season style. Take a peak at our many minimal inspired designs online.

White Crepe Top
Floral Print Straight Cut Kimono
White Georgette Hijab
White Trousers to be released over the weekend.

www.inayahcollection.com
That looks nice @berry..r

We alaykum assalam, kindly email customer.care@inayahcollection.com with your order number and they will be able to assist you inshaAllah - please allow 1-2 working days for a reply as admin must work in order of emails received. Thank you

Thank you ladies :)

Thank you ladies

Please visit our website for pricing in all major currencies

I like the kimono, xxx

Oui super beau faut surtout etre mince et ne pas avoir de forme pr que ce soit un minimum

inayahC

wa alaykum assalam, kindly email customer.care@inayahcollection.com with your order number and they will be able to assist you inshaAllah - please allow 1-2 working days for a reply as admin must work in order of emails received. Thank you

inayahC

Thank you ladies

Please visit our website for pricing in all major currencies

I like the kimono

Oui super beau faut surtout etre mince et ne pas avoir de forme pr que ce soit un minimum

inayahC

Please visit our website for pricing in all major currencies

I like the kimono

Oui super beau faut surtout etre mince et ne pas avoir de forme pr que ce soit un minimum

inayahC

Thank you ladies

Please visit our website for pricing in all major currencies

I like the kimono

Oui super beau faut surtout etre mince et ne pas avoir de forme pr que ce soit un minimum

inayahC
inayah@nooralqa Hi, it usually takes 1-2 working days once it has been dispatched :) x
iznazarin@tehajamall u will look gorjes.should buy it!hehe
ilaydaaekavy I liked this one @haci040
aabed_15242@ilaydaaekavy ama moet je kei lang voor zijn
ayahzg@maysamalifarraj95
maysamalifarraj95@ayahzg ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥
nosaibah_r@m_riaa how about I make you it instead
anwaramer@ruru_pal
ruru_pal@anwaramer
aisha.ah_r abdulla
eman 840@3beer_hamad بريطانيا في حلم شرقي
olakhaliilong @shaweenali @nisaa_w
safa_mamari@zuwainalimamari look this account
tamxnaa@aysha.voraji
rawandmarwan9@mesha.ghz
hwavl ! تعريفين سافرتين إذا عُثرت .. هل حساب على لغم خُذ! @hds_90
naazia_amod@ruwaida_amod
mubinakatchi@bibichona
noorjahan.xo@aysha200 I'm buying the whole outfit
razoom yousef@7nu
noorjahan.xo@inayah when will you be releasing the white trousers?
3atika@beautyangel_92 sahka vi kortaki chye jana
nori254@fifisafrifa
inayah@noorjahan.xo Our white tapered trousers are online :)
chiclawyer@lateisthehour
fatimahhusin@kamialahsr love how simple n elegant inayah is...
kamalihsr@super cantik @fatimahhusin!
kamalihsr@fatimahhusin really good for work wear pun
jesuismariam_@asola.mohamed kijk hoe mooi
two_years_ago@moosoha_ حلو يطلع اوفر وى لمستحصل 9
samahghany@samarghany
shachikokuza@arisrrymayrizasihombing@ekasarizasihombing
travana.king
sajidjhan@afsha_aa
mashalbakshAre these pants available now? @inayahc
inayahc@mashalbaksh they will be soon x
mashalbakshOhhh, They aren't the white tapered trousers on the website? @inayahc
2009_zhoor@eme_moha @fatiiimahiya
al حساب ذا شروفووا
faree7a.93@reemdarras
mai_mohamed199519How much plz
eba2amro@ososozaareer
ferdous_balamash@totababdull@omsedrah
mburskaMaşAllah! :) 
s4 ss@gulbahar17
emanalkhodayir@momimik
_maryooma@hissa.1
sss sdf@ almuaiimi
hxbiibiil love this one! @adel_alfoqaha
adel_alfoqahaHahaha @hxbiibiil do you want from me to buy something like that for u
hxibii: Yessss @adel_alfoqaha
_ffeamoonoo: @munaid tjej hemmestsiden
pamela_haidat: @evilbean6 @batears01
lama_salahat: @areenaa
manaly_id: @marwa_ibrahim
gmabutaleb: @sara_j_h @dareen_tm
eminelohse: How much please?
kiboshhh: @ines_wabo
ines_wabo: @kiboshhh
__hanooon: If I order on Friday will my clothes come in before Eid?
mer0zturk: Alleen andere kleur @umranozel
umranozel: Ja bu hepsinden güzel qua model @mer0zturk
shazia_khader_: @muhammed_shaheer
iiiqraaa: This dress! @salwafatima
salwafatima: Yess i want it! @salwafatima
iiiqraaa: this is beautiful
esraaiilhan: @kkkaya0
kkkaya0: tkt plus tard ;)
esraaiilhan: İnşallah c sa que jveux sur les robes iste jaime troop @kkkaya0
kkkaya0: bende seviyorummm
jordanian_arabian: Your posts have helped me a lot because I'm a new hijabi sister. And it is a little hard at the beginning to find long tops and such. I live in the US.
_zahra_mohamed: Jaa Die haben so wunderschöne Sachen ♥ @h_a_d_i_r

422
6,630 likes

24w

inayah-

Festive Collection:

Dusty Pink Oversized Kimono
White Crepe Top
Grey Crossover Trousers
Off White Georgette Hijab

www.inayahcollection.com

load more comments

sabriyyar Is the kimono see through?

juhena_@jahedabegum99 Totally my kind of look.

xxrxw@itsblvckpearl

mom_of_2dolls_sabrinasamranaplz respond me ASAP! If you order in today would you receive it b4 Eid. Shipping to US@inayahc

sweetzz96 How long does it take to ship out items? (To USA)

ranaamasri@haanamasri

amiram08@3_abeer

aamaa1413@78_zoo

aamaa1413@wiiix

enas.mohammed.374@suzanabuhmaid ah mhwh hadol elalwan daymn m3 b3d

rehab_almadkahly@battal1444

sarahahmed_94@samiya_fp the colours the everything

do3a2ahmed@totaliaaa_4ever

alfinaelufar Klu buat sekarang ini, kaya gini boleh ga?? @ldymoscow

inayahcHi @sweetzz96 it usually takes 1-2 working days once it has been dispatched :) x

inayahc@mom_of_2dolls_sabrinasamranasdfsghjkhadija Hi ladies, yes you will receive it before Eid, the cut of date has yet to be announced. The order usually reaches its destination 1-2 working days once it has been dispatched x
Hi,

to

for the future purchases :)
queenz_aljUI like this account@hanood_af
aqsa17@reverttoislam ye or ne?
thecakeshop_kuwait@hasobaso
reverttoislam@aqsa17 naaa
aqsa17han q? :o @reverttoislam
reverttoislam1 donno. I liked the other one more @aqsa17
aqsa17lol ok...let me ask the admin then;)@reverttoislam
reverttoislam@aqsa17
_harmeeet_@alif_0815
fathimajoosab@nazzy_v @hasuparuk
nada_bafa@hno_ba@marambahubaishi
irthcultural@alaa.designs@a.k.photographer @asoorkm
alaaalmane@irthcultural
ma7zoffHow much this?
shammaalsuwaidei @zalnsour
asoorkm @irthcultural
tamxna_
zekkie5@saartjee1
saartjee1@zekkie5 mooie kleuren die broek is alleen beetje gek en blouse is te lang
ryoons_226@ananoor
bera_kilicHey, usually I use size 36 (EU). You only have xs/small or medium/large available. Will the xs/s fit me? Do I have to pay for the shipping back if I want to return it? Thanks ❤️  @inayahc
sarasetoo@lubna_alhumidan
soumia @mayremmmmm en deze
emilia.astahova@nahi20 so pretty right
princess_diamant_29@amura51 huh7
somayesoltanii@soltanizahra اين انت وهذا عونه
fateme_a_dia@naemeh__@sabooloo@hejabe_fatemie_man
sabooloo@fateme_a_di
fatima za @ zainabhi die Seite meinte ich
hanawielbarasi@susubosue
samina.@fatima8666
lina_shaaban@tamaraashaaban1 like thia page ktit helwin
malkhazni.94@inayahc could you please respond to my email? @inayahc
miiso11@medo_dk w da brdo ☺️
nancyali@827nervana
anureetika@areecishah your kind of color
shamsa.alb@awatef41
sameerakarim@mothers_intuition
hijew@aishahida
__camii_3sal@Nabela.bel
maia_my98@halimahkl1 nice one
s4 ss@gulbahar17
thefoodmenu_bh@noora_jg
hanooshx33@nadeennagi17
nadeennagi17How hot! @hanooshx3
hastvar_@saza_taqana
lama.salahat@areenaa
aisyhwaranisha@dianaideris dis one iz pretty

dianaideris aah la @aisyhwaranisha

noorwiixo So classy @zoyaa_ahmed

hanami alattar@m.alattar11

eynachia@afifahazri

thesarah888@annaalshawab

Opsesivna@mean__ah

muhic_a@opsesivna

hhd 85@ssh_91

alaa_abokaeas@hancenalkrad حبيبتي يتيمه

tam2o@hind0033 @nadayafeay @beno191@hana_gebran66

tam2o@hego_20

chokladnarkoman@nesrine_bh52 dude we

nesrine_bh52@chokladnarkoman this is AMAZING

mema28z@afrahshammar

khvlfv@libanon_mimo

nidalibrahimxox@sabahbofficial

muslim_mira Doka hada mastor@happyzineb

joodyjardat@danoosh_1997

happyzineb Hta ana 9olt lihabat@muslim_amira

khxlys@edaakhalidah nak seluar centu! Nanti kena cari

dodomoe@rm3s_ اطواق بدنو اي

nigora_khan@nasiba30

rm3s@dodomoe الـحل مقع وين بحـنين

reham.1985

sawenkhdr@rezhna_askim

dodomoe@nwara097 hhhhh

faranax_bxgum These trousers @taz_xo

sarahalboshi@salmanquihtan I like the colors

ayatalwaqedi@um_zayed989

lovecindyxo Her "kimono" @lovelyyrossy_x3 shittttttttt Im bout to start rocking a hijab to lol

lovecindyxo@lovelyyrossy_x3

lovelyyrossy_x3 Lmaoooooo you're so stupid! It's pretty @lovecindyxo

swesyywirakereen nii @rostitkamafaridik

unnknownn_1!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Le cardigan et le pantalon my gad @lynn.hammoud l'achètera genre

plusieurs couleurs de sarwels hahah

lynn.hammoud Woooow @inconitxs

unnknownn_1 SCREENSHOT TOOOOUT aahahah @lynn.hammoud
Hijabs from £5, Dresses & Abaya's from £20
Whilst stocks last.

www.inayahcollection.com

load more comments

thecutewish OMG WOO
fatimabenzz@instaotif
dewdropsandsunshine Wooooo!
dewdropsandsunshine Can the deep brown drape abaya be worn without the belt?

fatmahjadid@amirah.hamidon@atiqah_ramli

saqia.yasmin@shuhena.x go go go! You could find some really nice pieces 😊❤️
f3rv@pumpkinshake_belikann

sarahahmed_94@samiya_fp

meem.krs@jooj168 شروفي

tanzila [@ sabzi]

irtiqak@uzairkhan24 please order theres sale
umm.maryam@64aylin@amatullah61 Ucuzlama var bakin isterseniz 😊❤️

swaggyjsdb@nnooooooooooooobody

farahnk Website is down @inayahc 😞

khadizak@sk790

instaotif Tkt jy etai ce matin lol @fatimabenzz

dewdropsandsunshine I've put 11 items in my basket now I can't even access the website, never mind order...
Hi ladies, we are sorry to hear you are having trouble with our website please email customer.care@inayahcollection.com along with the exact issue you are experiencing and also a screenshot. Thank you x
inayahc@lillyboo_1 yes we ship worldwide :) x

inayahc@ich_bin_muslma Hi, you can place an order via our website www.inayahcollection.com x

__ haaych I've only just seen it @tonujakanom

cintakasihoofficial:-D

naz2727 Sold out!!!! @inayahc

inayahc@dewdropsandsunshine Hi, yes it has enough room for movement and yes if you would like to you can wear the Brown Drape Abaya without a belt :) x

sajadwaik@sundus_a @ayahsuarez

ayahsuarez@sajadwaik @sundus_a beddi mn shaaan allah

limzloveslife@sarah_y.k it took 5 times but I had sabr and I finally placed my order lol! Cc @superleils

tonujakanom__ haaych Afsor Gave Me £150 For Eid So

__ haaych @tonujakanom

milahamid@ameeraazmi ! Dh beli kaaaaa. Tunggu milia

dewdropsandsunshine Thanks @inayahc :) how fitted is the Basic Denim Abaya (sale) around the stomach? I'm a size 8 body, slim everywhere except tummy (waaaaah!) I usually order 54/56 in Medium from you which is perfect, however bearing in mind it is of viscose mix I'm worried it will cling around the stomach and make me look pregnant! X

sarahasaz Hi @inayahc When are your crepe tops coming back in stock? I have been waiting what feels like ages to order clothes from your store but size medium in a lot of things is always out of stock

:(@inayahc

sarah_y.k@limzloveslife im going to get involved now

beautevix I've just added so much clothes in my basket and eventually I wanted to check out but you guys don't have PayPal makes you guys degrade from a 10 to a -6533. So freaking disappointed

atiyasdfghjkl@arus01

ruwanalkam@suha.alkam

hijabilife@inayahc I just placed my order! I am based in the U.S. but my order was in pounds? That was confusing.

hijabilife@dewdropsandsunshine I have the drape Abaya in large and I have a tummy. I should have gotten the Medium as it is very roomy. I got two though and they are great for nursing mommies!

sharlychowdhury got so excited about a dress on sale, ready to check out on my to see shipping to the U.S is as much as how much the dress is costing me

sharlychowdhury@hijabilife you can just google to convert it. If you type in the price "British pounds convert to USD" it'll convert for you

fahima.shah Pretty useless as everything is out of stock. You need to up your game

yara0abdelaziz@safrinaamira 5 DOLLAR HIIABS JUMP ON IT. prob still expensive tho

safrinaamira That's 5 pounds which is like 8 or 9 dollars

safrinaamira@yara0abdelaziz

hijabilife@inayahc yup I did that already. Haha my hubs won't like that conversion that's for sure.

hijabilife@sharlychowdhury see above

amiraahrshha@fatimahjadid omooo *keecmas*

limzloveslife@nikimama girl you better get it while you can!

b.yasminee Salam Aleykum which size for 160 cm !? @inayahc

yara0abdelaziz@safrinaamira those darn Europeans

smk_xo You guys should really have a fashion show

dewdropsandsunshine@hijabilife Sis, I'm not pregnant! Haha. It's just that certain clothes can make me look it, as I'm tubby around my tummy but skinny everywhere else! Xx

inayahc@fahima.shah Our customers are fast and sale goods naturally retail very quickly. There is still plenty in stock.

inayahc@dewdropsandsunshine Salaam :) we would advise going for one size up in that case! x
inayahc@yass.rawih  Wa alaykum assalam :) is that your height or shoulder to hem measurement? x
inayahc@hijablife We hope you love your purchases! For next time you can select USD from the
currency dropdown on the homepage to convert all prices and shop in dollars :) x
inayahc@beautevilxo Hi, unfortunately we don't accept PayPal but you may use the debit card linked to
your PayPal or pay via bank transfer too, by contacting customer.care@inayahcollection.com :) x
inayahc@sarahasaz Hi Sarah, we aim to restock our crepe tops in all sizes in approximately 3-4 weeks
time! Kindly add the item to your wish list so that you are notified once the goods are restocked before
they sell out x
b.yasmineee@inayahc my height
__newnew_n@devamel21
aieda_r@billiefunkyjean
thornyroseee
mrs_sai.ali@dewdropsandsunshine I always order larger because I worry about my belly too lol. At
least then if you are having a bad belly day the abaya conceals it and if you do have a flat stomach day
you can always use a belt to tighten and emphasise the waist. I'm a small UK 10 5ft 9 and always order
a large58. Hope this helps sis. Also sometimes the super skinny models look like they have a belly in
the pic so me with my non model figure push for the larger sizes. X
alawiyahalhadad@aidahhabshie !!!!!!!
dewdropsandsunshine@mrs_sai.ali mA you're tall sis :) JzkA...much appreciated. You're a small yet
you have to order a large (says everything about Inayah's sizing!) I ordered it yesterday afternoon and
because it's sale I can't return or exchange, so I'm buggered if it doesn't fit. Ordered it in 56 M which fits
me perfectly in Inayah's sizing. The only reason why I am questioning this particular piece is because of
the viscose mix....I have no idea whether that means it will drape over lumps and bumps, or only
"enhance" them! Inayah ought to take into consideration the fabric and make these things clear! X
mrs.sai.ali It depends on fabric Hun@dewdropsandsunshine. It's Jersey then I go for the large
(because a medium is their size 10 which I am) as for viscose I ordered a large size again as I didn't
want the pregnant look. Yes the arms do look loose on me and the chest area but like I said my
preference is to have clothes look looser on me then tight and show every lump and bump. Post 4 kids
and my figure is not so forgiving anymore
mrs_sai.ali@dewdropsandsunshine it is a guessing game and I too have had to return items. Including
having to purchase an xsmall once because of deign and material. I pray one day they open a shop. Xx
dewdropsandsunshine@mrs_sai.ali It is a guessing game indeed. I find that the type of material
makes a massive difference to the size you require. And I don't know if it's just me, but have you come
across certain sleeve lengths coming up too short (even though you've ordered the size which normally
fits?) I've had to return items previously which is such a pain...and an expense! It would be great if they
had a standard size for all, but if this isn't possible for whatever reason (and bearing in mind they don't
have a shop) Inayah should make and effort to say so! I'll defo consider ordering a large next
time....which may look odd given the fact that my body is a size 6/8, but rather than looking
pregnant (which I'm not!)
dewdropsandsunshine@mrs_sai.ali I'm sure you wouldn't swap your four children for the world sis
mA you look so young and slim in your dp x
mrs.sai.ali@dewdropsandsunshine thank you xxx
farkafil@ayahhr83
aidahhabshie@alawiyahalhadadpensan!!!!! Amcam????!da pilih??
ayahhr83 Thanks @farkafil
s2images Loving the sale ♥
casaweya@teszadiieg@susanneelsborg@sentabeuke Så er det nu man slår til
b.yasmineee@inayahc Salam Aleykum my height is 1m60 what I have to choose please?
teszadie har først regnet med at skulle købe i september haha! 😂

@casaweya

husains7@hira_m

blizzaro@fiszy

nasreen777@anisah_hussain_ox most sizes have gone

shapla_18@inayah salam, when would the sale finish?

mai.the@earthtomaria @f.hmr

sarahrzs When I want to go to your website they told me that it is in "maintenence" :(

inayah@inayah Hi, it should be fine now x

inayah@shapla_18 Wa alaykumsalam :) there are no specific dates x

rabiaaaaxo how much would that be in sgd

saida.ao@bosaynaxa kijk hun inst. ze hebben ook een website

784

785

786

Youtube video:

787

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-zcR5ROx4

789

Published on Jun 19, 2015

792

saima.hussain 5 months ago

very nice. can u do hijab tutorials for people who wear glasses pls.

Reply · 16

Hide replies

INAYAH 4 months ago

+saima.hussain Hi, thank you for your suggestion, we will keep note of it for future Hijab Tutorials :) x

Reply · 7

AnEternityIsNotEnough_LetsStartWithForever 4 months ago

+INAYAH yesss that would be awesome

Reply · 1

Amina Choudry 3 months ago

just took the glasses in I think it will look fine

Reply ·

Amina Choudry 3 months ago

*tuck
Dewi Ariani 4 months ago
is she nabila bee?

Ambreen Zahoor 3 weeks ago
Yup

Rasa Baumilaite 1 month ago
She is like a flower...

Fanny Z 4 months ago
That model is gorg...mA

Anne Rahim 4 months ago
Can u please make a hijab tutorial for hijabis with glasses

INAYAH 3 months ago
Hi +Anne Rahim thank you for your suggestion, we will consider this for future videos.

Ainat Rashid 1 month ago
Finally a proper hijab tutorial I see on youtube. Mashallah beautiful
İlahə Karimli 4 months ago
nice
Reply ·

stella polare 1 month ago
The model looks like a doll anyway, really nice
Reply ·

Princess Cutie 5 months ago
What is the music playing? :) 
Reply ·

Desert Rose 1 month ago
model's gorgeous. love the last scarf print.
Reply ·

Aisha Bana 4 months ago
Please restock the mink maxi hijab x
Reply ·

INAYAH 3 months ago
Hi +Aisha Bana all hijabs will be restocked next week x
Reply ·

Ainat Rashid 1 month ago
Models contour is on Fleek
Reply ·

SABRINA DIANNE 2 months ago
really gorgeous that model!
Ibti Ššêm 4 months ago
So Beautiful Girl . Masha Allah
Reply · 1

msmina 4 months ago
Who is the inayah model? She is so pretty masha Allah
Reply · 2

Hülya Hijabi 2 months ago
New in youtube
Reply ·

Ammara Nisar 2 months ago
y h lol thats her..nabilabee
Reply ·

Heba Al-alkami 5 months ago
I'm going to try it for sure! thanks a lot for sharing the tutorials with us.
Reply · 1

Sarah Baker 1 month ago
i l'île thé 3 one
Reply ·

aisha datey 5 months ago
First to like and Masha'Allah ☐ the model is so preeeettttyyy
Reply · 1
Anoniempjeee 4 months ago
Haar blik bevalt me niet

Reply ·

Radhi K Jabbar 3 months ago
wow very nice

Reply ·

Faizah Begum 2 months ago
is nabilabee doing the hijab?

Reply ·

Adnin Arif 4 months ago
You look like a doll darling ❤️

Reply ·

live experiences 4 months ago
واهب حلاق

Reply ·

lovly heart 1 month ago
she so pretty mashalah

Reply ·

nazmin begum 2 months ago
That's a bit boring

Reply ·

ashurfim 4 months ago
OH MY GOD THESE ARE ALL SO CUUUTE

Reply ·
is that nabilabee doing the hija.. to find out who that is just go on youtube home page and type in nabilabee and im sure u guys will think that she looks like the one doing the hijab on the model.

Mashallah❤❤

Is that nabilabee? All looks r gorgeous.

Stunning!

Very nice and simply done.

Allahumma Barik Laha the model is so stunning
Иван ивонов 4 months ago
Beautiful girl
Reply · 1

Karrar 1234 3 months ago
Reply · 1

sabrine brinesa 5 months ago
thank's a lot; loved the third one
Reply · 1

Ummi Hani 3 months ago
nice n simple
Reply · 1

Emaan Fareed 2 months ago
is that nabilabee ??
Reply · 1

Hoiriyeh Moarif 1 month ago
Reply · 1

zahra alsuhail 4 months ago
Reply · 1
Shaiqua Fatma 4 months ago
nice
Reply ·

hija 121 4 months ago
c'est quoi le nom de fond de musique sur cet video?
Reply ·

Hoiriyeh Moarif 1 month ago
ملاحظة: الردة غير مفتوحة
Reply ·

Sabrina Abdulahi 4 months ago
The model is really pretty
Reply · 2

anon Y 4 months ago
ملاحظة: الردة غير مفتوحة
Reply ·

saima hussain 5 months ago
Reply ·

judy Inayeh 4 months ago
what's the kind of cloth for this hijab??
Reply ·

INAYAH 3 months ago (edited)
Hi +judy Inayeh a variety of materials were used including modal and georgette hijabs.
Reply ·
We show you 3 ways to style INAYAH jersey hijabs.

We want to hear from you! So SUBSCRIBE, REQUEST, COMMENT, LIKE & SHARE for more INAYAH hijab tutorials.


Shop all the designs featured in the video at www.inayahcollection.com

Follow INAYAH to stay inspired, and up to date with the latest in modest fashion.
Assalamo aleikum wa rahmatallah wa barakatu. Thank you so much for these clear, easy, and beautiful tutorials. MashAllah they are very well done and they are extremely extremely helpful! I have one request. Could you show some styles for sisters who do not use any kind of volume or even wrap their buns with scarves? I see this in many online tutorials but I and others believe this practice is makruh so it is hard to find a tutorial for a style that looks very neat and nice for our flat hair. Thank you and jezallahkhayr for your help!

INAYAH 3 weeks ago
+ Abigail Trumbo Wa alaikumsalam Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu, jazakAllah for your positive and constructive feedback. We will look into this for future Hijab Tutorials :) x

roro arwa 2 months ago
Love the 2nd style !! Similar to mine xox

Naz A 3 months ago
Can you do this but for Georgette hijabs These look stunning

INAYAH 3 weeks ago
+ Naz A Hi, yes we have similar styles for our Georgette Hijabs under our other tutorials :) x

BellaLiamsi 3 months ago
Nice but I wish there is further instructions on how to achieve these looks.

Arefa Suleiman 2 months ago
INAYAH WINTER LOOKBOOK: Modest Clothing, Everyday Abayas & Hijabs

Published on Dec 4, 2015

INAYAH's exclusive winter campaign has arrived, featuring contemporary modest wear, abayas, dresses and hijabs. Stay modest and fashionable this winter with INAYAH.

Shop all the designs featured in the video at www.inayahcollection.com

Follow INAYAH to stay inspired, and up to date with the latest in modest fashion.

Instagram: https://instagram.com/inayahc/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/InayahC
Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/inayahc/
Tumblr: http://islamic-fashion-inayah.tumblr...
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Inayah.Colle...
Assalamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh :)

Reply ·

Wa alaikumsalam Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuhu :)

Reply ·

The editing is absolutely flawless masha'Allah. I love this so much!

Reply · 1

Salamu alaykum , do you ship to egypt ?

Reply ·

Wa alaikumsalam, yes we ship worldwide :) x

Reply ·

WOW.

Reply · 4

This video is so well made. Amazing work and beautiful clothes, MA.

Reply · 1
Nergiz Deniz 2 weeks ago
so beautiful MasAllah ❤ are the models muslim too?
Reply ·

Tuğba B 2 weeks ago
Amazing! :) What is that song called?
Reply ·

saima hussain 2 weeks ago
wow love all the looks. can u pls make a tutorial for the hijab style at 1.28 ♡
Reply ·

INAYAH 2 weeks ago
+saima hussain Hi, yes we can do x
Reply ·

Lilia Wafa 2 weeks ago
Beautiful collection Masha'Allah ! Who's the cinematographer ?
Reply ·

Nawel E. 2 weeks ago
Assalam alaykum. Love it. :)
Reply ·

inukaa x 2 weeks ago
the dress at 0:16, where can i find it ?
Reply ·

INAYAH 2 weeks ago
+inukaa x Hi, you can find it via our website www.inayahcollection.com :) x
Appendix 5 - Static Coding

Dina Tokio: HUGE SPRING | SUMMER HAUL!
May 2015
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXEAbjb77M0

Codes:

00:00 matching guide

0:30 ; seasonal shopping

1:00; favorite shops are H&M, boohoo, and Asos

1:02 “need to find location spot for filming” – Aesthetics

1:50 ; comfy,

cheap

and easy to match

3:20 ; “love them”, love the colour, good to match

5:05 ; item looks cheap – disliked

6:40 ; expensive but quality – willing to pay more

8:00-11:00 increased consumption on sale

11:10 ; “jumpsuit not fitting my own figure” –

concern about style usability, (toilet visits, hard to match)

not covering my bum

13:00 – willing to pay more for quality as its seen as long-term investment

17:20 ; loving the colours but hard to match

18;30 : “all muslim girls need a long black shirt in their closet” – long black shirt
is a “must-have”
AUTUMN HAUL - CLOTHING! | BOOHOO | Amena

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liY2eSYX7f0

0:20 loves seasonal styles and colours

1:40 ; easy to match

- easy to match to different styles (formal/casual)

2:15 long fitting,

nice colour

2:37 fitting of product differs from product description and size,

non-transparent vs transparent

layering

3:00 talks about own figure and the fitting accordingly

3:07 – item non-transparent –

practical , comfy

3:55 “flattering fit ” - fit is suitable for curvy women to hide imperfections/fat

4:30 nice colour,

long (suitable for hijabis – “jackpot for hijabis”),

feels like high quality when touching it, (texture)

like “topshop” (assumed to be of higher quality brand)

5:30 likes the print,

soft, cozy, lightweight

6:30 “love it”, less practical though

7:50“ this garment is good for snowy days with tea and a movie” - associate with events

8:20 it feels lovely when touching, quality is nice,
Hi lovelies,

Today I wanted to share my winter haul with you! I am so proud of myself that I didn’t buy any capes, you know I heart capes! The theme of this haul is very much, the on-trend cosy fake furs. I love having colours that frame my hoojab, particularly in the winter time to keep warm.


As I have shared with you, I am digging the more neutral colours, so my first purchase is the khaki fur lined cardigan from Boohoo. It’s long, with three quarter batwing sleeves, really easy to pair with a long sleeved top.
My next purchase is the thick-knit off-the-shoulder black jumper.

I am really impressed with the quality, it doesn’t look like its going to bobble, if at all, thus I went for two colours! Yes indeedy! I just couldn’t resist getting it in this beautiful burgundy colour. It is a rich colour that I would have so much fun matching with a lip colour.
I also bought some outerwear accessories. The first is basically the Hoojab’s long lost, furry, cosy cousin. Ahhh, so soft!

The next is another detached fur collar in this beautiful teal colour! It’s a luxurious accessory that makes an outfit classy.

You are well aware of my passion for cute pyjamas, and this has shown up in this haul in the form of these adorable polar bear pyjamas! How cute are these! I love prancing around in these cosy pyjamas, especially since these are so warm and comfy.

For a bit of luxury in my nightwear, I also bought these satin pyjamas. I love the comfortable fit and the fact that the colour is so flattering to my skin tone.
My final purchase from Boohoo is the polo neck poncho. Sometimes a girl’s gotta have a cosy poncho day! When I’m out and about with errands, it’s a really easy and practical item to wear.

Actually I picked up this furry hat for my sister, who was looking for one for a while. But now that I hold it in my hands, I love it and might just keep this one for myself and get her another one, hmmm not sure what to do….

I picked up a few things from ASOS. The first is my long knit dress. A lot of you have been asking me about it since I posted this photo on my Instagram – so now you know ladies. I bought this from the tall section, because it is meant to be a ‘midi’ dress, so I wanted mine to be longer than usual. I paired this dress with my new Ugg boots from John Lewis – love them! They are the Error! Hyperlink reference not valid., but they are from the children’s section, so cheaper than the adult boots.
I bought this funky white cape t-shirt! My love of capes, lives on! This is a nice top to pair with a long sleeved top underneath to make a creative outfit. It actually looks much nicer once worn, which I hope to show you soon.

The next item is a long sleeved top, with an asymmetrical cut at the bottom. It is one for my basic collection that I layer with under my clothes. I love that it is long and covers my bum, and that it has a quirky cut at the bottom.
For me, it was love at first sight with this gilet. It is the perfect length and can be worn with so many neutral colours, with this piece as the wow item in your outfit.

Lastly from ASOS is this sleeveless polo neck top – again I have posted pictures wearing this and you have all enquired after it. The mustard colour is so under appreciated in my opinion, it is a great autumn colour and so flattering to our skin tones.

Hope you enjoyed this haul! Happy shopping!

Hijab essentials: Where I get my favourite hijabs?

Habiba Da silva , Nov 16, 2015

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N79V0_bPw_8

Codes:

0:15 favorite hijabs,

where to get it,

fabrics
0:40 fabric and colour

0:45 how to style (usage)

0:55 elegance

1:10 best collections, beautiful colours

1:40 comparison between comfy vs. non-comfy items

1:50 fabric, colour variety, function

2:35 add-ons, accessories for item

3:22 “loves the tags” (artefacts)

3:40 likes colours that you can play with

5:15 soft, not too thick (comfy)

Matching skin tone
Appendix 6 - Memos

Seasonal shopping

It appears that the bloggers are shopping according to seasonal change. Dina Tokio calls one of her videos “Huge Spring/Summer haul” (Tokio, May 2015). She says (00:34) that she has been buying loads of things but she will only show her favorite items (Tokio, May 2015). She then picks up and describes many different items in front of the camera, and explain when and how she would be wearing them. Based on texture, colour and fabric, she talks about how she will match the item with other garments and accessories for the occasion.

Amena says in her ‘Autumn Haul – Clothing!’ (September 19, 2015); “(...)pure anticipation of this time of year...I absolutely love Autumn and winter” (0:25) and “I thought I would share with you my autumn purchases” (01:10). She repeats her love for this particular season of the year and talks about experiences she associates with it. Further on, when showing the viewers one of the garments she states that “this garment is good for snowy days with tea and a movie” (7:50, September 19, 2015). Hence, she stresses that the item is particularly good for a special season and a special occasion.

Based on the above-mentioned, we are wondering whether all customers regularly shop every time the season changes, and we were interested in finding out the customer behaviours in regards to the different seasons as well.

Aesthetics:

Dina Tokio mentions that she “need to find a location spot for filming” (1:02, Huge spring-summer haul, May 2015). What we also noticed from Amena’s blog pictures and vlogs on youtube is that she always has a nicely decorated background with flowers and lighting. Hence, we get the impression that filming spots, background and decoration seems to be important for the blogger, when filming and launching her videos. It appears that Tokio and Amena assume that it is important for the viewers that the background and decoration are nice for the viewers to like what they see in the video overall. Hence we get the impression that details surrounding a product are not of less important to the product as it adds value to the product.
What is the most important factor when shopping?

When we look at our data, some topics keep popping up again and again. The topics are:

1- coverage
2- color matching
3- easy to use

Easy to use
We have noted that both the bloggers and customers are very interested in easy to use products.

Artefacts:

In a video with Habiba Da Silva (Hijab essentials: Where I get my favourite hijabs?, November 16, 2015) Habiba expresses “Love the tags” (3:22) which clearly indicates that the tags are a noticeable part of the attire playing such an important role to her as to make her “love” them and mention them in her fashion vlog.

Hence it is very interesting to see how small details catches so much attention for the consumer and make them even talk about them in their review of the product.

in another blog (Al Shams Abaya Review - May 10, 2015). Packaging seems to have a big importance for the blogger to highlight in her new collection

Coverage:

it seems that long and covering and non transparent garments are attractive for the bloggers. As Amena (September 19, 2015) puts it; “it’s a jackpot for a hijabi”. And Dina Tokio (may 5, 2015) talks about the jumpsuit has to be bulky
and loose in order to cover her bum. Both bloggers talk several times about ‘layering up’ several garments in order to achieve the wished for coverage.

Coverage is a much discussed topic……..

**Must have:**

Dina talks about a long top being a ‘Must-have’ for hijabis and also about a summer shirt that everyone must have for summer

**what defines a must-have?**

What is the definition of must.have – in which context does the bloggers in particular use it? every blogger talks about must-haves subjectively

**Quality**

Quality: blogger willing to pay more for better quality as its seen as a better long-term investment as this will be kept for a longer period of time.

= long-term investment

**Price:**

connection between price and buying behaviour

When products are low-priced/on sale, the blogger tends to make purchases of garments she usually would never buy

**Sale**
apparently, sales increases the amount of products purchased at a shop. But also impulsive purchase

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<tr>
<th>Safe choice:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“H&amp;M… Can't go wrong”</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Love:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“I loooove them….I love footwear that is pointy”, “I Looove gold bling” “I Love the colour” (Tokio, May, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The word “Love” towards a product is repeatedly expressed when bloggers describes and evaluates items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love: love is again repeatedly mentioned about items and styles and colours and fabric. Another synonum used by Amenakin to express love is “heart” as she says “I heart capes”</td>
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<table>
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<th>Cheap look:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“they look really cheap and nasty” (Tokio, May, 2015), and then she adds “I don’t really feel them but lets see if we can make them work”.</td>
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<th>A look you don’t have to think about</th>
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Easy to match:

Habibda da silva talks about prints being limiting when being creative

Texture: The feeling when touching the fabric: apparently, the feeling of the fabric when touching it is noticeable and adds value to the item as it gives a sense of; quality, luxury, practicality, loveliness, cozyness, softness. This is often spoken about by Amena which is often rubbing the fabric with her fingers with a satisfied smile.

Item associated with occasions: what is noticeable is that bloggers often talks about the garment in association with a place or an event (this dress for eid, this jumpsuit for a snowy day with tea and movies).

Connecting item to an action (prancing): (amena)

Fitting: fitting is often discussed in terms of whether the style suits a certain figure or whether the item is tight or seen-through. It seems that in this particular segment, muslim hijabi women, fitting is of high priority as the aim with the garments is primarily to cover the woman’s body modestly. “flattering fit” as Amena callsit, is about hiding imperfections of curvy women.

Comparison of fitting:

blogger is showing how the item fits her figure and style (as a hijabi) in one picture versus the model on a pictures right beside it (amenaofficial.com, 2015). As she also talks about sizes and fitting which often varies from what she expected it to look like, it seems like its an important issue for a blogger to show how garments look on a “normal” “average-sized” woman. As previously noticed, a lot of disappointment and dissatisfaction from users about items looking different when wearing them compared to what they expected, most notably due to their figure and size differing from the model’s. she even mentions somewhere else that the fitting of the item was nicer than on the model.
On-trend: blogger sees herself as opinion leader

Matching: is an issue widely discussed among bloggers and users. Especially when it comes to hijabi women as they seemly are used to layering and therefore have to match different items with different fabrics and colours. Amena often mentions an item to be “easy to pair” in this context, bearing in mind she might need to layer it with garments underneath or on top.

Habiba da silva also talks about matching, while explaining she prefers one-coloured and non-printed scarfs as they are easier to match (habiba, November 16, 2015).

Liking an item encourages buying more in different colours:

Amena (2015) mentions that liking an item made her purchase more of it but in different colours.

Packaging: seems to have a big importance for the blogger to highlight in her new collection

What is a blog?
A blog is an information-sharing medium to share different types of knowledge; thoughts, experiences and advice usually textually with pictures.

What is a vlog?
A vlog is a video-based medium to share thoughts, experiences and advice by talking straight to the camera, doing a tutorial (either while speaking and/or putting music as a background noise) or speaking about a topic (a haul), or cat-walking portraying outfits to demonstrate the fitting and look of the attire, among others.

What is a Blogger/Vlogger?

Why are bloggers/vloggers interested in blogging/vlogging?
fame, money, acknowledgement, sharing experiences, a hobby
Blog/vlog as sharing of what?

We have observed that bloggers/vloggers are very interested and passionate in sharing knowledge with their community. A thing we want to clarify is what type of knowledge that is shared! Are vlogs a form of experience sharing, expertise sharing, advice or just a form of insight?

We think to answer these questions we have to flip the point of view - and put ourselves in the online user's position.

the reason why online users are interested in blogs and vlogs are because they are seeking knowledge in a specific area. the knowledge they seek is a specific kind of knowledge, namely advice based on experience. however, there are certain other highly influential factors that determine whether this advice is valid. for the advice to be valid the advice giver should be a reliable source of information - an expert. and for the communicator to be reaching the position of being the valid source this person has to appear professional for the online user. here, the influential factors determining whether this source (blogger) can be considered an expert are; professional appearance, a charming personality, has a unique charisma, being open about themselves and their life, being down-to-earth to be close to the viewer, sharing personal experiences, giving new options, professional aesthetics, facts but also that this medium is a person the online users can relate themselves to. the more experience the more expertise, the more reliable a person becomes and assumed to be capable to give advice.

another important aspect that is important for the online user is that this blogger experiences the same challenges and have the same needs but are a more steps ahead and have found the solutions for these common challenges. hence, the online users see those “mediums” as role models.

what specific means or strategies do bloggers use?

positioning (from online expert to online friend):

1. phase: selection; find the best medium → look for the professional
2. momentum; continuation through building a relationship with online users through update: focus on the experience/entertainment

What make an online user interested in blogs or vlogs?

Here we have more than one answer. Online users can be seeking an answer for a question - i.e. how to match hijab with garment. Mainly online users are looking for other experience

Bloggers are doing Vlogs or blogs where they share their experiences with products namely what they like and dislike about the products, the texture, the style, the colours, matching options practicality and also for which occasion and season this item would be suitable.
in general, appears to have the aim to give helpful advice and guidance, sometimes through tutorials, to simplify the choices and life for their viewers in the vlog, experiences with newly-purchased products are shared through hauls. indirectly we get the message that the blogger is so experienced that she can handle a lot of different clothes and knows how to match them perfectly and create the perfect outfit.

Why are online users interested in Blogs and Vlogs?

We were wondering, why online users are interested in blogs and vlogs. The impression we get when exploring the blogosphere world is that online users are interested in getting answers on questions regarding choices or issues they are uncertain about. They are also searching for methods in the forms of guidelines and tutorials to learn to style, match or apply a product. Furthermore, users are very interested in advice on choices and products and experiences based on the former as well. Last and not least, they are searching for the exact right products covering their exact need and wish to minimise the risk of investing in the wrong products to the minimum. those users that are eager with their questions and are very interested in others’ insight and experience are themselves usually less experienced within the area and hence are seeking for expertise from the “experts” in the field, which in this context are the popular bloggers whom we see as the opinion leaders. During our exploration, we noticed that the activity, in terms of input from online users, on Instagram is significantly much higher than it is on youtube and blogs. whereas the activity on youtube is higher than the activity on blogs. hence, it seemed that the simplicity, easiness and quickness of Instagram, which is solely based on pictures or very short video captions uploaded, seems more user-friendly for the online user due to the fact that it is less time-consuming to find inspirational pictures and discussions.

Experience:

Advice:

Making life easier:

help making a choice

What bloggers are trying to accomplish

bloggers are interested in sharing their experiences and advice to help their viewers making “the better choice”. they inspire by giving more visualized options related to matching items to create an outfit for a certain occasion. they aim at getting popularity and acknowledgement which might give them a satisfaction. but it is also about their lifestyle which they have chosen - to be ambassadors of fashion and shopping advice, by portraying themselves as professional, experienced, open personality that is close to the online users in their community.

secondly, it appears that the bloggers are thinking loudly and expressing their thoughts and feeling about the product. they also usually link to the product and shop and/or mention where they got it from.

thirdly, they often portray pictures or videos of themselves wearing the item to demonstrate the fitting of the product on their body.
how exactly do bloggers accomplish what they want?
likes, subscribes, sharing with friends.
the methods the bloggers use are; reviewing items, demonstrating usage, sharing advantages and disadvantages.

what means and strategies do bloggers use?
tutorials, sharing experience and knowledge, demonstration of matching options etc.

how do members (bloggers) talk about, characterise, and understand what is going on?
• talk about it; show their version of the answer - ask for feedback,
• they characterize products according to occasions, seasons and whether its a cheap product or a luxurious product, coverage (layering, transparency and fitting), comfort, colours, easy usage ( “a look you dont have to think about” - dina tokio) (habiba da silva; “its simple”), practicality, functionalty, fabric texture (oh it feels so soft), easy to match, must-have, on-trend
• understand what is going on; users are interested in fashion. bloggers understand the fashion trends and convert/modify them as to match modest fashion standards of the viewers.
• bloggers can therefore also be understood as fashion translators.

what assumptions are bloggers making?
• modest coverage and fitting is important for the community
• prices have to be affordable
• quality should be acceptable
• garments should be comfortable
• online users expect advice and experience sharing
• online users expect tutorials
• online users expect demonstration of how to use the items

What do I see going on here?
joy, fun, knowledge or information that the bloggers assume is lacking out there and believe that they will contribute with to cover an existing need for a particular segment. the bloggers appear to be some kind of authority within islamic fashion. and they are important influencers of redefining modest fashion and recreating fashion trends. what we also see, is that every blogger in particular has their own personal style which is portrayed in their choices of attire and outfit gears. this personal style is a contributing factor to define their character as a blogger to be distinguished from other bloggers. other influential factors, other than their physical appearance, are the way they speak, behave, and also the aesthetics such as the decoration in the background and the music and filming quality and editing of their vlogs.

what did i learn from the notes:
there is less focus on the product and more focus on the “experience” from the blogs
making a successful blog/vlog requires more than expected: personality, passion, opening up for private life, sharing expertise, professionalism,

the aim with the blog/vlog is to make people in the community's life easier and solving a problem for them.

vloggers are some kind of and "online friend" or a big sister that is more experienced than oneself. because she appears similar to us in many ways, having similar lifestyle, and challenges but is more experienced than us.

are bloggers better because of visualization abilities
why did i include these notes?