

# **What role do partnerships and collaborations play in the success of health and wellbeing platforms?**

*Seminarpaper*

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## List of abbreviations

COO	Chief Operating Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
IS	Information Systems
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
S-D Logic	Service Dominant Logic

## 1. Introduction

The digital health industry is experiencing exponential growth and will reach almost 1 trillion euros by 2025, according to Roland Berger (2020). Digital platforms now occupy a central position in this as they improve the connection between patients, physicians, and healthcare providers. They provide a range of data-driven services to enhance healthcare and promote overall well-being effectively. It includes personalized counseling, prevention programs, diagnostic support, and therapy options for the user's needs (Choureiri, 2020). Even though women make up about half of the world's population and influence 80 percent of the purchasing decision in the health sector, there is a notable disconnect in women's health (Kemble, 2022).

A vital aspect of this is menopause, which typically lasts 6 to 10 years and leaves women with more than 34 symptoms, including hot flashes and depression. These symptoms often result in reduced working hours or even an exit from working life. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate support and information during this transition (Verdonk et al., 2022). The two-sided platform model of eve&i aims to provide a possible solution to this problem. It addresses the specific challenges faced by menopausal women, providing science-based information, counseling services, and longer-term therapy and support (eve&i, 2023).

Consequently, this seminar paper dedicates itself to the following research questions: *What role do partnerships and collaborations play in the success of health and well-being platforms?*

It explores how these elements enhance functionality, scalability, and user engagement. Moreover, it strives to contribute to the existing research and practical contributions. This research conducts qualitative interviews with professionals who are working at eve&i. It will be done to collect their valuable insights and experiences regarding partnerships. The specific benefits, challenges, and opportunities will be identified by exploring their perspectives.

The seminar paper is divided into five chapters. After introductory Chapter 1, which sets out the motivation, objectives, and methodological approach, chapter 2 introduces the main theoretical concepts and related research. Furthermore, chapter 3 explains the process of data collection and analysis. In the following chapter, the findings and results obtained are presented. Chapter 5 critically discusses the findings, considering the theoretical and practical implications, and highlights the limitations of the work. Finally, the last chapter also summarises the central points of the work and provides an outlook in the conclusion.

## 2. Theoretical background

A digital platform is an online environment or virtual space that enables users to interact, exchange services, share information, or conduct business (Constantinides et al., 2018). Its complex and multi-faceted offering provides a variety of definitions and characteristics found in the literature (Dunn et al., 2021; Staub et al., 2021). Gawer (2014) divides this discussion into economic and technical perspectives. The first describes platforms as unique markets that promote exchange between actors who would otherwise be unable to trade. They enable and change the dynamics of traditional markets by modifying the elements of pricing and competition. From a technical point of view, platforms consist of underlying architectures divided into manageable modules that enable the exchange of information and facilitate interaction between the user and the platform (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014; Wulf & Blohm, 2020).

A key feature that determines the success of a digital platform is the principle of network effects (Schrieck et al., 2017). The more users join and actively participate, the more valuable the platform becomes, leading to an increase in transactions and potential revenues. In this context, ecosystems are created for different user groups, such as buyers, service providers, and consumers, with the platform provider acting as an intermediary in multi-sided markets. Another crucial success factor of a digital platform is its scalability, which allows the user base to expand quickly and without significant costs (Karhu et al., 2020; Malgonde et al., 2022).

### 2.1 Related Research

Recent studies in information systems (IS) show that the role of partnerships and collaboration in this area is being intensively researched. Here it is important to consider relevant studies. In this regard, Lessart and Reuver's work (2019) focuses on the structure of health and well-being platforms used for various healthcare applications, ranging from disease prevention and research to remote patient care.

However, previous research models addressing such platforms' complex, modular architecture have yet to be able to represent the critical characteristics of healthcare platforms. It draws on Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) concepts and explores the structural elements of health platforms that foster a collaborative relationship. The theory proposed in this highlights the importance of these elements as they can pave the way for effective collaboration between healthcare providers and patients (Lessard & Reuver, 2019).

Further research by Koldewey (2022) explores the factors that significantly influence the success or failure of digital platforms. A systematic literature review identified 24 factors spread

across nine dimensions in this context. These include governance, stakeholder management, value proposition, strategic management, IT architecture, marketing and communications, corporate culture, pricing structure, and laws and regulations.

The analysis also showed that current research focuses primarily on success factors. In particular, strategic management and stakeholder management are of fundamental importance here. In contrast, IT architecture and pricing structure are mainly associated with failure factors, while marketing and communication are more likely to contribute to success. For the future, the paper recommends conducting detailed analyses based on platform types and examining the relationships between individual factors (Koldewey et al., 2022).

The success of digital platforms, especially in health and well-being, depends on the interaction of various factors and the competitive environment. Boettcher (2022) studies those in specific fields, particularly in "winner-takes-all" and "few-takes-all" markets. Case studies were combined with Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to evaluate successful and failed platforms. It was found that the success of platforms depends on a compelling value proposition that sets them apart from the competition through unique features, products, or services. This must be elaborated to ensure value creation, often achieved through effective collaboration with complementary businesses within the platform's ecosystem. It can significantly enhance the platform's offering and its attractiveness to users. In addition, the work highlights the importance of platforms prioritizing value creation, especially regarding revenue generation.

This can be achieved through various pricing models, including subscription and asymmetric pricing, contributing to platforms' overall success and profitability. It requires balancing user acquisition and retention (Janiesch et al., 2020). The use of network effects and ecosystem dynamics strongly influences its potential.

Punzidenxe (2022) and Grover (2022) argue that a robust and adaptable platform business model is critical to capturing and creating value in the digital health landscape. Effectively managing these factors is crucial for performing health and well-being platforms.



### 3. Methodology

This section describes the process of data collection and analysis. It explains how the interviews were conducted and what results can be derived.

The seminar paper uses Urquhart's (2009) grounded theory in the context of qualitative research to explore the role of partnerships and collaborations in the success of health and wellness platforms. This approach presents data collection, analysis, and theory building as a continuously interrelated and ongoing process. It offers the opportunity to explore surveys from a first formative perspective. The research design is flexible and allows in-depth analysis of dynamics and processes. This makes it possible to develop a theory on the research question from the data. Coding is organized into three conceptual stages and is a central process: open, axial, and selective. These processes are not linear but require a constant back and forth in data collection, analysis, and theory building. An adapted coding paradigm is used to identify critical components such as key drivers, network effects, and sector-specific cooperation mechanisms, which form the basis for mapping and deriving success factors.

#### 3.1 Data Collection

Data collection refers to a selection of cases, e.g., people, groups, or events, that are representative of a selected population or situation at a particular time and place and that are to be studied (Lee & Liebenau, 1997). In contrast to quantitative studies, qualitative research focuses on the structured nature of the phenomenon and its range and characteristics, making it difficult to generalize the findings (Avison, 2002). Several criteria were used to select representative interviewees for eve&i. To ensure the appropriateness of the sample, particular emphasis was placed on interviewees with many years of professional experience in the industry. Potential interviewees who met these criteria were contacted through various communication channels such as Slack and LinkedIn. After careful consideration, a sample of 3 key individuals closely involved in the development and strategic direction of eve&i was selected.

The prepared guide is divided into four sections: opening, introduction, key questions, and conclusion. It is attached as an appendix (see Table 1). Initially, the interviewee is asked permission to record the interview. Then both the interviewer and the interviewee introduce themselves. This is followed by an explanation of the structure and reasons for the interview. In the introduction, the interviewee is asked about their role and experience with eve&i by briefly introducing themselves and their involvement with the platform. The key questions relate to different aspects of the partnerships and collaborations that eve&i has entered into, providing insights

into the decision-making process, the impact of these collaborations, and the lessons learned. For example, the interviewees were asked about their criteria for collaborating with specific organizations or institutions. Respondents were allowed to provide additional information in the last part of the interview.

The first interviewee in this paper was the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and co-founder of Rox Health, Roche's venture builder, who played an essential and central role in creating and developing eve&i. His portfolio and work experience also includes founding MySugr GmbH, a platform for people with diabetes. Roche acquired this in March 2020. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and co-founder of eve&i were also interviewed. In his previous career as a physician, he was Head of Payer Strategy at Roche and Head of Market Access at Pfizer. He is responsible for the strategic management. The last interviewee is a Venture Architect at Rox Health and co-founder of eve&i. His professional background includes various business development and sales positions at Siemens Healthineers, MySugr, and Rox.

The age range was 35-55, and all were male. The interviewees were based in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and had professional and academic backgrounds in business, engineering, and medicine. They all contributed their work and views and added their perspectives on the role of partnerships and collaboration in eve&i. The interviews followed a guided, semi-structured design. All interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent and transcribed for analysis. The average length of the interviews was 30 minutes.

### **3.2 Data Analysis**

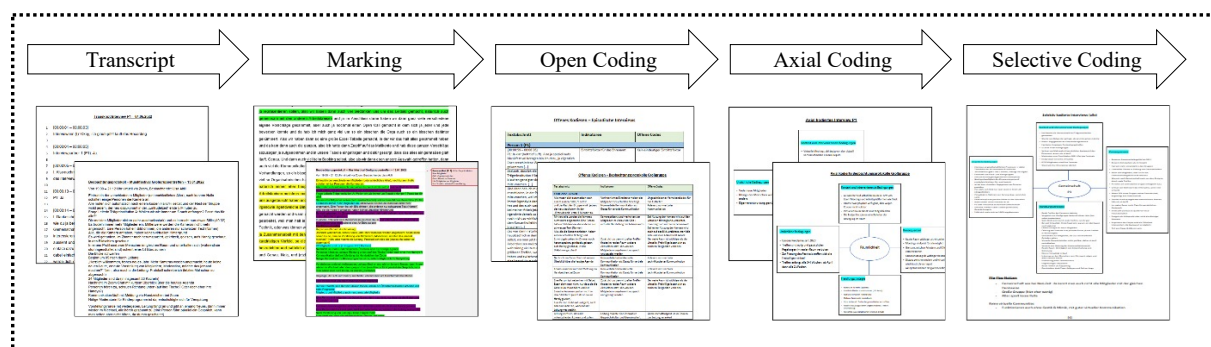
The collected data, consisting of the interview transcripts, were all analyzed and evaluated in a coding paradigm using the method of coding from the Grounded Theory mentioned earlier. In the first step, notable observations and interview passages were color-coded in Word to be able to code them openly afterward.

Open coding is a process in which data and codes are continuously compared and used to ask sensitizing questions. The researcher uses personal and professional experiences and knowledge from the relevant literature to ask these questions. All these resources are used creatively for free association to interpret the data and develop codes that describe the interpretation found. In this process, both one's own and the other's assumptions about the phenomenon under consideration are challenged and explored. It is the part of data analysis that focuses on conceptualization and categorization. In the first step, the data is broken down into smaller parts that are analyzed in depth (Urquhart et al., 2009; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

In doing so, one wants to capture the core message of each part and develop a code for it. These can be developed directly from the data or refer to the literature, e.g., theories from didactics, mathematics, and information systems. In the second step, the parts of the analysis are compared for differences and similarities. Codes or concepts are assigned to a higher order (category). In this way, the developed codes can be related to others (Konecki, 2021; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

In the next step, axial coding is used to illuminate the relationships between the concepts and categories developed in the open coding process. It helps to reveal the relationships between categories. This is done by examining data and codes regarding causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences and their linkages. Strauss and Corbin (2014) see the coding paradigm as an essential component of grounded theory, as it adds depth and precision. Axial coding reassembles data from open coding by connecting a category and its subcategories (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

Selective coding aims to integrate different categories from axial coding into a coherent theory. Major categories are identified and linked to other categories. These are validated, refined, and further elaborated. The main category describes the central phenomenon into which all other categories are integrated. Once this has been identified, the research question can be answered. The result is a grounded theory derived from the data. Selective coding is more abstract than axial coding and is used to develop a comprehensive theory (Urquhart et al., 2009; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019; Wiesche et al., 2017). Even though the evaluation process is presented here in a linear way, it should be emphasized again that some of the steps were carried out several times, and there was always a change between data collection, analysis, and theory building.



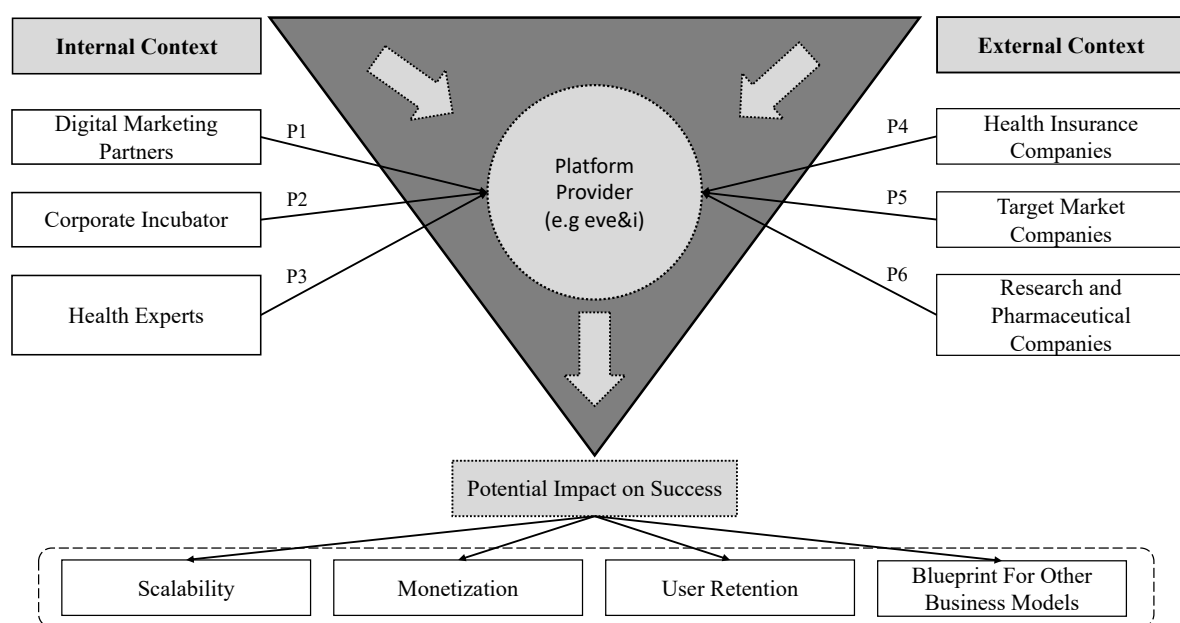
**Figure 1** Self-generated representation of the data evaluation process with reference to Urquhart (2009) and Wiesche (2017)

## 4. Results

Through the expert interviews, six factors were identified that explain the role of partnerships and collaborations in the success of eve&i. These can be grouped into internal and external contexts to categorize the influences correctly.

As already mentioned in the theoretical background, the success of platforms is defined by various key figures, such as user loyalty, growth, scalability, monetization, and usage of the platform. A fundamental goal of eve&i is to develop a commercially sustainable business model. This requires careful strategic and operational design, including building strong relationships with business-to-customer customers and business-to-business partners.

An essential aspect of this is user engagement, understanding the needs and pain points of the target audience. This leads to users returning to the platform regularly, interacting with experts and the community, and ideally purchasing the products on offer. High user loyalty is also an indicator of the platform's success. It depends on several factors, such as the quality and relevance of the products offered, ease of use, and customer service. Despite eve&i's clear focus on user loyalty and customer relationship, the company is subject to the constraints of Roche's corporate structure, which may not fully align with eve&i's objectives. Another critical success criterion for eve&i is that it can serve as a model or blueprint for other digital business models. The activities, strategies, and outcomes are considered 'lessons learned' and can guide other organizations aiming at similar business models. The findings are summarised in Figure 2.



**Figure 2 Self-generated presentation: Influence of collaborations and partnerships on the potential success of eve&i**

## 4.1 Internal Context

The internal context includes and describes the factors, relationships, and situations within an organization directly related to its core business. These aspects contribute significantly to the platform's product or service delivery. Furthermore, the internal structures have a significant impact on the platform's value creation through outsourcing to digital marketing and healthcare experts and the close connection to the parent company Roche. They are essential to presenting a comprehensive offer to the target group and achieving defined success targets. Ultimately, they can influence user acceptance and satisfaction and the platform's overall success.

### **P1: Digital Marketing Actors have an impact on growth, visibility and informative content for the target audience**

The analysis of the transcripts shows that eve&i uses partnerships in different areas, such as platform building, branding, UX design, and performance marketing. It is emphasized that eve&i focuses on the strategic elements of the business rather than diving into the detailed aspects of development. A key message was that specific tasks are outsourced to partners wherever specialist expertise is required. Using existing, low-cost and modular solutions was highlighted as an effective way to rapidly develop a robust business model, saving resources and time that would otherwise be spent on internal development. This strategy extends to outsourcing to specialized partners, particularly in UX and software development. In this way, eve&i can keep up with the pace of the market. The need to work with partners was also emphasized. When eve&i was founded, it focused mainly on consulting and providing expertise for menopausal women with less emphasis on product development. However, this focus has shifted over time. Despite this change, it is recognized that external expertise is still needed to gain a deeper understanding. Finding and retaining qualified external staff and ensuring the quality and relevance of the content they produce were cited as potential challenges. In discussing these points, the influence of these factors became apparent, as the following statement shows:

*“So, partnerships play an important role, both in terms of companies wanting to do business with the platform and in terms of actually building the platform. We have partnerships with providers who provide content and offer performance marketing services. For example, we work closely with male and female doctors who advise us.” (CEO of eve&i)*

### **P2: Roche's close connection and financial support significantly impacts eve&i's strategic management and resource allocation**

As a subsidiary of Roche, eve&i is subject to the goals and guidelines of the parent company. This close affiliation has a significant impact on the strategy and success of the them. It offers

a financial advantage as there is no time-consuming financing process. In doing so, it frees them from the need to seek funders or investors so that they can invest more time in the projects. This financial security fosters an environment conducive to achieving their goals while reducing external pressures. In addition, eve&i benefits from Roche's image and reputation, which makes it easier to connect with potential partners, stakeholders, and other actors.

Furthermore, they enjoys significant autonomy in collaborating with other pharmaceutical companies on projects where parent company is not currently present, such as in hormone replacement therapy.

Nevertheless, challenges are also mentioned in the interviews. Conflicts of interest could arise where Roche has a strong portfolio. Due to regulatory and legal obligations, eve&i is not allowed to act as a manufacturer.

Consequently, they cannot offer products that require certification. Instead, they work with external companies with the necessary prerequisites to offer potential products to their target group. The affiliation also provides the opportunity to test and grow innovative ideas quickly. During the discussion of this aspect, the influence of these factors became clear, as evidenced by the following statement:

*"For example, we have significantly more time at our disposal than startups not dependent on large funders. [...] The entire contract process with investors is extremely nerve-wracking and time-consuming at the same time." (COO of Rox Health)*

### **P3: Healthcare experts support credibility, unique solutions, and enhances user adoption and satisfaction**

Close collaboration with external healthcare experts is critical in giving the platform scientific credibility and providing unique healthcare solutions. These deliver their extensive knowledge and experience based on recognized best practices, and it is tightly integrated into the platform to meet its users' needs best.

The main tasks of health experts are multifaceted. They create content that is both medically accurate and up-to-date. In addition, they offer online consultations, Q&A sessions, and live sessions to help the target audience better understand their symptoms and contribute to support studies aimed at gathering evidence on the impact of menopause.

By working closely with digital marketing stakeholders, it is possible to provide reasonable offers and increase the platform's reputation. Interviews have confirmed that this improves user

adoption, trust, and customer relationships. It also shows that users feel that their needs are understood and considered.

## **4.2 External Context**

The external context refers to partnerships and collaborations that do not directly affect the platform's offering but aim at scaling, growth, revenue generation, and reaching a broader environment. The aim is to understand better which actors have been identified and how they contribute to the value creation and success of eve&i.

### **P4: Eve&i targets employed menopausal women in Germany with a platform for optimized health insurance benefits and comprehensive care**

The results also describe an active engagement with public and private health insurance companies. Due to the competitive pressure in Germany, they are trying to distinguish themselves and stand out from their rivals through differentiated offers and services. The cooperation aims to make insured women aware of various existing and new services. Here, the target group represents a significant market, as they are often still in full-time employment and are typically in the higher income classes. In addition, this age group has increased in long-term illnesses, prompting health insurers to step up their efforts to provide preventive services. It has also been found that insured women often need to make optimal use of the benefits available to them. In response, eve&i aims to work with insurance companies to increase awareness and maximize access.

Furthermore, the findings also revealed that women expect their health insurance companies to cover the costs of eve&i or other beneficial services. Working with different health insurance companies is also possible, although individual agreements and specific details must be considered. The current aim is to set up further pilot projects and to achieve more comprehensive coverage. However, these initiatives still need to be considered commercially lucrative.

### **P5: Companies collaborate to address their female workforce in order to reduce sick days and improve performance**

The interviews underline that employers and companies are seen as potential clients and partners. In this context, eve&i's value proposition is specifically aimed at female employees. One interviewee mentioned that the number of sick days for menopausal women can increase by up to 16 days per year. Furthermore, the symptoms can lead to reduced working hours or interruption. Women may even have to give up work due to their conditions in extreme cases.

Eve&i wants to offer its service as a part of occupational health management to help partner companies support their female employees in this life phase. Through this support, the employers hope to increase productivity and strengthen the loyalty of female employees to the company. The interviews also show a general employment trend: Female employees change jobs more frequently.

With these initiatives, eve&i aims to improve the working environment for women and contribute to more sustainable employment practices. Interviews indicate that a successful pilot project has already been launched: a three-month live program that has already achieved considerable reach. This is expected to increase the number of users due to these activities significantly. The success of previous projects reinforces this expectation. For example, the COO of Rox Health reported on his experience with MySugr, where a partnership with the market leader in blood glucose monitoring led to a significant increase in user numbers. *“We have a contract with a pharmaceutical company to make our product marketable. However, we have not yet achieved broad reach. As soon as we launch the first pilot with a company or a health insurance company, this will change abruptly, as we will be able to reach a larger number of potential customers immediately.”* (Co-Founder and Venture Builder of eve&i)

#### **P6: Research Companies are willing to pay for valuable data and debunk myths to the target group**

Other possible partnerships exist with research and pharmaceutical companies. Therefore, eve&i offers access to large amounts of data that can be used for market research purposes. They conduct surveys among their users and collect valuable information about health, menopause, and expectations of conversations with experts and products. It was also noted that pharmaceutical companies often need direct access to patients, as their distribution channels and marketing efforts focus on intermediaries such as pharmacists, doctors, and hospitals. This is where eve&i, as an independent partner, want to support them in reaching out to patients. In addition, they enable the cooperation partners to answer various research questions. For this purpose, data analyses are carried out, and insights are provided that are not easy to obtain independently. Another important observation is that pharmaceutical companies are interested in better informing their target group via the platform. Hormone replacement therapy is cited as an example, as many misconceptions exist. Companies that manufacture such products want to debunk these myths. The aim is not to promote a specific product but to provide general information. In this way, the advantages of specific therapies are to be shown, and tips for



effective communication with doctors are to be given. This kind of cooperation is a win-win situation for all parties involved, as eve&i gains reputation and new interested parties.

## 5. Discussion

The following chapter looks at the results of the work, which are critically reviewed and discussed. This mainly concerns the limitations of the work, for example, the research method. Furthermore, it will present the added value for research and practice.

### 5.1 Discussion of Findings

Health and well-being platforms can play a crucial role in improving access to resources, tools, and services that help individuals to manage their overall fitness and soundness. In order to become established and thrive in the long term, it is necessary to form alliances with essential actors, adapt the business model, and offer unique solutions for the target group. Security-related aspects need to be considered. Through a qualitative analysis based on three interviews with experts, who are developing and working on the platform of eve&i, the seminar paper will provide insights into the role of collaborators and partnerships relevant to the context of health and well-being platforms.

The research findings underline the operational and strategic importance of partnerships and collaborations for eve&i's success. Based on this, other platform providers can consider several strategic insights to drive operational success.

Internally, three key actors have emerged that contribute significantly to quality, relevance, and content. Marketing players and health experts are used to optimizing the business model, adapting to market dynamics, and achieving performance targets by combining internal resources (P1). The strategic outsourcing of specialist areas such as UX design, branding, and performance marketing aligns with Lessard and Reuver's (2019) findings. The results broaden this perspective by showing that outsourcing ensures rapid market response and can provide a strategic advantage. Reinforcing the importance of these partnerships requires further research into tactics to maintain, manage and optimize this collaboration. This influence requires careful evaluation by other platform providers. They also play an essential role in maintaining a user-friendly interface and customer service that contribute to the platform's efficiency. Outsourcing various tasks demonstrates the need to develop a stable partnership ecosystem. It allows eve&i to focus on its core competencies and ensures that resources are used effectively. This could also be a strategy for other companies. One can quickly build a competitive business model while reducing the costs and time associated with internal development.

However, there is also a tension between financial security and the strategic autonomy that comes from Roche's ownership, as seen with P2. The advantages are the financial support that

comes with a high degree of agility, the reputation of the parent company, and the possibility of rapid growth. In the case of eve&i, Roche's financial and reputational support provides a stable environment for growth and validates Furstenu's (2016) research findings. Koldewey (2022) and Hodapp (2022) suggest that strategic management, stakeholder management, and a compelling value proposition are essential success factors. For start-ups and other platform providers, it is critical to identify and leverage all potential resources.

In the case of eve&i, the company can spend more time and resources on product development and strategic initiatives rather than seeking funding. It can contribute to the overall success of the platform. On the other hand, there are risks and potential conflicts of interest. Dynamics occur that can act as both catalysts and barriers. Future research could explore these. It also suggests that start-ups and companies operating under the umbrella of large corporations should carefully consider how parent company structures and policies affect their business models and strategies.

In the field of health and well-being, the reliability of information is crucial. The involvement of health professionals contributes significantly to this and underlines the need for high quality. As a practical example, **P3** highlights the role of health professionals in giving credibility to eve&i and increasing user acceptance. By involving those in the platform, eve&i improves the value proposition by ensuring scientific trustworthiness and providing high-quality content. The work of Boettcher (2022) emphasizes the attractiveness of platforms through unique features and collaborations. Other platforms should also consider incorporating expert opinion and input, especially in areas where misinformation can have serious consequences. However, these collaborations should be consistent with the overall mission and values of the platform to ensure mutual benefit. The potential challenge is to find and recruit highly qualified individuals, which requires a carefully thought-out search, selection, and communication process.

Externally, the target market and collaboration with companies and research institutions are critical factors in reaching the target audience and potentially scaling the business model. Working with health insurers is an innovative approach to maximize the value of services for users. Menopausal women represent a significant and underserved market in Germany where internal insurance offerings can be optimized. However, the success of this strategy depends on how effectively eve&i can engage with those (**P4**) and convince them of the benefits of care. The importance of employers (**P5**) and their role in supporting menopausal workers are also highlighted. This provides a new perspective on how digital health platforms can help manage workplace health. Other companies could consider a similar approach and work with third parties to

grow their user base and use the services effectively. The findings of this paper provide empirical evidence for Koldewey's (2022) and Hodapps's (2022) assumptions, highlighting, in particular, eve&i's purposeful approach (**P4**) and collaborative strategies to optimize employee health (**P5**).

Eve&i's ability to collect data and make it available to research and pharmaceutical companies (**P6**) highlights the potential value that it can have for external stakeholders. This is precious for healthcare and medical research, where detailed and comprehensive patient information can improve research and development. Finally, using data represents an excellent opportunity for other platform providers. It can provide insights that can lead to improvements and innovations. Moreover, this data can be an additional source of revenue. However, platform providers must ensure the responsible use of this, maintain user trust, and comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

## 5.2 Limitations

The work is subject to the following limitations. The results presented here are based on a purely qualitative analysis, which is plausible as a foundation for such research approaches and allows several hypotheses for further analyses. These findings can serve as a starting point for extending the research to quantitative analyses. In this way, further statements could be made about the influence of success through cooperation and partnerships. The already elaborated categories could be transformed into a standardized questionnaire to confirm or refute previous findings, leading to new insights. The work could also be extended and intensified in terms of qualitative analyses. More interviews would be helpful for this, and the type of interviews could also vary for more perspectives, for example, through cross-case analyses (Alnahdi, 2013).

The applied grounded theory involves continuous data collection, analysis, and theory building, which requires repetitive runs, much time, and a high level of interpretive skills. The theories developed could be influenced by the researcher's perception and interpretation of the data, which can lead to bias. In addition, the focus is on generating new theories from the data rather than validating or building on existing theories (Konecki, 2021). This approach may need to be revised to integrate the findings with the theories and frameworks presented in the works cited.

Further limitations may arise from sample bias, which limits its transferability to other contexts. The eve&i practical example provides results that may not reflect the experiences of other platforms. This is reinforced by the fact that the platform is still in its early stages, and the circumstances affecting its development and operation may change over time. Further investigation of more mature platforms active in the sector for longer could offset this limitation.

In addition, Roche's close affiliation and ownership may mask both advantages and disadvantages that other platforms without influential support may experience. Examining platforms with varying degrees of corporate ownership could contribute to a more balanced understanding.

Eve&i targets (working) menopausal women in Germany, a rather specific demographic. Although the results provide a deep understanding of the needs of this target group and the partnerships entered into, other user groups still need to be considered. Target groups in other countries might have different needs for such platforms, which also affects the collaborations. Broadening the geographical scope of future research could alleviate this limitation (Verdonk et al., 2022). Another limitation of this work is that the business model of eve & i should have been explicitly investigated. Its complexity and uniqueness can significantly impact the performance and competitiveness of the platform and are essential for the platform's success. It could be valuable to investigate how the business model and the initiation of collaborations and partnerships influence each other.

In addition, market dynamics have yet to be addressed in detail in this work. Taking this into account could provide deeper insights into the company's strategies and decisions and better clarify its positioning in the market. A more comprehensive analysis could improve future research's quality and relevance.

### **5.3 Implications**

The contribution of this work to the literature extends the understanding of internal and external relationships, the strategic importance of partnerships, and their impact on success. The findings fill a gap in the literature on health and wellness platforms by drawing attention to the different forms of partnerships and their integrated role in shaping platform operations, strategy, and performance. In addition, this study provides insights into the management of digital platforms, particularly in the health industry, and contributes to the body of knowledge on digital strategies, partnerships, and stakeholder management.

It directs future research toward a more in-depth exploration of how platforms can form, manage and optimize the relationships. Unraveling the dynamics of these collaborations and understanding the different roles of different actors within these alliances could add valuable nuances to the existing knowledge base. It also highlights potential conflicts of interest and regulatory challenges faced by platform providers and opens up avenues for future research. Future work could explore how parent companies' structures and policies influence their subsidiaries' business models and strategies.

The seminar paper also highlights the potential value of user data to external stakeholders and introduces a new direction for research on data management, privacy, and ethical considerations. This introduces a new direction for research into data management, including privacy concerns and ethical considerations related to the use of user data. Interestingly, the research focuses on a specific demographic - menopausal women in Germany - signaling the need for comprehensive research on the needs of different user groups and how they influence platform strategies and collaborations. The findings pave the way for other health and wellbeing platform providers to expand their collaborations and partnerships.

By integrating a variety of specialists into the platform - from healthcare experts and marketers to technology innovators, academic researchers, and patient advocacy groups - providers can broaden the expertise within their organizations. These relationships can also offer unique perspectives and enable the development of more comprehensive solutions.

In addition, an ongoing commitment to improving the user experience is critical to standing out in a competitive market. Platform providers should develop an intuitive interface, interactive features, and personalized content and provide responsive customer service. They should also regularly collect feedback from users, as this provides valuable insights for continuous improvement. Also, they should leverage advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and big data analytics in today's technology-driven world. These tools can drive efficiency and innovation and prove instrumental in predictive analytics, personalized content delivery, efficient handling of customer queries, and extracting insightful data from user behavior.

Providers must develop robust privacy practices given the sensitive nature of health-related data. This includes adopting the highest data encryption standards, conducting regular audits and vulnerability assessments, and being transparent with users about how their data is stored, processed, and shared.

In addition, regular monitoring and evaluation of the platform's performance should be undertaken to assess its impact, identify gaps and guide future strategy and decision-making. This will help providers adapt to change and optimize their platforms effectively.

By adopting these strategies and actions, other platform providers in the health and wellbeing sector can increase their operational effectiveness, build stronger relationships and significantly improve health outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter serves as a concluding summary of this seminar paper and looks at possible future developments. The emergence of digital platforms in the health and well-being sector is leading to a profound transformation of the healthcare landscape. Technological and data-driven solutions are increasingly crucial in optimizing prevention, diagnosis, and therapy. They are particularly noteworthy in women's health and can play a significant role in personalizing care and addressing gender-specific health issues.

This work's focus and foremost objective were to analyze the role of partnerships and collaborations for the success of such platforms based on existing literature and through qualitative interviews. The case study of *eve&i* exemplified this. During the investigation, these cooperations' remarkable diversity and scope became apparent.

After the presentation of the theoretical foundations, the research design of Grounded Theory was introduced. This served as a solid foundation for conducting the interviews, data collection, and analysis. The semi-structured guide provided the framework and the results identified various stakeholders contributing to key objectives such as user engagement, credibility, and value generation of the platform. Furthermore, both practical and theoretical implications were derived.

Overall, it can be concluded that partnerships and collaborations can significantly impact the success of health and well-being platforms. As a strongly interdisciplinary field of research, digital platforms play a significant role in academia and practice.

The interviews shed light on diverse influences, assessments, and characteristics that can assist platforms such as *eve & i* reach their objectives. These can include scaling, fostering user engagement, and serving as a blue print for other companies in the sector. Risks are also involved, some of which may still be unexplored in theory and practice.

Given the growing handling of sensitive data by digital health platforms, data protection, security, and governance will become a greater focus in the future. In addition, the increasing proliferation of such platforms is likely to intensify competition, which is why they need to differentiate themselves through unique offerings and demonstrable benefits.

Their rise can signify a new era of inclusivity and specificity in healthcare, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of health needs. Perspective adoption and management are areas that require further investigation. Consequently, it is exciting to observe this topic's further development.

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## Appendix

Section	Description
<b>Opening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vorstellung des Interviewers und des Studienhintergrunds</li> <li>• Sind Sie damit einverstanden, dass wir eine Audioaufnahme des Interviews machen?</li> <li>• Erläuterung des Ablaufs des Interviews und die Gründe für die Befragung</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Können Sie sich kurz vorstellen und Ihre Rolle und Erfahrung bei eve&amp;i beschreiben?</li> <li>• Wie würden Sie die Plattform eve&amp;i beschreiben und welche Dienstleistungen bietet sie ihren Nutzern?</li> </ul>
<b>Key Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wie würden Sie die Art der Partnerschaften und Kooperationen beschreiben, die eve&amp;i eingegangen ist?</li> <li>• Wie entscheiden Sie, mit welchen Organisationen oder Institutionen Sie zusammenarbeiten? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Welches sind für eve&amp;i die wichtigsten Schritte bei der Anbahnung und Entwicklung einer Partnerschaft oder Kooperation?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Wie haben sich diese Partnerschaften und Kooperationen auf die Wirksamkeit und Reichweite von eve&amp;i ausgewirkt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Können Sie einige Beispiele für erfolgreiche Ergebnisse nennen, die sich aus diesen Kooperationen ergeben haben?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Welche Herausforderungen und Chancen haben sich aus Ihren Partnerschaften und Kooperationen ergeben?</li> <li>• Was waren aus Ihrer Sicht die wichtigsten Vor- und Nachteile von eve&amp;i's bisherigen Partnerschaften und Kooperationen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Wie sehen Sie die Rolle dieser Kooperationen für den Gesamterfolg von eve&amp;i?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Welche Lehren haben Sie aus diesen Kooperationen gezogen und welche Empfehlungen würden Sie anderen Plattformen im Bereich Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden geben?</li> </ul>
<b>Closing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haben Sie weitere Informationen, die Sie uns mitteilen möchten?</li> <li>• Vielen Dank für das Interview</li> </ul>

Table 1 Interview Guideline

## Declaration of honor

I hereby declare in accordance with § 6 Para. 3 PO that I have written the above seminar paper myself and have not used any sources or aids other than those stated.

The following points have been taken into account in accordance with the AIS Code of Research Conduct.

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2. Do not fabricate or falsify data, research procedures, or data analysis.
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4. Do not make misrepresentations to supervisor about the originality of work you submit to him/her.
5. Do not take or use published data of others without acknowledgement, or unpublished data without both permission and acknowledgement.
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7. Do not use other people's unpublished writings, information, ideas, concepts or data that you may see as a result of supervision without permission of the author.
8. Use archival material only in accordance with the rules of the archival source.
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10. Do not republish old ideas of your own as if they were a new intellectual contribution.
11. Settle data set ownership issues before data compilation.
12. Consult your supervisor if in doubt.

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Place, date

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Signature