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# Entrepreneurs Driven by the Need for Self-Fulfillment

An exploration of the origin of such a need  
and how entrepreneurs work towards fulfilling it

Master's thesis within Business Administration

Author: David Gay-Perret &  
Anup Mainali

Tutor: Leona Achtenhagen

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## Master's Thesis in Business Administration

Title: Entrepreneurs Driven by the Need for Self-Fulfillment  
Author: David Gay-Perret & Anup Mainali  
Tutor: Leona Achtenhagen  
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### **Abstract**

This paper is a Master Thesis studying the human need for Self-Fulfillment, presented as the equivalent of Self-Actualization, in the context of entrepreneurship.

The problems identified in the field are the lack of literature on Self-Actualization in entrepreneurship although it is something observed in the world, the lack of empirical data in the field of motivation, and finally the fact Self-Actualization is a need leading an individual to contribute to his or her surrounding (unlike other needs), which makes understanding its consequences and origin all the more important.

Two aspects were chosen to cover the topic: tracing the origin of the need and understanding how entrepreneurs fulfill it (for those using their company for that purpose). To do so, interviews consisting of 4 themes were carried out with 12 individuals having started and running their company (both genders, various cultural backgrounds, with companies of various size, age and industry), and driven by the need to Self-Fulfill.

The main findings are the fact the individual's mindset and attitudes seem to be what enables him or her to reach Self-Actualization, and these human qualities and characteristic could be gathered under the terms "Personal Development". Also some people felt the need to Self-Actualize before starting the venture and thus have an idea of how to contribute: the company becomes only a step in the process. Others reached the need after starting the company and see it as a set of opportunities to Self-Actualize. In both case however, a holistic view over the firm seems to be the only way to truly actualize through it: every aspect of the business needs to be focused on helping and improvement (not just the business idea).

Finally, by expanding the findings made in entrepreneurship, this paper suggests that in general, Personal Development may lead to society's improvement and provides some suggestions to continue the study.

### **Key words:**

Motivation, Self-Actualization, Entrepreneurship, Self-Fulfillment, Personal Development.

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# 1 Introduction

Entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, motivation, these themes have received a lot of attention from scholars, and they remain very actual ones. By simply watching around us, we see the consequences of some people who one day decided to start a company. Small ventures or multinational corporations all began in the same way: a person, or a group of persons, had an idea, something they wanted to give or create, and as the idea became clearer it pushed them into action, leading to the establishment of an enterprise.

History is filled with success stories: may they be financial wealth, meaningful life, positive externalities for the society and community, or any other objectives the entrepreneur may have set for him or herself. And of course many ventures simply did not work out and disappeared, leaving behind something to learn, study, or at the very least a memory. After all a “failure” is always full of teachings!

## 1.1 Background of the study

Although entrepreneurship is a very actual phenomenon, it goes back centuries ago (Herbert & Link 2009), since there are people buying and selling things. The form has evolved, the items traded have changed too (especially since we find many less tangible items traded nowadays, called “services”), but the nature of the process remains the same: an individual or a group perceive an opportunity (a lack of something, or a possible improvement for example) and decide to act on it, thus bringing to life a company and its consequences such as new trends, better/worse quality of life, opportunities for others.

From its very nature, entrepreneurship is a risky action because there is a lot at stake: financial investments with no obvious payback, high personal involvement that prevents from doing many other things at the same time which could possibly decrease the risk, high chance of failure (i.e. the company turns out not to be sustainable and every resource invested in its creation is lost), And yet thousands of individual go for it every year, everywhere in this world (Boyd & Vozikis 1994, Busenitz & Barney 1997, Krueger 1993, Krueger & Brazeal 1994). When one knows humans tend to be risk averse, this trend seems quite curious and it has led many scholars in a quest for understanding. They adopted many perspectives, as we will see further down, but before an even more important question needs to be answered: why is it so relevant to understand entrepreneurship?

“Entrepreneurship is at the heart of the national advantage” said Porter (1990) in his “Competitive advantage of Nations”. This simple quote tells a lot on the key role entrepreneurs and their company plays on a macroeconomic scale. The famous Joseph Schumpeter justifies this idea with a little more details, by explaining that entrepreneurs create economic growth through innovation and change (Schumpeter, 1934). After all who is bringing new things to our life if not companies? Technologies and findings may come from researches out of the private sector, but it is indeed enterprises that use them to answer our needs (and maybe, some would add, create new ones). So entrepreneurship is a relevant field of study because it is needed on an economic point of view (Carree & Thurik 2010).

As mentioned above, the phenomenon of entrepreneurship has been studied under different angles. One of the first ones, quite famous although debated and not necessarily successful, is the study of entrepreneurs themselves, as people, in order to find common points between them, understand what makes them successful or not (Brockhaus 1982, DeCarlo & Lyons 1979, Schwartz 1976). Character traits or mindset were the primary focus of these researches, as these were perceived (quite logically) as key elements to understand entrepreneurship.

Thus three character traits emerged from these findings: it seemed one could have characterized the entrepreneur as someone with a strong need for achievement (meaning the need to do something, create something), a high risk-taking propensity and an internal locus of control (meaning taking full responsibility for what happens and looking inside for failure and success rather than outside). It also means entrepreneurs have a strong belief in their skills and ability to overcome obstacles (Johnson 1990).

More recently, as the researches mentioned above seemed inconclusive, entrepreneurship has been looked upon from an environmental forces point of view to understand in what conditions it took place (Aldrich 2000). The underlying assumption is that the personal characteristics of the entrepreneur are irrelevant, or at least entrepreneurs are so different that establishing their psychological profiles results in listing too many characteristics, which in turn means more or less any one fits in that category. Therefore entrepreneurship needs to be studied according to the economic factors it takes place in: the field the company is in, its form, the way it does business and this could be explained by its environment.

Now even more recently, although the previous studies were acknowledged as useful, it seemed company creation could definitely not be studied without regards to the person behind, driving every single decision (Shane, Locke & Collins 2003). This is what the study of the personal motivation behind entrepreneurship is about: finding what drives entrepreneurs starting their venture and the consequences (Naffziger, Hornsby & Kurakto 1994). Yet one big limitation to this approach on entrepreneurship so far is that it remains very theoretical: Kurakto et al. (1997) mention the fact there is a lack of empirical research on entrepreneurial motivation.

Nevertheless it is important to list here some findings of this field of research, as it is extremely relevant for this paper. Thus among the various objectives entrepreneurs commonly seek to achieve by starting a venture, is found to be the need for “Self-Fulfillment”, which is perceived as a reward and therefore something to aim at (Sarri & Trihopoulou 2004, Buttner & Moore 1997). Although more information will follow regarding the connection between Self-Fulfillment and Self-Actualization, it can already be stated here that some entrepreneurs seek Self-Actualization through starting and running a company (Carland & Carland’s “macroentrepreneurs”, 1997) and others don’t (their “microentrepreneurs” and “entrepreneurs”). Obviously, making money plays also a vital role (Cromie, 1987) since entrepreneurship is often a way to obtain financial rewards greatly above what an employee would gain. Kirzner (1985) even introduced the entrepreneur as someone supposed to grab profit out of available opportunities. That person initiates actions to fulfill presently unfulfilled needs and improves inefficiencies in order to gather more funds and earn profits. At last Drucker (1985) wrote that entrepreneurship was the act of innovating through endowing available resources with new wealth-producing capacities, and with the purpose of generating more funds.

Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs and company creation have been extensively studied through the past decades, starting from different assumptions, using different methods and angles and, ultimately, bringing a variety of results. However, and this statement is yet to be challenged, it has been recognized that entrepreneurs and their company are not homogenous (Gartner 1985, Vesper 1979 and Copper & Dunkelberg 1981), which is a source of difficulties in studying entrepreneurship: obviously a category has been created around people starting a company, but at the end of the day it seems to remain their only common point.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

The previous part of this paper gave an overview of the background regarding entrepreneurship and motivation. Although a more detailed, specific and systematic literature review will follow with a focus on the topic of this paper, it is useful to clarify here what problem the literature has been perceived as facing in the field of entrepreneurship.

Many entrepreneurs are following a vision: they are “looking for something” when they start a company. Many directions have been taken to study entrepreneurship, many models and perspectives have been tried with more or less success, but when it comes back to the individual’s decision to start a venture what matters is his or her motivation, regardless of others’, and the repercussions it may have on the company and, by extension, the society we all evolve in.

Many entrepreneurs are pulled toward something, want something and plan to use company creation to obtain it, and this motive, at the origin of the individual’s motivation, varies from a person to another. Among what is commonly cited as a motivation behind venture creation is the need for Self-Fulfillment (Sarri & Trihopoulou 2004, Buttner & Moore 1997). Yet despite its obvious importance it remains quite fuzzy and lacks empirical studies on its perceived origin and consequences.

**Therefore the problem identified is a lack of information on Self-Fulfillment in the field of entrepreneurship.**

## **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this paper will be to address the problem identified above. Concretely, it means **understanding Self-Fulfillment as a driver behind entrepreneurship**. Whether it appears before company creation and leads to it, or after the company is started and becomes a driver to run it, is irrelevant: the need remains the same.

In order to do so, two aspects of the need for Self-Fulfillment will be investigated: its origin and how entrepreneurship effectively contributes to fulfill this need.

**To make things more clear, two research questions will be addressed:**

**1/ What elements can be identified to help tracing the origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment?**

**2/ Among entrepreneurs linking their Self-Fulfillment to their company, how do they Self-Fulfill?**

As essentially qualitative in nature, this study primarily aims at finding connections and building a theory rather than establishing statistical facts.

#### **1.4 Plan of this paper**

The following paper aims at addressing the research questions above. To do so this introduction is followed by an extensive literature review of the fields of motivation and its place when related to entrepreneurship, of Self-Fulfillment (to understand what it is), of Maslow and his Pyramid of the Human Needs (absolutely needed since Self-Fulfillment is a need and Maslow provides a framework to study it) and of all the connections that can be found between these different, cross-disciplinary themes. This literature review will also highlight gaps to be fulfilled while clarifying the topic and showing how relevant it is, not only for scholars' and theoretical curiosity, but also for concrete results and effects.

Then the method used to gather empirical data will be detailed, with definition of each key term, justification for the specific choices and preferences made and detailed description of the tools that will be used on the field.

The next part will be the presentation of the raw results, which are the information gathered after interviewing relevant people with the aim of exploring connections and ideas related to the subject and the research questions. Although only relevant parts will be listed, the full data will be available in appendix 3 for further references.

After this the answers obtained will be gathered and analyzed in order to try to extract common ideas and possible trends that could answer the purpose and therefore offer a more comprehensive view over Self-Fulfillment as a drive behind entrepreneurship. This will be included in the Analysis part.

Finally the conclusion will first include a reflection over the findings in relation to the literature review and also clearly indicate the contribution of this paper. Second it will offer suggestions of possible trails to follow, in order to explore different aspects based on what has been found here and deepen the subject.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction: ideas on how to study entrepreneurship**

The background to the topic presented above clearly showed that many perspectives have been taken to study entrepreneurship. Throughout decades authors have focused on the external forces, the individual traits, then the motivation. Although so far no one perspective model seems enough to explain every situation and no one technique seems better than another to cover the topic “entrepreneurship”, this variety of views led scholars to many debates (see Gartner 1988 and Carland et al. 1988 answering each other on the topic of “who the entrepreneur is” to understand the topic is far from agreed upon) and ultimately it brought up an important conclusion: entrepreneurship should be studied as a multidimensional process, which Gartner (1988) and Carland et al. (1988) previously mentioned agreed on.

This is not a mere statement: it is a beginning of a framework that whoever wants to study of entrepreneurship should work in. Therefore the following literature review will cover different aspects such as economical or psychological, and different levels: the individual and the firm (which are closely related when a single entrepreneur starts a venture).

However it is not question here of simply summarizing what has been said on different subjects. Johnson (1990) suggests a link between psychology, behavior and firm outcomes is needed in the field of entrepreneurship, and therefore the different topics reviewed further down are also linked together into one coherent whole. This also seems to be an important precaution in order to give a good overview of the subject of this paper because it belongs to many categories.

One last important point to mention in this introduction is the definition chosen of the word “entrepreneur”. In this study, it will be used to designate “an individual who created a company”. It does not matter whether it is successful or not, whether it still exists or not or any other difference one may find among people starting ventures. What matters is the motive behind entrepreneurship.

### **2.2 Motivation in entrepreneurship**

#### **2.2.1 Why studying motivation?**

The main subject of this paper deals with motivation, and more precisely the motive known as “the need of an individual to Self-Fulfill”. Authors such as Bird (1988) have stressed the importance of entrepreneurial intentions as a forerunner to establishing a new venture, thus highlighting the importance of the “what” driving the person starting a company.

Herron and Sapienza (1992) were even clearer by saying “Because motivation plays an important part in the creation of new organizations, theories of organizational creation that fail to address this notion are incomplete”. Thus not only is studying motivation relevant because the need for Self-Fulfillment belongs to that category, but also because this paper is about organizational creation.

### **2.2.2 Defining motivation**

Motivation can be defined as a behavior toward the achievement of a goal (Kaufman 1990). Therefore motivation is a behavior, a set of actions. According to Maslow (1943), motivation comes from a need to be fulfilled, and here is an important distinction: the one between motives and motivation.

According to the authors mentioned above, motivation is an action directed toward something specific, and this something is a need to be fulfilled. Therefore the need is the motive (the reason) for acting, and this study will be about the motive known as “Self-Fulfillment”, leading to the set of actions called “entrepreneurship”.

Markman and Baron, in their article “Person-entrepreneurship fit: why some people are more successful as entrepreneurs than others” (2003) have made an interesting connection between the individual’s need (motive) and values or preferences. This connection could not be better summarized than by quoting them directly: “People are attracted to work settings that are consistent with their values and fulfill their needs.”

So basically it seems a person’s mindset and personal characteristics help defining which job to choose, while the need that person wants to fulfill sets the expectations for the job chosen. Now if this is applied to entrepreneurship, it tells us that the entrepreneur’s own preferences push toward entrepreneurship rather than other professions (however we will not go into details for this aspect: “why” someone chose venture creation instead of something else is beyond the scope of this paper), while his or her need to be fulfilled at the time the decision is made defines what is searched through venture creation.

### **2.2.3 Different motives behind entrepreneurship**

Now that motivation and motives have been clarified and that we understand how they apply to entrepreneurship, it is important to introduce the main trend in research aiming at classifying motives, namely the “push” and “pull” factors.

Gilad and Levine (1986) proposed an entrepreneurial motivation theory called “push” theory and “pull” theory. The “push” theory states that an individual becomes an entrepreneur by impact of negative external forces. That person is “pushed” to entrepreneurship by, for example, job dissatisfaction, difficulty finding employment, lack of sufficient salary or difficult work schedule. Most of time the push theory is applied to entrepreneurs in developing countries, e.g. starting a shop or selling vegetables they grow in order to survive. Entrepreneurship in that context often aims at fulfilling basic needs (more on the concept of needs and their classification further down in this literature review).

On the other hand the “pull” theory states that individuals are involved in entrepreneurial behavior as a mean for the quest of autonomy, self-fulfillment, wealth and prosperity achievement and further enviable outcomes (related to higher order needs). The person is attracted by something that is perceived as achievable through entrepreneurship.

Keeble et al. (1992) stated that most of the time people were pulled rather than pushed to entrepreneurship. Besides it could be argued that being pushed or pulled is essentially a matter of point of view: if one does not find employment (a pushed factor toward venture creation), then one wishes to start a company in order to have a job (pulled to ven-

ture creation). Therefore in order to make the difference clear, this paper offers to consider one's motives as belonging to the "pull" theory when that person knows what he or she is looking for when starting a company, while considering as belonging to the "push" theory any motive based on escaping a current situation without a clear goal to reach (the feeling could be summarized by a sentence such as "I want to change my current situation but I don't know yet how my new situation should be").

#### **2.2.4 Conclusion**

This part of the literature review about motivation contains multiple key elements relevant for this paper: first there is a need to study motivation to understand entrepreneurship; second motivation has been defined as a behavior originating in a motive, a goal, which has been found to be a need to be fulfilled. Thus "motivation behind entrepreneurship" refers to the need to be fulfilled through entrepreneurship. Third two big categories of motives have been identified: push and pull. The former one refers to people whose motives can essentially be summarized as a will to change a current situation without a clear goal as to what to build, while the latter one refers to people clearly aiming at something they believe can be attained through entrepreneurship.

### **2.3 The need for Self-Fulfillment**

As the title of this paper suggests it, the subject dealt with here is not just any kind of motive or "motives" in general: it is the need for "Self-Fulfillment".

It is an especially difficult concept to work with as it encompasses ideas from a variety of discipline: behavior, psychology, even spirituality to some extent. It is a term that everyone seems to understand or recognize when felt, while no one is able to define it. Besides it rather belongs to the world of personal experimentation and interpretation than external "scientific" observation.

Yet for the need of clarity a few main ideas encompassed by the term "Self-Fulfillment" as gathered here, starting with Goldstein (1939) who wrote that Self-Fulfillment could be viewed as the tendency of an individual to wanting to become more of what he or she is, to bring out his or her outmost qualities, to do what one is truly capable of. This need does not take a definite shape but varies from one person to another, thus pointing out why it is so difficult to describe in absolute terms.

Self-Fulfillment is also the place for personal growth and development, the chance of doing something original or innovative (Mitchell & Moudgill, 1976). It is the approach of feeling valuable by achieving goals linked with one's own perception and standards, as opposed to what is commonly presented as "good" or "desirable".

Self-Fulfillment also relates to one's personal standards and expectations (Gewirth, 1998), which is certainly the key aspect of the concept. It is defined as an individual's attainment of his or her strongest and deepest desire.

Regarding the push and pull theory introduced above, Gilad & Levine (1986) classified Self-Fulfillment as a pull factor as it is something people are attracted to.

Finally, to relate Self-Fulfillment to venture creation, it has been mentioned as an objective for starting a company (Sarri & Trihopoulou 2004 and Buttner & Moore 1997).

In this paper no specific definition is chosen: rather the emphasis should be put on seeing Self-Fulfillment as a little bit of everything detailed above. Choosing one definition over another would mean rejecting or forgetting some key aspects. It is thus better to go through what other authors have written and shape a global idea.

## 2.4 Maslow's Pyramid of the Human Needs and its relevance for this topic

The word “need”, associated with motives, motivation and Self-Fulfillment, has been extensively used in this literature review. Maslow has been mentioned too, and it is not a coincidence his name appears in this topic: he provided a hierarchy of the human needs in a very understandable and concrete fashion by using clear headings and a pyramid shape, as will be shown further down, and thanks to his work the topic of this paper, and more specifically the notion of Self-Fulfillment, will be clarified.

Therefore this part of the literature review will extensively introduce Maslow's work, its application and detail its relevance in the context of this paper.

### 2.4.1 General information

In “Theory of Human Motivation” (1943), Maslow built what would become a famous model summarizing and ordering the human needs. His work is perceived at the same time as a theory of human motives, since motives have been related to needs and his work classifies needs, and also a theory of human motivation as it relates the needs to the general behavior of an individual.

The hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow (1970) consists of:

- 1) The physiological needs
- 2) Need for safety
- 3) Need for love and belongingness
- 4) Need for Self-Esteem
- 5) Need for Self-Actualization

These different headings have been arranged into a pyramid-like figure (see figure 2-1).

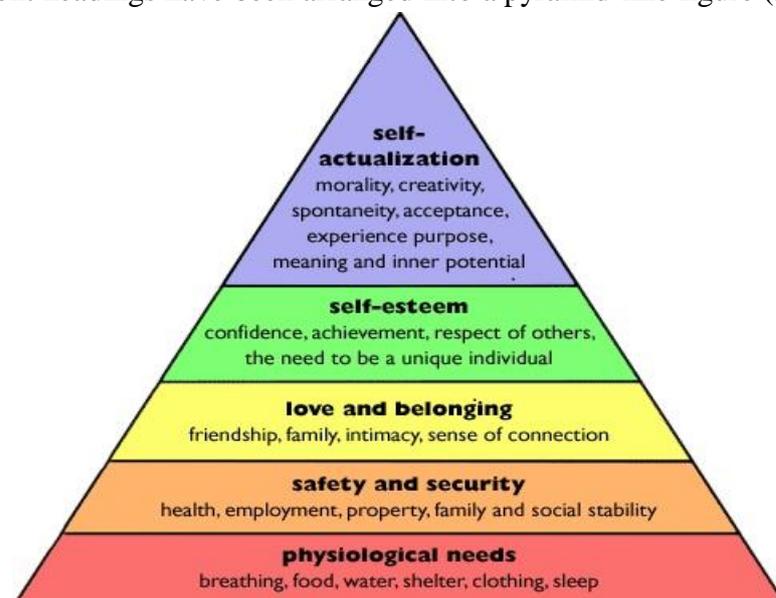


Figure 2-1: The Maslow Pyramid of the Human Needs.

Maslow (1954) also made a distinction between the different categories of needs: those which are deficiency needs, and those which are growth need. Therefore the first 3 levels (i.e. physiological, safety, belongingness) belong to the deficiency needs, while self-esteem and self-actualization are among the growth needs. Also figure 2-1 illustrates the fact an individual will first seek to fulfill a lower need before accessing the next level. To put it another way: an individual will not feel a higher need until the need just before is fulfilled.

Also deficient needs have top priority over growth need in order of fulfillment (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). It means that if a lower need once fulfilled is suddenly no longer covered, the person will feel that need again and lose interest in higher order needs. For example someone interested in building relationships, looking for friends (belongingness) or willing to discover and understand new cultures, to achieve something on his/her own (self-esteem) will put at once all his or her energy and focus in the search of food if it suddenly lacks, forgetting all the rest.

It also explains the concept of pyramid-shape: each part is built on top of the previous one and therefore shows that a person goes through each step without being able to skip one. If a lower step lacks, the whole structure crumbles and the person goes back to the unfulfilled need.

Finally Maslow (1970) made an important statement: he postulated that the hierarchy of needs is universal and does not depend on cultures, times or societies, thus the name "human needs" as it relates to every human being. It is a big difference with other views focusing on apparent desires or behaviors, very context-dependent.

#### **2.4.2 Details of the different needs**

Human needs are interrelated and interactive (Max-Neef, 1992): it is a global system with elements related to each other. The needs are the same for all individuals regardless of any background (consumerist or ascetic society). The only thing that can vary is the individual's choice of quantity and quality of satisfiers.

Now each need will be reviewed with a strong focus and lots of details given on Self-Actualization. More information regarding the four previous needs can be found in appendix 1 at the end of this paper, especially how they manifest and how they are commonly addressed. Also the needs are related to the individual (as opposed to companies, which comes later) in order to better understand the different motives behind people's behaviors.

##### **1) Physiological needs**

First needs to be addressed. This category regroups bodily-based drives (Leidy 1994) such as rest, food or thirst. More details in appendix 1.

##### **2) Safety needs**

Second level of needs, this category encompasses everything the individual needs in order to feel, safe such as protection or stability (Leidy 1994). More details in appendix 1.

### 3) Need for belongingness

Third level of needs. Belongingness relates to the individual's need "to be needed", translated into friendship, closeness and a search to belong to a group acknowledging one's lifestyle and values (Maslow 1970). More details to be found in appendix 1.

### 4) The need for Self-Esteem

Fourth level of needs. It relates to the individual's need for achievement or respect (Lawler & Suttle 1972). Concretely it consists in asserting one's uniqueness. More details on this rather wide need in appendix 1.

### 5) The need for Self-Actualization

Generally speaking, Self-Actualization is the wish to understand an individual's full potential. It is represented by the need for more expansion and cannot be entirely fulfilled. Therefore the building of Self-Actualization is the last defined type in human needs (Maslow, 1954).

It arises because the individual no longer focuses on gathering external things, people and conditions necessary for his or her well-being (Horney, 1991), and thus all the energy freed is put into the awareness of one's own potential: that person understands that he or she has a tremendous power that can be used for something. The need for Self-Actualization is the need to understand and use that potential, and therefore it aims at giving rather than taking (which characterized the previous needs) since the individual does not need anything for him or herself anymore.

It is a concept quite hard to grasp because the person seeking Self-Actualization will want to give, help others for these people's benefits (since that person has fulfilled the previous personal needs), while at the same time doing it for their own actualization. Maslow (1943) explains that once the level of Self-Esteem is satisfied, a person feels self-confidence values his worth and has strengths, abilities and competences as an individual that are useful and necessary for the world. That person then works towards making the world a better place through his or her resources: this is how people work on their self-actualization.

**The need for Self-Actualization is the need to use one's potential (competences, abilities, strengths). It is done through giving, helping, serving and making the world a better place for its own sake.** Unlike someone searching for belongingness, an individual who is seeking Self-Actualization does not try to be useful in order to show his or her value: that person knows it already and does not seek approval from others, but rather wants to contribute to the world with what he or she can do.

Self-actualizing people have the following characteristics (Daniels, 2001):

- 1) Being solution-focused: They identify what lacks around them, may it be in their life or society. They tend to find solutions to problems instead of focusing on the problems themselves.
- 2) Continuous admiration of one's life: instead of focusing on what they don't like or complaining about what they don't have, self-actualizing people focus on admiring or appreciating their life and continue to develop what they already have.

- 3) Anxiety regarding personal growth: they have concerns regarding their personal growth. They seek mainly to develop and use whatever situation as a mean for that purpose.
- 4) The capacity to have crest experiences: self-actualizing people will try to make the most out of the things they do and work toward making them even more interesting and enjoyable.

Finally Huit's (2007) review of Maslow's work help us understand that, as an individual becomes more and more self-actualized, he or she becomes wiser, knows exactly what to do in different situations that might arise in life.

### **2.4.3 The human needs and companies**

Kaufman (1990) made an interesting analogy between the human needs (introduced above from the individual point of view) and how they can possibly be answered in a company.

For example the survival (physiological) needs are translated into a need for continuous job and income. The need for safety takes the form of sales-maximization, needed in order to ensure keeping the business running. The need for belongingness is translated into allowing slackness from subordinates, which means releasing the pressure and building relationships. At last the need for Self-Esteem is translated into being the person with the highest wage in a community.

Studies from Porter (1961, 1962 and 1963) continue in this fashion by highlighting the fact that top executives seem to be more focused on achieving higher order needs than managers from the lower levels of an organization's hierarchy. Executives who are higher in the ranking of an organization have a stronger tendency to characterize success as a career that is successful, compared to first level officers (lower in organization hierarchy) who tend to see success in terms of security and income (Pellegrin & Coates, 1957).

Now a conclusion can be drawn from this part about the different human needs identified by Maslow: a specific need arises because the previous one was fulfilled. Thus the "origin" of a need is the fact the previous, lower ones, were fulfilled, and therefore the relevant questions when studying the origin of a need is "how" were the previous ones fulfilled.

### **2.4.4 Self-Fulfillment and Self-Actualization**

The previous parts enabled us to better understand Maslow's view on the human needs, what they were exactly and how they were fulfilled. This part is focused on reviewing literature establishing a link between Self-Fulfillment, this paper's topic, and Self-Actualization, so that the pyramid of the human needs can be used as a framework.

Self-Actualization is based more on the wishes of what a man is supposed to be (or want to be regarding his or her own standards) rather than what he or she currently is (Berkowitz, 1969). Thus this view relates to Self-Fulfillment since people consider it as a success factor when running their business: they are looking for it, which links it to Self-Actualization.

However Mitchell & Moudgill (1976) went even further by presenting Maslow's Pyramid of the Human Needs and replacing Self-Actualization by Self-Fulfillment, which they have done simply because, to them, they are one and same need.

Baumeister (1987) also followed that trend by highlighting that Self-Fulfillment can be translated into Self-Actualization, that it has been a goal to pursue for individuals, and that it has become more and more established by societies and cultures as a rightful and vital part of life.

Thus, from now on, the words Self-Fulfillment and Self-Actualization will be used to designate the same thing.

To conclude, Maslow's Pyramid of the Human Needs has been presented as a very useful and powerful tool to understand the origin of motivation (defined as a behavior deriving from a motive, which is itself a need to be fulfilled), and therefore it will be used throughout the study when working on the origin of Self-Fulfillment.

Also a logical chain of events can be built upon what has been reviewed so far: in the previous part was stated that studying the "origin" of a need was actually about finding out how the previous needs were fulfilled, as the need to be studied simply arose because the previous ones were fulfilled. In the specific case of this paper, studying the origin of Self-Fulfillment means studying how one managed to reach the need for Self-Actualization, which is about knowing how that person managed to fulfill the previous four types of needs. **This is one aspect this paper investigates and it is the first research question.**

## **2.5 Self-Fulfillment and entrepreneurship**

Now that the human needs have been extensively explained and that Self-Fulfillment has been showed as being the equivalent of Self-Actualization and thus belongs to the very top of the pyramid, this literature review progresses to focus more on the role of the firm regarding motivation, motives and of course Self-Fulfillment.

### **2.5.1 Role of the company in fulfilling a need**

"Being an entrepreneur, one who is self-employed and who starts, organizes, manages, and assumes responsibility for a business, offers a personal challenge that many individuals prefer over being an employee working for someone else." This quote from Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld (2005) tells a lot on what people search when starting a company. Indeed, for some the responsibilities and everything associated with running a business is a reward in itself. The same as a musician will play music because this is what he or she likes, a person will start and run a company because this is what he or she likes doing (strategic decisions, managing people, being one's "own boss"). Satisfaction is found in the act of running the business therefore the initial motive must be something linked to the nature of entrepreneurship so that the person finds what he or she is looking for when becoming an entrepreneur and regardless of the way the business is run, what is sold, where, to whom etc.

However there is another vision of things: the primary goal of life for many people is to be happy (Brunstein et al., 1998), but happiness is a by-product of involvement in useful or meaningful projects or works, which do not have the primary focus of fulfilling happiness. What does it concretely mean for entrepreneurship? It means that for some peo-

ple opening a company is not the same as being happy, or fulfilling a need. It means something more is needed, but entrepreneurship contributes to building the path toward the ultimate achievement that is sought after. Gilad and Levine (1986) make it plain and clear when explaining that entrepreneurial behaviors are used as means to achieve wealth or Self-Fulfillment for example.

To put it another way, some entrepreneurs go to that field because they are attracted by entrepreneurship itself, while others choose the same path because they see there a way to achieve what they are truly looking for (and possibly picked entrepreneurship among other possibilities because of personal interest and preferences). This distinction can be interesting if related to when the need for Self-Fulfillment arises.

## **2.5.2 Impact on the company**

The previous part allows us to understand that the motive behind entrepreneurship is not fulfilled simply by starting the company, and that consequently some actions are taken once the company is launched. Now the natural question following that statement is “what about the company?”

“Organizational leaders play a major role in shaping their companies’ direction and outcomes” wrote Markman & Baron (2003). This may be even more relevant for entrepreneurs, who are at the very heart of the venture. It means their actions and decisions do impact the company and therefore what drives these actions may explain a lot what is done.

Recent research helped understanding that human resources have a strong impact on companies’ performance. It seems human variability is even stronger than traditional exogenous factors such as barriers to entry or economies of scale (Bhidé 2000). Applied to entrepreneurs it means not only that they are a key element to success, but also and especially they are a key element to where the company is heading and how it interacts with its surrounding, its place in society.

Finally the concept of the dancer and the dance (Carland & Carland 1988) illustrates in a clear way the relationship between the entrepreneur and the company: one cannot be separated from the other (the dance/company cannot be separated from the dancer/entrepreneur, who made it). All the creativity, energy, expectations are put in the dance/company and therefore it reflects the person behind.

So what is important to understand is that people, and especially the company’s creator, have an impact on the company. Thus if this is linked with what was previously explained the following connection can be established: the entrepreneur is driven by the need for Self-Fulfillment, he or she will do something enabled by company creation to answer that need, and finally these actions will yield consequences for the company (and most probably the society as a company rarely evolves in autarky).

**Finding out the connection between the fulfillment of the entrepreneur’s need for Self-Actualization and the company that person created is one aspect this paper investigates: research question number two.** Of course the exact, concrete action will vary from one person to another, from one industry to another, so what matters is to find the trend, the mindset entrepreneurs have when they decide to do this or that.

## **2.6 Conclusion: the need for Self-Fulfillment as the motive behind entrepreneurship**

So, what can be concluded after reviewing the literature about this paper's subject? First there is a lack of empirical data in the field of entrepreneurial motivation in general (Kuratko et al. 1997). Second some entrepreneurs seek Self-Actualization through starting and running their business and some don't (Carland & Calrand 1997), and this study is focused on the former. Third little information is actually available to understand this need: its origin and how entrepreneurs fulfill it (as the literature review informed us).

Yet much information has been gathered, introduced and connected in order to create a coherent whole. So what did we find so far? We understood that people are driven by a need to fulfill and that it dictates their behavior and the outcomes they aim at. In the case of entrepreneurship, some entrepreneurs are driven by the need to Self-Fulfill, which came after these persons completed all other needs although we don't know how. These entrepreneurs, like any individual who reached the need for Self-Actualization, seek to contribute to the world with their potential (discovered after the previous needs were fulfilled) according to Maslow. Finally these entrepreneurs have an impact on the company's outcome and role in society: an impact supposedly positive since the entrepreneurs are driven by a need to contribute, but we don't know exactly what connection exists.

These findings allow stating three main reasons justifying the study of Self-Fulfillment as the motive behind entrepreneurship: first the lack of empirical data in the field of motivation that this study contributes to fill. Second the lack of information about Self-Fulfillment (origin and how it is addressed) although it is acknowledged as a motive behind entrepreneurship for some people (may it be to start the company or to run it). Third unlike other needs, Self-Actualization seems to lead to very beneficial behaviors for society, and thus having entrepreneurs driven by the need for Self-Fulfillment would potentially mean companies contributing to their surroundings. Therefore studying that need seems important to understand exactly if this assumption is true, and if it is then to open the way to other studies.

### **3 Method**

This part of the paper is about the method used to gather empirical data with the aim of answering the two research questions. It includes definitions of the key terms and many information regarding who participated, why, and how the data were collected on the field.

#### **3.1 Choice of research method: qualitative**

##### **3.1.1 Definition**

To gain a broad understanding of what qualitative methods are and thus be able to justify their relevance for this topic, a few definitions (completing each other) from different authors are presented here. None of them is chosen over another: rather they should be considered together to make a definition.

Qualitative research methods are encompassing naturalistic and interpretive types of research, which means studying the subject in a natural setting and interpreting the results (Norman, 2002). This interpretation is focused on giving meanings to what the subject brings about, and it can be done by using various empirical resources (or data) collected through tools such as case studies, interviews, experience, observation and body language.

Punch (1994) also highlights the variety of techniques available, while explaining that observing is at the center of the process and that qualitative methods can be used in many situations: “Qualitative research covers a spectrum of techniques – but central are observation, interviewing and documentary analysis – and these may be used in a broad range of disciplines.” Data collection must produce a meaningful output that will take various forms but cannot be briefed in metrics.

Finally Inui & Frankel (1991) offer an even broader definition as they introduce qualitative research methods as including all the techniques of inquiry in which researchers do not adopt any metric. According to them it prevents from encapsulating the ideas by counting and measuring.

##### **3.1.2 Condition of use**

Based on the previous definitions, qualitative research methods can be identified as especially adapted to a certain number of situations. Sofaer (1999) presented an interesting view on the evolution of a subject as it is more and more researched and the subsequent shift in methods used to investigate it.

First, qualitative methods are especially useful in “conducting initial explorations and to develop theories” (Sofaer, 1999). So it seems to be the right choice when it comes to the creation of a hypothesis. Whether it is a haunch or something that seems to happen in the world, when something new comes out it is first qualitative methods that will help defining the subject before it is tested later on with more quantitative methods, on a higher scale.

It is also useful when trying to find out what the relevant questions to ask actually are: when a subject is new or blurry it might not be obvious what should be investigated, or which angle should be taken. Also it can be used to know what directions answers can take.

The author provides a few steps to describe the evolution of the knowledge about a topic, and they are reproduced here with a few explanations:

- 1) Uncertainties about the answers, about what the right questions are (both in terms of content and phrasing) and about who should be asked. In this stage the researcher should focus on open-ended questions and ask people who seem relevant to describe their experience regarding a certain situation (relevant for the topic studied).
- 2) Some of the right questions start to appear. In that stage open-ended questions should still be used but they should be more specific in their form (i.e. their phrasing should follow a specific structure although the answers will be wide).
- 3) At this stage a higher level of confidence has been reached that almost every important question is established (content) and asked in a specific and correct way (form). Yet there is still a high uncertainty regarding the possible answers and which ones are relevant or not. Therefore questions can be close-ended or open-ended, but in both cases they can be listed and framed in a specific way.
- 4) Finally high certainty has been reached regarding the possible answers to expect, and therefore questions become exclusively close-ended with a specific order and framing.

It can be noticed that the methods used in the researches move from qualitative types to quantitative types as the knowledge of a topic increases.

To conclude, qualitative methods are used to gain a better understanding of various human experiences and their complexity (Mashall & Rossman, 1999).

### **3.1.3 Why using a qualitative method for this topic?**

When related to the previous definitions and conditions of use of qualitative method, the choice made for this study becomes more logical. There are also a few arguments that can be put forward to justify that choice as regard to the topic, starting with the fact that it belongs to the first or second category identified by Sofaer (1999). It is difficult to define clear questions or answers expected: it is more like a haunch, something that needs to be investigated a first time in order to possibly find a subject for further studies. Trials, experimentations and discussions are needed to find out what seems relevant in the study, and therefore qualitative method is the right choice.

Deriving from this point is the fact this study is about building a theory: it is about understanding Self-Fulfillment by connecting its origin to how it is acted upon, all this in the field of entrepreneurship. Sofaer (1999) clearly stated that qualitative methods were to be used in such a case.

Another argument, quite obvious, is the fact quantitative methods are simply unusable since there is no set of agreed-upon close-ended questions: they need to be found out first (which refers to the previous points).

Also studying motivations, motives, ways of thinking, reasons behind actions and feelings all form human experience and are quite complex and not so obvious to understand and even observe (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Getting into the person's mindset is needed in order to proceed with data gathering, which also means questions and an-

swers are very different from one person to another. According to the individual's feedback (which includes body language, perceptions), the questions and behavior of the research may change. It is this adaptability that enables to cover the topic of this paper.

Deriving from this is the obvious conclusion that, when looking at the subject, no set of specific questions (and thus a quantitative approach) would fit: no set of specific questions could give access to the multiple relevant experiences and interests people have, and even more important no set of specific questions could enable accessing to the individual's mindset to understand his or her point of view (which is at the core of this study, much more than mere facts). Therefore the complexity of such a topic can only be studied through qualitative methods with open-ended questions.

## **3.2 Data collection method: interviews**

### **3.2.1 Definition**

Interviews are about "gathering an 'authentic' understanding of people's experiences" wrote Silverman (2006). To be more accurate, interviews help defining and giving meaning to the theme provided by the researcher (Kvale, 1996), the main task being to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say, which demands time and patience and an ability to let the person talk while not losing track of what is searched (i.e. going in-depth). Interviews help discovering answers on both a factual and meaningful level (Kvale, 1996), although it is usually difficult to interview on meanings (yet it is the central theme of this paper). In any case the central structure is a set of themes or open-ended questions with no necessary order, which the interviewee will talk about/answer, while being guided by the researcher who makes sure the talk and information provided are relevant.

### **3.2.2 Condition of use**

Interview is primarily chosen as a research method when the topic is about knowing what is in and on people's mind, when it is about finding relevant information that cannot be directly accessed (Patton, 1980). For example we cannot observe and make patterns of things such as feelings, thoughts and the ways people interpret their world. Past actions and behaviors cannot be observed either, much like various situations interviewees went through with no observers. Also it is hard to figure out how people have organized the world, given meaning to what is going on around them, and thus they need to be asked and understanding can only come when taking their point of view (so in the end even an outside observer could not pretend reporting facts in an efficient way when what is studied relates to individual's perceptions).

Therefore interviews contribute to allow the interviewer to enter the interviewee's point of view and understand their perspective on events and facts, and from there it becomes clear and easy to study very personal aspects.

Interviews also have the most value when used to receive the story behind the interviewee's experience (McNamara, 1999): the interviewer can hunt for comprehensive and helpful information around the topic that contribute to bring out the desired information. Interviews are also useful when following-up certain respondents to questionnaires, for example to further examine their responses.

Finally one should keep in mind that qualitative methods, and especially interviews, are started with the assumption that the interviewee's viewpoint is "meaningful, knowledgeable and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1980).

### **3.2.3 Why interviews?**

Interviews have been chosen as the mean to gather empirical data for this study because it is believed to fit the need of this topic.

A small part of the study relates to facts (what entrepreneurs do, possible impact on the company, finding common actions), but the real interest lies in people's perceptions: in order to study Self-Fulfillment as a driver behind entrepreneurship, what matters is people's perception of their own growth and development, what their actions make them feel and ultimately why they do certain things (to feel fulfilled or for other reasons?). Otherwise the facts are simply irrelevant for this topic.

With such a description of what this study demands and when related to the conditions of use (or what can be expected from) interviews, it becomes obvious that they had to be chosen: only through an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' mindset can we hope to understand Self-Fulfillment.

This method for data collection also offers another benefit: it gives an opportunity to understand each person individually, which is important when studying motivation or motives, as it is a very personal things (people have different motivations, mean different things when using a same word).

Finally one more reason justifying the choice of interviews among other qualitative methods is the fact it helps documenting historical characteristics of someone (like personality), which is useful in this study. It amplifies the interviewee's experience and enables to go into more details to expand understanding.

## **3.3 Sample specifications**

### **3.3.1 Sample size**

The sample chosen gathered twelve individuals (whose characteristics will be detailed in the next section). This number was not picked randomly: rather it answers different requirements.

First of all the method used is qualitative, as it has been extensively explained above, and therefore it does not necessitate a huge amount of respondents as a quantitative method does.

On the other hand, less than ten people would simply be a sample too small to observe anything: there would be only a list of behaviors or decisions (with their reasons) but no ground strong enough to be used for observing a phenomenon and build a theory, which would leave the two research questions unanswered (or poorly answered).

Yet qualitative methods could be achieved with a bigger sample, even if it does not reach the size of what is used in quantitative methods. Also it is acknowledged that a bigger sample could offer more reliable results, or at least it could probably add some relevant points that cannot be found with twelve interviewees. However this study is focused on the fact it brings new concepts, it deals with entrepreneurial motivation in a

new way and, generally, it takes a view over entrepreneurship and the human needs that is rather new. Therefore there is a lot of work to be done in theory building that one study could, in any case, not fulfill. Also, given the time constraint, the focus has been given to presenting the new perspective through a strong literature review backed-up with a few, high quality in-depth interviews (rather than numerous ones). This contributes to present a paper which, as a whole, introduces new ideas while giving suggestions on how to study them, and thus twelve interviewees are believed to be a right number for that purpose.

### **3.3.2 Participants**

The twelve interviews participants have been selected according to criteria that were constructed based on the literature review and aiming at picking individuals who would be able to provide a constructive input from which answers to the research questions could be inferred.

First and foremost these individuals were all entrepreneurs according to the definition given in the literature review: they had created a company, no matter whether it was still existing or not, successful or not.

Second they come from a very international background (different nationalities) and represent different situations (students having started a venture, newly started companies, established ones with more or less employees, multinational or not). Basically people were not sorted according to their background, nor were they chosen or not according to it: being an entrepreneur was the only requirement, and they have been chosen precisely because they offered various backgrounds, as explained below.

Indeed, one point has to be mentioned: the need for Self-Actualization supposedly being universal (the concept has been introduced in the literature review when studying the Maslow Pyramid of the Human Needs), people's background is irrelevant when choosing them. Yet it remains an interesting feature as some relations might be found out (or not) when relating the answers to the background. So it is a characteristic that can be used during the analysis of the data, later on, if anything relevant is found regarding an individual's situation and culture. Otherwise it simply demonstrates that Maslow's statement that his pyramid is common to all humans is true.

## **3.4 The action plan**

### **3.4.1 Input**

Here is a list of what has been prepared, decided and thought of regarding the process of carrying out the interviews and why.

#### **3.4.1.1 The appointments**

First meeting the interviewees face-to-face was a decision taken early in the process: interviews, as detailed earlier, enable to go in details in the interviewee's mind to understand his or her mindset and perception of events, and thus it was believed that this could be achieved only by actually witnessing the body language and hearing the voice tone of that person.

However having face-to-face interviews only would have limited drastically the companies available (because of a lack of resources such as transport means, or financial and

time constraints). Therefore interviews carried out through Internet, with use of webcam and voice call software (such as Skype) were also added. This enables access to a much wider range of people and thus cultures and backgrounds, which is useful to obtain a broader perspective and have the international sample mentioned previously. Besides, the use of webcam and call software enables to decrease as much as possible the downturns of not being able to meet in person by helping keeping most of the benefits of a more traditional face-to-face interview (which are, as stated above, the voice tone and body language).

### 3.4.1.2 The structure of the interviews

The decision was taken not to ask a specific set of open-ended question for the reason that none could be found in previous studies that would match this situation: the point of view taken on motivation being rather new, there were no existing questions that could serve here, even as a basic structure, to bring the kind of answers sought after.

Instead, the method chosen consists in gathering ideas under themes. Thus four themes have been built (details further down), each clearly aiming at gathering answers for one aspect of the subject. Also the interviewers had the responsibility to decide when a theme gathered relevant responses and the interview could proceed to the new theme, or when it demanded more time and questioning.

Here are the details of these four themes:

#### 1) **Motives behind Company Creation**

Here the main idea is to find out whether Self-Fulfillment/Actualization had any role to play in the decision of starting the company. The form it takes is irrelevant, and also is its connection to starting a venture in general or beginning with a precise idea. What needs to be found out is whether contributing, helping, servicing and such were somehow connected to the will of starting the company in the first place.

#### 2) **Motives behind running the company**

This time the focus was given to the reasons that push the entrepreneur to keep doing what he or she is doing, instead of doing something else for example. After all an individual could have perfectly been driven by the need to Self-Fulfill and then lost that drive, or on the other hand having started a company for other reasons which were then replaced by the need to Self-Actualize. So once again the aim was to find out whether contributing and helping were among the main motives being running the company, the form being irrelevant here too.

Based on the answered gathered under these two themes, the interviewees were identified as belonging to one of the categories introduced in the following table.

	S.F at start	S.F now
Category 1	Yes	Yes
Category 2	Yes	No
Category 3	No	Yes
Category 4	No	No

Table 1: categories of interviewees

NB: an interview started with an individual later identified as belonging to category 4 was immediately stopped as it did not fit the topic. Therefore no mention of these people will be made in this paper.

The table above is helpful for two things: first it helps understanding when the need for Self-Fulfillment arose, which is helpful when framing questions for theme 3 (detailed below). Second it may prove useful during the process of analyzing the data by offering another perspective on them: checking if anything can be observed on people's mindset and behavior depending on when the need for Self-Actualization arose (and thus the role of entrepreneurship in this).

### 3) **Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

In this part the main focus is to find out what element(s) made the interviewee feel the need to Self-Actualize. The only thing known is that it relates to personal growth (as detailed during the literature review), but it could happen through an event, a chain of events, a person, an action or countless possibilities. Therefore the topic is quite broad. However the questions would stop only after understanding what was personally gained through the event/meeting/action mentioned by the interviewee: since the subject relates to the individual's needs, what is searched for is something personally gained.

To put it another way: what matters is what people obtained out of an event, and among these the focus is given to what helps fulfilling one's needs until reaching Self-Actualization.

However to make the theme easier to understand, the technique used during the interviews consists in asking people to first relate the emergence of the need to help their surrounding with a specific event or time, then having them explaining what was exactly learned at that time, why it seems so important, and finally whether they can relate this to the origin of their need to Self-Fulfill.

Also, as mentioned above, the table summarizing when the need for Self-Fulfillment arose (after themes 1 and 2) is useful in this theme: for example if the need to Self-Actualize appears after company creation, then it can be inferred that something happened between the date the company was started and now, when it is run. Thus it becomes possible to ask questions aiming at making the interviewee compare themselves before starting the venture and now, and tell what differences they can observe in themselves.

Finally this theme gathers data useful to answer the first research question of this paper.

### 4) **The company and fulfilling the need**

Since among all kinds of people feeling the need to Self-Actualize entrepreneurs have been chosen, and since the first two themes made sure the individual interviewed was subject to the need for Self-Fulfillment and it was related to his or her company, the logical next step is to understand the nature of this connection.

Therefore the data gathered under this heading must help to understand how the entrepreneur works on his or her Self-Actualization with help of the venture created. It includes questions such as “Is a good business idea enough? And how to define good then?”, “What impact does the entrepreneur has on the company since his/her decisions are driven by the need to Self-Fulfill?”, “How is the company perceived? Does it provide situations to work on one’s Self-Fulfillment? Is it only a way to carry out the idea that leads to fulfillment?”

This theme gathers data useful to answer the second research question of this paper.

The strength of the “theme” method is that it allows a huge freedom in the questions asked, and therefore the possibility to adapt them in real time to the unique answers provided by each interviewee (even more unique that they come from a wide background that will necessarily lead to different answers to a same question, or different interpretation of what the question means). Arvey and Campion (1982) described that, for decision making type of interview (related with making themes), factors such as “errors in the interview, interviewer training, demographic variables (e.g., race, sex), nonverbal behavior, interviewee variables, perceptions of the interviewer, and interviewee training” play a vital role and thus finding a specific answer is easier if the interview process is structured according to a specific subject, which in our case refers to the themes.

This topic, since it is quite new and, as we have seen in the literature review, involves many disciplines which can make it confusing at times (for both the interviewee and interviewer). Therefore such a freedom is needed to fully cover the topic researched.

Also the order of the themes is not random: it follows a chronological order, from the idea of starting the company to its current status and possible evolutions. It makes it easy for the interviewees to follow the logic of the interview and helps them providing relevant information. At the same time the interviewer can refer to information previously provided and use them in the next themes, since the past explains the future to some extent, which is very true in the case of motivation as it is the cause of the present.

### **3.4.2 On the field**

Here is a description of how the interviews took place and their characteristics.

#### **3.4.2.1 Specificities of the interviews**

First of all interviews were recorded (only oral part though) in order to have them accessible for further reference. The interviewees speaking quite fast and the amount of information being quite big, it is rather hard to write down all the relevant points and some personal notes, therefore having the interview accessible afterwards is useful to extract all the key elements from it, and even erase what turns out not to be so important.

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one and a half hour. It depended of course a lot on the interviewee propensity to talk and give details, but also on how the themes and questions deriving from them were understood (which may lead to additional time needed until the appropriate information were gathered).

### **3.4.2.2 The process of interviewing**

Since this is not a key aspect of this paper, more details are available on that part in appendix 2. However in general, the interviewers followed the four themes introduced above and asked questions depending on the interviewees input, until the information sought after were given. Then the next theme was started and so on until the end.

### **3.4.3 Afterwards**

Once the interviews are done, recorded and the answers gathered and organized under their proper headings, it is time to go through all the notes taken individually by each interviewer and to gather everything under one single document for each interview. This is an opportunity to keep only relevant points (sometimes an answer seemed interesting at first but turned out to be out of subject and thus leaves irrelevant noise on the paper) and to add short analysis of the answers when a point seems to come out in the interview. These documents are available in the appendix section of this paper (number 4).

From there all answers will be gathered and combined to create the “result” part of this paper (to be found further down). Data are gathered and introduced according to the theme they belong to.

Finally this will make it easier to compare and find common points and trends that will be listed in the analysis, from which the answers to the research questions will be drawn.

## **3.5 Trustworthiness**

Huberman & Miles (2002) in their “Qualitative Researcher’s Companion” list a few common points that any research using qualitative method should consider when preparing the method to gather data and going on the field. These points are related to the trustworthiness of the method (and thus of the results presented and the final outcomes of the study): they introduce a few themes to reflect upon the value of the method chosen and its application.

These themes are listed below, and for each of them is indicated how it applies and how it is dealt with in this paper.

First methods and data are not valid or invalid in themselves (Huberman & Miles, 2002): they need to be considered as regard to what they are supposed to produce or show. From there they can be judged as well chosen/gathered and meaningful or not. This is why every step of the method (from its choice to its application) is detailed in this part of the paper: it clarifies the relevance of the method chosen and the choices made regarding the topic studied.

Second comes the notion of descriptive validity, which refers to the ability to report what has been said accurately (Huberman & Miles, 2002). It is a main issue in the case of interviews since reporting what has been said correctly is at the heart of finding answers that can lead to a valid result. This is why the interviews are recorded (as mentioned above), the two interviewers take notes independently before combining them into one file and, although each theme is addressed individually, any relevant point is written down (even if it does not belong to the theme currently addressed).

Third is the term “reliability”, defined as whether or not different results are obtained when studying the same phenomenon in case different methods are used and different researchers are carrying out the study (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The authors also suggest that this limitation can be overcome by checking that the observers’ purpose and perspectives are the same between the two studies, even if the people or methods change. In this paper’s specific case, this limitation is difficult to address since the topic and perspective taken are rather new. However the extensive amount of information included in the literature review and the method should help any researcher interested in further investigating the subject understanding the perspective taken here and the topic, and thus enable them to focus on the same thing in the same way.

Finally interpretive validity needs to be considered, which refers to the validity of something perceived by an individual (an interpretation) rather than a fact that can be described and observed (Huberman & Miles, 2002). It requires from the researcher to pay attention to the body language, voice tone and explanations to truly understand what is meant. In this paper it is another main issue since the whole topic is about the individual’s perception (a same action can fulfill a need for someone and not for someone else, or fulfill a different need), and to address it and ensure high interpretive validity face-to-face interviews are given priority (as detailed above). Also having people explain their motivations behind their actions rather than guessing them is a way to increase interpretive validity. However a great deal comes from the interviews themselves and what happens “on the spot”, which is rather hard to transcribe in a paper.

## 4 Results

This chapter presents the empirical findings, meaning the data collected from the interviews with various people (detailed in the previous section of this paper). Only aggregated data is provided in this section while the next one, “Analysis”, will help extracting relevant information for the purpose of the paper.

The detailed results of each interview are presented as appendixes (number 4), along with a short summary of each company owned by the interviewees. The reader is strongly encouraged to check these documents as they give a lot of information and details on each interviewee individually (and these information will not be introduced otherwise but some references will be made to them).

### 4.1 Introducing the Findings

This section provides a global overview of the interviews that have been conducted. As mentioned above they include four themes (the motive to start the company, motives to run the company, origin of the need for self-fulfillment, and the company’s role in fulfilling the need) and therefore the findings are presented following the same order to make them clear and easy to understand.

The answers are also classified according to the category the interviewee belongs to (the list can be found in the “method” part above). In the end all interviewees fell into either category 1, which stipulates that the need for self-fulfillment appeared before the start of the company, or category 3, which includes people whose need for self-fulfillment arose after company creation.

Finally a number has been assigned to each interviewee to avoid repeating the names time and again. It becomes much simpler and also clearer for readers to understand who said what, and it is less time and space consuming while keeping identifying them reasonably simple.

Below is the table that lists the number assigned to each interviewee and the category they fall into.

<b>Number Assigned to each Interviewee</b>	<b>Names of the interviewee</b>	<b>Category of the interviewee identified</b>
1	Antonia Georgeiva Petrova	3
2	Biswas Hamal	1
3	Durga Mainali	1
4	Ievgen Machulsky	3
5	Kunga Lama	1
6	Laurent Selles	1
7	Mikeal Esselius	1
8	Petra Holmbäck	3
9	Suman Karmakar	3
10	Torre Svensson	3
11	Åsa Rydhard	3
12	Nirmal Adhikari	3

Table 2: Number assigned

Likewise, the rest of the findings will be presented in tables, which make it easy for the reader to understand the key points. This has been done to make the findings short and simple for subsequent analysis. Since the number of interviewees goes up to 12 and since some interviews lasted more than one and half hour, there were lots of irrelevant data that could not be used in this paper and that would simply have made the whole section confusing.

Grouping data in this fashion was possible because many answers were similar, and thus it makes it much easier to see trends or to point out connections: tables make them obvious. The answers are arranged starting with the most common answers.

#### 4.1.1 Motive to start the company

These are the findings from the first theme of the interview.

<b>Data Collected (Motives to start the company)</b>	<b>Which Interviewee</b>
▪ Wanted to do something on their own	All of them
▪ Liking of the field or personal interest	4,5,6,7,8,9,10
▪ Previous experience on the same field	1,2,3,7,11
▪ Take challenges to try something new and bring something in the market	1,2,3,5,9
▪ Help other people and\or environment to improve	6,7,3,5,2
▪ Identifying gap and\or finding opportunities via some links or realizing one's own passion	3,4,5,10
▪ Background studies	3,5,6,9
▪ Inspired by an event or someone	1,4,5,9
▪ Support from family and\or friends	3,5,10
▪ Meeting new people and\or Visiting new places	1,2
▪ Knowledge of the market	6,8
▪ To start something new after leaving unsatisfying job	11,12
▪ Availability of resources	2

Table 3: Findings generated from theme 1

From the table above can be seen that most people started their own company because they wanted to do something on their own and take on challenges. Personal interest and liking of the field also is an important factor for establishing a company. Identifying a gap where people are sure they can do something also came back regularly. One of the interviewee (number 2) illustrated that point when saying: "Going to new places and seeing so many people having various difficulties and the fact most of other consultant companies are not contributing 100% has been a problem".

We can also notice a trend with people from category 1 (where self-fulfilment came up before the establishment of the company) who wanted to help other people and their environment to improve already before starting a venture.

Meeting people and having knowledge on the same field or result of unsatisfying job however seems to play less important roles.

#### 4.1.2 Motives to run the company now

These are the answers gathered from the second theme of the interview.

<b>Data Collected (Motives to run the company now)</b>	<b>Which Interviewee</b>
▪ Good working environment	1,2,5,8,9,10,12
▪ Helping employees\team members \ investors\ people\others	1,4,6,7,8,11
▪ Growth and expansion of company\business	2,3,7,11
▪ Satisfaction and happiness due to helping others	2,3,4,5
▪ Building contacts\networks	1,3,12
▪ To be successful	9,11,12
▪ Seeing people happy	1,2,3
▪ Employees satisfaction	2,5,8
▪ Customer satisfaction	8,9,10
▪ Seeing things which they think they can do\make better	4,5,10
▪ Gathering funds\earning money to sustain in the market	7,10
▪ Not giving up	4,11
▪ Making customers\people happy and smiling	1,5
▪ Positive contributions to the society	6

Table 4: Findings generated from theme 2

Answers gathered under theme 2 show a high number of responses linked to running the company in order to help and satisfy stakeholders (customers, employees, investors, people) and also making the work environment better. People from both category 1 and 3 have the desire to help and satisfy the stakeholders and make them as happy as possible.

There's an interesting evolution among the motives between theme 1 and 2: here more motives relate to contributing to the outside.

#### 4.1.3 Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment.

These data were collected from the third theme of the interview.

<b>Data Collected (Origin of the need for self-fulfillment)</b>	<b>Which Interviewee</b>
▪ Found\met a mentor\instructor as motivation\ inspiration for growth in self confidence	1,2,6,9,12
▪ Giving up things they didn't like and doing things they like by finding right context of work	2,6,9,10,11
▪ Mindset "nothing is impossible"	1,3,12
▪ Satisfaction from doing things they like despite the lack of support	2,5,3
▪ Satisfaction when they see other satisfied from their work	2,5,3
▪ Using challenges as an advantage to learn\gain skills\knowledge and read books and articles	4,11
▪ Inspired by an event	5,7
▪ Learning by doing	8,9
▪ Seeing higher purpose of life is to help and serve others	3

Table 5: Findings generated from theme 3

These findings indicate that the origin of the need for self-fulfillment for most of the interviewees is linked with some events or the meeting of someone. A lot is about the mindset, such as believing nothing is impossible as interviewee 3 mentioned it: “For me I feel nothing is impossible and it’s only your mind that sees it as impossible, but when you do it with your heart, there are so many ways you can achieve your dream. You just have to open your eyes”. Also the subsequent actions taken, such as giving up something one is not passionate about.

#### 4.1.4 The company and need fulfillment

These are the answers for the fourth theme of the interview.

<b>Data Collected (The company and need fulfillment)</b>	<b>Which Interviewee</b>
▪ Creating\providing good and healthy working environment	3,4,6,9,11
▪ Providing employment\volunteer opportunities to people	3,5,10,11
▪ Company used as a mean to self-fulfill	1,2,3,5
▪ Company providing various opportunities to help like training, improving customer situation	1,4,10
▪ Increase trust in employees	2,6,12
▪ Company involved in helping by improving clients\employees condition	3,7,8
▪ Contributing to make the society better	5,6,12
▪ Happy and satisfied members \customers \ employees \ stakeholders	3,5,9
▪ Providing high quality service to customers	4,6,11
▪ Company enabled to travel more and help people	2,12
▪ Core purpose of the company is customer and employees’ satisfaction and selling smile.	1,12
▪ Providing emotional support to employees	9,11
▪ Providing opportunities help, develop and grow	8

Table 6: Findings generated from theme 4

We notice the answers are all linked to some kind of improvement. Many are connected to employees’ and customers’ satisfaction, taking many forms with many answers related to a good working environment and employment opportunities. Using the company as a mean to self-fulfill was also an important factor as both category 1 and 3 people have this type of answer.

In any case the view entrepreneurs have over their company appears holistic (i.e. considering each aspect), and service, satisfaction and helping others appear as the main subjects but presented under different forms of language. Here is a quote illustrating this will to help as the outmost priority (interviewee 12): “I don’t urge people to do business with me if they are not satisfied, instead I give them suggestions about how they can get better service”. Also another one from interviewee 7 to understand the view over the company: “I live my own dreams to inspire others”.

## 5 Analysis

This part of the paper will introduce observations made from the results introduced previously, but also from the documents available under appendix 4 and the interviewers' experience on the field.

The analysis in a qualitative study aims at fetching a connotation to a situation, unlike the examination for reality focused on in quantitative research. Strauss & Corbin (1998) describe the analysis as "the interplay between researchers and data", admitting that there is a degree of personal mixture in the interpretation of the empirical findings.

The following observations are introduced under specific headings as they do not necessarily relate to one specific theme from the interviews. In fact they mostly come from trends across themes and people's perceptions and explanations.

### 5.1 Origin of Self-Fulfillment:

A few elements relating to the origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment have been gathered here, starting with the observation that, by creating certain challenges pushing a person to learn certain personal skills or attitudes (to overcome the challenges), entrepreneurship helps people growing and reaching the need for Self-Actualization. Company creation thus acts as a background for individual and personal training and consequent growth.

This aspect is also supported by the fact interviewees explained that after creating the company (usually for Self-Esteem purposes as detailed later) they didn't go up or felt they were growing, as it was expected: instead they went down and felt overwhelmed by all the new things, responsibilities and uncertainty that appeared with venture creation. The need for Self-Actualization arose only later on, after the individual learned to deal with the new situations through a new attitude: this attitude seems to help him or her gain peace, calmness and control over his or her environment, which in turn leads to reaching the top of Maslow's Pyramid.

Another aspect constantly coming back was the notion of following one's inner drives: doing what one loves in one's way contributes to reaching the need to Self-Actualize. This can be stated when observing that this need rose after the individual started doing what he or she wanted, or the fact the person left other jobs because he or she was not driven by what he or she was doing there (even if sometimes the person couldn't tell at the time what he or she would like to do instead). In every case, "following one's dreams" was the central and common attitude driving the decisions, regardless of when the need to Self-Actualize came up (i.e. before or after company creation).

Deriving from this observation is the fact the goals one sets for oneself (coming from one's "heart", what one likes) seem to be driven by one's needs, and thus fulfilling them logically allows to reach Self-Fulfillment ultimately.

There is also an important point regarding the notion introduced above: persisting until achieving the goals one fixes for one's self and not giving up certainly is a key to self-actualization, but it should be tempered by the fact that the individual should change these goals before completion if they are no longer interesting. Persistence was observed but not stubbornness: the goals were carefully chosen and constantly reaffirmed as important.

Another key finding is the role other people may have in the entrepreneurs' development: the meeting of an important individual came back regularly as a key element in the process of reaching Self-Actualization. Usually this meeting was associated with new perspectives on what one can do or where he or she wants to go. This "mentor" very often is a model (because of a lifestyle the entrepreneur would like to have, a mindset and attitude the person displays, things achieved...).

Here is a list of some attitudes and mindsets mentioned by the entrepreneurs (it is not supposed to be comprehensive but it does give an idea of what it takes to reach Self-Actualization): self-confidence, courage, having an ideal to reach (a goal coming from one's own wishes), persistence ("nothing is impossible") without stubbornness (giving up things that are no longer interesting) and being ready to always learn.

This list is valid both for category 3 entrepreneurs (with the need for Fulfillment arising after company creation) and category 1 (need arising before the venture was created). The difference however is that the latter obviously learned the mindset and attitudes without the help of the company and the setting it provides (as detailed above). Therefore it took the shape of a conscious process of learning and experiencing, of events they could learn from and key meetings of course as mentioned previously. These taught them what they know and led them to decide they had something to bring to the world.

## **5.2 Role of the company:**

Under this heading are gathered findings relating to the role the company has in the entrepreneur's Self-Fulfillment and how it is perceived, and the first and most important idea is that the need for Self-Fulfillment is worked on by envisioning the company as a whole. Therefore a business idea that would be beneficial is not enough for the person to feel fulfillment (the market already sorts useful from useless ideas): his or her company must entirely be beneficial, on all aspects. Only then does he or she have the feeling of fulfillment.

Further down are detailed specificities depending on when the need arose, but it can already be stated that small or big companies didn't present a difference when studying the role the company had: usually entrepreneurs identified more to the company when it was small (they are the company) and thus it is easy to understand that they can only actualize through a holistic vision of their venture. However in big companies the result is quite the same because the individual's motivation is the same: it is not possible for a person to work on his or her actualization with some parts of the company and simply give up the rest.

Finally before going into details, here are some aspects of the company regularly mentioned as important to Self-Fulfill: taking care of customers (not just because they bring the money, otherwise that would not be linked with Self-Fulfillment), employees and society (providing jobs, satisfaction of non-direct stakeholders such as internet users in general...).

### **5.2.1 Role of the company when the need arose before company creation (category 1):**

In this case, the entrepreneur decided to start the company because he or she knew how to contribute (i.e. work on Self-Actualization) and needed his or her own company to do so. The initial idea could be the will to create jobs, to bring a specific product/service to the world, to share a specific piece of knowledge, to improve the way some things are done. The company thus becomes only a structure to exercise the activity that aims at contributing.

For some people, entrepreneurship has been chosen because of personal preferences compared to being an employee. There might have been a couple of possibilities to do the thing they were aiming at in another way, but they preferred becoming an entrepreneur (which relates to the idea of following one's inner drive introduced above).

On the other hand for some people it was simply needed: because of the nature of the idea itself or other circumstances.

### **5.2.2 Role of the company when the need arose after company creation (category 3):**

There is a significant difference in the way the company is perceived when the need to Self-Actualize comes after company creation. At that time, the entrepreneur already has spent some time running the business and learned an attitude and a mindset that ultimately led him or her to seek to help and give through what is at hand (see previous findings). This will then take the form of improving the company on every aspect: the company becomes like a set of opportunities for the entrepreneur to Self-Fulfill. Since he or she no longer needs anything from the outside, since the company is already started and he or she wishes to keep it as it is (instead of starting something new, which would then bring that person to category 1), the entrepreneur simply decides to use that context to keep fulfilling his or her needs.

Ultimately, as highlighted when describing the general role of the company, both categories of entrepreneurs have a holistic vision of their venture and act with a mindset focused on others. The difference is the perception they have on their company.

## **5.3 Background of the individuals and companies:**

Although there was no special focus during the interviews on the background of the interviewees (information about the specificities of the sample can be found in the "method" part of this paper), it is still interesting to highlight a few trends.

First and foremost, no specific trend or pattern has been found in the answers gathered when considering the interviewees from their background: age, situation (student or not), culture, gender and other usual criteria to group people seem irrelevant in this study. The answers introduced above are thus people-dependent and it seems impossible to gather these people under specific criteria, other than their common need to Self-Fulfill of course.

Second a slight trend has been observed when looking at companies. Although looking at the venture's size and type of industry it belongs to failed to bring up any trend, the amount of time the company had been running did. Usually, an entrepreneur owning a company that has been around for a longer time also seems to have a stronger focus on

Self-Actualization. This of course is valid only for entrepreneurs from category 3, as the others already had the need before even starting a venture.

#### **5.4 Additional findings:**

Here are listed a few findings that came as offspring's of the main questions and topic investigated. Although not central to the research, they still add an interesting perspective and therefore are worth being mentioned.

The first insight is that most of the interviewees whose need for Self-Fulfillment appeared after company creation initially started the venture with reasons related to Self-Esteem (doing something on their own and doing what they like). It means company creation in itself enabled them to fulfill Self-Esteem before giving access to Self-Fulfillment.

Also among the interviewees whose need for Self-Fulfillment appeared after company creation, we noticed that this need was more clearly identified and given a higher priority for established firms (it became a central point of focus). "Established firms" does not mean big firms, but rather those which have been in business for a while (it relates to the trend mentioned under the previous heading). Entrepreneurs behind newly created ventures tend to introduce Self-Fulfillment as an emerging need, something they started to envision and that would drive the future growth of the company.

Finally during the interviews, some values taught in childhood or else were mentioned because they could summarize the individual's mindset, or what this person was thinking, which principles he or she was following. Among these values some were identified as relating to Self-Actualization, the most obvious example being "giving without expecting something in return". However it was found out that these values were not necessarily followed because of understanding: instead they were simply taught and/or reinforced (by punishing those not following the behavior the value dictates) for the sake of it, which ultimately led to either following the teaching without question and no specific conscious commitment to it, or by fear of punishment if doing otherwise. For example the interviewee would stop following the teaching when gaining independence.

Consequently it seems only the fact the individual reaches the need the value is associated to can produce a willing, long-lasting behavior based on this value through personal understanding and commitment. This has been observed when the individual would follow the value again (after having left it) consciously because the need faced simply brought it up.

## 6 Conclusion

The final part of this paper, the conclusion, is divided into two parts: first come the answers to the research questions through extracting the most relevant information from the “Analysis” and relating them to theories. The main findings are also listed here for a global understanding of what this paper brings.

The second part lists a couple of ideas for further researches to deepen the subject dealt with, and also address other related issues.

### 6.1 Answering the research questions

#### 6.1.1 Self-Fulfillment in previous studies

An important insight worth sharing is that there might be a misunderstanding on what is meant by “Self-Fulfillment” in previous studies. It was introduced as a reason behind company creation but once related to the theory of the Human Needs from Maslow (as it was done in the “Literature Review”), it turns out that creating a company in itself cannot contribute to Self-Actualization since it is not turned toward the outside: it is the individual’s achievement and thus relates to Self-Esteem. Also it is a definite action that happens once: it does not last and Self-Actualization, from its nature, cannot be fully completed and thus demands long-lasting actions.

One possibility to explain the point above is of course that the entrepreneur already felt the need to Self-Fulfill before starting the venture (as seen in this paper): then the person could indeed present entrepreneurship as a way to work on his or her actualization. Yet again, the need is never fulfilled by creating the company in itself: it is what is meant to be given that brings fulfillment, company creation being only a way of giving it.

Consequently to the question “Why did you start a company?”, the answer “Because I can attain Self-Fulfillment” seems inconsistent or incomplete. Something is missing, such as the fact that person doesn’t mean attaining Self-Fulfillment because he or she created a company, but because of what is possible through it.

#### 6.1.2 The background issue

It can be stated now that the answers and information gathered relating to the emergence of the need to Self-Actualize or how it is acted upon did not depend on who was speaking and where the information came from: no pattern was observed among students, people from a same culture, males, females or else. It was predictable though since Maslow already stated that the needs identified were *human* needs and thus related to the human nature, shared by everyone. Therefore this study simply acknowledged this view and also used it to bring more reliable answers to the research questions (wide and varied sample).

However there were slight patterns observed when checking when the need arose (before or after creating the company): the timing indeed led to different views over company creation.

Also looking at companies characteristics was enlightening: although the industry or the size were irrelevant, the time the company had been around did have an impact. Usually a longer time meant a stronger focus on Self-Actualization, while an entrepreneur be-

hind a newly created venture tends to give a higher priority to Self-Actualization as time goes by.

So the conclusion to be drawn is that studying the background of the people for that kind of study only leads to findings regarding when the need arises, not how it is fulfilled, where it comes from or whether it arises at all.

### **6.1.3 Tracing the origin of the need to Self-Fulfill**

Here is the first research question: **What elements can be identified to help tracing the origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment?**

All that has been found in the “Analysis” part leads to understanding that the mindset of the individual seems to be what enables access to Self-Actualization: Self-Actualization comes from peace of mind, a feeling of harmony, the individual not needing anything, not feeling threatened or overwhelmed and thus being ready to give.

To go further, the mindset and human qualities identified and listed previously can be summarized under the terms “Personal Development” (when not directly mentioned by the interviewee, under a form or another). An individual develops when he or she learns a mindset, attitudes and behaviors that lead him or her to become the best he or she can be, leading to more happiness and to climbing up the Pyramid of the needs.

### **6.1.4 Role of the company**

Here is the second research question: **Among entrepreneurs linking their Self-Fulfillment to their company, how do they Self-Fulfill?**

As the research question highlights it, some entrepreneurs do not use their company to work on their Self-Fulfillment. However this research, the findings and the analysis show answers only for those who do.

Thus, among those who use their company to Self-Actualize, two categories have been found:

- 1) The individual who already felt the need to Fulfill, to give and help and wanted to earn money by doing it. That person had reached the top of Maslow’s Pyramid before starting the venture, and the venture is just a mean to achieve the purpose of helping (it is built around this idea).
- 2) The person who wanted to start a company for other needs (mostly Self-Esteem in this study), who reached Self-Actualization through it (it helped fulfilling the previous needs) and then wished to use the venture to Actualize. In this case the company helped fulfilling many needs including Self-Actualization. Also it is viewed as a set of opportunities to work on one’s Fulfillment.

It was found out however that in both cases the entrepreneurs seeking Self-Fulfillment and using their company for it tend to create and manage firms with very beneficial effects on their surrounding and stakeholders: a direct consequence of their need to contribute, as highlighted in the analysis.

### 6.1.5 Global view over the topic

The two research questions were actually two points of a bigger process: the need to Self-Fulfill arises, the individual starts a company to answer it or is already in business and uses it to fulfill the need, and the company is managed in a specific way.

Now the previous findings can be added to this process and an interesting connection appears: Personal Development, whatever form it takes, strongly contributes to helping entrepreneurs to reach the need for Self-Actualization. In turn these individuals manage or create companies beneficial for society on every aspect, not just through the business idea (which is, in the end, is already sorted by the market). The following figure summarizes this conclusion:

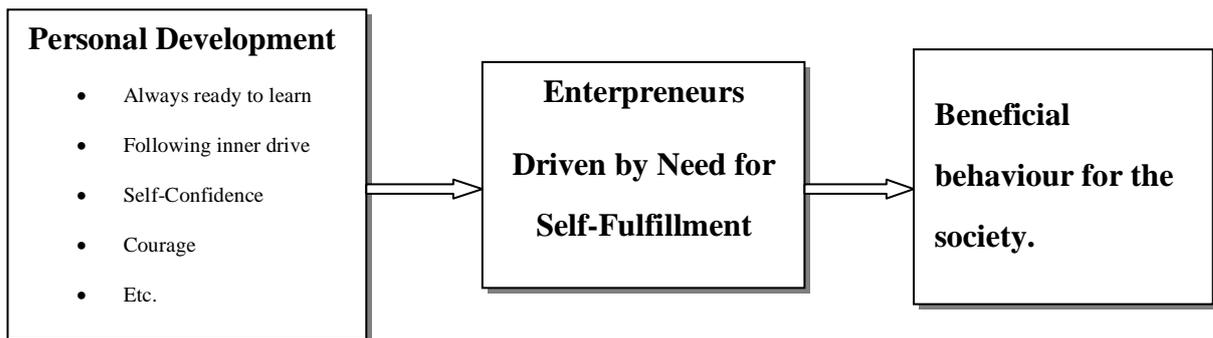


Figure 6-1: Relationship between Personal Development and Society

Stating that Personal Development leads to improvements in society as a whole might seem a bit hasty, however it is what this study highlights in the field of entrepreneurship, and it could be used as a base for other studies (more details later on).

## 6.2 Contribution

This part highlights how the findings summarized above contribute on one hand to the theory and literature existing on this field of study, and on the other hand on a broader, more practical perspective.

### 6.2.1 To the theory and literature

The conclusion to the literature review presented previously showed a lack of empirical studies in the field of motivation, and therefore this paper first contributes to filling that gap.

Also it increases our understanding of the need for Self-Fulfillment in entrepreneurship by providing answers regarding the possible origin of that need, and by adding perspectives on how it is fulfilled (holistic contribution, which adds up to Carland & Carland (1997) who highlighted a focus on innovation).

This paper contributes to understanding need fulfillment in general too, as it adds the notion that one's mindset might be a key element to take into account.

In the field of entrepreneurship in general, it joins other studies on the entrepreneur's motivation as an explanatory factor of the differences observed among these people, by highlighting the fact the individual's behavior depends a lot on what they aim at and what drives them.

Also it helps understanding the importance of the entrepreneur in the venture by showing how their decisions impact the whole company.

Finally the final connection and diagram introduced above contribute to research as a whole by linking Personal Development to society's improvement and thus introducing new perspectives on the individual's role and impact on society, and the fact such an impact can be made positive by understanding human nature itself (the human needs).

## **6.2.2 To practice and non-academic world**

A strength of this paper is that it contains insights useful for a broad range of people. For example people interested in Personal Development and trying to reach Self-Actualization will find a number of interesting concepts to apply, ranging from the attitudes listed in the "analysis", to the general statement that they should focus on their mindset.

Also entrepreneurs feeling the need for Actualization may find a couple of ideas worth trying, such as first and foremost deciding whether their Fulfillment can be achieved through their company or not, and if yes then working on a global improvement by keeping a holistic vision.

The final diagram may also prove useful for policy-makers, by showing that encouraging entrepreneurship only is doubtlessly useful on an economic point of view, but might not be enough when considering a bigger scale, longer term view: society's improvement. Supporting the individual development might be something to focus on too.

Finally, and this is one of the most important point of this study (if not the most important): this paper contributes to more or less everyone by showing that it seems an individual has the power to improve his or her surrounding and society, and that it "only" demands to first improve oneself first.

As Bengt Johannisson (2011) put it:

*"Both pragmatism and existentialism tell us that as human beings we have a responsibility to get involved in society and that appropriate knowledge is created by participation and not by observation."*

## **6.3 Further research**

### **6.3.1 Suggestions**

First of all there is a need for more quantitative studies regarding the findings presented here for entrepreneurs in order to try to find patterns and confirm the trends detailed above at least in the field of entrepreneurship.

Then theoretically, nothing prevents any other group of people (employees, retired people...) to Self-Actualize. Also previous researches have shown entrepreneurs seeing their business as unrelated to Self-Fulfillment. Thus any action can be driven by the need to Self-Fulfill, and therefore entrepreneurship matters less than the "why" behind, which can be shared by other people doing other things. Therefore the idea behind this paper could be extended to other groups of people by trying to focus more on the need for Self-Actualization rather than a category of persons. From there it could be possible

to understand generally the origin of the need and to see how it is acted upon. Of course, just as this study showed, the concrete actions vary from people to people, but the mindset is the same and therefore an extended study should be able to show how each individual makes the most out of his or her situation to Self-Actualize, and thus improves his or her surrounding where he or she stands.

There is also another point in the study that would deserve more in-depth study: the fact that human needs seem to depend a lot on the individual's mindset and attitudes. It certainly has a huge place to take, a place surely underestimated, but it is not what brings food on the table for example, so there must be something else. A suggestion to study this aspect is to start with the assumption that the mindset decreases the size of a need and thus enables to go to the next one more easily.

Finally a last suggestion would be, assuming the previous suggestions indeed confirm the relationship between Personal Development and society improvement, to find out what reasons push people to develop in the first place, in order to understand how to generalize Personal Development.

### **6.3.2 A few advices for future researchers in this field**

The experience gathered during the course of this project should be shared in order to simplify the work of possible future researches interested in the field. Therefore here are a few points that should be kept in mind when dealing with this paper's topic.

First interviewing people about motivation and asking them to remember a situation is not a good idea as it is very hard to make sure they refer to their motivation at the time the event of interest happened rather than now. It is even hard for them to remember their motivation at the time.

Also anyone wishing to continue with the subject of this paper should first and foremost acknowledge Self-Fulfillment and Self-Actualization as one thing.

Finally whoever wishes to continue this study or start a related one should be very aware of what Personal Development is about, and not just by reading about it but by experiencing and working on it. It can hardly be grasped by words as it is something to try and understand by oneself (and the name indicates...). From there the researcher has a chance to understand the people he or she is talking with.

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# **Appendix 1: the first four human needs according to Maslow**

## **1) Physiological need**

It is the most basic of the human need and it must be fulfilled first before any other need may even be felt (and therefore used as a driver and acted upon). Physiological needs include the need for food, water, air, and so on (Lawler & Suttle 1972). Leidy (1994) defined it as the bodily-based drives, and gave examples such as sleep, rest, sensory pleasures, sexual desire, thirst, hunger and things related to basic survival.

Therefore when someone can drink, eat and fill-in the body needs, that person comes to perceive another kind of need: safety.

## **2) Safety needs**

With the satisfaction of the most fundamental needs emerge more socially-oriented goals, the first one being the need for safety and security (Leidy 1994). This term encompasses protection, stability, freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos. It is the same as Lawler & Suttle's (1972) absence of pain, threat and illness.

To better understand how this need manifests, Maslow (1968, 1970) presents people having a need for safety (or lacking safety) as people having a perception of the world as something overwhelming, hostile and threatening. On the other hand, the one who is safe will rather perceive the world as something trustworthy, self-directed, autonomous and interested in others: simply put this person will be more confident and peaceful.

Fulfilling the need for safety takes different forms according to each individual, but it can be translated by escaping war-zones, buying a house instead of renting (better to have one's own place) or creating police and other groups with the specific aim of maintaining safety.

## **3) Need for belongingness**

After physiological and safety needs are met, the individual feels safe and sound and thus starts to feel the need for love and belongingness, which could be translated as "the need to be needed". It is the desire for friendly relationships, closeness and a visible place in a group (a meaningful place with something to contribute with). Maslow (1970) introduces the lack of love and belongingness as resulting in a feeling of alienation, rejection and desolation. It can also be viewed as a prerequisite for the development of self-esteem and self-confidence as humans have the desire to belong to groups (Leidy 1994): clubs, work groups, religious, which are many ways to fulfill that need. The key idea is that the individual must be valued and therefore among people that acknowledge the individual's life style, values and way of thinking. Otherwise simply being part of a group does not fulfill the need.

Belongingness is a need much more psychological since when not fulfilled it does not have consequences for the body or survival (as opposed to physiological or, to some extent, safety needs).

#### **4) The need for Self-Esteem**

Esteem needs include the need for personal feelings of achievement and also the need for appreciation and respect (Lawler & Suttle 1972). Maslow (1970) adds to that definition the need for sufficiency, self-worth, competence, self-government, freedom (lack of restrictions), desire for recognition and dignity. It is a need extremely based on psychological satisfaction, and about the individual's perception of him or herself: it is about showing to the world the uniqueness of who we are and having this uniqueness recognized and acknowledged. Therefore it is a will to stand out of the group while not leaving it (which would mean going back to the need for belongingness). The individual is using the base created by fulfilling the previous needs to assert his or her freedom (by choosing different paths than the crowd, by voluntarily following what seems right to him or her and not necessarily to most of people, while ensuring there are people supporting these choices).

Maslow (1943) explains that even if an individual seems to have fulfilled his or her need for Self-Esteem and approaches Self-Actualization, dissatisfaction may still arise in the form of new discontents and restlessness. Basically although the person seems to have asserted his or her uniqueness and freedom, he or she cannot access Self-Actualization because there are always small things blocking the way, or that persons is not at peace and therefore does not feel the need to Self-Actualize. This will only be stopped when an individual is doing things which he or she is fitted for. For example a poet must write poems and a musician must be making music, which leads them to happiness and peace of mind and opens the way to feeling the need to Self-Actualize which, as we will see further down, is related to the outside. Thus completing Self-Esteem goes through finding and doing what we are fitted for and enjoy doing. For some entrepreneurs, it is entrepreneurship.

## **Appendix 2: The process of interviewing (details)**

The general idea behind each interview is to have the interviewee talk about the four themes introduced above while the interviewers write down the relevant points (each on their own to increase the probability of gathering all the relevant points). The discussion is stimulated by first explaining what the theme encompasses and let the person tell what he or she has to tell about it, and then ask open-ended questions to put the interviewee on the track of what input is needed (in case it was not provided during the initial talk of course). Then after an important amount of information has been shared, the interviewers sometimes rephrase and summarize what has been said by including only relevant points, in order to make sure the connections are valid, the right meaning behind the person's words was understood, and also that nothing is forgotten in the process. It gives an opportunity for the interviewee to understand what is important for the topic in their talk (and thus focus their thoughts) and also to add something if needed.

Now when it comes to the themes, the interview moves from the first one to the fourth one. Each of them is addressed individually, however if what is answered belongs to another theme it is written down there. This prevents the interviewee from repeating himself while ensuring that the maximum of relevant data is kept. After all what an individual says at one point (following one theme/question) might not come back later (or at least not under the same form), even though the questions then aim at finding exactly the same thing.

There is as well an important step after themes 1 & 2: the person has been identified as belonging to one of the four possible categories and, assuming that person is not in category 4 of course, the interview proceeds to focus on Self-Fulfillment. Therefore to make sure the interviewee understands which of his or her motives the focus is given to, sometime is taken to explain what is meant by Self-Fulfillment/Self-Actualization, with reference to the Maslow Pyramid if needed. Also referring to what the person has said makes it easy for him or her to concretely understand what is of interest in his or her specific situation. Therefore Self-Fulfillment is not mentioned clearly during the first two themes to avoid any influence, but once it has been explicitly introduced by the interviewee (no matter which form it takes) it is then highlighted and clarified for the rest of the interview.

Finally the interviewers try not to interrupt the respondent except if it is out of the subject or when running out of time. Otherwise any information is potentially useful: since the topic is motivation, a relevant answer can come from various backgrounds, some of them seemingly irrelevant at first and finally turning out to bring a good point in the end.

### Appendix 3: Short descriptions of the companies interviewed

Number Assigned to interviewee	Name	Type of company
1	Antonia Georgieva Petrova	Bulgarian student who opened and manages, along with a small team, a small coffee shop in a building located in the middle of students' accommodations in Jönköping, Sweden. This area was already equipped with various games to relax. She provides drinks and light food (sandwiches...) and also contributes to expending the activities offered in this area (buying new games...)
2	Biswas Hamal	Nepalese CEO of a consultant company in Nepal, responsible for carrying out various researches. The reports are used by other NGO's, INGO's and the government for carrying out various projects in different areas.
3	Durga Mainali	Nepalese Managing Director of an orphanage and a co-operative organization in Nepal. The orphanage has around 60 children, with age varying from 3 months old to 16 years old and is running thanks to various donations from different people and organizations from around the world. The co-operative organization is providing financial services to people with deposit and loan facility and profit is utilized for children welfare.
4	Ievgen Machulsky	Ukrainian student who opened a company in Sweden in charge of finding customers for a Ukrainian company doing web design. Although mostly looking within Sweden, he has contacts all over the world.
5	Kunga Lama	Nepalese CEO of one of the best construction company in Nepal: "A" class with 30 years of experience. It was established as a "C" Class construction firm in 1981. It was then promoted to "B" class in 1984 and was again promoted to "A" class in 1991. This company is a general contractor undertaking the following civil construction jobs: Roads, Irrigation, Building, Hydro Power Projects Water Supply, And other Civil Works.
6	Laurent Selles	French associate creator of a microwave technology ensuring a homogeneous warming process. The company sells this technology to other businesses worldwide. Also created a 10-steps process to help inventors bringing their products to the market.

7	Mikeal Esselius	Swedish professional coach in the field of communication. Coaches a variety of people (from companies to private persons, CEOs to job seekers) in Sweden.
8	Petra Holmbäck	Swedish founder and CEO of a staffing and recruiting agency in Jönköping, Sweden (Kollegor). Specialized in medias since she has a background in that field.
9	Suman Karmakar	Bangladeshi student who started an Indian Restaurant in Jönköping, Sweden. The place is also a coffee shop.
10	Torre Svensson	Swedish founder of one of the first and biggest company in Sweden making beautiful wooden gazibos sold worldwide. Although the company was started 30 years ago he still runs it, though spending much less time on it than he used to. He is the only worker but has a partner for the business aspects.
11	Åsa Ryhard	Swedish founder of an ethnographic company aiming at translating customers' wishes for companies. She acts as a translator by understanding what the customer truly means (from his/her background and culture) and explains to the company, adapting to its culture and background too.
12	Nirmal Adhikari	Nepalese founder of a young travel and tours agency named "Safar Nepal travel and tours", whose main services are to provide people with cheap domestic and international air tickets, good and very reasonable holiday packages around Nepal.

## **Appendix 4: Answers gathered from the interviews**

### **Appendix 4.1: Antoniya Georgieva Petrova**

#### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Wanted to start something on her own
- Interest and experience in coffee shops + opportunity via a friend = started the business. However the nature of the opportunity demanded to consider it as something to do for fun and on free time rather than a full-time activity.
- Need to be with people and curiosity of trying new things

#### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Wants to make people smile: identified her job as a service (since coffee can be bought everywhere) that mainly aims at having customers spending a good time
- Many contacts with people and improvement of the student surroundings
- Interest in having a coffee shop and helping team to grow and learn to try new things
- => The contribution (to her team members and customers) was the central motivation

**That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

#### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Met a mentor with a life-style she dreamt of and values she shared. Led to a strong increase in Self-Confidence (by seeing this successful woman, she understood she could make it too) and to take a service-oriented mindset, focus on helping customers through a good atmosphere and creating a good work environment by trusting the employees.
- Starting the company in the same field as her mentor helped her replicate what she learned (both in terms of technical skills, like making coffee, and values such as “selling service and not a product”)
- Mindset “nothing is impossible” that leads her to achieve what she aims at and thus fulfill her needs one by one until the top
- => A mentor is a very beneficial addition because it shows an ideal to reach, it boosts self-confidence by showing that what one dreams of actually exists and is attainable and it makes the person grow through understanding and adopting new values and mindsets.

#### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- The company itself contributes to Self-Fulfillment because its core purpose is “to sell smile” to customers and thus trying to improve their condition. Therefore she can work on her actualization simply by running the company toward its goal.
- Also the company offers different opportunities to help. She mentioned for example the training of her employees where she could help them grow, or the good atmosphere she created within the work team. She couldn't envision selling smile to customers and not to the employees.
- => The company itself can be the mean to work on Self-Fulfillment (especially in the case of service industry). However it can also be seen as a background featuring multiple opportunities for the entrepreneur trying to Self-Fulfill (for example by improving the employee's condition).

## **Appendix 4.2: Biswas Hamal**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Wanted to do something on his own after working for other consultant firms, where he had the confidence to do better than them.
- Easy availability of various projects from different national and international organizations.
- Likes visiting new places and helping people to uplift their lives.
- Motivated to take on challenges
- “Going to a new place and seeing so many people having various difficulties and the fact that most of other consultant companies are not contributing 100% has been a problem.”

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Seeing many people who are still below the poverty line with the hope that there is someone out there who is trying to help them to uplift their living standards.
- Employees' satisfaction, which has helped to gather more projects for the company and the clients' satisfaction as well.
- => seeing happy people around the working environment is like a boost in one's perception towards increasing the quality of one's company.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Inspired by his father who always told him to help others and only do the things you like which helped to increase his self-confidence.
- Had a study background on finance, but didn't feel that finance was right for him and gave up jobs related with finance and instead started to travel around and meet underprivileged people to understand their needs and problems.
- The beginning was tough as there was a lack of money and lots of other things that created complications, but it helped him to gain more knowledge and the most important thing was that he felt satisfied and happy when doing things he liked.
- => Doing what you like and gaining satisfaction from it, whatever the situation may be leads to Self-fulfillment. (You certainly feel you are fulfilled)

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- “There has been an increase in the number of employees in fact satisfied employees” by which he is able to travel more and know people's problems and find solutions for them. There is very less focus on how the company is running, as a result of trust in the employees.
- There is an increased number of contracts from various clients, which has helped him to travel more and help people around.
- => Self-Fulfillment achieved by guaranteeing that the company can be used as a means to contribute

## **Appendix 4.3: Durga Mainali**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Wanted to be self-employed and start something on her own.
- Interest and study background in social work and wanting to help others.
- Saw a gap where she could help children to have a better education and make a bright future for them.
- Help from family and friends by supporting her idea and motivation from them.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Happy to see children smile and play.
  - Many contacts with people from different parts of the world and improvement of her organization.
  - The fact that she is able to help children which started with one child and now there are more than 50 children and many of them have found a home for themselves in different part of the world.
  - Establishment of the co-operative organization which is now helping the under privileged people in the society and especially women upliftment.
  - To see more and more people wanting to help and engage in her organization.
  - Huge interest from foreigners to help with different things.
- ⇒ The contribution to the society to make it a better place (by doing different stuffs) is one important factor why people are motivated to run a company, which helps to make them satisfied and happy.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 1.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Seeing many children in the streets, without home and family made her feel she could do something for them to make their future bright.
  - Starting the company in the same field as her study background and her interest felt very good and had motivation to do better.
  - Helping and serving others, especially children made her feel that life has a higher purpose, which is to help others in what so ever way you can.
  - “for me I feel nothing is impossible and its only your mind that sees it as impossible but when you do it with your heart, there are so many ways you can achieve your dream. You just have to open your eyes.” And getting satisfaction from helping others, she thinks it is the best kind of feeling you can have than other happy moments in life.
- ⇒ going there and trying out things will boosts up the self-confidence and your mentality as well to adopt new values and get a service mindsets.

#### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

→ The company is contributing to Self-Fulfillment because its main purpose is to help and provide service, both by co-operative and Orphanage and thus it has been able to help in improving the condition of people. That is why the company itself is in the Self-Actualization phase coz it is always helping others and making her satisfied and fulfilled with it.

→ Also the organization offers different opportunities to help. As she mentioned that many national and international people are coming there to provide help and support and providing lots and lots of voluntary service,

→ This has created a good atmosphere and lots of happy and satisfied members of the organization, and these members are willing to help in various activities.

=> The company itself can be the mean to work on Self-Fulfillment (especially in the case of service industry). However it can also be seen as a background featuring multiple opportunities for the entrepreneur trying to Self-Fulfill (for example by providing more service).

## **Appendix 4.4: Ievgen Machulsky**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Cousin as a role model (successful company owner in Sweden)
- Interested in graphics and web design (which is why he chose that field)
- Opportunity arising from a friend's offer as web design is a growing industry
- Want to bring something new to the market with good prices
- For personal growth: meet people, gain success, international experience, new things
- => Personal growth was the motive to start a company, and the field was decided by his interest and an opportunity.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Helping companies to be better by improving their digital presence. For example he felt truly happy after a customer was satisfied, and not because it would mean potential future benefits, but because that person was happy.
- Wants satisfied customers and to create trust and carry out the task, not give up
- Contributing in Internet users satisfactions, because browsing a beautiful, fully functional website is better than a buggy, ugly one.
- Strong feelings when facing suboptimal websites: will to improve it
- => The possibility to truly help business and internet users is what keeps him going.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Starting the company created lots of challenges for himself. Example of coming to a meeting and staying in a corner. He used these challenges to improve and gain skills, for example taking a place in the meeting, greeting every one...
- Also read books about project management and learned from it.
- Identified personal improvements are communication skills (listen to people and talk to them), improved self-confidence, learned persistence in face of challenges and greater patience.
- These skills resulted in a calm and confident attitude that ultimately enabled him to focus on improving companies' condition.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Provide high quality service (this was stressed many times over the interview: high quality means a real improvement of the current condition) for a good price
- Contact companies with suboptimal websites and offer help
- For customers: fast pace and high customer service.
- Although he was alone, the need driving his decisions pushed him to envision a non-stressful working environment for his employees. His main idea was that work needs to be enjoyed.
- Could not see his company as truly beneficial if it provided high customer service while disregarding all other aspects (environment, society, employees...).
- => Sees the company as a whole and seeks benefits for all stakeholders.

## **Appendix 4.5: Kunga Lama**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Poor structure of his house, which collapsed and from that point of time always wanted people to live in a safe and secure house.
- Study background which was civil engineering.
- Liked making various new designs and structure which are safe.
- Motivated to take on challenges
- The policy of government was helpful for investing on a rural construction project.
- Support from the family to help people live in a safe house and let people know about the engineering faults which may lead to collateral damage.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Lots of projects that needs re-construction, support from the government as well
- Happy costumers coz they get beautiful designs and more safety.
- Satisfied and sincere employees, who are always ready to do quality work and help making construction better
- Always meeting the deadlines and more and more customer wanting to choose his company for construction.
- Have built roads and bridges and feels secure and satisfied when he sees people passing that road or bridge.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Inspired from the event where his house collapsed due to improper structure.
- This event helped him to gain more confidence to help his family and other people to build more secure houses.
- The beginning was hard as people were more driven by price rather than safety as various construction company were charging high price for lower quality.
  - This mindset of people around actually helped him to prove that people could get quality at less cost and at the same time be secure and safe.
- To see family happy, with children playing in the garden made him happy and satisfied and always thought how can he make it more better and safe conditions around.
- => When one feels the need to do something he likes and does it, it makes the person happy and satisfied which are important to reach self-fulfillment.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Company has taken a new height with almost all the stakeholders are happy and motivated to work as his company as a whole is contributing to make the society better.
- Have employed more employees as the workload got heavier. Feeling the he has helped so many people has been a key to his success.
- => Self-Fulfillment is achieved by helping the society without any expectation of return and using a company tends to be one of the perfect platform for helping people in whatever shape it may take.

## **Appendix 4.6: Laurent Selles**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Interest for disruptive innovations in general
- Knowledge of the technology and the market and will to make the concept work
- Interest in the environment: although he is interested in disruptive innovation, anything that is not beneficial for the environment is of no interest to him.
- Interested in the technology because it is a disruptive innovation and because it is beneficial for his surrounding
- => Very strong focus on improving his surrounding through new, green technologies

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Has mentioned only one, straight after the theme was explained: making a positive contribution to society through his company (green and superior microwave technology) and a method he created to help inventors bringing their own technologies to the market

### **This interviewee was identified as belonging to category 1.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Switched from selling products built abroad to fabricant of products to sell abroad. This enabled him to go in the field he liked and to discover new technologies (which are his main interest)
- Meeting with people to learn, open the mind
- The emergence of the need was identified as taking place after meeting 2 key people who introduced new technologies that he found interesting, but also who taught him a lot. He learned to manage his time, prepare a meeting, debrief a meeting, trust, empathy, team work and so on. Based on these he had a better understanding of phenomenon around him and improved his performance and stress management. He identified these as the origin behind his need to contribute (i.e. after gaining these skills he felt he could help around him), and the technologies he discovered as the mean (i.e. his personal interest was in these technologies and after gaining the skills previously listed he saw them as opportunities to help and wished to do this).

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- His need of contributing is mainly addressed through the business idea (the technology he sells)
- Also addressed through a method he created to help other inventors bring their technology to market (and thus increase the availability of new technologies, potentially beneficial for society)
- Need fulfillment cannot be achieved unless it truly encompasses everything he acts upon
- Strong trust in the employees, high responsibilities. Perceived as the best they can do for their employees to have a good work environment.

## **Appendix 4.7: Mikael Esselius**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Personal interest in the field of coaching.
- Wanted other people to feel equally good and happy as him.
- Driven by the urge to help others succeed.
- Chose company creation as a personal preference of lifestyle over being an employee
- => He had the will to help before even starting the company, and thus its emergence is not related to company creation. Entrepreneurship was a way preferred over another (employee) to achieve his true goal: helping others succeeding through coaching.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Gathering funds to sustain his work
- => The view over money is that it makes sure the company is running and thus he can continue helping
- Willingness to grow in order to be able to travel around the world and expand his impact
- Still mainly the willingness to help

**This interviewee was identified as belonging to category 1.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- 4-days seminar with Anthony Robbins (in the field of coaching, Personal Development) which changed his mindset, with a big emphasis on mastering your fear (which he identified as having been a main element holding him back previously). From that moment he wished to produce the same beneficial change in others.
- => A conscious process of Personal Development aims primarily at changing a mindset which then leads to the need to Self-Actualize. This change in mindset fills the previous needs.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Company used as an indirect way of helping others: he believes living one's dreams is the key, and he said: "I live my own dreams to inspire others". People must create their own happiness and his company is an idea to show a way.
- Contributing is done primarily through the business idea (coaching) since it is itself based on helping.
- However it is translated into company policies too since he charges generally a lower price than average, gives some courses for free or accepts a much lower fee than his own when being hired by certain agencies (such as the Swedish Employment Center).

## **Appendix 4.8: Petra Holmbäck**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Like to be own boss and willingness to earn more money
- Personal interest + skills in that domain
- Feeling she could improve the ways of working in that field (didn't like the way it was done)
- Feeling that she could do things in a much better way (not only a different way as stated above) than people currently doing this (and thus her current competitors)
- => Did not explicitly mention the idea of contributing. Improving the way things were done was more a challenge and satisfaction for herself (relating it to Self-Esteem)

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Seeing her customers happy helps her continue even during harsh times
- Keeping the staff happy by contributing to their growth
- Seeing the customer (companies) evolve and grow: their happiness make her happy too
- Going beyond the idea "customer = money" helps growing their business and, thus, hers
- => The motives that push her to keep the company going on and growing is the ability she has to improve her environment (whether it takes the form of her customers or employees/staff)

**This interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Started the company from scratches: impossible to focus on the "little extra" that she now finds satisfying (and that fulfill her need to help others)
- Learned by doing. "Don't work too much, take it easy" + learned to know people's behavior (those you can trust, those you can't), to be more confident when meeting customers, and multiple skills. This was identified as leading to a more peaceful mindset and a feeling of control regained over her environment.
- After regaining peace she started to give tips and suggestions to other businesses, to take extra care of the employees and so on, which are now her way of Self-Fulfilling.
- Raised up with the idea of giving without expecting something in return, which she applies to her job and which gives her satisfaction. However it is not always true (especially in her private life where it is not always the case that she doesn't mind if not getting anything in exchange of what she gives)
- => Peace seems to come from a control over the environment, which comes only after some time has passed since the company was created (as it brings a lot of changes). This time is used to learn personal skills (such as relaxing) that ultimately bring back control over the environment.
- => The values one is raised up with can be meaningful and even refer to higher needs such as Self-Actualization (give for the sake of it), but they are applied only when the individual reaches the level they refer to and thus truly understands them and feels compelled to act upon them.

**Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Offers an opportunity to improve staff condition: by considering people as humans and not machines (a value of her business) + giving emotional support.
- Offers opportunities for her to develop and grow (and thus prevents from going down to lower order needs) + satisfied with her business (related to the reason why starting: be her own boss. Without this she would be stuck to Self-Esteem)
- The business idea contributes to improving the clients' condition
- => The company is like a set of opportunities for someone willing to Self-Fulfill.

## **Appendix 4.9: Suman Karmakar**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Dream to be an entrepreneur in a foreign country
- Apply theories
- Likes cooking
- Motivated to take on challenges
- He mentioned himself that he was driven by the need for Self-Esteem: he wanted to be a business man, to do something different...

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- To be successful, which he has defined as providing good customer service, employments and a good work environment for his employees.
- => His success was the success of everything around him, which is identified as Self-Actualization.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Inspired by Jhonny Mansen (Frisby AB) who led to an increase in self-confidence and to action, instead of wondering what to do and doubting.
- Business is the right context for him, the context where he feels he belongs, and it gives him energy to face challenges.
- The beginning was tough with the feeling that life became complicated, that there was a lot to do. However he learned by doing (and sometimes through failures) and managing the business led him to gain self-control, self-confidence, ability to manage emotions and stress... These skills in turn led him to start gaining control again over his environment instead of being overwhelmed by responsibilities. It is only then, after gaining these skills, that he started to focus on Self-Fulfillment under the form of creating a good work environment, providing employments.
- => Starting the company leads to a drop in the Maslow Pyramid due to the new environment. However by gaining specific skills, he was able to go up again.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- A few meaningful activities have been identified: contacts with schools to offer places for students (to learn the business world), giving emotional support to the employees and creating a friendly work environment, offering great customer service because he needs to survive in order to help (and customers ensure the business works) and also for the purpose of having happy customers for its own sake.
- => Self-Fulfillment is worked on by ensuring the company as a whole is contributing. It demands a multi-perspective view as opposed to simply offering a good product of service.

## **Appendix 4.10: Tore Svensson**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Could not envision being an employee: need to be own boss, to have the freedom to work whenever he wanted to.
- Inherited the family farm but interest in technical things and solving issues by building new things
- Special interest in carpentry
- => Being an entrepreneur was the only option he could imagine, and working as a carpenter was his passion

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- Mentioned earning money but recognized it as not the main drive (he was not thinking about making money when he was working)
- After starting the company he found out he could build beautiful gazebos, since the current offer included only ugly ones
- Wanted customers to be happy

**That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Doing what he loved in the way he liked it was the main key: it drove his decision to sell the farm and start the business. He wanted to do what he loved, and this fulfilled his needs.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Gave some gazebos for free to the church
- Although he didn't want employees, he happened to hire some when these people truly needed a job
- Outsourced some of his production (unrelated to carpentry such as windows) to have for time for himself and give job to others

## **Appendix 4.11: Åsa Rydhard**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Wanted to start something on her own and be own boss because it was hard to find employment in ethnographic consulting firm.
- To start something new after leaving unsatisfying job.
- Had previous experience in the same field.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- “You haven’t failed until you have given up”. So giving up on running the company is a failure and she doesn’t like to fail.
- Taking new challenges by finding new customers and be established and bring in new partners to have profit in the business.
- Helping people by solving their complex problem. “I bridge reality between people”.
- Taking the whole company as herself “I am the company and I do what is meaningful and what is helpful to others”
- => Taking own self as the whole company is a motivation to run the business because as a human we have to do various things to survive and it is same with the company.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- While working for other company she realized that selling hours for someone else is not as doing something meaningful which makes you satisfied.
- Avoiding being nerdy and learning new skills by which is will be able to help other people by analyzing the culture.
- Mindset “We don’t make things new, we make it visible” that leads her to achieve what she aims and thus fulfill her needs.
- Has fulfilled all other needs and is economically strong so this is why she is finding people she can help.
- Rise in self-confidence after establishing the company and having courage to be brave to present own self in the market and society.
- => Bridging the gap between people’s own culture and the company’s culture will help both the people and the company to improve.

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- Help people to find employment if they can’t find one if they are interested in the same field.
- Making the work place happy and joyful play station, so that people are happy which brings innovation on the process of working.
- Listening to people so that she understands the problem\gap and help them.
- Representing people and their needs and being open to them with honesty and using a holistic approach is a good company policy.
- => The company itself can be the mean to work on Self-Fulfillment. However it can also be seen as a background featuring multiple opportunities for the entrepreneur trying to Self-Fulfill (for example by improving the employee’s condition).

## **Appendix 4.12: Nirmal Adhikari**

### **Theme 1: Motives behind company creation**

- Wanted to start something on his own
- There were resources available, because of his contacts and previous experience.
- Had unsatisfying job before, so he wanted to do something he likes which will enable him to meet people and build contacts and starting a travel agency was his first choice.

### **Theme 2: Motives behind running the company**

- He recommends that through his company he is helping people with cheap service as far as possible and identifies his job as a service agency rather than a travel agency.
- He wants to be successful and meet his demands as well.
- Creating good working environment with the employees has enabled to increase the level of trust.

### **That interviewee was identified as belonging to category 3.**

### **Theme 3: Origin of the need for Self-Fulfillment**

- Found a mentor in a seminar which was organized by IATA regarding running a travel agency, and through it, he was more focused on providing service by lowering his commission and fees. From this event, he was actually focused on self-fulfillment.
- After this seminar he developed service oriented mindset.
- I give suggestions to people if he is not able to help, "I don't urge people to do business with me if they are not satisfied, instead I give them suggestions about how they can get better service".

### **Theme 4: the company and need fulfillment**

- The company has been able to make customers and employees happy, through which he is happy as well. There also has been increase in number of customers.
- He really liked to travel around to new place, so the company has enabled him to do so
- With service mindset, there has been some change in the company policy which is not focused towards profit maximization but towards self-satisfaction and providing more opportunities for help which is helping to make a better society as well.