Motivation in the Gig Economy
A Case Study of Gig Workers in the IT and Business Consulting Industry

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Motivation i Gig-ekonomin
En fallstudie aviggare i konsultverksamhet inom IT och Business

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Examensarbete TRITA-ITM-EX 2019:309
KTH Industriell teknik och management
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Abstract

The number of self-employed has been rising and it is estimated that 20–30% of the working-age population in the EU-15 and the U.S. is involved in some form of independent work. This growth is driven by technological advancements, changing work values and an overall need to adapt to a high-change environment. This has given rise to a new term: the gig economy.

The IT and Business consulting industry has started to tap further into the gig economy and has started to realize that it could be beneficial to interact with gig workers in new ways, since current arrangements with subcontracting consultants are insufficient. In order to redesign current arrangements in an efficient way, it is of interest to gain a greater understanding of the incumbents’ perspectives. This thesis investigates what motivational factors that are the most distinguishing to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry. Thereto, possibilities and limitations for transferring theories of entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy are discussed. Further, the thesis elaborates upon how the findings can be used in practice and what insights they provide for redesigning consultancies.

The thesis employed a case study methodology where semi-structured interviews with gig workers in the context of this study were conducted. The study was influenced by previous research in entrepreneurial motivation, a closely related area within self-employment. The result is that the most distinguishing motivational factors are independence and development. A motivation for independence expresses itself in wanting to decide which projects to take on as well as where and when, and not having a superior that tells you what to do. A motivation for development involves the need for learning new things, improve your skills, and take on challenges. Networking and building relationships are important parts of being a gig worker and often necessities, but even though some gig workers really enjoyed these activities, it is hard to determine whether they are motivating in themselves. Thereto, it was found that monetary rewards were not motivational per se, but a necessity for working. The motivational factors were found to be rooted in the inherent motivations of high need for achievement, desire for independence, internal locus of control, and high self-efficacy. Lastly, there are both possibilities and limitations of theory transfer. The possibilities concern the similarities of the roles when viewing them as self-employed and the limitations concern the theories that are tightly coupled to the entrepreneurial process.

**Keywords:** Gig economy, gig worker, motivation, consulting, IT, Business, entrepreneurial motivation
Motivation i Gig-ekonomin
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Sammanfattning
Antalet egenanställda har ökat och det är beräknat att upptill till 20–30 % av den yrkesverksamma befolkningen i EU-15 och USA är involverad i någon form av självständigt arbete. Denna tillväxt är driven av teknologiutveckling, förändrade arbetsvärdningar samt ett övergripande behov av anpassning i en snabbföränderlig miljö. Detta har gett upphov till en ny term: gig-ekonomin.


Nyckelord: Gig-ekonomi,iggare,motivation, konsultverksamhet, IT, Business, entreprenöriell motivation
Acknowledgements

This master thesis was conducted at the department of Industrial Economics and Management at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. The study was performed between mid-January 2019 and late May 2019.

First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the commissioning company, Tieto, for giving us the opportunity as well as for all the help along the way. A special thanks to Ragnar Malmborg and Dr. Amalia Nilsson for your continuous support and engagement throughout the thesis process, your insights and our many discussions have been very valuable.

Secondly, we would like to give a special thanks to our supervisor at KTH, Erika Lokatt, Ph.D. We really appreciate all the feedback, inspiration and encouragements you have given us this semester.

Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to all the interviewees who took the time to meet us. Without you this would not have been possible.

Kristin Karlsson & Johan Wranne
Stockholm, May 2019
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1 Introduction

This section introduces the thesis. The background and the context of the research are described and the problematization is presented. This is followed by the purpose of the thesis and its research questions. The delimitations of the thesis are discussed, and the section ends with an outline of the paper.

1.1 Background

The number of independent workers and freelancers is growing rapidly. In the EU-15\(^1\) and the United States up to 162 million people, representing 20–30% of the working-age population, are involved in some form of independent work (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016). It is projected that the US independent workforce will account for 20% of the total workforce by 2020 (EY Global, 2018a), and in Sweden alone, the number of self-employed has increased annually with 55% between 2011 and 2017 (Triches, 2018).

The growth is driven by an increase in both supply and demand. On the supply side, growth has been characterized by changing work values and beliefs, especially from millennials entering the workforce. In Deloitte (2017)’s study on millennials, they found that millennials appreciate flexible working arrangements, an essential part of independent work, as it supports greater productivity while also improving general well-being and health. EY Global (2018b) found that independent workers above all value the flexibility and control that comes with the work form, and a survey conducted by MBO Partners (2017) showed that flexibility and to be one’s own boss are the top reasons for choosing independent work.

On the demand side, in a global market driven by innovation and digital disruption, more organizations find it beneficial to contract independent workers (Poon, 2018). In a survey conducted by EY Global (2018a) companies reported that their main reasons for using freelancers were to control total labor costs, complete projects requiring special competencies and as a response to seasonal workforce requirements. In a high-change environment, freelancers can help organizations to stay agile and avoid costly full-time commitments that traditional employment entails (Poon, 2018).

The growth on both the supply and demand side have been facilitated by a rapid technology development. Technology has made matching procedures of workers and clients easier than ever (Harris & Krueger, 2015), where so called third-party “platforms” connect clients with independent workers. This rapid growth, enabled by a growing workforce with changed values,

\(^1\) In McKinsey (2016)’s study, numbers from UK, Germany, France, Spain and Sweden has been extrapolated to represent the EU-15
a demand for more agile work, and technological advancements has given rise to a new term: the gig economy.

In this thesis the gig economy is defined as a “free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements”\(^2\), where engagements often are, but not necessarily, mediated by platform companies. Platforms are defined as any form of third-party intermediary between the independent worker and the client. The term gig worker will from this point forward be used to denote the individual engaged in any form of independent work in the gig economy. The term project will henceforth be used for denoting an engagement a gig worker pursues, even though it might not be a project per definition.

1.1.1 IT and Business Consulting and the Gig Economy

The gig economy spans over many different professions (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016), from the well-known transportation services of Uber and Lyft, to high-skill labor in knowledge intensive roles such as software developers and management consultants. The interest in the gig economy is high among companies in all sectors, and intrigued by the possible benefits that it might entail, many companies are tapping into gig workers as a part of their workforce (Deloitte Insights, 2016). One sector that has given the area of independent work more attention lately is the consulting industry.

For IT and Business consulting firms, the benefits of using gig workers include an increased flexibility in meeting fluctuating client demand and the opportunity to obtain specialists when in-house knowledge is scarce (Hill, 2016). This leads to reduced labor costs and a potential revenue increase. Being able to meet fluctuating demand might also have future benefits, since if a consultancy cannot meet demand for a specific project, it could damage their brand for future potential partnerships. In contrast to the involved benefits, one might argue that the growth of the gig economy could be harmful to the consulting industry, as they lose employees to the gig economy and in turn lose competencies as well as face increased competition.

Little is known of how the gig economy will affect IT and Business consulting firms, but there are signs that it is an industry in movement, and that the industry is heading towards disruption (Christensen, Wang, & van Bever, 2013). As a result of the changing business environment, where firms for example have difficulties in meeting demand of resources and specialized skills, existing consulting firms may have to reorganize and look for new ways to work (Christensen et al., 2013). In the current business environment, scarcity of in-house resources and skills is partly solved by hiring subcontracting consultants through brokerage firms, though there are indications that these arrangements are not effective nor streamlined enough. With the increase of self-employed individuals, there is a need for new solutions that are more efficient and less bureaucratic, that at the same time is interesting and practical for gig workers as well as for the consulting firm and its clients.

\(^2\) (“What is gig economy?,” 2016)
This raises some questions for the consulting firms of today: How could a consultancy create opportunities that are appreciated by both gig workers and clients whilst gaining benefits themselves? How can that organization ensure good project delivery? How should the arrangement between the gig worker and the company be designed?

1.2 Problematization

Due to the changes seen in the economy, where more people are turning towards self-employment and where organizations need more specific competencies and resources, consulting firms are tapping into the gig economy (Deloitte Insights, 2016). Current arrangements with subcontracting consultants are insufficient and consulting firms have realized that it could be beneficial to interact with gig workers in new ways. Still, it is important that consulting firms can ensure their clients good quality and good project delivery to strengthen the client relationship (Czerniawska, 2006), which ultimately secures income and new inquiries (Reichheld, 1993). This has raised questions on how the consulting firms should manage and organize in order to be attractive for both gig workers and the consultancies’ clients.

Although there is research on the gig economy, the gig economy in the context of IT and Business consulting is not that well-researched. Most of the existing research focuses on labor conditions in the gig economy. Because of the unclear legal employment status of those working for e.g. Uber and Deliveroo (Sargeant, 2017), many urge for unionization and improved working conditions for the gig worker (Flanagan, 2017; Friedman, 2014; Milland, 2017). Very little research has been made on professions outside of low-skill work (low-skill work includes ride-sharing, deliveries, microtasks, and more), and there is a need for a widened perspective on the gig economy and its incumbents, especially since BCG Henderson Institute (2019) found that almost 30% of the work sourced from platforms is high-skill work in the countries they surveyed.

In order to answer the question how the arrangement between consulting firms, gig workers and clients should be designed, it is important to understand all incumbents’ perspectives and interests. This thesis will focus on the perspective of the gig worker, and more specifically the motivations of working in the gig economy. It has been shown by e.g. Maier (1955) that motivation is tightly coupled with job performance, and thus knowing an employee’s motivation can help organizations in creating an optimal environment for them which ultimately aids in aligning performance with strategic goals of the organization (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011). Motivation theory is a broad and well-researched area, which includes classic general theories such as Maslow (1943)’s theory of needs as well as more context specific theories such as theories on entrepreneurial motivation (see e.g. Shane, Locke, & Collins, 2003). Although motivational research has been performed in many different areas, the application of such theories on the context of the gig worker is not well-researched. There is

3 US, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, UK, Japan, Brazil, Indonesia, China and India
thus a need to investigate that, and especially in the context of IT and Business consulting where the research on the gig economy is limited.

### 1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to obtain an understanding of the motivational factors and personality traits of gig workers, more specifically those who are performing high-skill labor in the IT and Business consulting industry. In order to fulfill this purpose, the following research question will be answered:

*What are the most distinguishing motivational factors to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry?*

Following this research question, the findings will be used to address the transferability of entrepreneurial motivation to the setting of gig workers.

*What possibilities and limitations are there for transferring research on entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy?*

### 1.4 Delimitations

The delimitations of the thesis are the deliberate choices that have been made in order to restrict the scope of the study and in order to obtain high quality. The thesis will only focus on the actual motivational factors of a gig worker and will thereby not touch upon the discussion regarding performance. The researchers have further restricted the analysis to those who have the gig economy as a primary source of income and have made a deliberate choice to join it. The study is furthermore restricted to the Swedish context, in order to avoid problems that could arise regarding different countries’ culture and legal arrangements.
1.5 Outline of the Thesis

1 Introduction: This section introduces the thesis. The background and the context of the research are described and the problematization is presented. This is followed by the purpose of the thesis and its research questions. The delimitations of the thesis are discussed, and the section ends with an outline of the paper.

2 Research Context: The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the setting in which the research takes place. The section starts with a description of the gig economy, where the phenomenon and definitions are presented. The section continues with an overview of the IT and Business consulting industry.

3 Literature Review: This section introduces motivation theory, explains motivation’s impact on job performance and discusses classic and more contemporary motivation theories. The section continues with a deep dive into entrepreneurial motivation and ends with a discussion on entrepreneurship as a field of study and its connection to the gig economy.

4 Methodology: This section presents and discusses the methodology and the methods applied throughout the thesis. It includes a review of the thesis’ research approach and design, followed by a description of the research process. A presentation of the data collection method as well as the methods applied in analyzing said data is provided. The section ends with a discussion on the quality of the research, addressing the transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability, as well as a discussion on ethical considerations.

5 Findings and Analysis: In this section the findings from the qualitative study are presented and analyzed in relationship to the presented literature review. The findings are based on four major themes that emerged from the data collection process and are related to theory throughout. The section ends with the research questions being addressed and answered.

6 Discussion: This section discusses and further elaborates on the findings and the analysis. First, discussion is performed on the novelty and the definition of the gig economy. It continues with the managerial implications of the study’s findings and ends with a discussion on the study’s limitations and potential future research.

7 Conclusions: This section concludes the study. The answers to the research questions, the thesis’ contributions, limitations and future research are summarized.
2 Research Context

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the setting in which the research takes place. The section starts with a description of the gig economy, where the phenomenon and definitions are presented. The section continues with an overview of the IT and Business consulting industry.

2.1 The Gig Economy

The gig economy is the collective term used to explain the economy of independent work, and the name derives from the short-term commitments provided by gig workers, which are often called gigs (Kobie, 2018). The work in the gig economy is usually characterized by multi-party interactions, involving a seller, a buyer and a platform company (Healy, Nicholson, & Pekarek, 2017). The seller often refers to the independent worker that offer labor and time but may in some cases be the producer of the actual ware (e.g. a restaurant). The buyer is on the other side of the transaction and can for example be an organization in need of a specific competence for an individual project. The work involved in the transaction is generally characterized by a high degree of autonomy, short-term arrangements and task-based payments (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016; The Department of Business, Energy & Industry Strategy, 2018). This arrangement is often mediated by platform companies that connects buyers with sellers, with a higher or lower degree of involvement in the interaction.

Platforms can be structured in many ways dependent on the job arrangement between the gig worker and the client. Kalleberg and Dunn (2016) separate platforms into four categories; crowd work platforms; transportation platforms; delivery/home task platforms; and online freelance platforms. These platforms differ in the level of wage and worker control, where crowd work platforms (such as crowdsource.com) are characterized by low wages and low worker control, transportation platforms (such as uber.com) and delivery/home task platforms (such as taskrabbit.com) are characterized by high wages and low worker control, and online freelance platforms (such as upwork.com) are characterized by high wages and high worker control. The amount of payment is oftentimes correlated to the required skill-level and the duration of the gig (Kalleberg & Dunn, 2016). BCG Henderson Institute (2019) has defined four other categories dependent on two dimensions, the ownership of the client relationship and the degree of task integration with client’s workflow. The work is either assigned and processed by platforms or negotiated by the independent worker, and the integration with client’s workflow ranges from separated to integrated.

Even though many highlight the involvement of platform companies as the distinguishing characteristic of the gig economy, some argue that it may not be a necessary attribute (Kobie, 2018), where for example Hill (2016) claims that high-skill workers are not as dependent on piecework distributed via the internet as low-skill workers. In that case, the gig economy would
necessarily not be a new phenomenon, but rather a new denomination for an aggregate of self-employed individuals such as freelancers, independent contractors and contingent workers. On the other hand, Harris and Krueger (2015) argue that workers in the gig economy actually should be classified as a new category of employment, and should include work in both the online and the offline economy (i.e. both platform-based and non-platform-based work). There is furthermore no prevalent conclusion whether the gig economy will keep accelerating or eventually stagnate and how it will express itself. Healy et al. (2017) have, for example, identified five different paths the gig economy might take, some leading to its growth, some leading to its demise. Thereto, the gig economy could express itself differently depending on context and country, where countries’ cultures and legal arrangements might have a significant impact on how it is formed and how it will evolve. For example, a majority of the work mediated by platforms in Sweden are white-collar jobs, which contrasts the U.S., where a majority is composed of blue-collar jobs (BCG Henderson Institute, 2019)\(^4\), and the differences will probably have a significant effect on how the gig economy in these particular countries will evolve.

Regardless of if it is a new phenomenon or not and if it is here to stay or not, the gig economy has received a great amount of attention both academically and in media, and the immense growth of the gig economy gives reason for organizations, unions and other stakeholders to investigate the potential opportunities and adversities that the gig economy may entail. Demonstrably, the gig economy has already disrupted some industries, for example Uber for the taxi industry and Airbnb for the hotel industry, and it is possible that other industries can be disrupted by this phenomenon as well.

### 2.2 IT and Business Consulting

Consulting is an advisory service (Kubr, 2002). As businesses, both large and small, strive to deliver the best products and services they can at the lowest possible costs and under increasingly tough competition, it can become more cost effective to contract external consultants rather than hire full-time experts for designated projects. Consultant providers include, among others, law firms and accounting firms as well as IT and management consultancies (Prince & Everett, 2012).

Consulting firms within IT and Business have projects in a wide range of areas and industries. On the Business side projects concern developing and/or justifying business cases, organization design and change, business process efficiency and effectiveness, and resource augmentation in the areas of e.g. interim management, project/program management and business analysis. On the IT side projects concern IT system integration, developing IT architecture target and roadmaps, design and implementation of IT operational models and governance, and resource augmentation in the areas of e.g. interim IT management, project management, IT architecture, programming and testing.

\(^4\) White-collar jobs refer to “High-skill work” and “Personal Services”, and Blue-collar jobs refer to the three categories of “Low-skill work” in BCG (2019)’s study
IT and Business consultancies, like any other consultancy, are dependent on clients and their needs. The client’s needs can be categorized as either a need for manpower or a need for specialized skills, where the latter is a way to get access to a skill set for a specific, complex, and often highly prioritized project where a solution is to be found, and where the former rather is a way to obtain resources for a project where the content and the solution is predefined. Oftentimes, when clients turn to consultancies, they perceive it as a more cost-effective solution than hiring the needed resources and skills full-time. In order to facilitate and ease the process of ordering and initiating multiple projects, framework agreements⁵ are often signed between consultancies and larger companies or authorities. These often have a specified agreement period during which new contracts can be awarded for projects.

For consulting firms, it is important to recruit individuals with the right competence in order to be able to staff projects appropriately. If the consulting firm cannot staff projects appropriately, they cannot respond to the inquiry in a satisfying manner and at the same time ensure high project delivery, which is of the essence for creating stable relationships (Czerniawska, 2006, p. 51). Good relationships are necessary to retain customers and acquire new projects, which in turn secure income for the firm (Reichheld, 1993). However, due to fluctuating demand and a need for rather specific competencies, consultancies cannot always staff their projects using their in-house human capital, and therefore need to use subcontracting consultants. These subcontractors could be both employed at another consulting firm or self-employed and are contracted through brokerage firms or by direct contact. Brokerage firms are firms that mediate the contact between buyers and sellers for a commission of the transaction. Ework Group and Workforce Logiq (formerly ZeroChaos) are examples of such firms in Sweden, which broke consultants from several smaller consultancies and sole proprietorships. Consultancies can sign framework agreements with brokerage firms in order to facilitate continued use of subcontracting consultants. However, this always induces extra costs for the subcontracting consultant and often times also for the company.

As being able to staff projects has been found to be important for retaining a good relationship with customers, consulting firms are tapping further into the gig economy. Further, as knowing the motivation of your employees can aid in aligning performance with strategic goals (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011), an investigation of the gig workers’ motivation is of interest.

⁵ This refers to what is called “Ramavtal” in the Swedish context. For more info, see Konkurrensverket’s report (Johansson, Malmberg, & Larsson, 2015)
This section introduces motivation theory, explains motivation’s impact on job performance and discusses classic and more contemporary motivation theories. The section continues with a deep dive into entrepreneurial motivation and ends with a discussion on entrepreneurship as a field of study and its connection to the gig economy.

3.1 An Introduction to Motivation

Motivation originates from the Latin word *movere*, which roughly translates to “to move”. The underlying concept of motivation is defined by Rudolph and Kleiner (1989) as “the development of a desire within an employee to perform a task to his/her greatest ability based on that individual’s own initiative”. It is further explained by Mullins (2008) as some sort of driving force in individuals that is used in an attempt to achieve some goal in order to fulfill some need or meet some expectation.

Already in the 1950’s, Maier (1955) postulated that motivation and ability are the building blocks of job performance, and argued that performance can be depicted as a multiplicative function of the two parts, usually expressed as \( P = f(A \times M) \). Later, Hollenbeck and Whitener (1988) expanded Maier (1955)’s model and included the concept of personality traits, where the “causal impact” of personality traits on performance is moderated by ability and mediated by motivation (see figure below).

![Figure 1: An illustration of Hollenbeck and Whitener (1988, p. 83)'s model](image)

Thereafter, Herron and Robinson (1993) elaborated on the Hollenbeck-Whitener model and included the concepts of behavior and context, claiming that performance is the evaluation of the results of a specific behavior in its context. Consequently, there are reasons to impose that motivation is a predictor of human behavior, and in some contexts job performance as well. By knowing an employee’s motivation, organizations can create an optimal environment for them, and ultimately aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011).
There are a multitude of theories about human motivation, and in a broad sense they can be classified as either content theories or process theories, according to how the motivation functions, to its effects, or on the basis of what motivation tools can be used (Bencsik, Machova, & Hevesi, 2016). Content theories are theories that focus on the individual factors that motivate people to do something, and have been explored by e.g. Maslow (1943), Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959), and McClelland (1961). These theories mainly suggest that the needs of an individual are the source of motivation, and which furthermore give rise to a specific behavior. Process theories are, on the other hand, theories that focus on the influencing factors beyond an individual's needs, and have been explored by e.g. Skinner (1953), Vroom (1964), and Locke and Latham (1990). In contrast to content theories, focus now lie on the factors that trigger motivation, in a “how” instead of “what” context (Bencsik et al., 2016).

One of the most well-known content theories is Maslow (1953; 1943)’s theory of personal needs. Maslow postulated that individuals have five categories of needs which often are illustrated in a pyramid. Furthermore, he theorized that a person cannot pursue a higher level in the pyramid without having satisfied the needs below. Survival needs are found in the base bottom of the pyramid, i.e. the need for food, air, water and sleep. Once these needs have been met, the individual can reach for the next level, the safety needs. Safety needs include personal security, health and employment. At the top of the pyramid self-actualization is found, which represents the need for self-fulfillment and reaching one’s full potential. Maslow’s theory has been used diligently but has also been questioned by many researchers throughout the years. Wahba and Bridwell (1976) highlight that the idea of hierarchy may or may not be operative according to the situation, and Viorel, Aurel, Virgil, and Stefania (2009) further question the strict hierarchy of needs and claim that an individual is not bounded to fulfill the needs in this orderly manner.

Since Maslow first presented his theory of personal needs, a multitude of theories has been produced to explain motivation in different contexts, both content and process theories. One such context, that has been widely researched, is the motivation of the self-employed (Walker & Webster, 2007). Researchers have looked at motivation in all stages of the self-employment process, from the motivation to become self-employed to the motivation to remain self-employed and the motivation to exit self-employment. However, most motivational theories of self-employment equate self-employment with entrepreneurship, even though self-employment encases more than just entrepreneurship. Regardless of this, the findings in entrepreneurship motivation theory may still be relevant for all forms of self-employment, since all entrepreneurs per definition are self-employed (Patel & Thatcher, 2012). Based on this argument, the research on motivational factors of a gig worker in this thesis will proceed from the factors that have been proven to be motivational for entrepreneurs.
3.2 Entrepreneurial Motivation

Entrepreneurial motivation has been covered in many different contexts, and the motivational factors that have been highlighted vary highly between publications, where both content and process theories have been examined. Much research has had a focus on recognizing or exploiting opportunities, and how or why entrepreneurs form intentions for developing such opportunities and ideas, often called opportunity entrepreneurship. Such research assumes that self-employment is a voluntary choice and decision. However, in contrast to this, under not so benign conditions, individuals could be pushed into self-employment out of necessity, often called necessity entrepreneurship. These factors have also been called push and pull motivational factors in other research, and are practically the same concept (Fairlie & Fossen, 2018), where an individual is either attracted to entrepreneurship for a variety of positive reasons (i.e. “pulled”) or a reluctant choice made by individuals unable to find appropriate alternatives (i.e. “pushed”) (Dawson & Henley, 2012). A push factor could for example be job dissatisfaction and a pull factor could for example be a desire for autonomy. The distinction between the two is however ambiguous. For example, a financial motive can be both a push and a pull factor, where Dawson and Henley (2012) mean that, in a choice of occupation, one might be driven to self-employment because of the increased returns that entrepreneurship is perceived to entail, or one can be driven away from organizational employment because of the decreased earnings it is perceived to impose. As stated in Delimitations, this thesis focuses on self-employment out of opportunities.

In addition to the thoroughly researched area of push and pull motivation, some research has had a focus on individual characteristics such as how age and culture act as a driver of self-employment motivation (Minola, Criaco, & Obschonka, 2016). Thereto, there have also been several in-depth literature reviews, among others Drews, Stephan, Hart, and Mickiewicz (2015) that studied 27 papers and concluded that there are seven prevalent dimensions that captures entrepreneurial motivation. The dimensions suggested by Drews et al. (2015) are: Achievement, challenge and learning, which captures a desire for personal development; Independence and autonomy, which highlights the ability of controlling one’s time and work; Income security and financial success, which captures the desire for monetary returns; Recognition and status, which relates to social status; Family and roles, which captures the desire to continue a family tradition; Dissatisfaction, which describes motivation that arises from dissatisfaction with previous job; and Community and social motivations, which includes the desire to contribute to the society.

Aside from these areas, research has also been conducted focusing more on the actual inherent motivational factors in entrepreneurs, for example individual attributes that would explain why some individuals persist in entrepreneurship while others don’t (Patel & Thatcher, 2012). Thereto, Shane, Locke, and Collins (2003) made a meta-analysis of previous research on entrepreneurial motivation, resulting in a list of seven important motivational factors in order to facilitate future research in the area. This was compiled as a response to their criticism concerning that research prior their publication had had too large of a focus on environmental characteristics and the characteristics of entrepreneurial opportunity. They suggest that
entrepreneurship should be studied as a dynamic process, and the magnitude of the motivational factors affecting it will vary depending on which part of the process that is being investigated. In some cases, all of the presented motivational factors matter and in other cases, only some. Shane et al. (2003) argued that the motivation will influence decisions and especially who will pursue the entrepreneurial opportunities. Thereto, they acknowledge and explicitly assume that the entrepreneurial actions are the result of both motivational and cognitive factors, including ability, skills and intelligence, which is closely related to the ideas of Maier (1955).

The factors highlighted are divided into two groups, general motivational factors and task-specific motivational factors. The five general factors are; need for achievement, locus of control, desire for independence, egoistic passion and drive. The two task-specific factors are goal-setting and self-efficacy. Furthermore, Shane et al. (2003) discussed the factors risk-taking propensity and tolerance for ambiguity as they have been frequently explored in the area of entrepreneurial motivation, but as there have been ambiguous results regarding these factors’ significance Shane et al. (2003) chose not to include these in their model. The nine factors are presented separately in their article but may have some intercorrelation and there are not always distinct demarcations between these in previous research.

Below follows a description of the seven factors included in Shane et al. (2003)’s model, i.e. need for achievement, locus of control, desire for independence, egoistic passion, drive, goal-setting and self-efficacy. The factors risk-taking propensity and tolerance for ambiguity are also described.

3.2.1 Need for Achievement

Need for achievement refers to an individual’s desire for accomplishment, to perform and complete challenging tasks, and mastering of skills (McClelland, 1961). Need for achievement was developed and popularized by McClelland (1961) as a part of his Need Theory, and he argues that the individuals that have qualities associated with high need for achievement are more likely to be involved in entrepreneurial activities. These activities and entrepreneurial tasks require individual skill and effort, are moderately risky and have a high degree of individual responsibility for outcomes.

Moreover, according to Williams and Curtis (2007, p. 89), McClelland suggested that for individuals with high need for achievement the following holds:

- *Achievement is more important than material or financial reward*
- *Achieving the aim or task gives greater personal satisfaction than receiving praise or recognition*
- *Financial reward is regarded as a measurement of success, not an end in itself*
- *Security is not the prime motivator, nor is status*
● Feedback is essential, because it enables measurement of success, not for reasons of praise or recognition (the implication here is that feedback must be reliable, quantifiable and factual)
● Achievement-motivated people constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better
● Achievement-motivated people will logically favour jobs and responsibilities that naturally satisfy their needs, that is, offer flexibility and opportunity to set and achieve goals, for example, sales and business management, and entrepreneurial roles


Since, there have been many studies that try to confirm McClelland’s claim. Among those who found that high need for achievement is closely related to entrepreneurial activity are Begley and Boyd (1987b), who found that entrepreneurs scored higher in e.g. need for achievement than small business managers, Korunka, Frank, Lueger, and Mugler (2003), that found the relation studying Austrian entrepreneurs, Collins, Hanges, and Locke (2004), which concluded in a meta-analysis of need for achievement and entrepreneurship studies that they are significantly related, and Gürol and Atsan (2006), that found the relation in studying university students in Turkey. However, while studying Swedish entrepreneurship students, Hansemak (2003) did not find that need for achievement had any predictive validity on the entrepreneurial activity of starting a new business.

3.2.2 Locus of Control

*Locus of control* is a personality trait that represents the extent to which individuals perceive a reinforcement as an outcome of their actions or characteristics (Rotter, 1966). If the individual perceives the outcome to be within their personal control and contingent upon their own behavior, the individual has internal locus of control. External locus of control, on the contrary, is when the individual perceives the outcome of an event to be beyond their personal control and understanding, such as perceiving it as luck, fate or chance (de Wit, 1993; Rotter, 1966). Individuals with an internal locus of control are attracted to roles where they are able to have an immediate impact on results, which is why many individuals with an internal locus of control are attracted to entrepreneurship, Rotter (1966) argue.

Various research has studied the importance of locus of control in an entrepreneurial context, and it is suggested that self-employed individuals exhibit internal locus of control (de Wit, 1993). This has been supported in early research, where, among others, Evans and Leighton (1989) have found a statistically significant result for self-employed and an internal locus of control. The relationship between internal locus of control and the likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activity has also been studied by Shapero (1975), Brockhaus (1982), and Gartner (1985), though with differing results. Even though the results slightly vary, there is an extensive support for the relevance of internal locus of control in an entrepreneurial setting (Kerr, Kerr, & Xu, 2018). More recent research has also found the predictive significance of internal locus of control on entrepreneurial attitudes and self-employment intention (Baluku, Bantu, & Otto, 2018).
3.2.3 Desire for Independence

*Desire for independence* has been frequently associated with entrepreneurial values and behavior, and involves the person taking responsibility and using their own judgement instead of blindly following others (Shane et al., 2003). Independence is likely to find expression in an individual’s will to manage one’s own time and the individual’s will to be one’s own boss (Ranyard, 2017). Independence is a necessitative trait for entrepreneurs, as the entrepreneur takes responsibility for exploiting an opportunity as well as responsibility for the end results of the venture (Shane et al., 2003). Thereto, an individual may be pulled towards entrepreneurship because of a desire for independence.

In a comparative study of American and Puerto Rican women, Hisrich (1984) found that a desire for independence was one of the prime motivators for starting a venture, and in Aldridge (1997)’s study of 63 entrepreneurs it was found that entrepreneurs have a higher score on personality measures related to independence than the general population. However, even though independence has been found to be a significant motivator, some research has shown that the independence and autonomy often come at a cost, as self-employed tend to work long hours (Evans, Kunda, & Barley, 2004).

3.2.4 Egoistic Passion

*Egoistic passion* is the selfish love to work (Shane et al., 2003), and Cardon, Wincent, Singh and Drnovsek (2009) define passion as “intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities”. Shane and his coauthors (2003) argue that the true egoist passionately loves the process of establishing and maintaining a profitable organization, and not, as some others argue, that people’s core motive is to selflessly serve others. Prior to the publication from Shane et al. (2003), only one study has incorporated passion in an entrepreneurial context. That study, performed by Baum, Locke, and Smith (2001), found that passion had a direct significant effect on a firm’s growth. A couple of years later, Baum and Locke (2004) extended the study and found that passion did not have a direct effect on venture performance, but that it rather has an indirect effect which is mediated through goals, communicated vision and self-efficacy.

3.2.5 Drive

*Drive* is the willingness to put forth effort and refers both to the effort of thinking and to the effort of realizing ideas (Shane et al., 2003). Shane et al. (2003) divide drive into four aspects: ambition; goals; energy and stamina; and persistence. Ambition affects to which degree the entrepreneur seeks to create something significant when they pursue opportunities, and high goals will lead to better performance than low or moderate goals. Persistence is defined as goal-directed energy over time. Further, Shane et al. (2003) argue that in order to achieve high goals the entrepreneur requires energy and stamina. However, Shane et al. (2003) state that there is some relation between drive and need for achievement, which could make it difficult to quantify it appropriately.
3.2.6 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is used to describe a person’s belief in their ability to implement the needed resources, skills and competencies to complete a specific task (Bandura, 1997). A person with high self-efficacy will for such a task make more of an effort, set higher goals, and develop better strategies (Shane et al., 2003). Bandura (1994) highlights four sources of self-efficacy: Mastery experiences (success increases one’s belief in one’s efficacy); Social models (seeing others similar to oneself succeed with comparable tasks raises one’s own efficacy); Social persuasion (by being told by others that one can succeed with given activities raises one’s belief in that one can complete it); and Physiological responses (one can increase one’s perceived efficacy by altering negative emotional responses and reducing stress reactions). The entrepreneurial process is often characterized by ambiguous situations, where a high self-efficacy, including high effort, persistence and planning, facilitates the handling of such situations.

Self-efficacy has been shown to have a strong impact on motivation for self-employment and entrepreneurial activity. Baum (1994) found in studying the relation of traits to venture growth that self-efficacy had a strong positive relationship with venture growth. In studying both students and small business owners, Chen, Greene, and Crick (1998) found that self-efficacy differentiates entrepreneurship students from management and organizational psychology students and that business founders had higher self-efficacy than non-founders in regards of innovation and risk-taking propensity. Wang, Prieto, and Hinrichs (2010) found in studying 535 students in the United States that entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a strong impact on motivation for self-employment.

3.2.7 Goal-setting

Goal-setting has in some studies been quantifiably linked to entrepreneurial activity, and it is known from earlier that high goals lead to better outcomes than moderate or low goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). Tracy, Locke, and Renard (1998) found that entrepreneurs’ quantitative goals were significantly related to the outcomes, and Baum et al. (2001) found that growth goals were significantly related to the growth of that specific firm. De Wit (1993) however says that individuals with a high need for achievement prefer to be personally responsible for setting and reaching goals, which could imply that goal-setting is incorporated in need for achievement.

3.2.8 Risk-taking Propensity

Risk-taking propensity has been proposed to be a trait that sets entrepreneurs apart from the general population for a long time, where it is generally suggested that entrepreneurs are less risk averse (de Wit, 1993). Risk is closely related to the inherent uncertainty of entrepreneurship, with respect to financial well-being, psychic well-being, career security, and family relations, that Liles (1974) argues all entrepreneurs must accept. McClelland (1961) argues that moderate risk-taking propensity is one of an entrepreneur’s defining traits, and Begley and Boyd (1987a) found that entrepreneurs had higher risk-taking propensity than small
business managers. However, there has been a lot of research suggesting that entrepreneurs do not differ in risk-taking propensity compared to managers or even the general population (Low & MacMillan, 1987). For example, neither Babb and Babb (1992) nor Palich and Bagby (1995) found any significant differences in risk-taking propensity in comparing firm founders and managers. Thereto, there are concerns about the measurement of risk-taking propensity, as research has shown that firm founders often do not perceive their actions as risky, meaning it could be confounded with a high self-efficacy (Shane et al., 2003).

3.2.9 Tolerance for Ambiguity

*Ambiguity tolerance* is the way an individual perceives a situation when confronted by unfamiliar clues and with unclear outcomes. An individual with low tolerance for ambiguity experiences the situation as threatening and stressful, whereas a person with high tolerance for ambiguity perceives the situation as attractive and interesting (Budner, 1962; Furnham & Ribchester, 1995). Schere (1981) meant that a high tolerance for ambiguity is important for entrepreneurs as the entrepreneurial context by nature is uncertain. The opinions however differ, where Sexton and Bowman (1986) found a similar result as Schere (1981), while Babb and Babb (1992) and Begley (1995) did not find any significant difference between entrepreneurs and managers in relation to their respective tolerance for ambiguity.

3.3 Motivational Factors in the Gig Economy

It is clear that the fields of entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurship in general are widely researched and have received a great amount of attention lately. However, research within the field of entrepreneurship has also been criticized, where criticism has been expressed regarding e.g. that entrepreneurship often is seen as a positive and desirable economic activity (Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers, & Gartner, 2012), the perspective on gender in entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2002), and a focus on the individual behind the entrepreneurial activity rather than the activity itself (Ahl, 2002). The latter is however addressed by Shane et al. (2003), that argue that their approach, where they for example hold environmental factors constant, could overcome such person-centric criticism. Nevertheless, there is a need to have a critical mindset when examining entrepreneurial motivation in the context of the gig economy.

When comparing entrepreneurs with gig workers, the most evident difference is that entrepreneurship is not per definition short-term. Rather, entrepreneurs have often been associated with working for the long-term and with a focus on building a successful business. Thereto, research on entrepreneurial activity is often based on market opportunities, where entrepreneurs recognize and exploit opportunities of future goods and services (see Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), which is not as of an essential factor for working in the gig economy. Thus, it is possible that some factors of entrepreneurial motivation might not be of relevance for the high-skill gig worker, considering the circumstantial differences, and it is entirely possible that other factors could have a significant impact on the motivation of the gig worker that have not been found to be of significance for entrepreneurs. However, as research on the gig economy is limited, and as the research on motivational factors in this context is limited as
well, there is a need for a starting point. As the entrepreneur and gig worker fall under the area of self-employment, which grants the two groups with many similarities, the literature on entrepreneurial motivation is possibly the most appropriate starting point for research in the area of motivation in the gig economy. Yet, it is essential that a critical mindset is employed throughout.

3.4 Overview of Motivational Factors

The following is an overview that depicts the nine factors in entrepreneurial motivation that are taken into consideration when examining motivation in the context of the gig worker. This overview is repeated in relation to the findings in Findings and Analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for Achievement</th>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Desire for Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egoistic Passion</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-setting</td>
<td>Risk-taking Propensity</td>
<td>Tolerance for Ambiguity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 2: Overview of motivational factors
4 Methodology

This section presents and discusses the methodology and the methods applied throughout the thesis. It includes a review of the thesis’ research approach and design, followed by a description of the research process. A presentation of the data collection method as well as the methods applied in analyzing said data is provided. The section ends with a discussion on the quality of the research, addressing the transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability, as well as a discussion on ethical considerations.

4.1 Research Approach and Design

The research in this thesis is based in a case study methodology performed in an interpretivist spirit, using a qualitative data collection method. The data has been gathered through interviews and has been analyzed using interpretation based on theories from previous research. The study has had an abductive approach, where the process has iterated between studying theories and collecting empirics, allowing the literature to guide the analysis of the empirics and vice versa (Blomkvist & Hallin, 2015).

A case study is a methodology used to explore a situation, a case, in its natural setting in order to achieve in-depth knowledge of a phenomenon. A case may be a business, an event, a person, a group of people, as well as many other phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Yin (2009) explains a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a present day phenomenon in-depth in its natural context, that benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions, and that copes with situations where there will be more variables than data points. Zainal (2007) argues that case studies in ways of explaining the complexities of real-life situations many times have an edge over survey and experimental research, where data becomes more static and less open for interpretation. The case investigated in this thesis is the group of gig workers that works in the IT and Business consulting industry. As the purpose of this thesis was to investigate the most distinguishing motivational factors for this case, a highly complex matter that benefits from prior development of theory on entrepreneurial motivation, it is highly appropriate to employ a case study methodology.

Paradigms are philosophical frameworks that can help guiding a researcher while conducting research (Collis & Hussey, 2013). In general, there are two main paradigms to consider: positivism and interpretivism. Positivism rests on the assumption that reality is static and objective, where the act of investigation does not have an effect that singular reality, while interpretivists claim that reality is a creation of the mind and subjective to the observer, where reality is affected by the act of investigation (Collis & Hussey, 2013). This thesis has been employed in an interpretivist spirit as it is in line with the purpose of the study, which is to obtain an understanding of gig workers’ motivation, where data is of high quality and of depth. Employing a positivist spirit did not suit the purpose of the study, but it is worth to note that
these two philosophies are the extremes on a scale. This thesis is placed towards the interpretivist extreme but should not be considered to be a pure interpretivist study.

4.2 Research Process

The process of this thesis can be divided into four main parts: Pre-study, Main study, Analysis and a concurrent Literature review. In order to gain an understanding of the background and context of the phenomenon scoped, a pre-study has been conducted, which Collis and Hussey (2013) explain is an important step in understanding complex situations and call it “contextualization”. The pre-study contains an initial review of literature and theory, and contextual interviews with companies using gig workers, an interview with a platform company, and a pilot interview with a gig worker. The main study consists of gathering data about the studied phenomenon using interviews with gig workers. The empirics gathered in the main study were thereafter analyzed in the analysis, where the literature review was taken into consideration while the researchers were also open for new insights and perspectives. An overview of the process can be found in the figure below.

4.2.1 Pre-study

The research commenced with a pre-study in order to build the foundation of the thesis. The process started with an initial review of literature and theory, where the phenomenon of gig economy, fundamental motivation theories, and newer, applied studies on motivation were briefly explored. The pre-study continued with contextual interviews with a number of different stakeholders. The approach gave the researchers a solid understanding of the problem explored, as well as provided the researchers with enough insight to continue the research. Moreover, the pre-study phase also gave the research a general structure and aligned the research with the expectations from the commissioning company and the academic institution. However, the research and its results have not been affected by these two parties.

In parallel with the initial literature review, interviews with various parties involved or affected by the gig economy in one way or another were conducted. These contextual interviews were held to obtain a greater understanding of the phenomenon and to obtain an understanding of opportunities and challenges that the gig economy could entail or already have entailed for the
different parties. Interviews were held with the commissioning company, a gig worker, companies that are contracting consultants as well as a company that act as a platform for gig workers. The interviews had a non-structured approach to be able to capture as many perspectives as possible. An overview of the contextual interviews can be found below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned Code</th>
<th>Role and/or Company</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Gig worker</td>
<td>Feb 1, 2019</td>
<td>55 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>CIO, Swedish Bank</td>
<td>March 19, 2019</td>
<td>40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Head of Talent Management, Commissioning Company</td>
<td>March 21, 2019</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>CEO, Platform Company</td>
<td>March 22, 2019</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Ex CIO (Retired), Swedish Insurance Company</td>
<td>March 29, 2019</td>
<td>55 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Literature Review

In accordance with an abductive approach, a literature review was concurrently conducted for the duration of the research. This can be contrasted to the suggested approach for a deductive study, where the review of literature and theory mainly is performed in the primary stages (Blomkvist & Hallin, 2015).

The literature review had two main purposes in this thesis. Firstly, the review aided in gaining a wider knowledge about the gig economy and an understanding of what research has focused on so far. Secondly, it allowed for a review of different motivational theories, both fundamental and applied, in order to explore the phenomenon and to develop an understanding of theories applied in the analysis. In order to find information, wide searches were made using search engines such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, and KTH Primo. The searches became more precise and narrower as the scope of the thesis became more condense. The review was organized using a spreadsheet categorized into the main fields; gig economy, motivation, and consulting. Within each category the literature was documented with title, author, year of publication, keywords and main takeaways. Thereafter, the literature review continued with a more thorough examination of the literature that was considered to be of most relevance and that was linked to the empirics.
4.2.3 Main study

The research proceeded with the main study, where the case, i.e. gig workers in IT and Business consulting, was investigated in regard to motivation theory. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews and the interviewees were selected using a snowball sampling method.

Sample selection

This study aims to understand a quite narrow group, highly skilled gig workers in knowledge intensive professions, and it has been of high importance to find individuals that match these specific criteria. As it is a quite narrow group, it is difficult to find such interviewees, and because of this the sampling procedure has been based in a snowball sampling method, initiated by coming into contact with a gig worker at the commissioning company. Snowball sampling, also called networking, focuses on finding new participants through current participants’ acquaintances or network, and thus is a facilitative measure in extending the number of participants (Collis & Hussey, 2013). This method is highly appropriate when it is essential that all individuals in the sample has experience with the studied phenomenon, as if a participant does not have the relevant experiences its participation will not contribute to the study. This thesis relies on having a sample of participants that have similar experiences of the gig economy in order to perform a reliable study of motivational factors, and thus the snowball sampling method is of high relevance. Similar experiences do not imply that all interviewees are exactly the same and share the same background, but all interviewees do fall under this thesis’ definition of a gig worker in the IT and Business consulting industry. The thesis also searched for potential research subjects using LinkedIn, where LinkedIn profiles of independent contractors in IT and Business were scrutinized and contacted if their profile and background were deemed to be relevant for the study.

As previously discussed, all interviewees were gig workers, i.e. independent contractors working in short-term arrangements on a payment by task basis that may or may not be connected to a platform, and worked in knowledge intensive professions in the IT or Business consulting industry. An overview of the interviewees can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned Code</th>
<th>Role and Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Project Manager, Program Manager. IT</td>
<td>March 20, 2019</td>
<td>50 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Teacher, Strategic Advisor. Business Consulting</td>
<td>March 28, 2019</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Project Manager, Change Manager, Business Development. IT</td>
<td>April 2, 2019</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Integration Developer, Data Migration. IT</td>
<td>April 3, 2019</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thereto, two interviews with full-time employed consultants in the IT and Business consulting industry were conducted. These were conducted to achieve an understanding of how gig workers’ motivation might differ from their full-time employed counterpart. The interviewees were found using convenience sampling, which occurs when the researcher has a small influence over the subjects that can be approached (Collis & Hussey, 2013). These interviewees were consultants at the commissioning company, which were contacted face-to-face or via email. An overview of the interviewees can be found below (FTE = Full-Time Employee).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned Code</th>
<th>Role and Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTE1</td>
<td>Project Manager. IT and Business</td>
<td>April 24, 2019</td>
<td>40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE2</td>
<td>Project Manager. IT and Business</td>
<td>April 24, 2019</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews**

Interviewing is a data collection method in which interviewees are asked questions to find out what they do, feel or think (Collis & Hussey, 2013), and are according to Arksey and Knight (1999) focused on collecting data about understandings, opinions, feelings and more that people have in common. Interviews are commonly divided into either unstructured or semi-structured in qualitative research, where unstructured interviews are very open with no specific questions, instead they just have an overarching topic to be explored. Semi-structured interviews are rather open, but still has more guiding questions or themes to be answered in the interviews and are often illustrated in an interview guide (Blomkvist & Hallin, 2015).

This thesis applied a semi-structured interviewing approach in collecting data, where themes and questions have been selected in order to achieve sufficient data to answer the research questions, but that are still open for follow-up questions, exemplifications, and potential tangents of interest. In order to facilitate future analysis, most of the interviews were recorded. However, the interviews with interviewees G3 and G8 were not recorded, since interview
subject G3 preferred not to be recorded and since the interview with G8 was performed in a noisy environment.

The developed interview questions were partly built on the literature review but also built with the intention to give the interviewees an opportunity to talk freely about their experiences and thoughts. Historically, many of the factors found in the literature review have been studied using quantitative methods, using questionnaires and the like. One example is the Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT) used when analyzing need for achievement which performed by having participants telling a story about what is going on in a picture (Blankenship et al., 2006). The stories are later coded according to some categories of achievement, such as wanting to do well, doing something to attain a goal, envisionment of doing well, and being happy because of success, and a score is accumulated (Blankenship et al., 2006). Another example is the Rotter I-E Scale used for measuring locus of control, which is a forced choice questionnaire measuring whether an individual’s locus of control is internal or external (Rotter, 1966). Choices are between claims such as “Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader” and “Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.”, where the former indicate an external locus of control and the latter an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966). The total score is the total number of external choices; thus, a low total score indicates an internal locus of control and vice versa.

Due to the thesis’ abductive approach, where theory affects the empirical analysis and the empirical analysis affects the theory, as well the thesis’ aim to achieve an in-depth understanding of gig workers’ motivation, open-ended questions have been preferred over questionnaires and surveys. If questionnaires or surveys would have been used, the research would have been limited to the factors hypothesized to be relevant, and other potential factors could not have been discovered. Open-ended questions gave the interviewees the opportunity to talk freely and the answers obtained have a less risk of being deceptive by leading questions. The interview guide can be found in the Appendix.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The data analysis procedure was inspired by the structure outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). The approach consists of three activity flows; reducing the data, displaying the data, and drawing and verifying conclusions.

Following this procedure, the first step was to reduce the data, which refers to “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). This was done by first transcribing the recorded data from the interviews, where the transcription of each interview was divided equally between the two researchers. If the interview was not recorded, notes were taken concurrently with the interview and later extended directly after the interview. The analysis commenced with the researchers reading the transcripts or notes independently and repeatedly in order to gain an overview of the empirics, and simultaneously taking notes and highlighting interesting words or sentences. The data was thenceforth analyzed conjointly
using a thematic approach where data was sorted into different categories. The categories were concurrently and inductively produced with the analysis, allowing the categories and themes to emerge from the collected data, while also considering the motivational factors discussed in the literature review. Quotes of interest for each category were gathered in a separate spreadsheet, which facilitated drawing and verifying conclusions. These themes aided in the structuring of the analysis.

The deductive element of the analysis was carried out with inspiration from previous research that has studied the factors presented in the literature review. For example, in order to identify to what extent need for achievement is expressed in an individual, the researchers looked for statements that are connected to the previously described characteristics of people with high need for achievement (see Need for Achievement), such as that achievement is more important than material or financial reward, or that they constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better. Other factors have been identified with inspiration from studies using quantitative measurements. For example, passion has been analyzed with inspiration from the research performed by Baum and Locke (2004), where they measured passion for work using a 5-point scale. In their study, the respondents were asked to answer to what extent they agree to statements such as “I love my work” and “I look forward to returning to work when I am away from work”.

4.3 Research Quality

The quality of the research is ensured by examining the four aspects of trustworthiness; dependability, transferability, credibility and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

*Dependability* refers to the stability of findings over time and if the research were to be repeated similar results would be obtained. Furthermore, it is of importance that the research is performed in an appropriate way. *Transferability* is concerned with how the findings of a study could be applied in a new context or with other research subjects, and connections can in many ways be drawn to replicability but in a less strict way than in quantitative research. *Confirmability* is connected to the objectivity of the researcher, where one evaluates to which degree the findings are dependent solely on the research subject’s responses and not of the biases or motivations of the researcher. *Credibility* refers to which degree the researcher is able to represent the “truth” of the findings and the subject’s responses, and is connected to whether a researcher could draw the same conclusions from the same dataset (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Guba, 1981).

The aspects of trustworthiness have been ensured by a number of different measures during the research process. The overall aim has been to produce a well-conducted thesis that is described thoroughly and with enough details so that it is easy to understand and follow. In order to fulfil this aim, all decisions and choices have been described in the methodology section, and every part of the thesis has been made and discussed by both researchers. The researchers have similar backgrounds, both are of similar age, have the same education, as well as the same cultural background. In order to diminish the researcher’s beliefs and biases effect on the study, a
critical mindset has been employed throughout by the researchers, as well as implementing continuous peer-reviewing from internal and external parts, involving the corporate and academic supervisors as well as fellow students.

In order to ensure that the interview process had a high quality, the following choices were made. Interviews have been held with both gig workers, a platform company and clients of the commissioning company to obtain several perspectives on the subject. In accordance with the guidelines outlined by Yin (2009), the interviewees have been given the opportunity to add further information after the interviews were conducted. Due to the possibility of personal agendas and moods as well as the interviewees’ current knowledge and experience could have an impact on the provided answers, emphasis has been on establishing protocols and procedures to assure authenticity of the findings (Collis & Hussey, 2013). For example, the data collection process can be followed by the interview guide in the Appendix and by the list of the specific interviews held above. Furthermore, the interviewees were ensured anonymity in order to increase their incentives of speaking honestly and truthfully. The interviews that were recorded were transcribed and carefully read by both researchers; however, the transcripts are not provided in the Appendix due to ethical reasons. For the interviews that were not recorded notes were taken both concurrently and afterwards by the researchers, but neither these are provided in the Appendix due to ethical reasons.

### 4.4 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations in this thesis concern the commissioning company, the interviewees and the academic institution.

The commissioning company was asked if they desired to be anonymous throughout the thesis report, but they did not mind being presented. However, this has not affected the quality of the research, as the focus of the study does not lie in the company itself. All interviewees have participated voluntarily, and their participation has remained anonymous throughout the research process.

The general ethical policy outlined by the academic institution, regarding among others plagiarism and research misconduct, has been carefully reviewed and followed. The thesis has by no means had any intention of being physically or psychologically harmful for anyone participating in the study.
5 Findings and Analysis

In this section the findings from the qualitative study are presented and analyzed in relationship to the presented literature review. The findings are based on four major themes that emerged from the data collection process and are related to theory throughout. The section ends with the research questions being addressed and answered.

In this section the results from the conducted interviews are presented and analyzed. From the interviews four major themes were discovered inductively: Independence, Finance, Relationships & Networking, and Development & Learning.

5.1 Independence

Independence, autonomy and freedom of choice appeared frequently throughout the data. In the analysis of independence, the following has been identified: All gig workers have highlighted the importance of independence; being independent might rather be a perception; and seniority could influence one’s level of decisive independence.

All interviewees mentioned independence or freedom as one of the reasons why they wanted to be a gig worker or as a perk of being a gig worker. This is in accordance with the literature on entrepreneurial motivation, where desire for independence has frequently been associated with entrepreneurial values and behavior (Shane et al., 2003). Independence for a gig worker expresses itself in different forms, where one highlighted the perk of not being bound by a 30-day annual leave, and another highlighted the opportunity to sleep in after a bad night (if not on a project). Apart from these specific examples, independence was highlighted in the form of being able to decide over one’s time, projects, vacations, and charge rate, so that it aligns with one’s life situation, values and beliefs. One interviewee (G6) want to be able to say no to projects in industries that are against his ethical beliefs while another interviewee (G8) want to take on projects with people that give energy rather than drain it.

“I do not want to have anyone deciding over me, which projects I take on I choose myself, because then I think I develop the most“ - G1

“You are independent, and that is the best part I suppose“ - G7

“One of the best things is that you become free, [and you] decide how much you would like to work” - G4

However, it is important to point out that being able to decide is not always a reality, but many times rather a perception. Projects are not in abundance, and projects that fulfill all of a gig worker’s wishes, regarding factors such as project length and location flexibility, are rare. Thereto, the project might not be timely for the gig worker, and either overlap a current project
or be too many months away for it to be a reliable alternative. The gig worker could therefore in some situations be forced to take on suboptimal projects to be able to provide for themselves and their families. Thusly, being able to decide over one’s projects is many times more of a perception than a practical reality. Though one cannot ignore its motivational properties, where the perceived independence can be motivational in itself. This was e.g. demonstrated by an interviewee (G3) that mentioned that if the individual would have liked to work 60%, this is still moderated by the availability of projects of that scope, and the individual might have to take on a project that is full-time anyway. However, the gig worker pointed out that it is their own choice to take on a project that does not fulfill all their wishes since they still had the opportunity to say no, which the gig worker still found to be a form of independence. The gig worker did not have the perception that they would have the same opportunity to say no to such a project if they would have been employed.

The independence is also moderated by the clients’ expectations and the projects’ scopes, where the interviewees have highlighted that their delivery is important and that they have to (and want to) work to meet or even exceed the client’s demand, which is in accordance with Czerniawska (2006) that emphasize the importance of project delivery when building relationships.

“As a self-employed you have to be flexible and adjust to the possible arrangements [with the client]” - G7

“I believe that the best [part about being self-employed] is being free over one’s work hours, as long as the client permits it of course” - G4

Lastly, it is possible to see that seniority, in terms of experience, has some sort of impact on a gig workers eligibility. A senior gig worker will have had the opportunity to meet and network with many people throughout their career and has therefore more individuals in their network that could be potential clients. Furthermore, a senior gig worker will have more time to hone their skill and build their brand, generally giving them a wider array of projects to choose from. Senior gig workers will also have had time to build a project portfolio that can confirm their skill and knowledge to the client. A junior gig worker will not have had the opportunity to build a network of such size nor been able to accumulate as much knowledge and skill and will therefore be more inclined to take projects that might not be optimal for their sense of independence.

It is evident that there are many factors that are limiting or hindering the gig worker to completely be in control over their independence. However, it is hard to deny the importance of independence for the gig worker, both from a perceptual and practical sense. Independence over choosing projects is more than often a form of perceived independence, since one’s opportunity of choice is heavily affected by one’s experience and skill level as well as the availability of projects of interest. Yet, under the right circumstances, the gig worker will have an opportunity to decide over which project they take on, which has been highly valued by the research subjects. Independence has also been expressed in being able to have more than
normal annual leave and being able to have more flexible working arrangements if desired and possible.

“Independence is to be able to decide, but you cannot be too picky. But you can be a bit picky” - G8

This could be contrasted to the full-time employees that did not talk about independence in a similar manner. One full-time employee talked about freedom in the form of the opportunities that a large company can offer, and even though they said one may have more freedom and independence as a gig worker, the freedom that working in a large company induces was said to be enough for them. For both full-timers the increased independence that work in the gig economy might entail was not seen to be a motivator to join it.

5.2 Finance

The importance of monetary rewards and the emphasis on the financial benefits of being a gig worker varied among the interviewees. It was identified that the awareness of financial matters was rather high among the gig workers, which articulated itself in monetary buffers and financial planning.

According to the majority of the interviewees, the importance of monetary rewards and the emphasis on the financial benefits of being a gig worker were not explicitly said to be a motivational factor for working in the gig economy. Most gig workers claimed that the financial aspect of their employment form was a nice bonus, but not a reason for why they chose to enter the gig economy.

“It is not for the money, I have been contemplating that, it is not for the money. But it might have been an annoyance that someone else kept a share of my money when they did not provide me with what I wanted” - G1

According to the literature these gig workers demonstrate characteristics related to high need for achievement, where financial rewards are secondary to achievement and is rather regarded as a measurement of success than as an end in itself (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89). These individuals rather entered the gig economy to be able to have a greater independence, and to be able to learn and develop more efficiently. However, in contrast to the majority, a few actually highlighted the monetary aspects of being a gig worker as an important factor. These individuals spoke about e.g. the tax advantages and the overall raise in salary.

“Well, there are tax advantages, for example I do not take out a salary over [omitted] per month in order to avoid state tax, that’s 50%. In that case I’d rather take some time off and only pay local taxes. I find that to be a great advantage [of being a gig worker]” - G4

“One’s financial earnings are doubled compared to being an employee [...] I’m responsible for my own finances, my own decisions, how much I’m going to work, etc.” - G7
In relation to the theory, if one put emphasis on the financial aspects of the role, one’s need for achievement is not as high (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89). However, it is not clear if these individuals perceive the monetary reward as motivational or rather highly value it as a measurement of success. It is thusly difficult to deduce, by solely evaluating these statements, whether or not they have a high need for achievement.

Apart from discussing financial aspects in relation to need for achievement, a lower self-efficacy could be identified in those who put emphasis on uncertainty and lack of financial security. Uncertainty about the future and being unsure about one’s ability, i.e. having a low self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1997), seem to have some sort of relation to one’s emphasis on the financial perks of being a gig worker, where some of the interviewees that talked about financial benefits also expressed concerns about finding new projects. The same uncertainty could however not be found among those who did not explicitly highlight the importance of monetary benefits. These expressed a higher belief in one’s ability and skill and believed that they would not have a problem with finding new projects, which indicates a high self-efficacy according to Bandura (1997)’s ideas.

“I believe that if I were to think that I just wanted a project to get money, I believe that it would be quite easy to find something to be frank. So, the question is how strategic one should be” - G5

When discussing uncertainty regarding financial aspects, one can draw parallels to theory on risk-taking propensity. There is an inherent uncertainty involved with being a gig worker, which the interviewees expressed as for example not being able to find a new project (i.e. having periods without any income), but none of the interviewees formulated their situation as risky. Most felt confident enough in their ability to obtain projects in the future, even though it might entail an increased effort, and many formulated the worst-case scenario as having to take a full-time position in traditional employment (being very confident in their ability to do so). This is in contrast to the notions of the full-time employees, which highlighted the inherent security in income and pension that comes with being employed. The potential increase in income of being self-employed was not seen as attractive, and the employed interviewees questioned whether the financial benefits were that much greater in the long run. It is however hard to evaluate whether the gig workers, as in the case of entrepreneurs (Shane et al., 2003), have a higher risk-taking propensity than most or if it rather is that they do not perceive their situation and actions as risky, indicating a high self-efficacy.

“If you are good and are able to deliver, there is no risk” - G1

Practically all gig workers work with so called buffers to be able to cope with periods with no income. As the role of being a gig worker often include periods of time when one is not out on a project, it is important to build a buffer in periods when one generates income. The buffer was oftentimes accentuated as a mean to cope with times when there are difficulties in finding new projects and necessarily not for potential long-term vacations or holidays. None of the
interviewees expressed an intention to go on a longer leave in the coming years, nor that it is the end goal of working today.

It is furthermore interesting to note that most gig workers showed signs of high financial awareness when discussing charge rate and the involvement of brokerage firms. The interviewees exhibited high insight regarding how much money is spent in the sole proprietorship and how high the charge-rate ought to be, and one interviewee even created detailed spreadsheets with different charge rates over different periods, where potential sickness, vacations, time between projects, and more were incorporated. When discussing brokerage firms, many were critical to their involvement, where the brokerage firms’ commission many times is too high in relation to the value they add. Criticism was also raised regarding brokerage firms exploiting framework agreements, where brokerage firms in negotiating the agreement are able to press prices, which lessens the gig worker’s margins. However, there are intermediaries whose services some interviewees find to be value adding, but these firms are not incorporated in the definition of traditional brokerage firms and rather are platform companies with higher or lesser involvement in the transaction.

Even though many gig workers do not see the financial aspect as a motivator in itself, it is evident that money still is an important part of the work. The gig worker still expects to be paid fairly for their work, and, if possible, they avoid the involvement of intermediaries when the value they add is not enough. Thusly, money is a factor that gig workers value, but it is not a motivator in itself. Parallels to the theory could be found in a high need for achievement, as gig workers expressed that financial matters were not considered to be motivators for joining the gig economy, of which similarities are found for entrepreneurs (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89). Furthermore, as in the case of the entrepreneur, risk is inherent to the situation of working in the gig economy, but as for entrepreneurs it is possible that a higher risk-taking propensity might be confused with a high self-efficacy (Shane et al., 2003).

5.3 Relationships & Networking

Building and maintaining relationships is an essential part of being a gig worker. Relationships was found to be the main method for coming in contact with clients among the gig workers, where projects are found through old colleagues, previous clients, or other gig workers. This is a time-consuming process, and many of the interviewees put a lot of effort in networking proactively.

All interviewees highlighted the importance of having a professional network. A gig worker’s network contains everything from old colleagues and old employees to previous clients and other gig workers. It is through one’s network a gig worker mainly finds new projects and engagements and using one’s network is most of the time the preferred method of choice.

“I actively work all the time with networking” - G1
Sales can occur through different entry points in the network. An old colleague many times knows the gig worker’s skills and background and can redirect the gig worker to a decision maker, which facilitates the process of finding a new project as such an individual can vouch for the gig worker. The same applies for selling projects to a previous client, although this demands that the gig worker’s previous engagement has been satisfactory in the eyes of the client. This is tightly linked to the theory presented by Czerniawska (2006, p. 51) for consulting firms, where high project delivery is essential for creating stable relationships. It could possibly be of even more importance for gig workers, as they are sole responsible for creating and maintaining relationships.

For many of the interviewees, networking involves both finding new individuals to add to their network and maintaining current relationships, and the preferred and most convenient way is by meeting over lunch. The majority of the gig workers actively plan lunches into their schedules, both with new acquaintances and old acquaintances. One interviewee told a story about a fellow gig worker that actively only takes on projects within the city limits in order to have the possibility to go on lunches to maintain the network. In addition to such lunches, networking also occurs on the client’s site with project colleagues, especially with other gig workers, on potential courses or seminars, and in some cases on networking events. One interviewee (G3) highlighted that all meetings can lead to something positive, of which similar mentalities were found among the other interviewees.

The interviewees also highlighted the informal network among gig workers. Gig workers help each other out. For example, if one is contacted for a new project but is not available, many interviewees say that they forward that project to a fellow gig worker that they think has the right profile. The argument for this strategy was often that if they help someone out, they will get help back when they need it. It is however important to recommend the right individual, since it affects your own brand very badly if the gig worker you recommend does not deliver to the expectations of the client. Furthermore, the interviewees like helping others that consider joining the gig economy, providing tips on how to get going, potential services one can use, and more.

However, sometimes one’s network is not enough, and then, to be able to get a new project, brokerage firms or other intermediaries are used. Almost all interviewees accentuated that they rather would avoid any sort of intermediary, especially brokerage firms, as money is lost in the
transaction and as the value they add is questioned. Even though they would like to avoid intermediary involvement, framework agreements sometimes make their involvement necessary. For example, two of the interviewees worked with a Swedish authority that have had framework agreements with different intermediaries throughout the years, and because of these agreements they were bounded to work as a subcontracting consultant for that intermediary and pay them a commission. There is however sometimes an opportunity to circumvent a high commission, and solely use the intermediary as an administrative part. One gig worker claimed that one in some cases can directly negotiate an individual agreement with a client, and later only use the holder of the framework agreement as an administrative function. Though, the general opinion is that these arrangements are an annoyance and an unnecessary step.

All but one said that they enjoyed meeting new people and building relationships. In addition, three interviewees explicitly said that they loved to network, and that it was an important motivation to why they chose to become a gig worker.

“It is very fun to meet new people all the time and get to know people everywhere” - G1

It is however not distinctly clear where one can draw parallels from the concept of networking to the presented theory. Networking could either be a motivation in itself or an implicit part of being self-employed, where underlying motivations such as internal locus of control, a high self-efficacy and passion can find expression. For example, a passion for meeting new people can be seen as a driver for networking, one’s belief in one’s ability in selling in one’s network can be interpreted as a high self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1997) and believing that oneself is responsible for finding new projects can be a reason why one act in networks, for which parallels can be drawn to an internal locus of control (see Rotter, 1966).

It was evident that the employed interviewees did not find this aspect as intriguing, even though they said that they liked to meet new people in their projects and at the office. Relationships and networking are essential parts of being a gig worker, and many gig workers highlighted that they enjoyed this aspect of the role, though whether or not it is a motivation in itself is left for future research.

5.4 Development & Learning

Developing oneself and learning new things are of high importance in order to remain attractive in the gig economy. Development and learning occur both through the work itself as well as through courses and similar external engagements. All gig workers enjoyed learning new things, and most highlighted that they want to take on projects that are challenging to some degree.

In order to sell oneself and be able to deliver on projects, competence development was highlighted to be important. By being updated on current events and best practices, one can remain attractive in a competitive market. A majority of the gig workers highlighted that they
Enjoy learning new things and enjoyed the opportunity of being able to be responsible for their own career path. Yet, they also highlighted that it is a demanding process.

“It is high learning, there is a high tempo and an elevated self-learning. I get an opportunity to learn a lot in a much higher tempo. The demands are higher on me to deliver each day, compared to being employed. It affects me directly if I do not deliver one day. [...] It is very important to learn and always develop.” - G1

Enjoying learning new things and developing oneself are closely related to having high need for achievement, as such a person constantly seeks to improve themselves and doing things better (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89). Furthermore, internal locus of control and independence were identified among many of the gig workers and were expressed as the desire to form your own career path and the responsibilities it implied.

“Whether I develop or not in my career, is up to me now and not because some boss chooses to see me and promote me. So, the power lies with me” - G5

“I want to see what I can do, what capacity I have and what competence I have” - G1

Competence development is oftentimes found in the work itself. Most gig workers highlighted the work itself as the best way to develop and learn, and the concept of “learning by doing” was frequently mentioned. Furthermore, most of the interviewees regarded a challenge as appealing. These individuals emphasized that taking on challenging and varying projects was appreciated, as they found it to be boring to do the same thing. However, there still needs to be a balance between challenge and previous knowledge, as the gig worker still needs to be knowledgeable enough to acquire the project in the first place.

“To have a [task] I already know how to do is boring, but maybe you should have 70-80% [in your] baggage” - G6

Enjoying learning new things and taking on new challenges are necessarily not distinguishing for gig workers, as these attributes can be held by many people across various industries and roles. Nevertheless, in comparison to employed individuals, gig workers need to take full responsibility for their competence development and cannot follow a development plan outlined by an employer. Thus, gig workers also need to find courses and the like on their own to continue their development. All gig workers but one have in one way or another, of free will, developed themselves using third-parties, including mainly seminars and courses (some with the intention of being certified). These courses are found through networks and by exploring the internet by own interest. Thereto, it was highlighted by many that courses need to be chosen carefully and strategically, as they are time-consuming and expensive, and further could influence and decide the gig worker’s career path.
“Well, you don’t really have a plan. Like, if you work at [omitted] you are [expected] to follow their template when you are educating yourself [...] you don’t really have that part when you are self-employed” - G7

“Certifications are important for me. Because then I have proof that I have known something at a specific point in time” - G4

It was evident that many gig workers enjoyed learning new things, to see a constant development and being able to decide your own career path. This indicates a high need for achievement and an internal locus of control, where the entrepreneurial motivation theory suggests that people with a high need for achievement constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89) and people with an internal locus of control believe that their impact directly affects their result (Rotter, 1966), which in this case is the career path and the revolving decisions. However, it can be questioned whether gig workers actually take more action in developing themselves compared to their employed counterpart. Development and learning have some sort of motivational impact on the gig workers, though perhaps not something that distinguish gig workers from the general population.

“I like what [Richard] Branson said, something like ‘Say yes to a project or a task, then see it as a challenge to learn how to do it!’” - G6

5.5 Major Connections to Entrepreneurial Motivation

In connection to the literature on entrepreneurial motivation, a high need for achievement, an internal locus of control, a desire for independence, and a high self-efficacy were found to be the most distinguishing motivational factors for the gig workers. Egoistic passion, drive, goal-setting, and tolerance for ambiguity were not found to be distinguishing, and the impact of risk-taking propensity on the gig worker is ambiguous. Compare with the figure below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for Achievement</th>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Desire for Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egoistic Passion</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-setting</td>
<td>Risk-taking Propensity</td>
<td>Tolerance for Ambiguity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4: Overview of motivational factors in relation to findings
As previously described, the most evident difference when comparing entrepreneurs with gig workers is that entrepreneurship not per definition is short-term. Rather, entrepreneurs have often been associated with working for the long-term and with a focus on building a successful business. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activity is often based on market opportunities, where entrepreneurs recognize and exploit opportunities of future goods and services (see Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). It is therefore not too surprising, but still interesting, that these results were obtained, as some of the arguments or statements that are used to describe or highlight the importance of a specific trait are tightly coupled to the aforementioned characteristics. For example, the arguments used for the significance of passion are partly built on the entrepreneurial process of building a profitable organization (Shane et al., 2003). This is in contrast to the gig worker, that per definition do not have the goal of building a profitable organization, but rather work cyclically with new projects. Further, goal-setting has in previous research been measured in relation to a firm’s growth, which neither is that applicable for gig workers.

The similarities between gig workers and entrepreneurs were found in factors that are not particularly related to the entrepreneurial process, where for example McClelland’s Need theory is general and applicable in a multitude of areas and not bounded to the entrepreneurial context. The gig workers showed indications of having a high need for achievement, which also is suggested for entrepreneurs (McClelland, 1961). The same applies for locus of control, where Rotter (1966)’s theory is general and where an internal locus of control was expressed similarly among gig workers and entrepreneurs. A high self-efficacy and a desire for independence were also found to be motivational for the gig worker, as research on entrepreneurial motivation suggests for the entrepreneur (Bandura, 1997; Shane et al., 2003). There are however questions about the similarities of the desire for independence between entrepreneurs and gig workers, where independence for the gig worker includes being independent over which projects to take on, which is not a part of the entrepreneurial process.

It is interesting that the distinguishing motivational factors for gig workers are those factors that are not so bounded to the entrepreneurial process, and that those who are not distinguishing rather are bounded to the entrepreneurial process. This gives indications that there are some limitations of the transferability of research on entrepreneurial motivation to the context of gig economy. It is therefore important to keep the impact of the entrepreneurial process on motivation in mind when trying to apply such research.

Furthermore, as entrepreneurship as a field of study has been criticized (see e.g. Ahl, 2002; Tedmanson et al., 2012) there are further limitations for transferring such theories to the context of the gig worker. A transfer of theory therefore requires researchers to address previous criticism, as well as to avoid applying theory that is too closely coupled to the entrepreneurial process.

On the other hand, there are still possibilities to transfer theories thanks to the many similarities between the gig worker and the entrepreneur. First, both gig workers and entrepreneurs are self-employed, which provides overarching similarities. In many cases, both the entrepreneur
and the gig worker leave previous security for uncertainty, either out of opportunity or necessity, and many of the drivers for such decisions should be transferable. Further, as independence is a great implication of being self-employed in general, theories of independence should have possibilities to be transferred. However, as this thesis found indications that independence, regardless of its motivational properties, might be more of a perceived independence, the transferability might have some complications as it is possible that it is not a perception for the entrepreneur. Such differences are of interest to further investigate and is therefore suggested for future research.

The conclusion is that there are both possibilities and limitations for transferring the theory of entrepreneurial motivation to the gig worker. The major limitations are that some of the motivational factors are tightly coupled to the entrepreneurial process, where similarities to gig workers are few. Yet, the theories of entrepreneurial motivation that are more coupled to the characteristics of the self-employed have greater possibilities to be transferred.

5.6 Addressing the Research Questions

What are the distinguishing motivational factors to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry?

While investigating the four major themes that emerged inductively from the data, Independence, Finance, Relationships & Networking, and Development & Learning, links to previous research and the presented theory have been found. The distinguishing factors are independence and development, being rooted in the inherent motivations of high need for achievement, desire for independence, internal locus of control and high self-efficacy.

It is not surprising that being independent and autonomous is a great motivation for working in the gig economy. Independence and not having a superior are by nature implications of being self-employed, and it is quite expected that it would be something that is considered to be attractive. This is also in line with theory from entrepreneurial motivation, as both roles necessitate independence, even though the way independence expresses itself in this setting might differ from the entrepreneurial context. The independence of a gig worker is heavily influenced by external factors, such as the client’s expectation, the availability of projects, and the gig worker’s life situation, and it is important to emphasize that a gig worker’s decisive opportunities might not be that much greater than that of a regular employee. Thus, independence is a motivator for working in the gig economy, although the ability for a gig worker to act upon their independence is questioned.

The second emerged theme was Finance, involving the gig workers’ views on monetary rewards and financial buffers. Monetary rewards were not per se a motivator, but rather a factor that indicated on other motivators. Monetary rewards were most times seen as a result rather than a goal, which can be connected to theory on high need for achievement, where financial rewards are seen as a measurement of success rather than an end in itself (Williams & Curtis,
Findings and Analysis

Closely related to uncertainty regarding financial aspects is risk-taking propensity, and as suggested for entrepreneurs, it is not clear whether gig workers have a high risk-taking propensity or if they rather do not perceive their situation as risky (Shane et al., 2003). It is also possible that risk-taking propensity can be confounded with a high self-efficacy, of which many indications appeared. Therefore, the significance of risk-taking propensity as a personality trait is unclear, but high need for achievement and high self-efficacy are found to be distinguishing motivational factors.

Gig workers enjoyed meeting new people and building relationships. Networking is the most common and most preferred method for selling oneself and obtaining projects. Even though claims have been made regarding wanting to meet more new people and loving to network, the belief is that there plausibly are underlying motivations that induce these expressions. Underlying motivational factors that can be connected to such expressions are an internal locus of control and a high self-efficacy. It is however difficult at this stage to deduce whether networking and meeting new people can be seen as motivators in themselves or not.

Lastly, from the theme Development & Learning it was established that gig workers enjoy learning new things and developing themselves. These can be seen as motivators in themselves, in accordance with the findings of Drews et al. (2015). It is however also possible to make connections to some underlying motivational factors, especially a high need for achievement, an internal locus of control, and independence, as for example people with high need for achievement constantly seek ways to improve themselves (Williams & Curtis, 2007, p. 89). Regardless of if one uses Drews et al. (2015)’s perspective or the underlying motivation perspective, it is evident that development and learning are motivations to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry.

The most distinguishing motivational factors to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry are found to be independence and development. These factors are, to a higher or lower degree, rooted in the inherent motivations of high need for achievement, desire for independence, internal locus of control and high self-efficacy. This addresses the question of the most distinguishing factors to work in the gig economy but does probably not cover all such motivational factors. Future research in the area might add a more comprehensive character.

The other research question concerns the transferability of entrepreneurial motivation theory to the gig economy, restated and addressed below:

*What possibilities and limitations are there for transferring research on entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy?*

There are both possibilities and limitations for transferring the research on entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy. The major limitations are that some of the research on entrepreneurial motivation is coupled to the entrepreneurial process, which is an area that distinguish the entrepreneur from the gig worker. For example, goal-setting has previously
been measured in terms of business growth and passion has previously been researched in regard to building a profitable organization. Moreover, the criticism that has been raised in the field of entrepreneurship studies limits the transfer, and the theory should not be transferred without addressing these.

On the other hand, there are some similarities between the gig worker and the entrepreneur that create possibilities for a transfer. Both the gig worker and the entrepreneur are self-employed, where both roles among others have an inherent independence even though it might express itself differently. Additionally, both gig workers and entrepreneurs have made a decision to become self-employed, either by choice or out of necessity. All these similarities create possibilities for transferring the theories of entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy. It is however important to always keep the differences in mind and employing a critical mindset when necessary.
6 Discussion

This section discusses and further elaborates on the findings and the analysis. First, discussion is performed on the novelty and the definition of the gig economy. It continues with the managerial implications of the study’s findings and ends with a discussion on the study’s limitations and potential future research.

6.1 The Gig Economy – Is it Something New?

As declared in the Background, the gig economy is in this study defined as a “free market system in which temporary positions are common and organizations contract with independent workers for short-term engagements”. Engagements are often, but not necessarily, mediated by platform companies, where platforms are defined as any form of third-party intermediary between the gig worker and the client. However, one question has risen during the research process – Is the gig economy something new? This calls for further discussion.

Self-employment has been around for centuries, from the merchants at the town square to the Uber drivers and IT consultants of today, and it is obvious that independent work is not something new. The new dimension of independent work, that would turn it into the gig economy, could be the inclusion of digital platforms, induced by an overall technological development. However, in the context of this study, engagements are not always mediated by platforms, and they are not an essential component for gig workers to connect with clients. Furthermore, most of the platforms that exist have not come into existence as a result of technological development and digitalization. In fact, many of them are not digital. Another aspect is the definition of short-term arrangements, where it is not clear when an arrangement should be classified as short. In the case of Uber, it is a matter of minutes, but for the interviewed gig workers, a short project is many times a year. Therefore, there is no limitation in this study of how short a short-term arrangement should be.

Thus, is it really correct to include this context into the narrower definitions of the gig economy, that emphasizes the inclusion of digital platforms and short-term arrangements? Or is it more appropriate to create a new denomination for contexts with similar characteristics as this study’s? Or should all just be labeled “independent work”? These are questions that should be further explored.

Nevertheless, independent work has been on the rise and both has and is foretold to affect industries as well as societies. Organizations are already tapping further into a workforce of independent workers, and no matter the answers to the above questions, it is of interest to examine the characteristics of it and its implications.
6.2 Managerial Implications

Consultancies have started to tap further into the gig economy, and it is hard to deny the gig economy’s rise and impact on the industry. The arrangements of today for subcontracting consultants have been shown to be suboptimal and there is room for improvements that would be beneficial for all parts of the transactions, i.e. gig workers, clients and consultancies. It is important to design these arrangements correctly in order to respond to a client’s inquiry while also ensuring high project delivery, which are of the essence for creating stable relationships (Czerniawska, 2006, p. 51) and necessary for acquiring new projects (Reichheld, 1993).

Oftentimes, intermediaries and middlemen have not been an appreciative part in the relationship between gig workers and clients, especially if they do not add value. However, a pure exclusion of intermediaries is often difficult because of the existence of framework agreements and the inherent value of them to both clients and intermediaries in terms of e.g. administrative simplicity. From the gig worker’s perspective, if intermediaries cannot be avoided, it is very important that the commission intermediaries take is justified. Such discrepancies in the incumbents’ views of the intermediary makes it of interest to elaborate upon how the optimal role of the intermediary could be designed.

This study found that independence is an important trait of gig workers and is something that is highly valued among them. Thus, it is important that the gig worker’s autonomy and independence is respected and that the intermediary does not undermine this motivational factor. In order to respect the gig worker’s independence and autonomy it is essential that the intermediary’s involvement in the interaction between the gig worker and the client is kept as low as possible. As expressed by the research subjects, they want to be able to choose which projects they take on as well as where and when. Thereto, most gig workers had a negative attitude toward exclusivity arrangements with intermediaries and wanted to be able to take on projects directly with clients or through another intermediary. These are necessary conditions for a consulting firm to take into consideration if they want to engage gig workers. However, there are also aspects that have been highlighted in the findings, such as development and networking, that could make an arrangement not just a necessity, but also an attractivity. As gig workers expressed that they want to learn and develop, a consulting firm can make themselves more attractive by offering surrounding, voluntary, educational activities, such as fully-fledged courses, seminars and certificates. Moreover, such activities could also fulfill some of the networking and relationship building needs of a gig worker, but such needs could also be fulfilled by offering more informal socializing activities.

These are value adding activities that might attract more gig workers to a consultancy and might justify a higher commission compared to if they were not available. Though, how high the commission could be is a tricky question, since it is a matter of how the value from the transaction and interaction is perceived. Below two possible scenarios, no/low commission and high commission, are elaborated upon.
The first scenario, where no or low commission is taken, is where the consultancy solely act as
the connecting part between the gig worker and the consulting firm’s client. This will be
beneficial in situations where a framework agreement exists, but the consulting firm cannot
take on a demanded project because of a lack of resources and skills internally. The consulting
firm can in such a situation take contact with a gig worker in their “network”, direct the gig
worker to their client, and mediate the interaction for a low or non-existent fee. The induced
value for the consultancies comes from being able to staff a project that otherwise would have
been a missed opportunity, which improves the consultancy’s brand in the eyes of the client.
Furthermore, in this arrangement the gig workers will keep their independence intact while not
losing profit, and the client is pleased since the process of contracting consultants has been kept
simple. Even though the consulting firm has not added any additional value to the gig worker,
they have been able to create a business model where the gig workers’ motivation has had the
opportunity to be fulfilled.

The second scenario, where a high commission is taken, is where the consultancy adds many
surrounding services to the interaction with the gig worker. The gig workers independence
should however still be kept intact, where the gig worker should be able to choose which
projects to take on as well as where and when. This scenario is attractive for the consultancy,
as the firm will be able to staff more projects, as in the former scenario, but also make a fiscal
profit from the gig workers’ engagements. Furthermore, offering many surrounding value
adding services could make the provider more attractive, as it creates more opportunities for
motivation for the gig workers. However, all such activities should be completely voluntary
for the gig worker, in order to not jeopardize their independence. Furthermore, as monetary
rewards were not a motivator per se, but many of the surrounding activities are, a high
commission can be taken and justified.

Both of these scenarios are possible and appropriate, but which one of the scenarios that is most
appropriate is dependent on the consulting firm. In all likelihood, it is best to balance the two
alternatives, and they should further be viewed as suggestions rather than facts. These scenarios
are however based on insights from the study and it would be beneficial to take these into
consideration while planning to tap further into the gig economy.

Regarding the industry contributions that the findings provide, the insights can be summarized
as: consulting firms have to take a gig worker’s wish to remain independent and autonomous
into consideration at all times; a taken commission needs to be justified by one’s value adding
services; and learning and networking activities can add more value to the gig worker than
monetary rewards.
6.3 Limitations

This study has had some limitations which need to be addressed. First, this thesis solely focuses on individuals that joined the gig economy by choice, i.e. out of opportunity and not out of necessity (see Entrepreneurial Motivation). It was clear that the research subjects did not join the gig economy out of pure necessity, e.g. getting fired and not being able to find a new full-time role, but it was however not evident that the interviewees were exclusively “pulled” to work in the gig economy. It has been shown that it is not always possible to make a clear distinction of push vs. pull factors. Many of the interviewees often expressed being both driven towards the attractive aspects of working in the gig economy, such as being independent, as well as being driven away from previous work arrangements, such as not liking one’s superior. It is further not always clear whether a factor is actually a push factor or a pull factor, as elaborated upon in the literature review. It is however clear that the gig workers did not join the gig economy out of necessity, which was considered to be a criterion strict enough for this study. Whether the gig workers were pushed or pulled into the gig economy is though ambiguous and could be a topic for future research.

Second, according to the definitions of the gig economy and the gig worker applied in this thesis, all of the interviewed research subjects are gig workers working in the gig economy. However, interestingly enough, only 3 out of 9 actually identified themselves as gig workers, and some were even uncertain of what the gig economy was and what it entails. The more common denominations used were “egenkonsult”⁶ and “frilansare”⁷, which are expressions commonly and traditionally used for such sole proprietors in Sweden. These discrepancies are very noteworthy and certainly not expected when this thesis commenced, but it should not raise questions regarding this thesis choice of method and sampling selection, since it is only a matter of difference in denomination and not in the meaning itself.

Third, a limiting factor has been the availability of research subjects, as it has been hard to find suitable research subjects that were available for interviewing, and a greater sample would have been beneficial for the research. A far greater sample could have given more conclusive results and further strengthened the findings, but, as time restrictions had to be respected, this was not possible for this study.

Lastly, a mixed method methodology could potentially have further strengthened the conclusions of this study. This thesis solely employed semi-structured interviewing as data collection method, and it could have been beneficial to dig deeper in the motivational factors that were found after the process of interviewing, e.g. by sending out surveys that investigated the motivational factors more specifically. However, due to time constraints, this was not possible.

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⁶ Swedish for “self-employed consultant”
⁷ Swedish for “freelancer”
6.4 Future Research

To continue and develop research in this area further, in-depth studies are needed concerning a multitude of perspectives. First, there is a general need for more research on the gig economy. Of today there is not an absolute definition of the gig economy and its incumbents, which creates difficulties in performing consistent research and thereto difficulties in answering the question if it is something new or not. From the discussions above, there is a need for a clear definition of what actually falls under the gig economy, and where the demarcations lie, that could be either quite narrow, e.g. only including low-skill work, or quite broad, e.g. including both high- and low-skill work on offline and online platforms.

Second, it is of interest to perform research commencing in the findings of this thesis. As the thesis has had a holistic approach and sought to find the most distinguishing factors, a more thorough investigation of specific motivational factors could solve some limitations of the study. In order to gain a comprehensive answer regarding which motivational factors that differentiate a gig worker from a full-time employee, the researchers propose in-depth and separate studies of possible inherent motivational factors that were found in the literature. Such studies could employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. Some of the factors that were not found to be distinguishing could still be important both practically and theoretically. Furthermore, research with the aim to confirm the distinguishing factors found in this study should be made, with similar or different methodology. Moreover, the research gave indications that independence oftentimes is more of a perception than a reality, and it would therefore be of interest to study if this actually is the case as independence was nonetheless found to be motivational.

Third, this thesis was inspired by Maier (1955)’s model where performance is a multiplicative function of ability and motivation. As this study solely focused on the motivation part in this expression, it could be of interest to also investigate ability of gig workers in the context of IT and Business consulting. Moreover, as the context is an influential part on performance in the Herron and Robinson (1993) model (an elaboration of Maier (1955)’s model), studies beyond the context of IT and Business consulting would be of interest. This could be beneficial in the creation of an absolute definition of the gig economy.

Lastly, in order to fully be able to answer the question regarding how the arrangement between consulting firms, gig workers and clients should be designed, it would be necessary to research the perspectives of the client and the consulting firm respectively. This thesis has focused on the gig worker and more perspectives will give more beneficial insights.
7 Conclusion

This section concludes the study. The answers to the research questions, the thesis’ contributions, limitations and future research are summarized.

7.1 Concluding Remarks

The gig economy is rising and more people are turning to self-employment. The consulting industry has started to tap further into the gig economy and has started to realize that it could be beneficial to interact with gig workers in new ways, since current arrangements with subcontracting consultants are insufficient. In order to redesign the arrangements between gig workers, clients and consulting firms appropriately it is important to understand all incumbents’ perspectives. This thesis has focused on the perspective of the gig worker, where the purpose has been to obtain an understanding of motivational factors and personality traits of gig workers performing high-skill labor in the IT and Business consulting industry. It has also sought to provide insights on how an existing consulting firm can use the thesis’ findings when elaborating on how their role as an intermediary should be designed. The thesis employed a qualitative case study of gig workers in IT and Business consulting, studying such workers through interviews influenced by previous research in entrepreneurial motivation, a closely related area within self-employment. The first research question that was aimed to be answered was:

What are the distinguishing motivational factors to work in the gig economy in the IT and Business consulting industry?

The results from the study is that the distinguishing motivational factors for gig workers are independence and development. A motivation for independence expresses itself in wanting to decide which projects to take on as well as where and when, and not having a superior that tells you what to do. A motivation for development involves the need for learning new things, improve your skills, and take on challenges. Networking and building relationships are important parts of being a gig worker and often necessities, but even though some gig workers really enjoyed these activities, it is hard to deduce whether they are motivating in themselves. Thereto, it was found that monetary rewards were not motivational per se, but a necessity for working. The motivational factors were found to be rooted in the inherent motivations of high need for achievement, desire for independence, internal locus of control and high self-efficacy.
The second research question that was aimed to be answered was:

*What possibilities and limitations are there for transferring research on entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy?*

There are both possibilities and limitations for transferring research on entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy. The limitations concern the entrepreneurial process, of which many motivational factors are dependent upon, and the criticism of entrepreneurship as a field of study. The possibilities lie in the similarities of the entrepreneur and the gig worker when seeing them as two branches of self-employment, for example an inherent independence is included in both roles.

### 7.2 Contributions

The past few years the gig economy has been an area of much discussion and exploration, but the discussion has been rather one sided and research on low-skill work such as ridesharing and delivery platforms has been predominant. Furthermore, the academic research in this area has mostly focused on labor conditions and on how the working conditions of gig workers can be improved. This study has thus broadened the research within high-skill work in the gig economy. Thereto, this thesis has contributed by investigating motivation in the gig economy, which has not been well-researched up until now. Moreover, this study has contributed by addressing the transferability of entrepreneurial motivation to the gig economy, which will be beneficial for future studies.

Additionally, this thesis has contributed with insights for the IT and Business consulting industry that will be helpful when undertaking the questions stated in the *Background*: How could a consultancy create opportunities that are appreciated by both gig workers and clients whilst gaining benefits themselves? How can that organization ensure good project delivery? How should the arrangement between the gig worker and the company be designed? The question regarding project delivery is partly answered by the motivational factors and the other two questions are addressed in *Managerial Implications*. The insights provided should be considered when designing current arrangements for the benefit of the gig worker, the client, and the consulting firm in question.

### 7.3 Limitations and Future Research

This thesis has had limitations, where one is that the study has had a holistic approach and scrutinizing specific factors have therefore not been possible. In addition, questions were raised regarding the distinction of push and pull factors for working in the gig economy, which might have a greater impact as motivational factors than the researchers first assumed. However, the researchers decided that delimiting the sample to those that had joined the gig economy out of opportunity to be a criterion strict enough. There are also limitations regarding the availability of interviewees and suggestions that a mixed method approach could have been used.
Further research could solve some of the aforementioned limitations. For example, future research can be in-depth studies of separate motivational factors to confirm them as distinguishing factors and could be performed using quantitative methods similar to those previously used (e.g. TATs when evaluating need for achievement and Rotter’s I-E scale for locus of control). Furthermore, there is a general need of more research on the gig economy, where of today there is no absolute definition of it nor where the demarcations lie. Future research on the novelty and the managerial implications of the phenomenon are also of interest to study. Last but not least, in order to fully be able to answer the question regarding how the arrangement between consulting firms, gig workers and clients should be designed, it would be necessary to also research the perspectives of the client and the consulting firm respectively.
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Appendix

Interview guide

Introduktion om examensarbetet och introduktion om oss.

Generella introduktionsfrågor:
- Berätta lite om dig själv
  - Vad gör du nu?
  - Vad har du gjort tidigare?
  - Hur länge har du varit “giggare”?

Mer djupgående frågor:
Med följdfrågor som varför, hur, när, exemplifiera etc.
- Varför blev duiggare?
  - Vilka alternativ valde du mellan?
  - Hur gick tankarna när du valde att inte ha en fast anställning?
    - Var du missnöjd tidigare? Eller lockades du snarare till gig-ekonomin?
    - Vad för möjligheter såg du? Vilka utmaningar/risker?
    - Kände du dig någonsin osäker på ditt beslut?

- Vad skulle du säga är det bästa med att varaiggare?
  - Kan du rangordna det som är bäst med ditt arbete?
  - Om frihet: Hur tar den sig i uttryck?
    - Säger du nej till projekt? Har du många att välja på?
  - Om relationer: Hur ser det ut? Hur får du kontakt med människor?

- Vad skulle du säga är det sämsta med att varaiggare?
  - Kan du rangordna dessa faktorer?

- Om man kollar tillbaka på hur du såg att livet skulle bli om du bleviggare, skulle du säga att denna bild har blivit uppfylld?

- Hur får du dina projekt?
  - Kan du beskriva processen? Kanske rita en tidslinje med projektstart och projektslut, när börjar du leta efter nytt projekt, när kommer nästa igång, osv

- Känner du att du har möjligheten att välja de projekt du vill ha?
  - Känner du att du har förmågan att själv påverka den “karriärväg” du tar?
● Tar du dig an projekt som du känner är utmanande? Eller brukar du hålla dig till det du känner dig bekväm med?

● Hur långa brukar dina projekt vara?
  ○ Hur långa/korta projekt vill du ta? Har du någon övre/nedre gräns?
  ○ Hur lång tid vill du ha mellan dina projekt? Hur har det historiskt sett ut?
  ○ Hur lång introduktionsperiod brukar det vara i början av ett projekt?

● Hur arbetar du mellan projekten? Det vill säga hur ser du till att vara relevant/kompetent för kommande uppdrag?
  ○ *Om kurser:* Hur hittar du dem? Hur vet du vilka du ska gå?

● Hur mycket tid lägger du på fakturering och andra administrativa uppgifter?

● Hur skulle den optimala giggare/plattform/klient-relationen se ut?

● Hur känner du inför framtiden?
  ○ Känns det som ett säkert spår?
  ○ Upplever du att arbetsformen växer?
  ○ Tror du att du kommer fortsätta jobba egen?
    ■ Varför/varför inte?