

Crowdfunding Backers Driven from Within?

A study of backer motivations in crowdfunding
forum posts.



Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship - Master Thesis

Aurélien J.G. Rougier

477360ar@eur.nl

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First Reader: Dr. C.W. Handke

Second Reader: Dr. E.M.M.P Loots

Abstract

This thesis examines the motivations individuals may have for supporting cultural crowdfunding campaigns through the analysis of online forum posts. In a context where the cultural and artistic industries face uncertainty linked to diminished subsidies and subsequent reduced funds, considerations pertaining to new sources of funding are crucial, further stressing the need to better understand phenomena such as crowdfunding. Hence, the following material draws upon literature pertaining to psychology and behavioral economics mainly to demonstrate that agents tend to privilege rewards which are rather internal and/or intangible when contributing to crowdfunding campaigns. Amongst other things, backers tend to see crowdfunding as a sort of group activity, a community. They are driven internally towards the act of crowdfunding in order to satisfy intrinsic needs. They see certain cultural projects as benefiting or enriching the wider industry, or being of special use to a third, more or less acquainted party. I therefore suggest that overall, the backers which (inter-)act on forums privilege indirect and/or intangible rewards when crowdfunding. To demonstrate this idea, I combine the various defining aspects of both non-use value and intrinsic motivation to obtain a framework that can help me reach this goal. I select the two most active crowdfunding forums I could find, Crowdfundingforum.com and Kickstarterforum.org, to conduct a Sentiment Analysis of forum posts, whilst implying a focus on the heavyweight crowdfunding platform Kickstarter.com. By using an array of terms or combinations of words as markers of the various aspects mentioned above, I verify to what extent various cultural industries, defined early on as “arts”, “publishing”, “film”, “games”, “music”, and “comics & illustration” validate these aspects on the aforementioned forums. The results of my analysis are mixed: it would seem backers pursue different types of rewards to various extents. On one hand, backers sometimes seem to privilege the social aspects of crowdfunding or adopt an investor behavior as they relish to the idea of being part of a convincing and successful campaign. In other cases, backers seem to privilege the utility that the projects or rewards can bring them directly. I conclude that crowdfunding backers do seem to pursue non-use value yet seem to have a mixed relationship with these intangible or intrinsic rewards, and therefore cannot be considered fully intrinsically motivated or self-determined. I conclude by making suggestions for further research. Namely, I believe that applying such methods on a larger-scale, whilst utilizing adequate

software could lead to results that are more precise. I also believe closer consideration should be given to the differences between various industries and types of projects.

Keywords: Crowdfunding, online forums, behavioral economics, non-use value, non-consumptive use, third-party use, intrinsic motivation, motivation crowding effect, rewards, natural language processing.

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“Look(s) like the main reason of backing is the “desire to be part of something”, that drives me to two questions, would you fund a project that you will never consume/use/watch/play/etc (excluding mere charity, that’s technically consumed when you make it).

Would equity crowdfunding fulfill better that desire to be part of something?”

– **whiterabbit**, a Kickstarterforum.org user, 07/07/2015.

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Part I – Introduction:

Purpose: I aim to demonstrate, through language analysis, that agents contribute towards crowdfunding projects for reasons that exceed their own utility and are therefore largely intrinsically motivated to contribute. Backers will seek out non-use value in the crowdfunding projects they support as they might perceive value which extends beyond their own utility. To support this idea, I utilize the notion of intrinsic motivation. Indeed, intrinsically-motivated actions are said to be inherently interesting or enjoyable, and respond to internal needs for autonomy, competence or relatedness. Using this theory, I suggest that intangible or internal rewards play major role in one’s own willingness to contribute, therefore stressing the importance of intrinsic motivation. I do not neglect the potential and empirically demonstrated positive effect of tangible or external rewards, including financial ones or the various perks one may receive when funding a campaign, yet these are not the aspects I focus on. These ideas can be, in certain cases, completed by the notion that the feelings linked to intrinsic motivation are fueled by “community benefits” (Belleflamme, Lambert & Schwienbacher, 2013, p. 585) such as the desire for social belonging, seeing a project through or supporting valued artists. This assumption may imply that backers are internally driven to engage with crowdfunding.

Motivation: Besides my own interests, motivations and concerns for the cultural industries, I would suggest a better understanding of the widespread trends affecting them is crucial for several reasons. First, and although this does not equally apply to all industries, the cultural industries have been subjected to profound changes in the past several decades. The music industry for example, has undergone significant changes: the concentration of the market in few hands (Business Wire, 2012), a sharp decrease in record sales alongside the rise of digitalization (Aguar & Martens, 2016), streaming services (IFPI, 2016) and piracy has led to smaller revenues. Although these changes have affected many other sectors besides the artistic one, the financial instability of the cultural industries have made them prominent. As I will argue in this thesis, these major changes have almost always been accompanied by political concerns: not only for the significance of such segments of the economy in terms of education, employment or revenue, but also the potential they have to attract larger, more competitive and innovative industries and their workforce, especially in densely populated areas where constituents show concerns for such issues. It would

seem these trends now coincide with the rise of crowdfunding as an increasingly popular method of financing cultural and artistic business ventures, therefore stressing the need to better understand this phenomenon.

Originality and value: While researching the topic of crowdfunding, I felt a gap concerning the issues I stress here, providing an arguably substantial motivation in terms of what this paper can bring to the literature. Although research regarding crowdfunding is abundant, academic work surrounding crowd motivation in the context of reward-based crowdfunding seems relatively underdeveloped, especially concerning non-consumptive or philanthropic behaviors. This also applies to the topic of intrinsic motivation mainly, as the phenomenon of crowdfunding itself and its popularity most especially are still arguably young. Although significant progress has been made regarding behavioral factors, such as the pursuit of specific rewards or the existence of altruistic motives affecting crowd motivations (*see* Steigenberger, 2017), further contributions seem welcome concerning the specific types of projects involved. Furthermore, to my knowledge, there is no basic framework linking forum posts, the prime source of data for this study, to non-use or non-consumptive behaviors or motivations, in the context of crowdfunding, much less in a cultural or artistic perspective. This study therefore aims to focus on the rapidly changing cultural industries, and the implications crowdfunding have for these. Indeed, one may suggest crowdfunding will represent a significant source of funding for the many different types of cultural business ventures in the years to come. It may become a prime alternative to intermediaries such as publishing houses or record labels for example (Beaumont-Thomas, 2014). Therefore, this study may further our understanding of crowd motivation and how backers, or funders, engage with specific projects. This gives a social motif to my thesis, as such information may allow entrepreneurs to minimize risk, assess the potential support they may expect for their venture, as well as its chance of success, and invest resources adequately.

Objective: This thesis focuses on how backers refer to the pursuit of indirect or non-individual benefits in the context of the reward-based crowdfunding of cultural ventures, how rewards or motivations brought upon by the act of crowdfunding might be intrinsic, and in what manner such elements might compel individuals to act and to express themselves on forums as they do.

Part II – Literature Review:

I. Defining the cultural and artistic sectors:

This next subpart will focus on narrowing down the subject of my thesis by clarifying what can be referred to as the cultural or artistic industries.

These segments of the economy have drawn growing interest from academics and policy makers since the 1980s. This was not only spurred by the fact that these industries represent a relatively significant amount of revenue on their own, but also by the belief that they serve to attract a highly-skilled workforce, which in turn powers other high-revenue and innovative industries, in the high-tech sector mainly. Early proponents of such ideas would be Richard Florida (*see* Florida, 2003), who examined the causes for the Silicon Valley’s success amongst others, although the discipline has grown exponentially since.

Due to economic development and growth concerns, this interest has also extended into the political sphere. For these reasons, countries like France or the United Kingdom pushed the artistic sector to the front-stage in the 1970-1980s. As funding increased and had to be allocated effectively, these industries had to be accurately defined. The first such definitions were drafted in 1998 by the now defunct Department for Culture, Media and Sport of the United Kingdom, and notably by its Arts Council of Great Britain branch, according to whom artistic and cultural activities include “**book publishing**”, “**sound recording and music publishing**”, “**performing arts**”, “**support activities to performing arts**”, “**artistic creation**” and “**operation of arts facilities**” (Arts Council of England, 2015, p. 10).

However, the nature of this sector means the definitions of the cultural industries differ drastically depending on which body attempts to measure them. UNESCO, the UN’s body for culture emphasizes this fact. The World Intellectual Property Organization for example considers that copyright is the defining aspect of the cultural industries and will therefore include “**software and database**” or “**advertising services**” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 35) in its definition of the cultural industries. This is partly because the cultural industries often overlap with the notion of creative industries, a broader notion not always restricted to the arts, and with dissimilar economic properties (*see* Potts, 2011).

Therefore, defining the cultural industries for my thesis proved challenging. Indeed, there is no single, agreed-upon definition of what to include within the cultural industries, for several reasons. O'Connor (2000) emphasizes that the "definition of cultural industries is necessarily fairly fluid" (p. 21), and is intrinsically linked to policy, as well as questions revolving around aesthetics. The author therefore suggests that activities like gardening, amongst other things, could to a certain extent be included in the definition of the cultural industries.

Therefore, due to the issues brought upon by accurately defining the cultural sector, and to remain reasonably inclusive in my definition, I have decided to simply borrow the categories used by the crowdfunding website I decided to focus on for the large part, Kickstarter. As of writing this thesis, these include "Arts", "Film", "Publishing", "Games", "Music" and "Comics and illustration" (www.kickstarter.com), which one may argue constitute the core of what can be referred to as the artistic or cultural sector. It is however important to know that categories such as "Design & Tech" or "Food & Craft" (www.kickstarter.com), were excluded from this piece of research, although they could be worth including. This implies one of the limitations of my work is that defining the cultural sector was left almost entirely to my discretion. Furthermore, some backers only referred to the types of projects they either had contributed to or were interested in contributing to, without always referring to any project or webpage. Such limitations will be discussed later.

It seems worth noting this piece was initially intended to focus on the music industry. However, as the relevant data for this specific sector unlike others is quite limited, I have decided to broaden my focus to the wider cultural industries. An emphasis on the music industry can be expected in places.

II. Crowdfunding:

a) Defining Crowdfunding:

Crowdfunding itself is a fairly simple concept which, in the past two decades, has been accurately defined many times. It is derived from the notion of "crowdsourcing", defined by Howe as "The act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an

employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call.” (2006a, 2006b, *as cited in* Kraus, Richter, Brem, Cheng & Chang, 2016, p. 14). Considering it is the financing function which is here outsourced, one may broadly define crowdfunding as “the use of the web or another online tool to get a group of people to finance a particular project” (Martínez-Cañas, Ruiz-Palomino & Pozo-Rubio, 2012, p. 1471). Therefore crowdfunding, in this perspective, is a type of fundraising, yet differs from it by several ways: crowdfunding is less time or resource-consuming and caters to more than just banks or corporate investors for example, as it aims to communicate and draw contributions from a broader, larger audience (Milaap). Furthermore, anyone can start a crowdfunding campaign from anywhere, for any reason often with little to no accountability.

There is extensive literature on the different forms this fundraising may take. Kraus *et al.* identify four different types of crowdfunding, all reliant on two groups of users, the backers and the founder (Kraus *et al.*, 2016):

- **“Donation-based crowdfunding”**, which is of an altruistic nature.
- **“Reward-based crowdfunding”**, which provides tangible and intangible incentives to backers.
- The **“lending model”**, consisting of small loans.
- **“Equity-based crowdfunding”**, which turns investors into equity stakeholders or shareholders in a certain way.

(Kraus *et al.*, 2016, p. 15)

These four models are commonly used in academic literature concerning crowdfunding, although the terms used to qualify them may differ (*see also* Narmandakh, 2015).

I have decided to focus my study on the reward-based model as it seems to be of interest not only to demonstrate my argument, but also because it is one of the dominant models used for artistic or cultural business ventures, which is true in the case for video games (Steigenberger, 2017, p. 339) or other industries such as music. Focusing on this model will allow me to understand backer motivations for engaging into behaviors which serve more than one’s own utility.

b) Success factors in Crowdfunding:

After researching this topic, one may observe much of the literature rarely focuses solely on the behavioral aspects of backers to characterize project success, but either on the processes the founders are involved in triggering, with the goal to achieve this success, or on the founders' own personal characteristics.

Based on a sample of the 1.000 latest successful and unsuccessful projects across various industries on Kickstarter as of 10/28/2014, Koch and Siering (2015) find that both project-specific aspects, including depth of project description or provision of graphical and audiovisual material, as well as founder-specific aspects, such as previous project experience or funding reciprocity, have a significant impact on project success (p. 4). Reyes and Bahm (2016) argue this is because artifacts like videos have an effect in compelling backers to be more altruistic (p. 386): by fostering emotion, these materials have a significant effect on motivation to act and contribute to any given campaign. In this last case, it is worth mentioning that result uncertainty linked to the use of a survey completed by 337 respondents may give inaccurate results. Yet the consistent nature of these findings across different papers may tend to disprove this assumption.

For the purposes of this thesis, I assume that if such aspects are indeed central in triggering a reaction on the part of the backers, their general emotions and opinions can be made obvious through the language they use to interact or describe backed projects. My interest here therefore lies in part with explaining how such emotions are perceptible in crowdfunding-related forum posts, how they might spur motivation to be expressed, and how this leads them to choose amongst a panel of different rewards for cultural projects.

Analyzing the language used in 45.810 projects posted on Kickstarter, Mitra and Gilbert (2014) suggest the language, specific phrases used by founders when marketing, promoting or advertising their project, have a "predictive power" (p. 6), hence supporting the belief that project-specific aspects affect backer motivation. These convey arguments of reciprocity, scarcity or authority (pp. 9-10), and play a major role in backers' willingness to contribute, therefore influencing project success. One could however argue this paper seems to pertain more to the marketing techniques employed by founders to persuade specific audiences. However, and as I will mention later, these seem to be key elements in fostering backer motivation and have led me

to believe that they lead backers to express themselves in a certain way on crowdfunding-related forums.

Mitra and Gilbert (2014) use analysis methods similar to my own (p. 3). Yet, to my knowledge, they have never been employed to study exchanges between backers, backers and founders, or to examine their drives or motivations. I aim to demonstrate this is possible. Recent years have seen the emergence of a flurry of literature focused on the topic of online text analysis, with similar yet slightly differing objectives than mine. Further attention will be given to this research method in later parts of this thesis.

Focusing on different types of projects within the music industry posted on various German crowdfunding platforms, Scherer and Winter (2015) also suggest the quality and abundance of information regarding a given project plays a significant role in project success. The two authors argue that success partly depends on the size of the platform, the type of project, as well as the nature of the reward (pp. 14-16) and conclude that the nature and size of the rewards proposed by some founders should be positively linked and proportional to their price. Indeed, out of the 601 they surveyed, the authors find that backers whom had to contribute too much or too little to attain a specific “step” (p. 21) of rewards led to certain projects being less successful. Again, it would seem the importance of the rewards offered by founders for backers cannot be ignored in my analysis. The article also seems to stress the importance of taking into consideration which platforms backers refer to when mentioning a specific project they backed.

In the case of more philanthropic fundraising events however, it would seem the rewards may be more of the intangible nature such as social recognition, therefore restricting formal quantification on the part of the founders (Webber, 2004, p. 133). Again, for this thesis, I was more interested in how backers refer to the pursuit of indirect rewards in the context of reward-based crowdfunding, how some of these rewards might be intrinsic, and in what manner such elements might compel individuals to act and to express themselves on forums as they do.

Finally, authors such as Mollick (2014) argue not only that underlying project quality positively affects project success (p. 8), but so does the personal network size of the founder and geographic factors (pp. 8-9). Indeed, Mollick argues for example that backers are usually spatially close to the projects they contribute to (*see also* Mendes-Da-Silva, Rossini, Conte, Gattaz &

Francisco, 2015). This last fact is one to which I have paid close attention to, as it is recurring in the literature regarding crowdfunding and may have a significant impact on the outcome of any given crowdfunding campaign. Yet, as it is not possible to my knowledge to track the location of all active forum users, they had to be ignored. I would argue that this does not significantly affect my results for a single reason: backers who contribute to a specific crowdfunding project may be spatially close to it, but I would argue this aspect matters little when the subject of my study are the answers to open questions on a public forum directed to anyone on the planet who has access to it.

III. Non-use value, non-consumptive use and third-party use:

a) Defining non-use and non-consumptive use:

This thesis is based on the idea that the primary reason for backers' contributing to crowdfunding campaigns and hence forums is not necessarily the pursuit of the rewards offered by founders. In other words, this means they do not pay for the mere purpose of consuming, but for other, adjacent reasons as well. They see value in more than just the utility the product can bring them directly: they perceive utility in more than their own use of said product or project. In economic theory, this may be referred to as either non-use value or non-consumptive use.

Non-use value can broadly be defined as the value agents place on economic goods which they do not use. It is an unpriced benefit, and is attributable to many different factors, including the nature of the demand and that of the supply or product itself. On the demand-side this would include:

- **Option value:** agents are willing to pay for a product they might use later but do not at present (Towse, 2010, p. 170). This is close to the notion of existence value, which implies agents benefit from knowing a good exists (Brookshire, Eubanks & Randall, 1983).
- **Altruistic value or third-party value:** agents are willing to pay for maintaining an asset not used by themselves but by others, without directly benefitting from it.

- **Aesthetic and authenticity values:** both pertain to the attributes of the cultural goods themselves, but also the various subjective qualities of the creator (Cuccia, 2003, p. 94).
- Other values that I have also decided not to focus on due to their relative irrelevance for this study or their controversial nature. This would include aspects such as demand by future generations for example (Towse, 2010, p. 170).

Close to the notion of non-use value is that of non-consumptive use, which can be defined as “The use of resources in ways that do not reduce supply” and would include examples such as “hiking, bird watching, and nature study in a forest” (www.oxfordreference.com). This definition usually applies to specific sectors as I will explain in the next subpart.

As they imply a wider notion of good than that of a single agent, both these concepts are closely related to that of public goods. They are believed to improve general welfare in terms of education, equal access and opportunities, etc. Samuelson and Musgrave argue that these goods are non-rival, which means their consumption by one individual does not diminish the available quantity for another, and non-excludable, meaning one cannot be excluded from their consumption. The market cannot produce such goods in an efficient manner as there is little to no incentive to do so (Arrow, 1969, p. 10; White, 2012, pp. 339-340).

This idea is also close to that of the commons, attributed to Ostrom, and according to which the efficient governance and management of public goods requires the emergence of new institutions (Frey, 2010). Although the notion is quite distant from the point I am making here due to its specificity, it reflects the idea according to which there are goods which must be managed correctly to increase general welfare. For this thesis, I suggest that crowdfunded goods and projects can be perceived to increase general welfare, or at least are perceived by backers to have some sort of non-use or third-party use value which might compel them to support, without just pursuing the rewards offered.

This may be further supported if one is to consider crowdfunding as an economic anomaly, where agents often do not always seem to make rational choices. Frey and Eichenberger (1991) suggest that under certain conditions agents make irrational choices which go against their own benefit, or do not increase their own utility (p. 73), thereby negating foundational principals of

economics. Crowdfunding projects involve risk for backers: there is little accountability for founders, which means they can either never deliver a project at all, never send out rewards, or delay delivery. When supporting a campaign, backers are therefore conscious that they might potentially undermine their own interest. I would thus suggest that, alongside their own benefit, backers contribute to crowdfunding projects because they see other benefits than direct ones to themselves. Such beliefs may be caused by a successful campaign, but also by values that are central to spurring one backer's actions.

b) Practical implications of non-use value:

On the supply side, the concepts of non-use value or non-consumptive use apply to various sectors usually pertaining to “nonmarketed commodities” (Brookshire *et al.*, 1983, p. 1) and the issues pertaining to them. One recurring example would be that of wildlife or environmental preservation. Brookshire *et al.* (1983) aim to estimate the option value that future populations of various species may have for those who either strive to hunt them, or merely see value in their existence (pp. 4-5). In the case of the commons, this applies mostly to natural resources like fisheries, woodland or waterways. Such considerations also often apply to cultural heritage, often perceived as providing “outstanding universal value” (Bertacchini & Saccone, 2012, p. 336) for humankind, regardless of individual use.

It would seem the goals of such studies is to reveal if and how much agents and individuals value goods that are either not tangible to them, do not or cannot use. They are key to crafting public policy regarding preservation. Non-use value is often measured with a tool referred to as contingent valuation. Although Cuccia (2003) admits such methods are usually used to estimate “the value that individuals attribute to non-market goods” (p. 90), the author also suggests that they may be used for “non-market values of market goods that the price cannot reveal” (p. 90).

c) *Non-use value in the context of crowdfunding:*

One may therefore wonder if backers perceive non-consumptive, non-use value to crowdfunding. The key here is to understand whether crowdfunding projects and campaigns, which are clearly market goods in the case of reward-based crowdfunding and are priced to the discretion of the founder, are perceived to have non-market values by backers, and if so why and how do they express their attraction to these values on crowdfunding-related forums.

For donation-based crowdfunding, the importance of these third-party values is prevalent, although some forms of tangible or external rewards do exist in this context, and usually take the form of awards or crediting. Some argue such rewards are often preferable to financial rewards for example, as they possess many advantages: amongst other things, they do not require a principal to engage into contractual activities, and do not always require a standard for merit to be set (Frey & Gallus, 2016, p. 82).

Interestingly however, the most obvious type of project which presents a non-use or third-party use value to the backers would be that of the public good crowdfunding. For infrastructure or the environment for example (Ansink, Koetse, Bouma, Hauck & Soest, 2017, p. 2). Studies referring to such projects fail to mention other motivations which might spur individuals to support such projects, or other indirect benefits drawn from supporting them. They usually focus on other success factors such as the reward size. Ansink *et al.* (2017) for example, suggest that in the case of the crowdfunding of public goods, agents make perfectly rational comparisons between rewards when contributing to a campaign or project (p. 22), but omit any other factors which may be potentially motivating for backers. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the authors base their experiment on a form of equity or lending crowdfunding.

In the case of reward-based crowdfunding, usually defined by the tangible rewards one receives in exchange for a contribution, I suggest backers can also see a wider purpose to a single project, and this plays a large part in motivating them. One can see the larger cultural value of a single project, or the value it has for a third party for example. Indeed, some suggest the way crowdfunding has evolved has changed the way people interact with it. Pais and Castrataro (2014) offer several basic operating factors to explain how this method of finance has changed. For example, they suggest that the evolution of crowdfunding has led new values to emerge at its core:

most of them social, including “connective action”, “active participation” or “reputation and trust” (pp. 185-186). Most interestingly however, they suggest that the evolution of crowdfunding has resulted in “**New forms of rewards**” where “**transactions are not always activated in order to buy something. (...) often the rewards are non-monetary and, in most cases, they represent a collective return rather than an individual one.**” (Pais & Castrataro, 2014, p. 186)

I aim to demonstrate that there is a myriad of motivations which may spur backers to contribute to a crowdfunding campaign, yet they are in large part driven internally, in the pursuit of intangible rewards.

d) Defining aspects of non-use value for this study:

Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis and following the various works referenced above, I considered the main aspects of non-use value perceived by backers when contributing to a crowdfunding campaign are as follows:

- **Social or community aspects of the project:** It would seem non-use value can in certain cases include, as mentioned above, altruistic or third-party use value, whether that third-party be the founder, another backer or anyone else. I would argue this implies that most activities which possess a non-use value for certain individuals imply wider social considerations by said individuals: their posts would therefore reference a third party. I also consider that ideas of empathy or solidarity, regardless of what or who they are directed to, are to be included in this category. Indeed, I believe they are markers of socialization rather than the expression of a positive emotion per se: they are not necessarily expressed in a positive context, and by definition require the involvement of two or more parties.
- **Altruism, philanthropy, ideas that transcend commercial values:** Considering what is stated above, I would argue such values to be a corollary to the social value perceived in crowdfunding projects by backers. Indeed, ideas such as these are more concerned with a notion of greater good or welfare, hence including a third-party whatever it may be. This will be further discussed in **Part III) – III. – a)**. Regardless, both these ideas may be

emblematic of the idea according to which backers pursue a form of “collective return” (Pais & Castrataro, 2014, p. 186), rather than a direct one.

- **Felt and expressed positive emotions:** I would suggest here that expressing why a specific project has value for a third party, will result in the expression of positive emotions. The drive towards wider considerations than one’s own utility seems to be obviously linked to the expression of positive emotions. I argue here that these positive emotions, as defining aspects of non-use value for backers, are a symptom of the belief held by backers that they are contributing to a good cause. I would argue that the pursuit of ‘good’ is therefore logically linked to the expression of positive emotions. Considering the works mentioned above, it would also seem the expression of such emotions are the result of them being voluntarily fostered by project founders, as they seem to indicate higher project success rates.

I would also suggest the aesthetic, existence or authenticity values mentioned above can be fall under these three categories: individuals can perceive all three of these values in the projects they support regardless of whether they directly benefit from it or not. As I aim to demonstrate through my data analysis, these ideas are recurring and are often directed towards a third party.

It seems necessary to stress that these characteristics alone will not help decipher non-use value, or any indirect benefit that users may derive from supporting a crowdfunding campaign: positive emotions for example, can be found in many posts but cannot serve to verify the presence of these indirect benefits unless they are considered in conjunction with other the aspects mentioned above.

These aspects will be further discussed when describing data collection and analysis methods. I believe however that such non-individual benefits are the ends pursued by backers. Yet what spurs them to act is to be found elsewhere. Indeed, I would suggest the key in understanding backers’ thought and action process, is the concept of intrinsic motivation. It seems to be closely linked to philanthropic behavior, third-party use and non-use value, as these values provide intangible, and often internal, rewards for the large part.

IV. The study of intrinsic motivation in the context of crowdfunding:

a) Defining intrinsic motivation:

Before looking more closely to the topic of intrinsic motivation within crowdfunding, this next subpart will first focus on defining the concept of intrinsic motivation.

Broadly put, James (2005) suggests that intrinsic drives, **“are the prototypes of autonomous or self-determined actions because they are performed out of interest and for the inherent satisfaction they yield”** (p. 551). The author therefore suggests that agents who are intrinsically motivated voluntarily want to participate and engage with an activity, without external prods, promises or threats. Therefore, one may suggest intrinsic factors play an important role in individual motivation. This implies that external interventions, through for example monetary rewards or punishments, have a direct, often negative, effect on intrinsic motivation.

This is known as the Motivation Crowding Effect, an economic concept which asserts that the use of price mechanisms is not always advisable. According to Frey and Jegen, “under particular conditions, monetary rewards undermine intrinsic motivation” (2001, p. 589) and will diminish quality or supply of a product: a concept commonly referred to as the crowding-out theory. Thus culture, for example, as providing “unpriced benefits” (Towse, 2010, p. 169) which tend to increase general welfare, is often perceived as being subject to intrinsic motivations in its creation and consumption. The notion of welfare is a recurring one in academia concerning cultural economics and seems to suggest there is a wider non-use value to cultural projects, one which backers can perceive as well.

The basic drivers of intrinsic motivation here are a perceived need by agents for competence and autonomy. If both conditions are fulfilled, the agent will be satisfied and pursue the activity regardless of additional tangible or external rewards. Following this arguably uncommon idea in economic theory, James emphasizes how increasing extrinsic rewards might have counterintuitive effects, and therefore might “crowd out” (2005, p. 550-551) intrinsic motivations. Increasing extrinsic rewards for an agent undertaking a specific work will only serve to motivate and increase productivity up until an optimal point, beyond which additional tangible rewards have little to no effect on one’s own motivation.

b) Different Approaches to Intrinsic Motivation:

Therefore, it would seem intrinsic motivations can be conceptualized as something that compels agents to act and is therefore more far-reaching than may seem. Thus, it is subject to many conceptualizations. Ryan and Deci (1985) divide them into six categories:

- **“approaches based on drive-naming”**: They imply any other drive than physiological ones. This would mean agents are driven by two types of objectives; physiological ones like seeking food; and intangible ones such as the need to explore, curiosity.
- **“psychodynamic drive theory”**: This theory implies that intrinsic motivation is an instinct dictated by aggressiveness and sexual needs amongst other things. To sum up, behavioral theorists who adhere to this school of thought believe intrinsic motivation to be an **“instinct to master”**, the state in which any given agent is conscious of what is, leading him/her to strive for what could be.
- **“physiological arousal”**: Here, it is believed that intrinsically-motivated behaviors appear when agents are beneath an optimal level of arousal, which leads them to boredom. To return to this optimal state, they engage into stimulating activities. If they supersede the optimum, this may lead them to a state referred to as distress.
- **“psychological incongruity”**: When agents engage into behavior that bridges between what is and what should be, which creates arousal. One may argue this theory contains reminders of the idea of “instinct to master”
- **“competence and self-determination”**: This theory holds the most similarities to the aspects of intrinsic motivation mentioned so far. It suggests individuals are driven by a need for competence and to be validated through it.
- And **“emotion”**: here, emotions spur intrinsically-motivated behaviors, which are characterized by enjoyment.

(Ryan & Deci, 1985, *as cited in* Saari, 2012, pp. 8-10).

Saari (2012) notes that most of these theories do not explicitly refer to intrinsic motivation but are mainly attempts to explain it. Although these different approaches may seem somewhat vague, they share several similarities, which I shall use for my data analysis.

c) Self-determination Theory:

The most prominent conception of intrinsic motivation, which nonetheless shares characteristics with those mentioned above, would be Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory. They argue that intrinsic motivation "refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable" (2000, p. 55). The authors suggest humans must fulfill a certain set of basic needs to reach optimal functioning, needs they divide into autonomy, competence and relatedness:

- **"Autonomy"**: a person's experience of having freely chosen a behavior
- **"Competence"**: a person's perceived ability in relation to a given task
- **"Relatedness"**: having a sense of belonging and/or social support.

(Saarii, 2012, pp. 11-12; Ryan & Deci, 2000)

The authors suggest that the intrinsically motivated tend to engage into behaviors that fulfill such needs, provide internal rewards, and sometimes are spurred by mere interest or curiosity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). Furthermore, the authors suggest there exists a panel, or continuum, of motivations beyond the mere notions of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (**See Appendix 1**).

For the purposes of this study, we shall mainly focus on the concept of intrinsic motivation and drives as the main driver for backers' actions, amongst other values, such as the consumptive use values they may derive from consuming their rewards.

d) Practical Implications and Illustrations of Intrinsic motivation:

Additional academic literature surrounding intrinsic motivation suggests that interpretation of rewards in relation to feelings of self-determination can be an agent's main driver to action (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999, p. 628). Ryan and Deci (2000) not only suggest that agents are different and therefore motivated by different things (p. 54), but that they are usually shown to be intrinsically motivated under specific circumstances (p. 58). The authors suggest for example that

social or environmental factors can play a role in its manifestation, although any type of behavior motivated by the activity itself is usually a manifestation of intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 1985, *as cited in* Saari, 2012, p. 8). James (2005) suggests for example that social, generalized norms may play a role, although often a minor one, in this process. If generalized norms tend to validate the activity an agent is conducting, the latter will see his or her competence affirmed and recognized (p. 554).

James (2005) also suggests motivation crowding out may be explained by two factors: the object to which intrinsic motivation is tied and the significance it has for the agent; and the size of the incentive and fixed compensation. In a case where initial extrinsic rewards are low, a low-paying job for example, an increase in extrinsic rewards, or pay raise, may lead to more motivation and subsequent productivity. However, in the case of a high-paying job, a raise might be perceived as an attempt of control, undermining the employee's strife for autonomy and therefore crowding out his/her motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) also suggest that, in the workplace for example, positive feedback may have a positive result on an employee's motivation, opposite to threats or deadlines (p. 59). These theories do not suggest that external and/or tangible rewards are unnecessary or ineffective in motivating individuals, but that they are part of a bigger panel of motivations.

e) **Associations to ideas of wanting and liking:**

Much of the literature surrounding the topic of intrinsic motivation I use is drawn from a corpus of psychological, and sometimes medical, literature. Indeed, this concept has neural implications as well, and is closely linked to the processes involved in 'wanting' or 'liking' something.

Saari (2012) suggests the feeling of wanting is associated to the motivation to engage into behaviors with the aim to obtain something, spurred by the secretion of dopamine. Liking is associated to the pleasure of having this something, and to the pleasure parts of the brain (p. 23). These two processes are linked to the concepts of utility and addiction, found in economic theory as well: the secretion of dopamine triggers the want for to get something, but the marginal utility for an additional unit of whatever is pursued can decrease with use. Common examples may

include drugs, tobacco or alcohol, where past a certain point utility or pleasure derived will decrease and pain will increase, but addiction will cause the agent to seek more. For the purposes of this thesis, this idea can be interpreted as meaning that backers don't necessarily see pleasure in actually having, owning or actively using the product they crowdfunded, but in seeing it being realized and benefit a community.

It would therefore seem the notion of want is central to the postulates formulated in this thesis. After researching this topic, one may also assume it is closely related to that of curiosity. Litman (2005) defines curiosity as the “**desire to know, to see, or to experience that motivates exploratory behavior directed towards the acquisition of new information**” (p. 793). The author suggests that curiosity is “**often described in terms of positive affectivity, and acquiring knowledge when one's curiosity has been aroused is considered intrinsically rewarding and highly pleasurable**” (Litman, 2005, p. 793). Although Litman recognizes the extent of this arousal can be limited depending on context, this might imply that participating in a campaign be motivating itself, as it suggests searching and obtaining information to be a motivating factor itself.

Therefore, the sense of wanting, the “neural basis for motivation” (Saari, 2012, p. 23), can imply that agents are intrinsically motivated to seek and obtain information which has aroused their interest and curiosity, as they see it as pleasurable. This implies that backers may engage with a crowdfunding campaign not because of the tangible rewards it provides, but for the overall value of the project itself and the way it is promoted. On a larger scale, they may perceive the general worth of said project, even if they do not necessarily use it or do not seek a reward from it.

*f) **Intrinsic motivation within the context of crowdfunding:***

Although rare, several authors have directly referred to intrinsic motivation within the context of crowdfunding. Narmandakh (2015) states that “**intrinsic factors are less concerned with big wins in the future but rather as the impact it has on the individual or the environment in which they see as being relevant to them.**” (p. 3), and therefore suggests that individuals may contribute to crowdfunding projects due to their pursuit of a sense of achievement, of community, a sense of ownership pertaining to the project they contributed to finance, but also due to the impact the project might have on society and on the individual, therefore suggesting that

backers engage into some sort of gift economy, typically pursuing non-use values. Gerber and Hui (2013) complete this thought by suggesting backers may be motivated by perceptions of control and choice regarding the project they support (p. 24).

This would therefore imply that backers are driven intrinsically, or internally, rather than by external and/or tangible factors. Most crowdfunding platforms, including large ones such as Kickstarter or Indiegogo, offer the possibility for founders to offer what can be referred to as a philanthropic reward: the idea according to which any given backer can help fund a campaign and immediately perceive nothing tangible from the founder in return.

One may suggest that such behaviors might be typically intrinsically motivated. In her study of the importance of various rewards in project success rates, Kuijpers (2017) aims to correlate various reward-seeking behaviors, one of them being philanthropic, to crowdfunding project success. Amongst other things, the author suggests such behaviors may be adopted because agents who adopt them perceive some sort of “inner utility” (p. 16) and satisfaction, which Harbough refers to as either a “warm glow” or “prestige” (Harbough, 1998, *as cited in* Kuijpers, 2017, p. 16). The author further suggests that tangible and/or external rewards may undermine such feelings, and therefore undermine the agent’s intrinsic motivation, what may be referred to as “the hidden cost of rewards” (Frey, 1999, *as cited in* Kuijpers, 2017, p. 17). However, Kuijpers finds no obvious link between the presence of a philanthropic reward and project success rates.

One may suggest this study, although very rich, might be limited in scope because it solely focuses on the Dutch crowdfunding platform Voor De Kunst, and its subject, although overlapping with mine, is not similar. Furthermore, it does not necessarily imply that backers privilege the tangible and external rewards over every other factor mentioned above, but perhaps that they were driven towards the project by some sort of inner motivation, or wider, social consideration: a non-use, or third-party use value.

The most prominent contribution in this regard would however be Steigenberger’s (2017) study of backer reward-based behaviors when contributing to video game crowdfunding projects.

Indeed, the author suggests there are three main sources of subjective utility: consumption, where backers “contribute resources according to the expected utility derived from consumption of the product to be developed or the rewards associated with the resource commitment” (p. 337), altruism, and social belonging (pp. 337-338), both of which I have mentioned previously. This seems to suggest individuals are driven by a variety of motives. Overall, Steigenberger suggests that crowdfunding allows efficient resource allocation within a specific niche market, and the success of such a project may create “beneficial welfare effects” (p. 350). This further seems to support the idea that crowdfunding backers perceive a non-use value to supporting crowdfunding projects, whether it profit a third-party or wider community, which they derive utility from.

Adding to this research, I aim to demonstrate the importance of such internal motivations in the decision to contribute or not to a crowdfunding campaign, depending on the type of project.

g) Implications of Intrinsic Motivation for this thesis:

The complexities of the theories of intrinsic motivation require that I define accurately the elements I am looking for, and how they may allow to decipher indirect benefits. Following my literature review above, I assume that founders and their campaigns play a major role in fostering such aspects.

Backers act as consumers most of the time, as evidenced by the fact that philanthropic rewards are often not the most sought out: they perceive intrinsic value, which serves their own direct benefit, in acquiring and using their reward.

The argument I make here however is the following: backers are intrinsically motivated to contribute not only for the reward, nor because they are explicitly encouraged or validated by doing so, but because the process of crowdfunding is in a way stimulating to them. The direct benefits they draw from the rewards are obvious in my results, yet the inner utility they derive from the act of crowdfunding can sometimes supersede direct benefits drawn from it. Crowdfunding provides them with inner rewards, which respond to certain needs. Considering most of the posts in my sample focus on the act of crowdfunding itself, to what comes before the backers receive the rewards, I therefore refer to intrinsic motivation in this context itself.

- **Inner drives:** Intrinsically-motivated individuals seem to adopt behaviors which respond to their needs of empowerment, competence and autonomy in action, what I refer to as inner or internal drives. I suggest here that the act of crowdfunding provides backers with a platform to satisfy these needs. No crowdfunding project could get off the ground without them, so they are empowered. They act as investors, exerting their competence, and founders depend on their free will or autonomy to see a project come to life. As I will argue, backers seem to be very aware of this. I therefore suggest here that one of the crucial motivations for backing is the satisfaction of these needs through intrinsic rewards, which they express through language.
- **Elements of curiosity, feelings of want:** The idea that backers try to satisfy certain needs through the act of crowdfunding is closely related to the notion that they strive to reach what could be, the notion of “want”. It seems backers have an underlying interest not only in discovering innovative, novel or creative projects, but also in contributing towards the creation of aesthetic, existence or authenticity value. This aspect of intrinsic motivation is useful if one is to consider the backers see some sort of larger purpose in the projects they support, whether it be a technological, artistic or social innovation. The elements of this category would relate to the “Intrigue” or “Inspiration” (Reyes & Bahm, 2016, p. 387) named by Reyes and Bahm in backer reactions to crowdfunding promotional videos.
- **Relatedness:** As they give away a sense of belonging, social norms seem to play a role in validating one’s actions, if the individual sees his/her competence reaffirmed (James, 2005, p. 554). This does not have to be done through explicit validation, but rather by the coherence one perceives between one’s actions and a general consensus.

Therefore, backers seem to engage into intrinsically-motivated behaviors which respond to the needs stated above. I would therefore argue that responding to such non-physiological needs creates arousal and hence the expression of positive emotions. They could be included in this list, yet I believe that perceiving non-use value in any given project, as well as being intrinsically

motivated to act towards its completion both create positive emotions by creating indirect benefits for the backer.

I believe that working with the concept of intrinsic motivation therefore must be treaded in conjunction with that of non-use, as studying both these concepts in this context means they must be considered together. I understand intrinsic motivation as mental process, which relies on the backer's own thought and action process in his/her strife for indirect, non-use value. I would suggest this to be further supported by the fact that several forum members mention they have either not received their reward, do not use it, have received it but are disappointed by it although they were charmed by the campaign, supported it to someone else's benefit etc. Therefore, by cross-referencing these aspects with those of non-use value, I aim to demonstrate that backers are driven by other purposes than by maximizing their own utility through consumptive use.

V. **Language analysis and Natural Language Processing:**

Beyond directly contacting backers to survey or interview them, a rich source of data concerning their motivations, emotions or sentiments would be the forums where they can interact, communicate with one another and most interestingly, express themselves. My data therefore comprises mainly of forum posts, which I have analyzed using natural language processing methods.

By no means is text analysis, or Natural Language Processing a newborn discipline. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010) suggest it appeared in the early XXth century with Freud's writing, and developed in the following decades as a technique to detect agent's "thoughts, intentions, and motives" (p. 25).

One of the forefathers of this discipline, James W. Pennebaker (2017), defines Natural Language Processing not only as "what (...) texts reveal about the people who authored them" (p. 101), but also how these texts lead people who utter them to act. In other words, it "focuses on how everyday language reflects basic social and personality processes"

(www.socialpsychology.org), in what way words translate to sentiment, emotion, and ultimately transition into action. Sub-disciplines of Natural Language Processing would include Sentiment Analysis and Opinion Mining.

The development of online interactions, mainly through social media has led to growing interest from many different stakeholders regarding the contents of messages posts on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter mainly. In the case of Twitter for example, Pak and Paroubek (2010) draw from a corpus of 300.000 text posts and seek to evidence patterns in expression of sentiment. To do so, they divided the corpus of texts into those containing either positive, negative or objective emotions. The authors took the emojis used in every text to decide whether an overall tweet should be considered as either. A tweet containing a “😊” (Pak & Paroubek, 2010, p. 1321) for example, would be a positive tweet. By doing so, they were able to determine patterns of language used when communicating specific emotions.

Many other texts treat of similar topics forming a strong corpus (*see* Go, Bhayani & Huang, 2009). Such methods have a wide variety of practical uses: the FBI has used sentiment analysis or opinion mining for various reasons (Pennebaker, 2017, p. 106). Such data can prove useful in determining public opinion for political reasons, namely during national elections (Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner & Welpe, 2010).

Many such works also focus on deciphering opinions or sentiment in online forums, with practical implications as well. In a paper which correlates opinion and motivation with action, Wen, Yang and Rose (2014) examine how posts by students attending a MOOC course reflected general opinion about the course and could be correlated with attendance levels. They also find that the expression of positive or negative emotions were differently correlated to attendance levels, depending on the type of the course (2014, p. 6). Although these differences were mainly attributable to the contents of the MOOCs themselves, I would argue the findings of this article, as well as that of others, were a good foundation on which to divide my own findings depending on the specific project involved. Following the findings of such articles, it also seems important to note that, in my sample, close attention was paid to context.

By observing investor behaviors and interactions during both opening and closing stages of the stock market, Wu, Zheng and Olson (2014) demonstrate a correlation between stock price volatility trends and stock market-related or themed forum sentiment (p. 1085). Such works seem to suggest that forum posts or such media interactions have practical implications, and these implications may be demonstrated especially when such posts are emotionally charged. As mentioned above, the use of promotional material, notably videos, plays a significant role in triggering these emotions (Reyes & Bahm, 2016, p. 387), although this is not the focus of my research.

Again, although many of the works mentioned above make mention of user motivations, few of them focus on the larger value they place on such projects, and what might compel backers to act to support them. I therefore see my work as an extension to those mentioned above.

Part III - Data Collection and Analysis method:

I. About Kickstarter, Crowdfundingforum.com and Kickstarterforum.org:

In this next part I will focus the platforms I have decided to work with, and the reasons for which I made these choices.

- Kickstarter: For several practical reasons I will discuss here, I have decided to focus on one crowdfunding platform mainly, although many other alternatives exist and are mentioned below. Founded in 2009, Kickstarter is the dominant platform of its type: it caters to a wide variety of industries including those mentioned above, claims to have collected over 3.6 billion USD from over 14 million backers, for nearly 150.000 successfully funded projects (www.kickstarter.com), or a 36.02 success rate (www.statista.com). The website has been the focus of much of the research concerning crowdfunding. The reason I selected Kickstarter mainly stems from the fact that most forum posts that proved relevant for this study concerned projects published on this platform. Furthermore, Kickstarter makes much of its data available, and many of the previously mentioned papers were either focused on Kickstarter, or the platform's size made it the main sample component of most studies, which is also the case for mine.

- Crowdfundingforum.net and Kickstarter.org: Both platforms are independently run forums focused on the topic of crowdfunding, the first having a general focus, the other being mainly, although not entirely, focused on campaigns or issues pertaining to projects published on Kickstarter, although Kickstarter is not affiliated with it. The reason I selected these two forums stems from the fact that they are to my knowledge the two most active forums entirely dedicated to crowdfunding, sharing tens of thousands of users between them. I excluded other such forums as they were either too small, too inactive, were often focused on other platforms than Kickstarter, or several of these reasons. I also considered using threads posted on Reddit, Facebook groups, or Steam forum threads in the case of video games. Yet again, many of these were either often too inactive, or were focused on issues with little to no relevance to my study focus.

I shall discuss issues linked to these choices in a later part of this thesis.

II. Methodology:

The complexity and unreliability of quantitative methods in this context have led me to focus on qualitative data and research methods. Indeed, as I wish to study the importance of intrinsic motivation of backers in their willingness to contribute and in subsequent project success, qualitative data seems more appropriate as it allows a better insight into individual motivations.

I wish to apply similar methods to those used by Mitra and Gilbert (2014) and others, through Natural Language Processing methods, or broadly speaking, through online opinion mining.

Although many of them are not active enough to provide a sufficient data sample, and although I've decided to focus on only two of them, forums related to or focusing on crowdfunding are abundant. They are often industry or product specific and are fueled by a community composed mainly of involved backers and active crowdfunding project funders. When interacting, describing, giving opinions about certain projects, one may argue that these people use specific

terms, phrases or words which reflect their emotions or feelings, including feelings of empowerment, competence and subsequent engagement with the project.

Therefore, the import of relevant data from Crowdfundingforum.net and Kickstarter.org led to an analysis through my own human reading, based on previous works pertaining to sentiment analysis, to demonstrate how it reflected the various aspects I was looking for.

III. Verifying the aforementioned characteristics:

a) Conciliating the concepts of Intrinsic Motivation and use-value through language:

To demonstrate the presence of the concepts mentioned above, it seems necessary to try to demonstrate how the aspects of both intrinsic motivation and non-use value can be conciliated. As a reminder, they are as follows:

Non-use value:

- **Social or community aspects of the project.**
- **Altruism, philanthropy, ideas that transcend commercial values.**
- **Felt and expressed positive emotions.**

Intrinsic motivation:

- **Inner Drives.**
- **Elements of curiosity, feelings of want.**
- **Relatedness.**

- **(Arousal, which leads to positive emotions.**

I will argue these aspects work in conjunction with and to a certain extent complement each other. Deciphering the presence of such concepts in online forum posts implies demonstrating that said posts validate various aspects pertaining to these concepts and observing how they co-occur. This following subsection is dedicated to elaborating how I plan to do this.

I have argued above that various aspects pertaining to crowdfunding campaigns have an effect in triggering certain responses on the part of the backers (*see* Koch & Siering, 2015; Mitra

& Gilbert, 2014; Scherer & Winter, 2015). These include altruistic, positive responses, marked by intrigue and curiosity or factors pertaining to one's own free will or power, such as competence or autonomy. Since my thesis focuses almost integrally on forum posts, I believe these to be decipherable through language.

The following material is therefore dedicated to presenting the 'dictionary' I crafted to do so. It was partly inspired by the LIWC system dictionary (*see* Pennebaker, Boyd, Jordan & Blackburn, 2015), a word-counting program created by Pennebaker and his associates, which classifies over 6000 words into various categories with varying relevance to my study. The terms below are partly drawn from the following LIWC categories: achievement, affiliation, social process, reward and personal terms (Pennebaker *et al*, 2015). By 'inspired' I imply that I saw little interest in using LIWC for my own thesis, but that it provided a useful foundation on which I could classify certain terms. In the cases mentioned above, I simply took the categories used by the program and progressively added terms to and alongside them after a long process I will outline here.

A larger part of the terms or phrases mentioned below were collected after a lengthy survey of the recurring terms used on Crowdfundingforum.com and Kickstarterforum.org and were associated by my own discretion to the four different aspects mentioned below. Initially, I combined the terms I found in the posts during preliminary readings with my own understanding of the significance of these terms. As the list grew longer I added synonyms to certain categories. As my framework got stronger, after several readings I was able to assign terms to a definite category with little to no overlapping in my view.

I would argue issues linked to overlapping were minimized by the careful attention paid to context during analysis. The word 'fun' for example, could have its meaning altered depending on whether the author was referring to his/her own enjoyment, or to that of a third party or larger group of people. Although such considerations were not limited to this one term, in this specific case the term would be counted in the Positive Emotions section when it referred to the authors own enjoyment (usually marked by first person terms like "mine" or "my"), and in both the Social Aspects and Positive Emotions sections, in the case where it referred to the enjoyment of a larger

group of people (often marked by affiliation terms like “friend”, “colleague”, “children”, etc.). Such issues were recurring for many terms.

It is worth mentioning that this is a concise list and does not include all the terms that could potentially decipher the motivations of backers behind their (inter-)actions. Not all suffixed or prefixed words could be mentioned but are implicitly included. Readers should consider that if the root word is present, derived terms are included as well. It seems obvious that at least several of these categories must be verified in a single post: positive emotions alone for example could be caused by the consumption of the product itself, depending on context.

- **Social aspects or Relatedness, crowdfunding as a group phenomenon:** I have argued above that actively seek non-use value are largely driven by social considerations. I believe this can be perceived in language with terms which emphasize such matters. In some cases, intrinsically-motivated individuals may also be attempting to adopt behaviors which validate some sort of general status quo, without their action necessarily needing to be explicitly validated by external forces, although this is not at all my focus here. One may also suggest such values usually transcend commercial values, and therefore any idea that reflects philanthropic, altruistic ideals or empathetical feelings may be put in this category, as they always imply a third party.
 - Achievement terms directed at others: “success”, “win”, “achieve/achievement”, “(good) luck”, “show love”, “support”, etc.
 - Affiliation terms such as “friend”, “social”, “fellow”, “colleague”, or other terms referring to a third party or acquaintance.
 - Social process terms like “we”/”us”, “you”, “they”, “like-minded”, etc.
 - Terms which pertain to a sense of belonging: “part of (something)”, etc.
 - Other Terms which might suggest social concerns: “rewarding”, “creative”, “help”, “sharing” “care/caring”, “give”, “hope”, “need”, etc.

- **Positive Emotions or Arousal:** These manifest for various reasons. Considering the importance of various success factors mentioned above in triggering an emotional response, backers will express satisfaction towards projects they believe accomplish a ‘good’ purpose or whose campaign’s various aspects trigger an emotional footprint. This satisfaction is also a symptom of their needs being met.

 - One may suggest these emotions or feelings may materialize in forums posts with positive words representing mainly positive emotions, or even emojis, although these terms should imply more than the backer’s own utility. Indeed, positive emotions can very well be triggered by the backers’ own benefit being maximized by the reward itself, something I will discuss later. Positive qualifiers for the project will work as well: (super/really) “amazing”, “awesome”, “enjoy”, “nice”, “sweet”, “rad”, “cool”, “great”, “happy”, “glad”, “neat”, “like”, “wonderful”, “magical”, “😊”, “:D”, “😁”, “hope”, “good”, “brilliant”, “enjoy”, “charm”, “anxious”, “fantastic”, “fun”, “dream”, “heart-warming”, etc.

- **Curiosity or Interest:** I understand this category as the ‘strife for what could be’ mentioned above. Although I concede this could be a strife for one’s own utility, or for that of another party whatever it may be. This is the prime reason for working intrinsic motivation in conjunction with the aspects of non-use value. Curiosity, or an interest in novelty and innovation, seems to be the prime reasons for backers to pursue projects to support. The project may arouse curiosity because it seems innovative or directly rewarding, because the campaign is effective in causing intrigue or inspiration, and it may seem innovative because it is pursued with wider, third-party considerations.

 - The terms I highlighted here are those who seem to mark an interest, a curiosity or a strife for something from the author: “intriguing”, “interesting”, “fascinated/fascinating”, “exciting/excited”, “curious”, “want”, “(really) like”, “support”, “creator/creative”, “irresistible”,

“impressive”, “incredible”, “uncommon”, “innovative”, “promising”, “inspiring”, “rewarding”, “new”, “brilliant”, “outstanding”, etc.

- **Internal drives, including feelings of empowerment, competence or autonomy:**

I mentioned above that backers expect to be convinced by any given project before accepting to back it, whether it be by the project’s intrinsic qualities, the quality of the material presented in the campaign, the founders experience, etc. In crowdfunding, one may argue backers are empowered from the onset: without their contribution, no project would come to life. The success of any project depends in large part on the agents’ free will and personal drives. Project founders must motivate backers to actually contribute to a campaign, by triggering a sense of involvement with the project, charming the backers into contributing. This investor behavior of backers is one I have extensively observed during my study. After extensive review of the posts, such feelings or drives seem perceptible through the following terms.

- The use of personal pronouns or empowering terms for example may be indicators of this aspect: the use of personal terms like “I”, “We”, or “expect/expectations”, “disappoint”, “help”, “want”, “success/succeed”, “favorite”, “generously” etc. Briefly put, any term that suggest the author has authority over a particular issue or topic.
- Terms pertaining to this ideal would be those focusing on one’s individuality and free will: “passionate/passion”, “want”, “love”, etc.
- Achievement terms like “success”, “win”, “achieve/achievement”, etc. Or reward terms such as “take”, “prize”, “benefit”, etc.

Whether or not these categories can perfectly reconcile the concepts of intrinsic motivation and non-use value remains to be seen. However, I believe this framework can enable me to test my assumptions, according to which there are other motivating factors than just purely consumptive ones for backers to act towards crowdfunding a certain project.

A major part of my paper consists in a comparative analysis between the different projects involved (Bryman, 2015, p. 72). As mentioned above, implications and results may vary depending on the specific types of projects overviewed. One may assume the implications for all ventures may differ. It is therefore essential to distinguish between these different projects. My framework is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – (Blank) Industry and Percentages of validated criteria table:

	Quantity in sample (n°)	Social Aspects (%)	Positive Emotions (%)	Curiosity or Interest (%)	Internal Drives (%)
Arts					
Film					
Publishing					
Games					
Music					
Comics & Illustration					
Total/Average across all industries					

b) Post Selection and Classification Process:

Due to the uncertainty linked to the specific terms I am looking for, the posts included in this thesis had to follow certain conditions as well as an explicit screening process before starting data collection. These conditions were kept to a minimum, and are outlined below:

- **Finding the posts:** The posts, including those that were cut out of my final sample, were all found after a lengthy review of both forums by my own hand.

- **Classification:** Posts were classified manually, mainly because word counting programs tend to ignore context, something I could not omit considering the relatively small size of my sample. The way I verified markers and subsequently classified posts was in part inspired by the classifications used by LIWC as I believe the program is helpful in doing so. Yet I concluded during the data collection process that using it would arguably prove unnecessary.
 - The factors mentioned above were verified in the following manner. Often, if one or more words pertaining to a specific category was present I would consider the category was verified for a given post. It is essential to stress that this was largely context-dependent.
 - First-person personal pronouns for example obviously cannot systematically be associated to empowerment but were usually uttered in response to a question directed to backers directly. **Example 1 - b** is a perfect demonstration of this: the post is a response to **Example 1 - a**, the original post of the thread on which both were posted.

Example 1 – a – Kickstarter Original Post n^o1:

How many projects have you backed and why do you back them?

by [sbriggman](#) » Fri Dec 19, 2014 4:46 am

Question:

1. How many projects have you backed on Kickstarter
2. What is your most frequent reason for backing?

My answer:

1. I have backed 82 projects.
2. Usually, because I like the creator or their creation and want to be able to say I was a part of this cool new ____.



[sbriggman](#)
-- Veteran Member --
★★★★★
Posts: 3477
Joined: Sat Apr 20, 2013 6:49 pm
Location: NYC

Example 1 – b - Kickstarterforum Post n°1:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **BonnieJoStufflebeam** » Mon Jul 06, 2015 7:29 pm

I've backed 8 projects. I mostly back projects in my industry, publishing, as I like to feel like I'm supporting other publishing ventures. I usually back for a copy of whatever thing they're creating. I rarely go for promotional t-shirts or special-edition posters, etc. I just want the book/album/piece of tech.

I'd probably have backed more, but up until recently I only worked part-time at a day job and didn't have a whole lot of funds. Now that I'm a full-time marketing manager for a press, I imagine I'll be backing more.

BonnieJoStufflebeam
-- New Member --
★☆☆☆☆
Posts: 8
Joined: Mon Jul 06, 2015 7:12 pm
Location: DFW, TX

- **Example 1 – a** is a question addressed directly to backers, **Example 1 – b** is a direct response from a backer to this question. Run through LIWC, the analysis of the response will emphasize the larger proportion of I-words, or first person singular terms contained in this post, which may imply the author is in no way driven by social considerations to back. This would reveal little about this post considering the author obviously perceives some value in backing creative projects which exceeds his/her own utility, mentioning the importance of “supporting other publishing ventures”, using social process terms such as “they” (**See Example 1 – b**). Other programs, such as SentiWordNet would mainly count markers of positive or negative emotions, and it seems the issues would be the same.
- Considering that this is a qualitative piece of work based on a small sample, the use of word-counting software would have ignored context-dependent or case-specific issues such as this one. I will further discuss some of these issues in **Part IV) – III.**
- Posts that fulfilled none of the aspects mentioned above were excluded from my sample (**See Example 2**).

Example 2 - Kickstarterforum Post n° 2:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by DevilsLegacy » Sat Jan 24, 2015 6:29 pm

Actually i backed 10 projects with the personal account and 3 with the company accoutn all related to Movie, anime and games.

Best
Gianpaolo

DevilsLegacy
-- New Member --

Posts: 3
Joined: Sat Jan 24, 2015 6:01 pm

- **Context:** The posts had to be written by backers or potential backers, had to be referring to cultural projects as defined above, and were selected because they seemed to be direct comments on said projects.
 - As I will argue below, I cannot guarantee that all posts in my sample were written by backers. Yet I believe that most of them were for several reasons: in most threads, the Ops were often addressing backers explicitly (**See Example 1 - a**), therefore spurring the reaction and response of the latter.
 - On a related point, most posts in my sample either explicitly refer to backing a project, to potentially backing one, or refer to the qualities of the projects themselves. Again, considering the authors are anonymous, I cannot guarantee that all of them were backers. The decision on whether or not they were was left entirely to my discretion. I believe it is logical, considering the facts stated above, that a very large portion of my sample is made of backers. This issue will be further discussed in **Part V**).
- **Industry:** When mentioning the projects they either backed in the past or prefer backing, some forum members mention several categories; e.g. games AND music, or games AND technology. In the first case, the post was kept in the sample and

both categories were counted. In the second, only the cultural category was counted, and the post was kept.

- **Information:** On a related note, I also expected at least a minimum amount of information regarding the cultural project mentioned by the author: a few qualifiers, adjectives, social terms, signs of drive or empowerment had to be present at the very least for the post to be kept in the sample. These terms also had to be related to the cultural project(s) referred to by the backer, and not to a non-cultural project if both were mentioned, to make keeping the post in the sample senseful.
- **Stemming:** For certain phrases and words from the list above to be included, they had to be stemmed so their meaning was not stripped from them. Indeed, some of the terms stated above have meanings that are context-dependent. Due to the issues mentioned by Wen *et al.* (2014), namely the fact that depending on the specific project and its industry the meaning of certain terms could be stripped from them, I believed it to be necessary to try to divide between the type of project involved. For example, when using the term ‘art’, some backers do not refer to the category used by Kickstarter, but to the design of any given project. For this reason, I believe it was important to complement LIWC’s dictionary with my own.
- **Popularity and Response Rate:** Obviously, some of the threads used in this study were more active than others. To obtain more generalizable results, I tried to balance between more (10< replies) and less (9> replies) active or popular threads. I felt it necessary to do so for the following reason: the topic, linked to the nature of the original post and therefore the way that authors responded to it, seemed to vary quite significantly between more or less popular threads. This is in large part linked to the nature of my sample, namely of the threads and/or posts I decided to keep in the sample, something I will discuss in further detail in **Part IV) – I.**

- **Size:** Although this was a hefty point of hesitation, I decided to limit the posts in my sample to those containing 10 or more words. Considering what was mentioned above regarding the studies focused on Twitter posts and online commentaries, I believe that it was possible to keep shorter posts. Although more words seem to make any sentiment analysis more accurate, the exact threshold was unclear to me, especially considering forum posts. I found that short posts written in an empathetical tone could provide richer data than longer posts written in a neutral tone. Links to other websites, mainly including links to projects posted for the large part on Kickstarter, were ignored in the word count.
- **Spelling:** Any minor spelling or grammar mistake was ignored, as long as the meanings of the sentences were intelligible to my own eye. Posts containing mistakes were corrected prior to being analyzed. Posts whose mistakes either seemed to strip their meaning from them, or made them intelligible, were excluded from this study. (See Weimar, Gurevych & Mühlhäuser, 2007; Weimer & Gurevych, 2007).

*c) **Demonstration:***

This following part aims to demonstrate how I plan to apply the above-mentioned method.

The post showed below was posted on Kickstarterforum.org on a thread meant for backers to explicit how many projects they had backed and why. It was retrieved on May 1st 2018 (See **Example 3**¹).

¹ For most of the observations I make in this thesis, I decided to provide only one or two posts as examples to illustrate. These observations become clearer on a larger scale when the full sample is available.


Example 3 – Kickstarterforum Post n°3:


Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **hollyelizabeth** » Sun Dec 21, 2014 7:01 pm

1. I have backed two projects.

2. I back up projects because in either really passionate about the film they are trying to make or because it is a fellow filmmaker and I know how difficult it is to get a film made with little resources and I try to help out with whatever I can.

hollyelizabeth
-- New Member --

Posts: 6
Joined: Sun Dec 21, 2014 6:51 pm



The author of this post is basically explaining which projects he/she has backed and why, in this case two films. Although it is quite short, and does not validate all defining characteristics mentioned above, I believe it is a good case study of the elements I am looking for, and how their presence may be more or less clearly evident. I discuss the various relevant factors below:

Factors decipherable through language:

- **Social Aspects:** This aspect can mainly be deciphered by the presence of a social process terms such as ‘they’, affiliation term ‘fellow’ which seems to suggest relatedness to the film directors the author is referring to. It also seems to suggest that the author has acted in large part in the interest of a third party, therefore not necessarily seeking to maximize his/her own utility.
- **Internal Drives:** The author uses the term ‘passionate’ to qualify his/her inner drive towards the projects backed, without referring to the films themselves, their overall quality or genre explicitly. One may suggest the author sees an overall cultural value to these projects, which goes beyond the films themselves or their content. The recurring use of first-person terms, or ideas which suggest some sort of paternalism, such as ‘help’, might suggest empowerment, as the backer here is compelled to act to the benefit of the filmmakers.

Factors not clearly evident:

- **Curiosity or Interest:** The backer's interest for novelty is not quite obvious here, as no terms seem to reflect this ideal. I would however argue that, since the author seems to perceive a non-negligible cultural and artistic value to the projects mentioned, and seems to have acted to support 'fellow filmmakers', he/she believed to have contributed in the optic of a wider cultural goal.
- **Positive Emotions:** Although the term 'passionate' may suggest arousal, the overall tone of this post seems to be more empathetical or compassionate rather than positive per say. Although one may argue these emotions are positive, I would suggest they do not reflect the idea of wanting, mentioned above, enough to qualify fully as positive: it would rather seem the author may have contributed to these projects by their sheer necessity, rather than for their intrinsic qualities. I believe such expressions of empathy represent a socializing process rather than positive emotions, and I have therefore classified such occurrences under the 'Social Aspects' qualifier.

Obviously, all posts cannot perfectly verify all characteristics through language only. Some interpretation had to be undertaken beyond the words involved in the posts. I merely use the specific terms mentioned above as markers of the non-use value authors can perceive in the projects, or of their motivations for supporting.

Although this post is quite short, it seems to provide a good case study for what I aim to do through my thesis. Many of the posts used in this study are longer and more detailed, containing more of the aspects mentioned above. In the next part, I will aim to point out similarities and recurring observations made during data analysis, to try to extract what posts usually have in common, recurring aspects, as well as discussion pertaining to more individual cases.

Part IV – Results, Findings:

I. The Sample:

The data collection process for this thesis started on May 1st, 2018 and extended until submission of its first draft on May 22nd. My research led me to collect approximately 250 posts who seemed relevant to my thesis after initial reading. For various reasons listed in **Part III – III. – b)**, I cut out a portion of this initial sample, bringing my total sample size down to 178 posts spanning 20 threads (**See Table 2**). As displayed in Table 2, some posts were counted several times depending on the number of projects and number of project types (industry) their authors refer to in a single post. Indeed, I mentioned in **Part III – III. - b)** that posts referring to several projects or project types would be counted several times. The total number of project types, resting at 220, is therefore slightly higher than that of the total number of posts.

Table 2 - Number of posts by industry on both forums^{2,3}:

	Kickstarterforum		Crowdfundingforum		Total	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Arts	18	11,25	-	0	18	8,2
Film	37	23,1	7	11,7	44	20
Publishing	15	9,4	7	11,7	22	10
Games	57	35,7	29	48	86	39
Music	15	9,4	-	0	15	7
Comics & Illustration	18	11,25	17	28	35	16
Total Project Types	160	100	60	100	220	100
Total Posts:	125	70,2	53	29,8	178	100

² As mentioned above, certain posts were counted several times as they referred to several types of projects. The total number of actual posts making up my sample is mentioned in this table in the “Total Posts” row.

³ Note that although several projects of the same category may have been backed by a single author, the category would only be counted once within a single post.

The main body of my sample comes from threads where explicit questions about which projects they preferred or why were asked to forum members, namely to the backers participating to the forum. Others were usually comments pertaining to a specific founder's project which was posted on the forum to gain visibility. This was mainly the case for Crowdfundingforum.com, as the website seems to have deleted, to my surprise and regret, many lengthy threads discussing backer motivations which may have been quite useful to this study.

Although I have tried to focus on both forums equally, my results may seem to be largely based on the posts retrieved from Kickstarterforum.org, as I collected 125 posts from the latter, and only 53 from Crowdfundingforum.com. I do believe that this unequal treatment has led to more diversity in my overall study, as it seemed to me that the way people interacted, or the culture on both forums was very different.

Overall, the posts which constitute my sample were written between 2013 and 2018 across both forums. As expected, with over 146 projects mentioned to have been posted on Kickstarter, it would seem this platform was the preferred crowdfunding platform for those making up my sample. Although other such platforms were mentioned, such as Indiegogo or Pledgemusic, these were mainly occasional. Often too, many authors did not disclose which platform they preferred or had supported projects on, and so the projects they referred to were classified under the "Unknown" section. Overall, 206 of projects were either mentioned to have been posted on Kickstarter, or the platform on which they were posted was not mentioned at all (See **Table 3**).

Table 3 - Distribution of projects by Crowdfunding platform:

N°	Kickstarter	Indiegogo	Crowdfunder.co.uk	Prefundia	Unclear ⁴	Unknown ⁵	Total
Arts	7	-	-	-	-	11	18
Film	31	1	-	-	-	12	44
Publishing	16	-	-	-	1	5	22
Games	62	-	1	6	1	16	85
Music	6	1	-	-	2	6	15
Comics & Illustration	25	-	-	-	-	10	35
Total	146	2	1	6	4	60	220

Accounting for 39% of the whole sample, the “**games**” category was referred to the most (See Table 2), whether they were board, card or video games. I would argue this to be the case because the gaming community seems to be the most active on both crowdfunding platforms and on the forums, and several forum members have expressed such beliefs quite clearly as demonstrated in Example 4. With big names like Star Citizen, Exploding Kittens, or Kingdom Come: Deliverance as I will mention again later on, it would explain why games make up a large portion of my sample. It may also be because “**games**” include many different types of things, but this could be said for almost all categories.

⁴ The “Unclear” section is dedicated to posts which referred to several types of projects backed on several platforms, without it being made clear which projects were posted on which platforms.

⁵ The “Unknown” section is dedicated to posts who do not explicitly refer to any specific project name or to any specific platform. When the name of the project was available, but the platform’s name was not, I manually searched on which crowdfunding platform the project was uploaded.

Example 4 - Kickstarterforum Post n°4:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **Mr Earthly** » Sun Oct 01, 2017 12:33 am

I usually only back games on Kickstarter because I feel like that's where everyone's creativity shines. And you get to be a part of it after you back them and they give you a copy of their game in return.

Also, I might be a little biased, but I definitely think that community of backers on the games section on Kickstarter is the strongest. Games that sound great are usually wildly successful, whereas games that sound not so great, are still successful, but not wildly.

Mr Earthly
-- New Member --
☆☆☆☆☆☆
Posts: 1
Joined: Sun Oct 01, 2017 12:25 am

^

To my surprise, accounting for a combined total of 33 projects out of 220, the projects which were referred to the least were “**music**” and “**arts**” (See **Table 2**), for reasons I cannot quite explain. This is probably linked to the demographics pertaining to those who participate on the forums, the general culture of the forums or of the crowdfunding platforms involved, namely Kickstarter. The platform is however quite renown for certain prominent musical projects. I would therefore link the scarcity of both these categories to characteristics pertaining to the forums I focused on.

“**Publishing**”, “**film**” or “**comics and illustration**” were quite evenly distributed across my sample. One may note the higher recurrence of “**film**” and “**comics and illustration**” amongst these, for reasons I shall explain by validating the characteristics of non-use value (See **Table 2**).

II. General Remarks:

My interest here, as evidenced by **Table 4**, lies in the percentages of posts which verified each factor for each industry and across all industries. This next sub-part is dedicated to verifying certain motivations in the backer’s posts and will attempt to explain anomalies.

If the forum authors were driven by other values than consumptive ones, and if my own framework is correct, at least several, related characteristics should be consistently observed across different posts. If all of them were verified consistently across a whole industry, I would consider the backers who focus on these industries to be driven by non-consumptive benefits, at least for

the portion that did validate said characteristics. For example, in the case of publishing, considering my results, I would suggest that about 40% of authors were largely driven by non-consumptive value. Although this is true in many cases, a few anomalies seem to appear, which we will examine here.

Table 4 – Filled-In Industry and Percentages of validated criteria table^{6,7} :

	Quantity in sample (n°)	Social Aspects (%)	Positive Emotions (%)	Curiosity or Interest (%)	Internal Drives (%)
Arts	18	55,5	55,5	39	39
Film	44	45,5	48	23	29,5
Publishing	22	45	45	45	32
Games	85	23,5	70,6	32	34
Music	15	73	33	13	33
Comics & Illustration	35	31,4	77	20	37
Total/Average across all industries	220	37,3	60,4	29	34

Before elaborating on my data analysis, I will here discuss several general remarks I believe are key to the completion of my thesis.

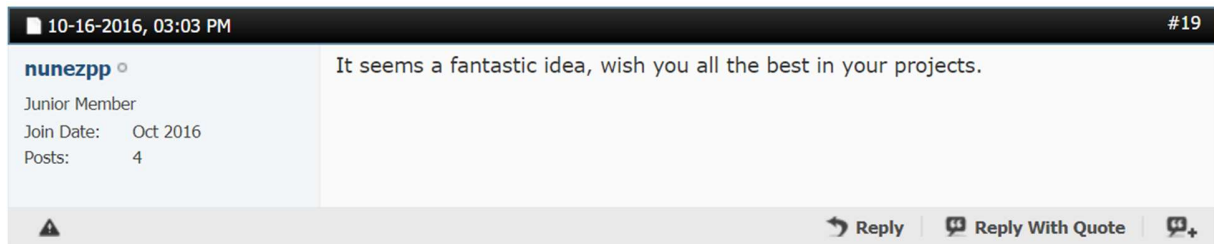
First, as discussed in **Part V** it is sometimes unclear amongst the posts that make up my sample whether some individuals even consider backing a project, as they do not explicitly mention backing. They merely seem to encourage the founders who start said projects (**See Example 5**). Although the reasons why are unknown to me, I decided not to exclude these posts

⁶ The percentage of every factor represents how many times said factor was verified in the total number of projects for a single industry.

⁷ Besides the “Quantity in sample” column, all numbers indicated in this column represent how many times individual factors were counted in a single industry. All other columns should be read as follows: e.g. “Social Aspects were verified in 55,5% of posts which referred to projects pertaining to the ‘arts’ category”.

as I believe their authors are still potential or past backers who do truly see value in the projects they are referring to.

Example 5 – Crowdfundingforum Post n°1:



I also believe it is worth noting that certain immensely popular and successful crowdfunding projects were mentioned in several of the posts making up my data sample: *i.e.* the Exploding Kittens card game, the Friday the 13th and Star Citizen video games, the Veronica Mars movie, etc. Although I do believe it was worth noting that they were mentioned in several of the posts in my sample, they were not disproportionately represented within the sample, and were often mentioned alongside other projects supported by the author.

Many backers are quite candid about being driven in large part by the prospect of external and tangible rewards or by their own personal benefit rather than by any non-use value the project may have (**See Example 6**). Although they concede to supporting their acquaintances' projects for example, or seeing some third-party use value of some sort, they still emphasize the importance of the rewards promised by the founder. Again, although some of the posts in my sample stress the importance of these rewards, they make up for a small portion of it.

Example 6 - Kickstarterforum Post n°5:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **jeverettmorton** » Wed Feb 04, 2015 2:29 pm

I've backed 11 projects, 10 of which were successful.

Six of them were art related. With three of those I was both legitimately interested in the reward and wanted to see the project creator succeed. Two of those were for unconventional comic books (a medium close to my heart) and I think it's pretty cool to see my name printed on the inside cover.

One was for an app, Gmail for the Mac. It wasn't an expensive cost and I thought I would give it a try. I can get Gmail on my phone and access the page on my computer, but I like the idea of an app.

One was an idealist pledge. The Bluelace Project made these high quality blue shoelaces for people to wear in support of American manufacturing.

One was for a film my cousin was co-producing. I haven't received the reward yet, but I'll get the film on DVD and my name is in the credits. I find that getting my name on something tangible is a big thing.

jeverettmorton
-- New Member --



Posts: 4
Joined: Wed Feb 04, 2015 2:16 pm
Location: DeKalb, IL



Furthermore, some posts included a mix of praise and disappointment (See Example 7) therefore some posts may have counted some negative sentiments. However, if I considered the post to be positive overall, I kept it in the sample. As these posts yet again only accounted for a small portion of my overall sample I believe they were only worth rapidly mentioning in this subpart.

Example 7 – Kickstarterforum Post n°6:

Re: What's the most interesting project you've backed?

by **LoxtonAxiosFoods** » Sat Jan 09, 2016 11:54 am

I've only ever backed one thing. A Halo Fan Film when I was 16. At the time it looked super cool. They met their funding in the end but didn't complete it until last year. I gave them kudos for the effort, but was unfortunately not impressed.

Food and technology all the way!

LoxtonAxiosFoods



As concluding remarks for this subpart, it seems worthwhile stating the following observations. Publishing, and to a lesser extent Arts, seem to validate all four aspects almost

equally and in most cases, over average (**See Table 4**). This may be because of the small sample sizes for both categories relative to games for example. It may however simply mark that the value-added sought out by backers for these categories may be quite balanced, between social, artistic/aesthetic and utilitarian considerations namely. These are the industries where non-use value and intrinsic motivation seem to co-occur the most: the industries where the crowdfunding backers who participate on forums seem to be internally driven to satisfy their needs by non-use value. It may also demonstrate the importance of dividing by industry to conduct such a study.

III. Verifying Characteristics:

Social Aspects: It seemed quite clear to me that backers see a wider social purpose to crowdfunding, taking upon different forms depending on the industry.

- This seems to be verified consistently for the arts, film-making and publishing. It is a prominent factor for musical projects as well, but this may be due to the limited sample size (**See Table 4**). One way to explain the recurrence of these factors is that many backers mention backing peers.
- This was especially true for film-making, as those who mentioned the industry would often evoke solidarity concerns: they would support a film project because they empathize with the struggle of getting through the industry's barriers (**See Example 2**). Sometimes their main concern was the teamwork involved in making the film⁸ (**See Example 8**), or the reason for it, rather than the project itself. Their words seem to evoke empathy, which I would argue is not as much a "positive" feeling of arousal as I defined it above, as it is a way to establish a form of relatedness, hence emphasizing the third-party use value of supporting such projects, as they focus on the benefits of others rather than their own.

⁸ The idea according to which individuals tend to focus on the campaigns, marketing pitch or story-telling more than the good itself seems to actually be a recurring one across industries, crowdfunding platforms and forums (**See Appendix 2**).

Example 8 - Kickstarterforum Post n°7:

Re: What's the most interesting project you've backed?

by **bui buoy** » Sat Aug 08, 2015 11:12 pm

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/am...to-america>

These Chicago ladies are working on a documentary about the struggle of losing hair during the cancer process. They are all really sweet and have given me advice on how to run my own successful campaign. They're so close to reaching their goal too! Help em' out!

bui buoy
-- New Member --


Posts: 4
Joined: Sat Aug 08, 2015 10:52 pm



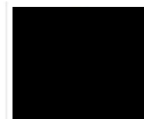
- When they are not directly supporting other members of their own industry, many backers seem to back their relatives' projects, whether they be siblings, colleagues or friends, regardless of content, subject or overall quality, although the importance of such factors may differ (See Examples 9 and 10).


Example 9 - Kickstarterforum Post n°8:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **rockonkitty** » Thu May 18, 2017 9:50 am

I've backed four projects. All have been my friends' film projects. Even when I don't particularly like their ideas, I'll back anyway because it's my friends' work. (I have a lot of filmmaker friends). My partner and I also back some non-film works together. They tend to be technology products or just innovative stuff that makes us laugh. I remember being so excited backing Ryan North's To Be Or Not To Be (Choose your own adventure). I wanted the book so badly and I was so happy when I finally got my hands on it.



rockonkitty
-- New Member --


Posts: 5
Joined: Wed May 17, 2017 11:05 pm

Example 10 - Kickstarterforum Post n°9:

Re: Just Curious...What Would You Back?

by **jdbelsterling** » Fri Oct 03, 2014 8:23 am

Usually I only back, or feel compelled to back, projects that are a friends or projects that resonate strongly with me, and have a message or product that I believe needs to be shared. This is especially true for films, art, and music.

jdbelsterling
-- Senior Member --


Posts: 54
Joined: Wed Oct 01, 2014 12:15 am



- Others state their family’s interest for backing a specific project (See Example 11) which one may argue has both a utilitarian function and a non-use one.

Example 11 – Kickstarterforum Post n°10:

Just Backed A Cool New Board Game About Being A Dog


by **topdogg** » Thu Aug 10, 2017 4:03 pm

Stumbled upon this cool game on kickstarter, you get to play as a dog and do a handful of different things a dog would do to win the game.


<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/21...ef=xly1rl>

The game itself has great artwork, and the miniatures are cute af. Each dog has their own personality and special traits, which correlate to how they perform in the game. This is definitely a pretty looking game. You get to search trash cans, pee on lamp posts, fight other dogs, and run away from the dog catcher. Sounds like a perfect gift for my kids, or for the dog lovers in my family. Had to pledge once I saw it!

topdogg
-- New Member --



Posts: 4
Joined: Thu Aug 10, 2017 3:42 pm



- Furthermore, some post authors refer to themselves as “we” (See Examples 12 and 13), as they seem to back projects as a hobby with a partner. I would suggest this tends to emphasize the community, group-activity or at least social nature of crowdfunding.

Example 12 - Kickstarterforum Post n°11:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **ryanfreemont** » Tue Sep 22, 2015 6:02 am


My wife and I work as a team and together we have backed about 20 projects.

We back projects for multiple reasons. We have been a part of 2 successful Kickstarter Campaigns and are currently in the middle of a third right now (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/pu...ers-anchor>) so we Completely Understand how much work goes into them and how much is means to have people back a campaign. So, we try to repay the favor when we are asked to.


Also, as Actors and filmmakers ourselves we see the benefit in backing films as a way to connect with other like minded people. The last film we backed we ended up getting contacted by the director and asked to audition, then booked roles in the film.

I will say that no matter how much we want to back something, if there is NOT an interesting incentive it makes it very difficult for us to back it. Getting something out of it is one of the great things about Kickstarter so we LOVE seeing people get creative with their incentives.

ryanfreemont
-- New Member --



Posts: 5
Joined: Tue Sep 22, 2015 5:53 am

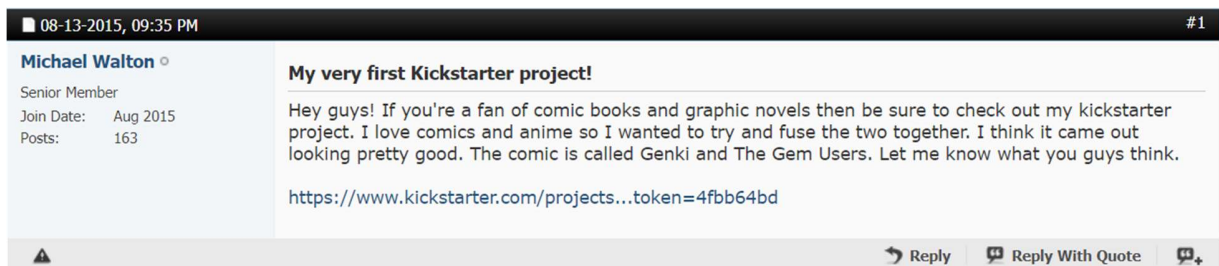


Example 13 - Crowdfundingforum Post n°2:



- It is worth noting that such social aspects seem to play a less significant role for comics and illustrations as well as games, made even more obvious by the fact that the former's slightly higher score is due in part to the fact that a couple of the threads I selected were entirely dedicated to either graphic novels or comic books (See Example 14). I believe the low scores these industries have achieved respectively can be linked to the more utilitarian nature of the products involved. Comics or graphic novels seem more likely to be consumed individually, and the same goes for certain games, although such arguments have no real standing.

Example 14 – Crowdfundingforum Original Post n°1⁹:



⁹ I used 16 posts responding to this original post in my sample, thereby possibly altering proportions.

Positive Emotions or Arousal: Although I faced the recurring problem that a lot of users write in quite a neutral tone, except for certain industries like games, positive emotions were the most common and recurring quality of many of the posts in my data sample.

- As was mentioned above, I noted the repeated presence of feelings of empathy or compassion: people for example wish to support peers or acquaintances. They do not always express excitement about it but suggest that it is only natural and that they are therefore compelled to do so (**See Example 2**). I believe the expression of feelings of empathy fit better into the “Social Aspects” qualifier.
- Positive emotions or arousal are still, however, found consistently across all industries, in 33% of posts in the case of music up to 77% in the case of comics & illustrations (**See Table 4**). They often translate into either excitement on the part of the author, or the positive attributes he or she might give to the project, or both.
- It appears the presence of positive emotions can be correlated with that of social aspects: arts, film and publishing seem to have stable levels of both, hovering around 45-55%, whilst games and comics show 70,6 and 77% of positive emotions against 23,5 and 31,4% of social aspects respectively (**See Table 4**). The opposite can be verified for musical projects. I would argue here that this is due to the differences in what individuals value the most across different industries.
- On a related note, I realized during the collection of my data that the source or cause of positive emotions was not always so obvious. I then realized that they may be partly drawn from the consumption of the products itself and the utility that individuals may gain from it (**See Example 15**), and therefore use value may be more important in the context of comics & illustration and games, while the opposite may be true for music for example, as most musical projects are written in an empathetical tone (**See Example 16**). This could be further supported by the fact some posts which mentioned being disappointed with a specific project were written in quite a neutral tone as well (**See Example 17**). This notion seemed odd to me, however, as many of the posts mentioning games I reviewed referred to board or card games which had to be played in social situations.

Example 15 - Kickstarterforum Post n°13:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **Gamelover** » Fri Jul 17, 2015 4:38 pm

I have backed only a few projects and I back them because of personal interest and/or the creativity of it. The latest one that just came out that I am going to back is this one [https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/27 ... nav_search](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/27...nav_search) and I am going to back it because I LOVE superheros!

Gamelover
-- New Member --


Posts: 6
Joined: Tue Mar 31, 2015
4:11 pm




Example 16 – Kickstarterforum Post n°14:

I just felt like being part of a whole band life and dream

by **Yasen** » Thu Jan 08, 2015 7:58 am

Lately I am following the project of Odd Crew band - <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/odd-ng-to-life>

I cannot say I am the perfect fan of metal music but I see so much courage in these guys that I felt like I must support them.

Yasen
-- New Member --


Posts: 4
Joined: Thu Jan 08, 2015
7:41 am



Example 17 – Kickstarterforum Post n°15:

Re: What's the most interesting project you've backed?

by **satumma** » Fri Oct 14, 2016 6:16 pm

Most interesting project that I have backed was a graphic novel that my two friends decide to make. In the end they managed to complete and deliver the project. Sadly, I didn't find the story or the artwork that inspiring. I was a bit underwhelmed.

satumma
-- New Member --


Posts: 4
Joined: Fri Oct 14, 2016
6:05 pm



- Therefore, I believe the presence of high levels of positive emotions must be considered carefully. Indeed, as mentioned in the literature review, the post authors are still probable backers and still see a consumptive use in the projects they back. Some of them confess to backing solely to receive a tangible, external reward enhancing their own utility. Many backers often claim to back projects for the sole reason that the products involved “satisfy their needs”. This is mainly the case for technological projects, but also often for cultural ones (See Example 15). Although many posts in my sample did mention the importance

of the rewards, other considerations were often mentioned, such as the importance it has for them that the founder be passionate or that the project might benefit others. Posts that only mentioned utilitarian considerations were excluded from my sample.

- My main explanation for the high levels of positive emotion is therefore that they pertain to many factors, namely the campaign and/or founder's characteristics him or herself, the wider social and cultural objectives of these projects whether it be on the part of the founder or the backer, or the mere utility the latter derives from purchasing specific rewards.

Curiosity or interest: Interest for the wider benefits or innovative nature of the project were not always so common, as evidenced by the fact that they were only verified for about 29% of projects (See Table 4).

- Yet, when it did occur, it was often qualifying the project as revolutionary for the industry, or beneficial to more or less social purposes (See Example 18). Evidence for this aspect was mainly found for arts and publishing projects, and to a lesser extent, games (See Example 19). I would suggest that the consistently rare nature of such terms across industries is significant in the way that the backers may have consistent, moderately high, standards of what can be considered revolutionary or innovative, across all industries.



Example 18 – Kickstarterforum Post n°16:

Re: Just Curious...What Would You Back?

by tealnewcomb » Tue Oct 14, 2014 11:04 pm

I think I'd be open to back quite a variety of projects, but more than anything I think I gravitate towards artists like myself, people who have creative ideas but struggle to find the time and money to put them together. Art books, print sets, sculptures and figurines, etc. I can empathize with having too many ideas and not enough money to get them going 😊

Really cool green technology is another favorite, it's new and people are so innovative, sometimes it blows me away.

tealnewcomb
-- New Member --

Posts: 6
Joined: Tue Oct 14, 2014 10:54 pm
Location: I live in Bogota Colombia, but I visit Michigan often, I run my KS projects from there.


Example 19 – Kickstarter Post n°17¹⁰:

Re: Video Games on Kickstarter

by **Cam Connor** » Thu Jun 11, 2015 9:52 am

I backed Camelot Unchained - a fantastic video game - and I don't regret it. It looks like it's going to revolutionize the MMO space and I can't wait to see it.

This was one of those times where I really felt like I was being a part of making something great come to life... which is really the joy of crowdfunding sites, imo.

Cam Connor
-- Junior Member --





Posts: 17
Joined: Wed Jun 10, 2015
5:16 pm

- The most recurring qualifiers were ‘creative’ (See **Example 20**), ‘interesting’ (See **Example 21**) or ‘innovative’ (See **Example 22**), suggesting the post authors saw some exceptional value to the projects they referred to. Yet, unless the project had a clear social purpose, this did not always involve a third-party use value: most post authors seemed to find value in a specific project because they perceived it as bringing some form of value-added to the wider industry and/or culture.

Example 20 – Crowdfundingforum Post n°3:

07-23-2014, 11:07 PM #2

<p>Irfann ◦ Junior Member Join Date: Jul 2014 Posts: 24</p>	<p>Your project sounds really interesting and creative, and I really like the title! It's also helpful that you have a breakdown of your anticipated costs, I'm sure many people will appreciate seeing that. Now, I'm new to the crowdfunding scene as I'm also trying to get a project going, so my comments may not be as valuable as some of the other members here.</p> <p>Your page makes it clear that you're enthusiastic about the project, which is fundamental to it's success, but I feel like it could be helpful to have a video to form a more personal connection and convey your passion for the project.</p>
--	--

 Reply |  Reply With Quote | 

¹⁰ An MMO is a genre of video game. I would argue this user emphasizes how this particular video game can enrich the MMO culture as a whole.

Example 21 – Kickstarterforum Post n°18:

Re: I backed a new TV show called "Dream Writers"

by **topdogg** » Thu Aug 10, 2017 3:49 pm

Looks interesting, could see this becoming a hit. Would love to see where it goes!

topdogg
-- New Member --

Posts: 4
Joined: Thu Aug 10, 2017 3:42 pm

^

Example 22 – Kickstarterforum Post n°19:

Re: I backed a new TV show called "Dream Writers"

by **anthony17** » Sat Aug 22, 2015 11:39 pm

This seems like a really cool idea! Innovative, interesting TV shows are hard to come by these days 😊

anthony17
-- New Member --

Posts: 5
Joined: Sat Aug 22, 2015 11:35 pm

^

- One could suggest that the use of such terms, marking the revolutionary characteristics of any given product, could verify the presence of a non-use value as well as a use-value: non-use value as in one forum post author may consider any given project a healthy addition to the industry due to its intrinsic qualities, but he/she may very well see direct self-interest in the innovative nature of any given product.
- I believe the exact meaning of the use of such words is up for interpretation. For the benefit of the doubt, and as is the case for many of the opinions expressed so far, I would suggest the middle ground would be the most reasonable explanation to this factor: the backers here see a general utility, which includes their own benefit but also that of others or of the wider industry. Such an assumption tends to under verify the presence of this aspect however, and this is something I will discuss later.

Internal Drives: Although they were modestly verified across all industries, it is worth taking time to discuss the results for this aspect.

- First, in certain cases it is worth noting that the prominence of the ‘internal drives’ factor may be closely linked to the large use of personal pronouns. Indeed, in some of the threads I used, Original Posters (OPs) were addressing backers directly (See **Example 1 – a** or **Example 23**), leading to the widespread use of first-person terms (“I”, “me”, “my”, etc.). This was a recurring issue in certain categories, namely comics and illustration, as it boosted the score of this factor. As demonstrated with **Example 1 - b**, this did not necessarily affect the rest of the post’s content.

Example 23 – Kickstarterforum Post n°20:

Video Games on Kickstarter

by **jesjesmi** » Thu Jan 29, 2015 10:17 pm

What video games have you all backed on Kickstarter? Did they turn out to be successful? If you backed them, how long did it take for any rewards or game completion to come through? Just curious! 😊

Check out our game: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/18...ible-baron>

jesjesmi
-- Junior Member --
★★★★☆
Posts: 16
Joined: Thu Jan 29, 2015 9:34 pm

- Another large part of this score is due to the recurrence of the terms ‘love’ (See **Example 24**) or ‘passion’ (See **Example 25**). Indeed, many users mention being driven towards projects from a specific industry, as these two terms and what they imply, namely a form of inner drive, are recurring. This was especially the case for video games, although one may argue the use of such words may represent one’s own utility drawn from such a project (See **Example 26**).

Example 24 – Kickstarterforum Post n°21:

Re: What’s the most interesting project you’ve backed?

by **FBK** » Mon May 18, 2015 11:47 pm

I just backed the most interesting project ever. OK, I’m biased because I’m a writer who loves edgy writing that pushes buttons.

Even still - I love the McSweeney’s campaign. There is nothing in this world more wonderful than indy publishing that allows writer’s to be free.

Write on!

FBK
-- Veteran Member --
★★★★★
Posts: 103
Joined: Tue Jul 01, 2014 10:01 pm

Example 25 – Kickstarterforum Post n° 22:


Re: What's the most interesting project you've backed?

by **musicguy** » Tue Jun 21, 2016 3:41 am

I'm really passionate about music campaigns, but I'd say the most interesting was:

Robot Turtles (board game to teach kids programming skills)
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/da...programmer>

It's done so well, I can now find the game at Target 😊



musicguy
-- New Member --
★☆☆☆☆

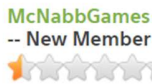
Posts: 5
Joined: Sun Jun 19, 2016 5:50 am
Location: Phoenix, AZ

Example 26 – Kickstarterforum Post n°23:

Re: What's the most interesting project you've backed?

by **McNabbGames** » Sat Mar 05, 2016 2:42 am

The most interesting project I've backed so far is the conspiracy card game. I love conspiracy theories and can't wait to play it.



McNabbGames
-- New Member --
★☆☆☆☆

Posts: 4
Joined: Sat Mar 05, 2016 2:32 am

- I would however argue that, although they may suggest some form of external reward which benefits the individual directly, both the ideas of love and passion imply an internal drive, which compels individuals to act towards a certain objective beyond a consumptive one. This may also undermine one's own utility by driving him/her to act irrationally. As mentioned above, I believe the exact nature of these drives depends on the object they are tied to, and I argue that in the case of cultural crowdfunding their significance is, for the large part, intangible and comes from within the backers themselves.
- This is further supported by the fact that some backers in my sample seem to have supported different projects yet seem often to have little to no interest in using the product itself (**See Example 27**). This would lead me to believe that backers are compelled to act in large part by internal drives. They see the act of crowdfunding as something that might fulfill their needs for autonomy, relatedness, etc. Further suggesting that individuals are intrinsically motivated to contribute to crowdfunding campaigns.


Example 27 – Kickstarterforum Post n°24:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **Juni** » Mon Apr 16, 2018 6:29 pm




I have only backed 3 projects. (Not for lack of interest, just lack of money.)
The first one was for a campaign helping a group of incarcerated men get their short stories published. As my 'almost degree' is in CJ, I have a great interest in any program that assists with actual rehabilitation in our prison systems.
The second one was from a friend's shared post on FB, for a band trying to get an album produced. I received the CD but never listened to it. And the third was for a personal friend needing help with medical bills.

I believe only one of those was KickStarter, the others were GFM.

Juni
-- New Member --

Posts: 5
Joined: Mon Apr 16, 2018 6:11 pm

- Besides the recurring use of personal pronouns, one may note words of authority are just as common. Indeed, it would seem agents are very aware that they have power over crowdfunding projects, and one may argue the language they use suggests either a form of paternalism or investor behavior (See **Example 28**), where the backers exist to foster a developer's or artists' creativity, but have a choice in whether or not to give their approval to the project. For example, many backers emphasize that they want the founder to fit their expectations of what "passionate" is (See **Example 29**). The backers also seem to expect competence in the pitch and marketing from any project they might potentially back (See **Example 30**). These factors seem to suggest autonomy, competence and/or empowerment on the part of the backers. This seems to validate not only the idea according to which internal drives characterize backer actions at least in part, but also one of the success factors of crowdfunding campaigns mentioned above, which is perceived competence in the founder by the backer.

Example 28 – Crowdfundingforum Post n°4:

06-10-2016, 09:01 PM		#18
RabidJason ◊ Junior Member Join Date: Jun 2016 Posts: 4	I love the art style of this game! I'm always proud of indie developers taking a leap! I've shared it with my circle! I hope you get funded!	
		 Reply  Reply With Quote 

Example 29 – Kickstarterforum Post n°25:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **MochShot** » Thu Dec 25, 2014 4:16 am

I just recently joined Kickstarter and have backed 2 projects so far. I just finished up school so I don't have much pocket money. However the projects I have backed relate to indie game development. I am currently developing (and trying to market) my own game (which if anyone has done so, its very nerve racking!). There is only so much we can do, so that is why I show as much love and support for other indie game devs. Large companies just push new games every day for a quick buck or two.. I would rather support a smaller team who puts all the blood and sweat into their games.

Passion projects are always the ones that turn out to be the greatest!



MochShot

-- Junior Member --



Posts: 40

Joined: Thu Dec 25, 2014 4:01 am



Example 30 – Kickstarterforum Post n°26:

Re: Just Curious...What Would You Back?

by **otherlindaroesch** » Sat Nov 15, 2014 10:18 pm

I tend to back art and music projects because that's the subject matter that I like. But, I also look at whether or not the project has a realistic goal, and I look at how well the project is presented on the page. If there are numerous spelling errors, or things that could easily be corrected with just a quick cursory review, I wouldn't likely back that project. It has to be well thought out and sort of cleverly executed. That being said, I know how hard it can be to write the perfect description or to shoot an even mediocre video, especially if the budget is zero. So, I'm inclined to back ideas that are great by individuals who may need a bump up in the world (because I can empathize).

otherlindaroesch

-- New Member --



Posts: 3

Joined: Sat Nov 15, 2014 9:32 pm

- Also, it appears there is a shared 'give to get back', or good karma, sentiment across both forums, as many of the backers which post on them claim to have both backed and started projects. They therefore support certain projects to give back what they've been given (See **Example 31**). The reason this sentiment is included in verifying the "internal drives" is

because I believe behaving in such a way is a form of philanthropic behavior: contributing to a project because it is the right thing to do, or because it provides some sort of warm glow, a form of intangible reward, therefore compelling backers to act almost in a way that does not directly and/or obviously maximize their own utility to reach that goal. The reason backers engage into this type of behavior may also be because they feel like their position empowers them to do so, hence reaffirming the notion of paternalism stated earlier, and/or because they might enjoy asserting this onto others.

Example 31 – Kickstarter Post n°27:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **Pharmdee** » Sat Apr 18, 2015 6:24 pm

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1594785314/the-legend-of-pan-pan-the-strongest-panda?fb_action_ids=10200359519588429&fb_action_types=og.shares&fb_source=other_multiline&actio

https://fbexternal-a.akamaihd.net/safe_image.php?d=AQBiedb-oPDFfXOK&w=487&h=275&url=https%3A%2F%2Fksr-ugc.imgix.net%2Fprojects%2F1760050%2Fphoto-original.jpg%3Fv%3D1427957533%26w%3D640%26h%3D480%26fit%3Dcrop%26auto%3Dform

I love these ideas. I back them because I believe in Good Faith. You Give To get 😊😊😊



Pharmdee
-- Junior Member --
★★★★☆

Posts: 16
Joined: Thu Apr 09, 2015
11:12 pm
Location: USA

Part V - Limitations:

No single piece of research, no matter how rich, is safe from criticism. This next part will therefore be dedicated to outlining what I believe are some of my thesis's weaknesses.

The very definition of cultural industries is flawed at worst and broad at best. Therefore, establishing a clear framework on what to include or not was left almost entirely to my discretion. This may have limited my sample size or the generalizability of my study. Obviously, certain projects may overlap between categories, meaning for example that a project labelled under “**Design & Tech**” (www.kickstarter.com) can have artistic goals or ends. I therefore decided to

include the posts that focused on projects with at least some form of seemingly objective cultural or artistic value to me. Also, many of the posts analyzed included projects pertaining to other things than only culture as I hear it above, whether it be technology or food & crafts, for example. I kept the posts which I believed were mainly, or at the very least in part, focused on culture, although some might contain references to other project types. I do believe this does not invalidate my thesis, as it seems obvious that different people are interested and invested in a variety of things which may have little to nothing in common. I compensated this by ignoring my subjective beliefs on what is artistic, cultural or not.

Furthermore, focusing on forums, especially on only a few, can limit the demographic I worked with: these are arguably backers which are passionate enough about crowdfunding to actively contribute to these forums. Therefore, they do not represent either the wider backer population, or even those who are more active on other, different forums. However, I would emphasize that focusing only on this arguably small population may still be generalizable to the wider backer population, including those who do not actively participate in forum activity. Wen *et al.* (2014) also emphasize this fact (p. 2), as their results concerning global attendance seem to reflect the generalizability of their research method.

The ‘backers’ who post on these forums might not actually be backers, but founders trying to promote their project (See **Example 32**). This was a recurring issue, and whilst reading through the posts on comments it was not always obviously perceptible. Therefore, I cannot exclude that some of the posts used for this study were written by founders to promote their own projects, although I was vigilant towards such tendencies. I believe, however that this does not invalidate my thesis as a whole. I mainly suspected posts which referred to only one project and linked to it, or posts whose authors had the same user name both on the forum and on the crowdfunding website they were linking to. I also believe that the language used by such founders would ironically give them away a large portion of the time.

Example 32 – Kickstarterforum Post n°28¹¹:

Re: How many projects have you backed and why do you back th

by **DiiZiGN** » Tue Feb 14, 2017 11:08 pm

I have backed DiiZiGN's products because it has unique features which nothing can be seen in current market.
pretty innovative, stable, foldable, portable, look grand.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/32...-with-phon>

DiiZiGN
-- New Member --
☆☆☆☆☆☆

Posts: 2
Joined: Tue Feb 14, 2017 10:50 pm

^

Part VI - Conclusion and Discussion:

Following my various observations, this final subpart is dedicated to summarizing my results, verifying my initial assumptions, before opening on suggestions for further research.

First of all, I was unable to prove whether or not non-use value or intrinsic motivations were major success factors, as many projects or crowdfunding platforms were not explicitly stated. Indeed, secondary data, pertaining to the “steps”, rewards or perks backers pursue, may have proven itself necessary to my research. Yet, and although I did try to verify this when possible, due to the overall absence to reference or links to the specific projects mentioned this was not possible. Although reference to behaviors vis-à-vis philanthropic rewards are mentioned above, often these rewards seem to be overlooked by backers. They do not seem to be a major success factor overall, in certain cases at least (*see* Kuijpers, 2017, p. 41).

After review, it seems certain intangible rewards or values are privileged by backers, but it remains relatively unclear towards which project exactly any backer would decide to channel such motivations, and how such factors play out in a wider decision-making process. This may have been because my thesis was limited in scope relative to this objective, or perhaps that my sample

¹¹ I excluded posts such as this one, as the hyperbolic nature of the project qualifiers seemed to signal that this was advertising on behalf of the founder rather than a backer expressing himself. Needless to say, this post is obviously spam advertising for the preceding reasons, but also because the users' name is the same one as on the Kickstarter link he provides. This post was of course not included in my sample but reflects what I was confronted with a few times.

size and methodology were not adequate to support such an idea. Yet, and as I mentioned before, this was not the focus of this thesis, which is the reason I did not expect to make such a correlation.

However, many backers do mention an attractive pitch, campaign, the want to support peers or acquaintances or the revolutionary nature of a project, hence perceiving some sort of value-added to it. Many of them seem to understand they have power to make a project come to life or not. Backers on forums indeed do attribute value to things that do not seem to maximize their own utility directly: the generally innovative aspects of a product, or various aspects pertaining to the founders, the campaign itself or the third party towards which it is directed. It would seem backers do find inherent satisfaction not only in supporting crowdfunding campaigns, but also in actively participating in a community and interacting with it. By doing so, it would seem they pursue inner drives like passion, and satisfy intrinsic needs for empowerment for example.

The evidence provided above suggests they do perceive indirect or non-individual benefits to reward-based crowdfunding of cultural ventures, intrinsic rewards or motivations brought upon by the act of crowdfunding and seem to be quite vocal about it on crowdfunding-related forums.

It seems however that, in many cases, use values are still disproportionately prominent, as the excitement and positive emotions conveyed by backers seems to be in large part drawn from the use of a product itself. The extent to which backers who engage with crowdfunding forums are self-determined seems to remain quite limited, as they seem to be just as much motivated by the tangible and/or external rewards they seem to draw from this participation. Therefore, although it would seem backers do perceive inherent satisfaction in supporting crowdfunding campaigns, my evidence suggests this is certainly not the biggest factor in backer decision-making processes, therefore suggesting they are not completely self-determined as defined by Ryan and Deci (2000).

It would seem backers are often drawn to the aspects surrounding the projects, the creators themselves or a wider community rather than the product as, and this was the point of the thesis, many terms used seem to ignore utilitarian aspects completely.

I believe my methods were adequate in analyzing the presence of non-use value or intrinsic motivation, amongst other things. I would therefore suggest further research focus on a larger-scale, more in-depth statistical analysis of this type of text, and make consistent use of adequate software, some of which was mentioned in this thesis. The main reason I did not use software such

as LIWC was due to the limited size of my sample, which led me to believe it would be more efficient to analyze them manually. Such methods could also aim to focus in large part on the founders themselves, as they are equally if not more active than backers not only on these forums, but also on other various platform, namely websites such as Facebook or Reddit. They should also take into consideration a greater diversity of projects: consider for example that the “film” category contains full-length feature films, TV series, online podcasts, short films, documentaries, etc. Such methods could also help correlate non-use values or inner drives to project success. Although I previously mentioned that these had not, to my knowledge, been correlated, perhaps results would differ on different platforms, for different types of projects which fall under other types of crowdfunding models.

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Sitography:

Crowdfundingforum.com: URL <<http://crowdfundingforum.com/>>

James W. Pennebaker's page : URL : <<http://pennebaker.socialpsychology.org/overview>>

Kickstarter forum: URL: <<http://www.kickstarterforum.org/>>

Kickstarter Website: URL: <<https://www.kickstarter.com/>>

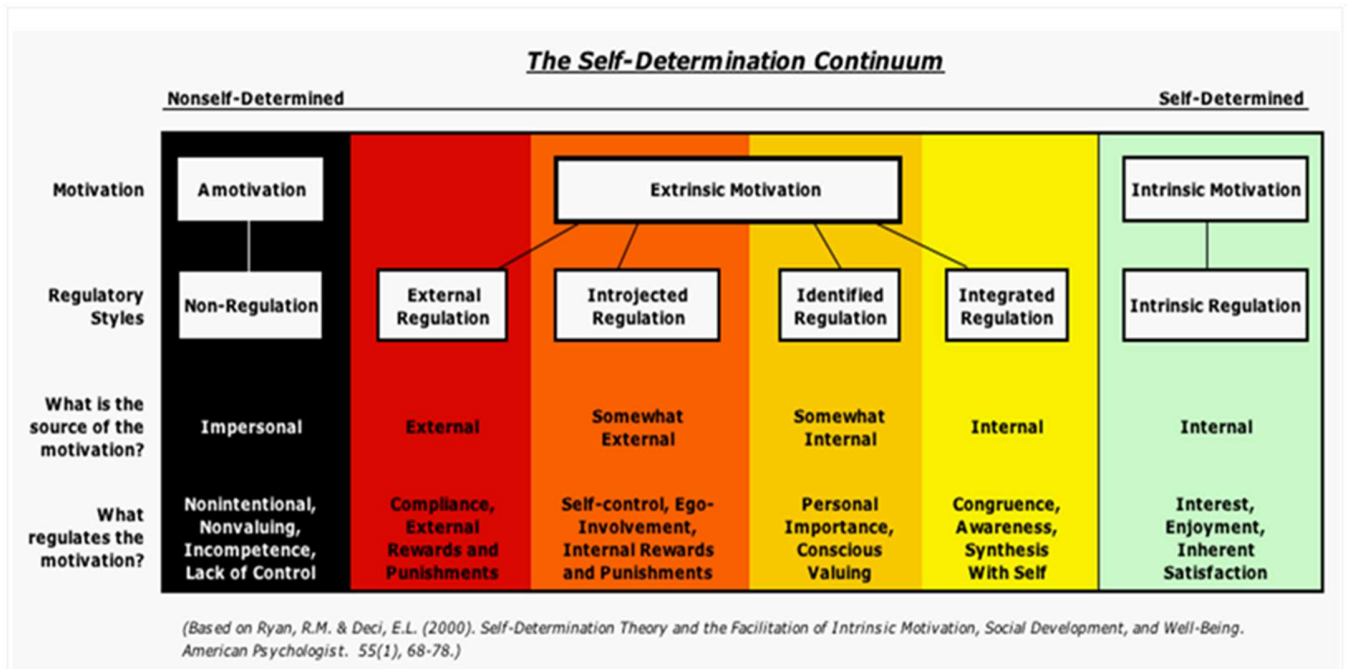
Positivepsychologyprogram: URL : <<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/self-determination-theory/>>

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Appendixes:

Appendix 1 – The Self-Determination Continuum:




(retrieved from: <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/self-determination-theory/>)

Appendix 2 – Crowdfundingforum Post n°5:

08-17-2015, 11:44 AM #18

Abiodun Timothy Olaoye ◦ Nice idea. Its sounds like a good campaign to me... Best of luck!

Junior Member
Join Date: Aug 2015
Posts: 2

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