

## ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship represents a fundamental concept in the economic sector, as it drives innovation, economic growth, and job creation. While entrepreneurship has been extensively studied, the emergence of social entrepreneurship as a distinct field has gained a significant amount of attention in recent years. One of the significant fields of study is around entrepreneurial motivations, specifically with the growing interest in unraveling the motivations and reasons behind individuals taking on this entrepreneurial journey called social entrepreneurship.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on social entrepreneurship, by primarily investigating the motivations of social entrepreneurs in comparison to mainstream entrepreneurs. The study, which is Vienna-based, also sheds light on the differences in challenges as well as the success indicators of both groups of entrepreneurs, and how these relate to their motivations. Understanding the motivations that drive individuals to become entrepreneurs is crucial for comprehending their entrepreneurial journey and how to further support them. The research utilizes a qualitative approach method and examines data collected through semi structured in depth interviews. A thematic analysis is employed to identify key themes and patterns, shedding light on the motivations and factors that drive social and mainstream entrepreneurs, as well as their challenges and success indicators they strive for.

The findings reveal that social entrepreneurs share common motivations with mainstream entrepreneurs, as such the desire for autonomy and opportunity recognition. However, the findings indicated that personal passion and desire to make a social change are key personal motivators for social entrepreneurs in contrast to mainstream entrepreneurs who were found to have financial success as their main motivator. The study compares the results with the existing literature, highlighting areas of agreement.

This research provides valuable insights through proposed recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and support networks in creating an enabling and supporting environment that promotes both social and mainstream entrepreneurs. The findings emphasize on the importance of tailored support systems and networks to foster social impact innovation and economic growth and well as tackling the challenges that entrepreneurs in Vienna are facing.