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***Development of an Online and Gamified Framework  
as a Lean Market Readiness Guide for New Ventures***

**SINTESI**

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# **Development of an Online and Gamified Framework as a Lean Market Readiness Guide for New Ventures**

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## **Sommario**

Questo lavoro di tesi è il risultato del tirocinio svolto da Aprile ad Ottobre 2016, in collaborazione con The Bulb, progetto della startup inglese JLF Tech Ltd. Lo scopo è stato quello di sviluppare un framework interattivo ed online per guidare le nuove imprese verso la maturazione di concetti di business ed ottenere la fattibilità commerciale. Per la realizzazione sono stati investigati due aspetti principali: 1) la metodologia della Lean Startup, il nuovo fenomeno imprenditoriale che applica i principi del 'non spreco' concepiti dalla Produzione Snella alla creazione del business; 2) la Gamification, l'applicazione degli elementi dei giochi in contesti diversi da quelli dell'intrattenimento, così da migliorare il coinvolgimento degli utenti. È stato così possibile rispondere alle due domande principali del progetto: 1) Quali sono gli esercizi da svolgere per massimizzare il successo in entrata sul mercato? 2) Come applicare la Gamification ad un processo per la creazione di un business? I risultati dimostrano che è possibile seguire un percorso standard, flessibile ed iterativo fino all'introduzione del business sul mercato, in cui gli elementi del gioco contribuiscono a mantenere gli utenti costantemente stimolati a raggiungere l'obiettivo finale.

## **Abstract**

This thesis work is the result of the internship carried out from April to October 2016 within The Bulb, a project of the English startup JLF Tech Ltd. The goal has been the development of an interactive and online framework to guide new ventures towards the maturation of business concepts to obtain commercial viability. To realise this, two main aspects have been investigated: 1) the Lean Startup methodology, the new entrepreneurship phenomenon that applies the Lean Manufacturing principles of 'zero waste' to the business creation; 2) the Gamification, the application of game elements to non-game contexts, in order to improve the engagement of the users. Therefore, the project aims to answer to the main questions: 1) What are the exercises to accomplish in order to maximise the success at market entry stage? 2) How to apply the elements of Gamification to a process for creation of a business? The results demonstrate that it is possible to follow a standard, flexible and iterative journey towards the market entry stage, to which the application of the game elements contributes to make the users constantly engaged towards the achievement of their goal.

## **1. SCOPE**

Nowadays the startup phenomenon is increasing, with the birth of hundreds of companies every year in the only United Kingdom (National Statistics, 2015). Considering its impact, many large cities are taking advantage of the situation, supporting the creation of new businesses. This is done not only opening the access to funding, but also with programmes that help people providing them with knowledge and opportunities to meet other entrepreneurs, mentors and investors. However, business ideas exist everywhere, not only in large cities and 'Silicon round-about', and many remote areas cannot benefit from these services and support. Therefore, many people are obliged to abandon their ideas, or progressing these on their own, ending up in wasting their time or money, mainly because they do not have a business background, as the majority of people (Endure Project, 2015) and they do not know what are the steps to follow in doing this.

The Bulb is a project of the digital start-up JLF Tech Ltd, founded in April 2015, with the aim to solve the described fragmented situation for entrepreneurs. It strongly believes that business opportunities do not have to be limited by geography. For this reason, The Bulb was born to be the online platform that works as a marketplace, connecting new entrepreneurs with mentors and investors, offering them business opportunities from day one. Indeed, the entrepreneurs can pursue an online path to mature their business ideas, by following a step-by-step interactive guide and by linking with mentors, until showcasing their results to The Bulb's portfolio of investors. For the mentors, people with senior expertise in business or in other specific fields willing to help new businesses in growing, it is possible to be more visible and to easily find new challenges to enjoy. Lastly the investors, being part of a bright community like the one of The Bulb, can spot the right opportunity to financially support at very early stages.

The aim of this Thesis has been to define the content of the step-by-step interactive guide that the entrepreneurs encounter once registered to The Bulb online platform.

To this end, it has been adopted and deployed the Steve Blank's Investment Readiness Level (IRL) theory together with the analysis of the Gamification methods. The first one consists in a theory for the business development that follows the Lean Startup principles; the second one relates instead to the application of game elements in non-game contexts, in order to enhance the customers' engagement and motivation.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The main phases carried out for the realisation of this work are summarised in Table 1.

Phase	Objective	Methodological Steps	Thesis §
<b>Literature Review</b>	To acquire knowledge on the Lean Startup principles and the gamification approaches. General understanding of the state of the art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keywords Research</li> <li>- Document Analysis and selection</li> <li>- Deep analysis of the selected documents</li> <li>- Collection of Results</li> </ul>	- 2.1 - 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
<b>Framework Development: Business Concepts Definition</b>	To define the Platform exercises to be developed and the data to be collected in order to achieve 'Market Readiness' stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deep comprehension of the IRL</li> <li>- Participation at the European Innovation Academy</li> <li>- Deep analysis of each of the IRL steps</li> <li>- Definition of the exercises to do in order to achieve each IRL milestones</li> </ul>	- 3.2 - 4.1, 4.2
<b>Framework Development: Journey Definition</b>	To develop an iterative non-linear journey for a business creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deep comprehension of the market fit concept</li> <li>- Identification of the journey main points in which it could be necessary to pivot and of the steps to achieve the market fit</li> <li>- Creation of the journey</li> </ul>	- 3.3 - 4.3
<b>Framework Development: Gamification Strategy</b>	To define the Game elements to be adopted in the context of a business creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deep comprehension of the Gamification approach</li> <li>- Identification of a Gamification design process to follow</li> <li>- Selection of the game elements to use</li> </ul>	- 3.4 - 4.4
<b>Framework Test and First Results</b>	To test the validity and the efficacy of the framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Definition of the Validation Strategy</li> <li>- First use of the Framework</li> </ul>	- 5.1 - 5.2

Table 1 - Work's Phases

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering the aim of the thesis, the literature review has investigated two main topics: the Lean Startup theories and the Gamification approaches. Both of them have been analysed following a top-down approach. The results are explained in Table 2 and Table 3.

The literature research undertaken confirms the possibility to realise a Gamified framework that guides entrepreneurs through the maturation of the idea, using the IRL as the basis for the journey, to which the game elements can be added in order to involve more the users, enhancing their intrinsic motivation as explained by the research about the Meaningful Gamification.

Lean Startup Topic	Main points
<b>Startup Definition</b>	The startup definitions given by Blank and Ries, the creators of the Lean Startup approach, have been considered. Standing to the first one, startups are "temporary organisations formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model" (Blank, 2013). Thus a startup, rather than focusing in executing a business model as an established company does, has to find the right business model first, that should be repeatable and scalable (Kolk, 2016). In this way it is possible to make the step to the status of 'established company', interrupting the condition of temporary. In Ries' opinion startups can be defined as, "human institutions designed to create new products or services in conditions of extreme uncertainty" (Ries, 2010). With the word Institutions Ries wants to underline the necessity to use an adequate management structure in the creation process for a new business. Which contrast with the current ideology for which the business development is a chaotic process with no standard set of rules. A new kind of management, especially thought for this uncertain context, is needed. The Lean Startup philosophy is born exactly with the aim to allow this.

<b>Lean Startup Applications</b>	Nowadays many universities and entrepreneurship programmes have recognised that there is a need to supply potential future entrepreneurs with specific tools ideated to be used in startup contexts, in a way that the persecution of their objectives with the lowest risk can be assured. Stanford, Harvard, Berkeley and Columbia in fact are some of the Universities that are embracing the Lean Startup curriculum (Blank, 2013). Also the European Innovation Academy, the World's Largest Extreme Accelerator for digital innovations, is doing the same. Moreover, many big companies are adopting the Lean Startup approach too, as a way to protect themselves from the many threats of the external environment: Dropbox (Nobel, 2011) and GE (Blank, 2013) are examples of two of them that have obtained optimum results thanks to the Lean Startup methodology.
<b>Lean Startup Methodology</b>	As the Lean Manufacturing approach gave to Toyota the possibility to dominate the automotive industry in the second half of nineties, the Lean Startup philosophy gives to startups the possibility to succeed. The key, also in this case, consists in eliminating any type of waste (Nobel, 2011), distinguishing the activities that can create value and benefits to the customers, from those that instead cannot (Ries, 2001). To allow this, it is necessary to use the tools provided by the Lean Startup (Blank, 2013): the use of the Business Model Canvas, instead of the Business Plan, as a way to save time and give to the entrepreneurs the possibility to change their assumptions; by adopting a Customer Development Approach, in which the customers are continuously involved in the creation of the business; and the Agile Development too, as a way to create and test a product step-by-step, adding a feature per time, in accordance to the principle of the Minimum Viable Product (MVP). This methodology is very different from the traditional one as it encourages the entrepreneurs in being sure of the validity of their idea, before starting building it. Indeed, the Lean Startup approach does not invest in scaling the company until it has been achieved the product-market fit, that corresponds to the fact that the solution developed matches with the customers' problem identified. To achieve it an entrepreneur has to follow a learning process and be ready to pivot many times, changing their assumptions to better satisfy the customers' requests.
<b>The Investment Readiness Level</b>	The IRL has been inspired by the Technology Investment Readiness (TRL) used by the NASA (Blank, 2013). It consists in nine consequential steps that can address the activities of the entrepreneurs in the first stages of the business creation, following the logic of the Lean Startup. It offers a universal language to investigate the development of a business, measuring the investment risk, that decreases as the higher the IRL level reached from the startup is: indeed, each of the levels represents an important milestone the startup has to achieve to be ready asking for funding and, more generally, to enter the market.

Table 2 - Lean Startup Literature

<b>Gamification Topics</b>	<b>Main points</b>
<b>Gamification Definition</b>	Sebastian Deterding, one of the most renowned expert in the Gamification field, in 2011 defined it as "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts". The Gamification can be applied to any context that is different to the one of fun, with the purpose of enhancing self-motivation. This is possible thanks to the engagement generated by the strong feelings of involvement and self-trust that games typically can recreate in their users (Mc Gonigal, 2009).
<b>Gamification Application</b>	Many well-known companies, as Microsoft, Samsung, Nike, Alfa Romeo, Foursquare (Harwood and Garry, 2015) and Duolingo has decided to use the Gamification as a way to increase their employees or customer engagement. Actually it seems that the prediction made from Gartner in 2011 has become true: over 70 percent of global 2000 organisations had at least one gamified application in 2014 (Gartner, 2011). At the same time, in 2012 it also predicted that by 2014, the 80 percent of the current gamified applications would have failed to meet business objectives primarily due to poor design (Gartner, 2012). This happens because most gamification based solutions have been created mixing bits and pieces from game components, without a formal game design process. (Mora et al, 2015).
<b>Gamification Methodology</b>	Analysing the literature it has emerged that to design an effective gamification strategy the steps to pursue are four, as shown below: 1. The definition of the user profile; 2. The definition of goals and parameters; 3. The definition of the target outcomes and metrics to monitor the users' journey; 4. The application of the game elements. To define the customers can be used the classification that in 2015 Robson made adapting the one of Barter to the Gamification context, distinguishing the users in Strivers, Slayers, Scholars and Socialities profiles. Knowing the customers' profile it is possible to define in a meaningful way what are the goals and the parameters of the gamified experience; once done this the game elements can be finally inserted following the logic of the MDE - Mechanical, Dynamics and Emotions. An approach like this can avoid the realisation of a gamified experience that is only a mix of points and game pieces.

<b>Meaningful Gamification</b>	Many of the companies that decide to use gamification elements in their processes, usually opt for solutions that involve reward mechanics. Anyway it must be considered that this technique does not fit for any type of gamified experience (Nicholson, 2011), but only for those that are interested in obtaining short and immediate changes. In particular, in all the situations in which the users are involved in pursuing their own objective, the extrinsic motivation elements can damage the motivation, and it is instead auspicious to use the intrinsic motivation elements, based on the Self Determination Theory (Rian & Deci, 2000). A gamification realised in this way gives to the users the possibility to learn from the gamified experience and reflect on it, allowing them to be more conscious (Nicholson, 2015).
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*Table 3 - Gamification Literature*

## 4. FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

The framework has been created following the logic of the Agile and Customer Development, in accordance to what has been learned from the Lean Startup approach. Therefore, it has been necessary to add the new features step-by-step, while they were developed, and to test them continuously with the entrepreneurs. This has been possible thanks to the use of a flexible online platform in which the modifications were easily updated and also thanks to the collaboration of a small group of entrepreneurs and experts, willing to test the improvements and offering back their feedback.

The process has followed the steps explained in the next pages.

### 4.1 Exercises Definition

First of all, it has been necessary to work on the IRL tool, in order to clearly define what it is needed to deliver to achieve each of the journey's milestones. Only determining this it has been possible to deploy the nine steps of the IRL and transform it in a guide that not only suggests the entrepreneurs what to achieve, but also how to do it.

Additionally, the name of the tool has been changed in 'Market Readiness Level' (MRL), in order to remember to the entrepreneurs where they should direct their focus, that is in satisfying the market, rather than in looking for investments.

Table 4 explains the content that have been created for each of the MRL levels.

#	Blank's Name	The Bulb's Name	Aim	Objectives	Deliverables
1	Complete First Pass Business Model Canvas	The Idea	To build the first sketch of the Business Model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the particular segment of customers to focus in at first</li> <li>2. Define the problem to solve for the customers</li> <li>3. Define the main features of the solution and how to communicate them to the customers</li> <li>4. Define how to make money and what are the costs that impact the most on the business</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer ID</li> <li>2. Problem Table</li> <li>3. Solution Table</li> <li>4. Lean Canvas</li> </ol>
2	Market Size / Competitor Analysis	The Research	To analyse the environment of the business proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the team and how to profit of its strengths</li> <li>2. Estimate how big is the market</li> <li>3. Know the competitors and define how to be better than them</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SWOT matrix</li> <li>2. TAM-SAM-SOM</li> <li>3. Competitor Analysis</li> </ol>

3	Problem & Solution Validation	The Interview	To validate the assumptions regarding the Problem and the Solution directly speaking with the customers	1. Speak with the targeted customers to discover if the problem is well identified and is a worth solving one, and if the solution fit with customers'needs 2. Create an interview and use it to collect meaningful data 3. Analyse the results and decide if they are confirming the assumptions	1. Offline Interview 2. Objective & Results 3. Online Interview
4	Prototype Low Fidelity MVP	The Paper Prototype	To be sure, as quickly and cheaply as possible, to build the right it before building it right (Savoia, 2011)	1. Build a fist paper prototype, that is a sort of fake advertisement, to test the interest in the product 2. Build another paper prototype to test the usage of it, to see how customers interact with it	1. First Paper Prototype 2. Second Paper Prototype
5	Validate Product/Market fit	The Test	To use the paper prototypes to obtain numeric data and validate the product/market fit	1. Spread the first prototype and collect data to calculate the Initial Level of Interest (ILI) Index 2. Invite your customers to use the second paper prototype and collect data to test the Ongoing Level of Interest (OLI) 3. Analse the result to evaluate if the Market Fit has been reached	1. ILI Index 2. OLI Table
6	Validate the Revenue Model	The Revenue Model	To define and validate the system that will ensure the revenue	1. Define the revenue model: how will the company make money? 2. Validate it, using some evidences	1. Revenue Model Story 2. Data Collection
7	ProTOTYPE High Fidelity MVP	The Real Prototype	To build the proper prototype of the idea	Find out how to build and produce your product, creating the prototype	Prototype
8	Validate Value Delivery	The Recipe	To define and validate the resources, the activities and the costs to sustain to build the product	1. Define the key activities that it is necessary to run in order to build the product 2. Define the key resources that it is necessary to use to build the product 3. Define the key suppliers or collaborators to work with 4. Determine the main costs 5. Validate the system composed by these elements	1. Value Delivery Table 2. Data Collection
9	Validate Metrics that Matters	The Measurement	To define the metrics to monitor in those fields in which the company feels less confident and that can affect its success	1. Select the business fields to monitor 2. For each of them select one or more aspect to measure 3. Build the metric that allows to measure the aspect 4. Assign a responsible to each of them	Dashboard

Table 4 - The MRL exercises

Identifying the elements explained in Table 4 has been the starting point to implement the activities that the entrepreneurs should carry out to mature their business idea. In doing this the attention has been put in guiding them to reach the requested objectives through the achievement of the established deliverables, using a simple language, easily comprehensible especially for those without a business background.

In the following pages are illustrated three different cases that are particularly meaningful in order to understand how the levels have been implemented.

For the Level 1, for example, has been created an interactive questionnaire that guide the entrepreneurs in the refillment of the deliverables established. This has been necessary because speaking with the early customers it was clear that they had difficulties in directly working on the

Lean Canvas, as for them it was not intuitive. In the particular case shown in table 5, each question contributes to the refillment of the 'Problem' and the 'Existing Alternatives' boxes of the Lean Canvas and to the completion of the 'Problem Template', appositely created for the self-assessment of the problem on the basis of the parameters studied during the literature phase. Indeed if the total score of the problem will not reach the sufficiency, as well as each particular voice, the entrepreneurs will receive an alarm signal that invites them to reflect on the worth-solving of the identified problem, because the risk is to spend resources in solving a problem that is not important for the customer.

#	Question	Description	Type	Contribution
1	Describe the problem you are trying to solve for your customer.*	Problem, business definition: "A perceived gap between the existing state and a desired state, or a deviation from a norm, standard, or status quo. "	Free Text	Lean Canvas: Problem Box Problem Table: Problem Box
2	How common it is to have this problem/passion?	Is this a problem that any of your targeted customers have (score 5), or only certain particular niches (score 1)?	Ranking	Problem Table: Commonality Score
3	How strong is the pain generate by this problem/passion?	Is this a problem that if unsolved can generated something dangerous (score 5), or instead nothing too heavy (score 1)?	Ranking	Seriousness- Problem Table
4	How often this problem/passion occurs?	Is this a problem that happens once per year or less (score 1), or even more than one time per day (score 5)?	Ranking	Frequency- Problem Table
5	How are people bypassing/solving their problem right now?*	These are the existing alternatives, something with which it is possible to mitigate the needs now. These are the existing alternatives, something with which it is possible to mitigate the needs now.	Free Text	Existing Alternatives - Lean Canvas
6	How well these existing alternatives are solving the problem?	Are the existing alternatives already satisfying your customers (score 1), or it would be better to use a more efficace solution (score 5)?	Ranking	Necessity- Problem Table

Table 5 – A section of the Level 1 questionnaire

In other situations, as for the Level 2, the entrepreneurs are guided in the fulfilment of standard templates, that indicate them the elements to identify. In fig. 1 is shown the TAM-SAM-SOM matrix, that supports the entrepreneurs estimation of the market size, suggesting them the voices to consider. The 'ratio column' allows to signal eventually mistakes, since the SOM cannot be major than the SAM and the SAM cannot be major than the TAM. Another template will additionally help the entrepreneur in the definition of the SOM, that is calculated automatically using a bottom up approach (Kolk, 2016), simply considering the information inserted by the entrepreneurs. It is also interesting to notice that in a case like this in which the entrepreneurs are not making assumptions,

but trying to understand what is the state of the art in the field they are going to work in, they are requested to validate their idea with facts, adding the source of the data used.

	How big ( £ )	Source	Your question	Ratio
<b>Total Addressable Market (TAM)</b> [How much money is being spent today to solve the problem you want to solve with your idea?]				
<b>Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM)</b> [How much money is being spent right now in your specific category of product?]				
<b>Share Of the Market (SOM)</b> [Use the quick exercise in the page below, and the corresponding voice of the table will be automatically refilled]				

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Figure 1: The TAM-SAM-SOM Matrix

Lastly, in other cases, as for example in Level 4, where is requested to develop a ‘Paper Prototype’, the entrepreneurs are guided using the storytelling. Indeed, the concept is new and in this way the entrepreneurs can comprehend it, simply by knowing two real stories in which the technique has been successfully used: the one of the IBM speech-to-text machine and the one of the Palm Pilot (Savoia, 2011). Once comprehend and digest the concept they are invited in creating their Paper Prototype, by using recommended tools selected from the literature, and by conceiving new strategies that best fit their idea, until uploading online the result.

### 4.3 Gamification Strategy

According to what has been studied during the literature review phase, in the case of the Bulb framework it is not meaningful to develop a gamified strategy in accordance to the traditional way used by most of companies, based on points or leaderboards. Indeed, these elements act on the extrinsic motivation and work only when it is needed a short term and immediate engagement. Instead, in the case of businesses development, the entrepreneurs have to stay engaged for longer, as it is a deep process that needs dedication and patience. For these reasons, it has been decided to realise a ‘Meaningful Gamification’ (Nicholson, 2015), based on the intrinsic motivation, that gives to the entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn and understand the journey they are following, offering them the possibility to reflect on the accomplished activities, in a way to make them plenty conscious of what they are doing.

To enhance the intrinsic motivation, it has been used the Self Determination Theory (Rian & Deci, 2000), that suggests to focus on three main aspects: the 'Autonomy', the 'Competence' and the 'Relatedness'. These have been implemented with the game elements as explained in Table 5.

Self Determination Theory Aspect	What	How	Implementation
Autonomy	It is the sense of willing when performing a task	Possibility to take own decisions each time a results is obtained.	The framework never obliges the entrepreneurs in taking decisions, it only gives some suggestions based on the results that have been uploaded
Competence	It is the need to participate in challenges and feel competent and efficient	Possibility to clearly understand each level's aim and how to achieve it	Introductory clear and involving videos before the beginning of each step
		Possibility to be conscious of the progression in the business development	Progression Index that raise with the idea maturation, reporting the entrepreneurs' advancement
		Possibility to have an indication on the exercises correction	Quality Index: an A, B or C mark that evaluates the exercises of the users, considering the time spent in doing it, the inserted text and the percentage of accomplishment of each level
		Possibility to be encouraged in the correct direction	Behavioural bars that measures the entrepreneurs' self confidence and open mindedness. These two aspects should be balanced during the business development: indeed the open mindedness measures the pivoting attitude, while the self-confidence refers to the time the entrepreneurs decide to go ahead with their idea even if the results are not as good as expected
Relatedness	It is the need to be part of a community and interact with others	Possibility to work with the other member of the team	The same members of the team can work at the idea together, with the possibility to distinguish who has made what
		Possibility to interact with others on the community	Possibility to meet mentors and work with them and to pitch the idea to the investors

Table 5 – Gamification Implementation

## 6. VALIDATION

To accelerate the validation process, The Bulb has organised events with University students interested in the business subject, in order to test the framework and make its offer more visible. In this way it has been possible to collaborate with 80 entrepreneurs, that actually are using the framework for their potential business, and accomplishing the deliverables, in particular, for the moment, related to the first level. It has been observed that the 80% of entrepreneurs that decide to use The Bulb framework are able to complete in a revealing way each voice of the Lean Canvas. This is a good result because during the European Innovation Academy, the international entrepreneurship programme that has been attended, it has been observed that instead less than the 30% of entrepreneurs were able to entirely complete the Lean Canvas, and that among them only the 15% inserted the right information. This comparison can be considered as a first validation

of the value of the first level of The Bulb framework, as it guides the entrepreneurs in the definition of all the business model elements. Over the next months, when the early adopters of the framework will progress other levels, it will be possible to make some more in depth considerations regarding the whole journey.

In the meanwhile, also an 'extreme' test event has been held with a group of 21 sixteen years old students from China. These have limited Business know-how, as too young, and limited English understanding. The event has been an intensive three-day entrepreneurship course in which the students have achieved the evaluation of the market fit of the fifth level for their idea, following the developed framework. The results obtained were surprisingly good and interesting, since, despite the context, all the teams have been able to entirely develop their projects and to achieve all the requirements specified. This has been confirmed also by the survey results that the students have been asked to complete. In their opinion in fact, this was possible because the easiness of the exercises proposed was medium-high, as illustrated in fig. 2.

Overall, how would rate the exercises difficulty?

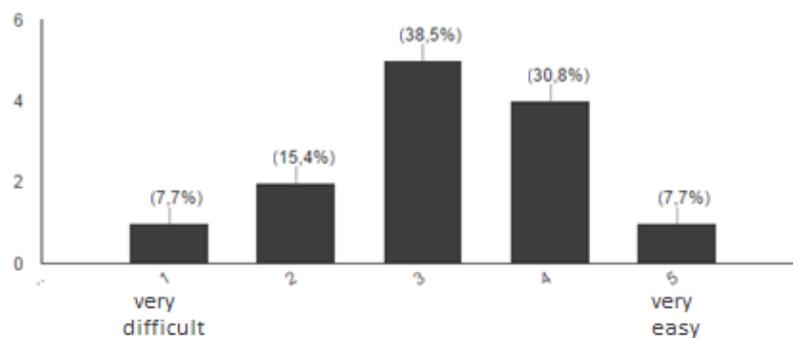


Figure 2: The students' answers regarding the exercises difficulties

In particular it has emerged that the most difficult exercise was the one of the creation of the Paper Prototype, and this is probable connected with the practical difficulties in creating it, rather than in the explanation given by the framework.

Moreover, teachers' expectations were exceeded and they recognised that their students were happy and involved in the development of their business, as shown in fig. 3.

How much would you rate the interest of your students during these activities?

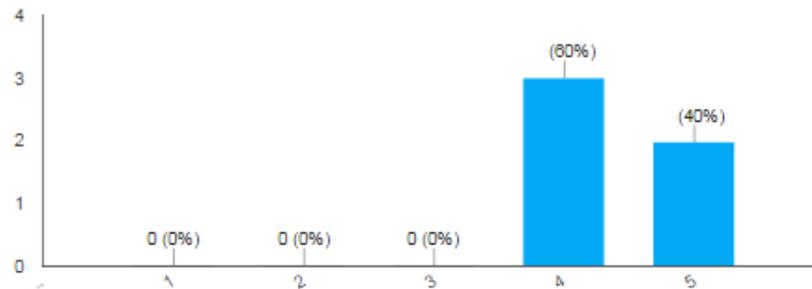


Figure 3: The students' involvement

The fact that The Bulb framework has been able to inspire and motivate young students not interested in business is a positive first result which gives confidence for future tests of it.

## 7. CONCLUSION & FUTURE RESEARCH

The goal of this project was to create a framework that, following Blank's IRL theory, aims to give the new ventures with the necessary level of information when approaching the development of a new business, supplying a path that allows them to reach the market fit stage, without wasting capital, time, or other resources as it follows the Lean Startup principles.

To develop this, the literature has been offered with an insight analysis of:

- The necessary activities to follow the steps suggested by Steve Blank's Investment Readiness Level;
- The application of the Gamification methods to the journey of business idea maturation.

The project needs to be validate properly, increasing the number of customers that use the platform through all the nine-level-journey. In this optic, it will be interesting to consider, how many, among them, will achieve a sustainable business afterwards thanks to the framework. Reasonably, if the framework works accordingly, the rate of startup projects that will succeed sustainability using the framework should be greater than the average of startups that succeed without it. Anyway, to obtain such a validation, it is necessary to wait for longer time (months or years).

The project puts also the basis for future development in the gamification direction. In particular, it would be necessary to deepen how to apply it to the field of the business creation: customer journey, environment design and multiple-scenarios population are the next topics to be analysed and developed.



## La mia esperienza in UK



Nonostante avessi sempre desiderato fare un'esperienza all'estero, decidere di partire non è stata la decisione più facile o più comoda, perché, come sempre, l'ignoto fa un po' paura. Tuttavia tutto era dalla mia parte: disponibilità delle borse di studio Erasmus e Consortium, in modo da coprire le spese dell'intero periodo fuori, possibilità di realizzare un sogno nel cassetto e vivere un'esperienza che avrei portato nel cuore per sempre. Non c'era molto da valutare, se non trovare il coraggio e partire! Oggi, a distanza di qualche mese, posso dire senza alcun dubbio che sia stata la migliore scelta che potessi prendere. Mi sento pienamente appagata dall'esperienza con cui il mio percorso di studi si è concluso: i quattro mesi che ho passato in Inghilterra,

infatti, mi hanno arricchito molto sia da un punto di vista professionale che personale. Tutto, anche i momenti più difficili, mi hanno insegnato qualcosa. I primi tempi ho vissuto sulla mia pelle cosa significhi essere considerato 'straniero', quando l'inglese non fluiva ancora bene e le persone per imbarazzo non mi parlavano: è stato doloroso, ma una tappa importante. Col tempo le diffidenze, e la mia lingua, si sono sciolte, ed ho imparato ad amare e sentirmi parte di una cultura che è diversa, ma al contempo in tanti aspetti molto simile alla nostra. È stato bello e sorprendente vedere come le gioie e le preoccupazioni delle persone siano le stesse, anche a tanti chilometri di distanza dalla mia città, e scoprire come poche settimane bastino a far sentire 'casa' quello che prima era soltanto un posto sconosciuto.

Dal punto di vista professionale poi, aver avuto la responsabilità di sviluppare da sola un progetto per un'azienda, mi ha permesso di migliorare le mie capacità gestionali, di sentirmi competente in materia e di mettermi in gioco al 100%, gestendo riunioni, eventi, spiegazioni dei risultati raggiunti, suggerimenti per miglioramenti. Inoltre il mondo delle startups, che prima non conoscevo, mi ha completamente affascinato, col suo dinamismo, i suoi sogni, ma anche le sue difficoltà.

Collaborare con The Bulb mi ha dato la possibilità non solo di vivere l'esperienza startup in prima persona, ma anche di partecipare ad eventi internazionali di imprenditoria come il PhD+ dell'Università di Pisa e l'European Innovation Academy, che hanno accresciuto ulteriormente le mie conoscenze in materia e mi hanno aperto gli orizzonti su un mondo ancora più vasto, dati i contatti che sono nati con altri studenti da ogni parte del mondo. In più mi ha spinto a mettermi in gioco in prima persona come speaker agli eventi organizzati dall'azienda con gli studenti della MMU di Crewe e della UCL di Londra, ai quali ho avuto la possibilità di spiegare il mio progetto, vincendo la paura del pubblico e del parlare inglese.

Ho davvero amato ogni momento dei quattro mesi passati e faccio tesoro di ogni cosa che ho imparato... Non posso negare di desiderare presto un'altra avventura come questa!