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Emotional Learning Applied to Extant Entrepreneurs in Wales

Dr Louisa A. Huxtable-Thomas, Research Assistant - LEAD Wales, Swansea University
Room 103a Technium Digital, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP
01792 606388 l.a.huxtable-thomas@swansea.ac.uk
Prof. Paul D. Hannon, Director of LEAD Wales, Swansea University
Prof. Sally Sambrook, Bangor University
Dr. Karen Jones, Bangor University

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Objectives

This paper provides a background summary of the research landscape at the interface between emotion, entrepreneurship education and leadership development. The paper presents the findings of an instrumental case study of emotional learning by owner-managers of small and medium sized business in Wales. The paper draws initial conclusions relating to leadership education specific to extant entrepreneurs as well as aspects of emotional learning by this somewhat under researched group.

Prior Work

The LEAD Wales programme, previously assessed by Henley and Norbury (2011) and developed from research by Kempster (2002, 2010), emphasises the importance of peer-to-peer learning by owner-managers of SMEs (extant entrepreneurs). The efficacy of peer-to-peer (P2P) learning in the workplace has been well established in the work of Gibb, Revans and others between the 1960s and 1990s. The LEAD Wales programme combines the peer-to-peer element with an integrated model of experiential (enacted), situated, formal and observed learning to encourage leadership skills development as described in Peters (2010).

In parallel, work by Shepherd (2003, 2004) on the value of emotion in teaching entrepreneurship has been continuously developed and is now put forward as a key element in the portfolio of innovative practices needed for teaching entrepreneurship and in being an effective teacher (Cope, 2011; Mortiboys, 2011; Pittaway & Rose, 2006; Thorpe, 2009 and others).

Approach

The LEAD Wales programme provides a unique opportunity to observe a synthesis of two research strands in practice. The research comprises an initial critical summary of previous literature reviews to underpin the focus of a participant observation approach to understanding emotional learning as encountered in the experiential and social (peer to peer) elements of the programme.

Results

It has been observed that the learning methods used in the LEAD Wales programme evoke strong emotional responses from extant entrepreneurs at various stages of the learning process. Such practices were observed to have profound impacts on changing the extant entrepreneur-learner's self awareness of their emotional responses as a leader of a small firm.

Implications

The emotional aspect of learning by established entrepreneurs that forms the focus of this paper is under-researched in practice and suggestions from previous research have not yet been widely applied. Results from this research contribute evidence that established class-room based emotional learning theories can be applied in experiential and situated learning paradigms with extant entrepreneurs who are capable of using both negative and positive emotive stimuli to inform learning and in turn personal development. This is crucial in the development of small firms as often growth and change is directly correlated with the development of the individual founder and leader.

Value

This research provides evidence of the value of negative, as well as positive, emotions to promote learning and supports a better understanding of the use of emotion in learning outside of traditional classroom environments. However in framing the research a key point has been identified that should be addressed in small business policy: that the extant entrepreneur is distinct and divergent from the nascent entrepreneur and that pedagogies need to be adopted that are specific to this group. This research is then of value to policy and practice in identifying the importance of stimulating new approaches to the design, delivery and assessment of development interventions aimed at the leaders of existing small firms.

Introduction

The role of emotion has been well established for teaching in formal and informal learning environments whether undergraduate courses (Shepherd, 2003) or non-accredited learning (Hooper Greenhill, 2004). Learning to cope with emotional stimuli (Shepherd, 2004) as well as raising and utilising positive emotions in the teaching environment (Vail, 1994) are becoming increasingly accepted as valid considerations for curriculum developers in both pre- and post-19 or adult education. Entrepreneurship education in the UK has benefitted from this more dynamic approach with various authors combining theories on emotion in teaching with those related to entrepreneurship education. This is relevant because the role of the entrepreneur is often personal and emotional, not just intellectual or managerial. In response to this entrepreneurship education is increasingly taught through active methods including observed, enacted (experiential or simulated), or situated (work based) learning where emotions can be more readily provoked.

The body of published research provides strong evidence for certain pedagogies that will provoke reactions in nascent or potential entrepreneurs with no prior experience of having started or run their own business. By sowing the learning with emotive content the nascent entrepreneur is given a chance to learn some of the reality of the entrepreneur, one that is often profoundly emotional due to the inherent risks and rewards (Kuratko, 2009).

However, the nascent entrepreneur is not the only audience for entrepreneurship education. Many people who start up and cultivate Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) do so without any formal prior entrepreneurship training and even fewer have exposure to formal leadership training or development prior to becoming the leader of their own organisation (Upton *et al*, 1995). This latter personal development is likely to be relevant because of the high potential for background stress and emotional disturbance, isolation or attachment to their role that entrepreneurs experience as a result of their responsibilities as leaders in dynamic, agile but often vulnerable organisations.

The lack of pedagogies and educational research that is specific to this group is of concern when the following three factors are considered: i) only a very small percentage of nascent entrepreneurs that are taught entrepreneurship education formally go on to form sustainable enterprises; ii) growth in small and medium sized enterprises is required to contribute to economic growth in the UK post 2008 in order to maintain sustainable growth (NESTA, 2009) and iii) leadership plays an important role in the long term sustainable growth of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe (Soriano and Martinez, 2007). Taken together these three factors suggest that there is a need to provide entrepreneurship, and particularly leadership, education to existing leaders of SMEs in the UK in order to contribute long term sustainable growth in the economy¹. As much of the research into suitable pedagogies undertaken to date focuses on entrepreneurship education which in turn does not appear to describe or recognise the experienced, 'entrepreneur' or SME leader there appears to be a need for a new definition; that of Extant Entrepreneur Development, meaning '*learning and development of entrepreneurial skills by experienced leaders of micro or small businesses*'. Recognising the distinct and divergent 'extant entrepreneur' as having potentially different needs or requirements for learning was the first step to undertaking a serious review of suitable learning interventions for that group. It was identified that, although the literature did not specifically describe this distinction, it was possible that research had been undertaken that did include this group. However the lack of published findings which made this distinction led to an assumption for the purposes of this study that extant entrepreneurs are under-described and potentially under-researched for the purposes of entrepreneurship and leadership education.

Having identified this distinct group of previously under-investigated but important learners, a question is raised: is the relatively new trend for including emotive and emotional elements in learning still valid or useful for extant entrepreneurs for whom real emotion and stressful situations are daily experiences? An initial literature review has identified no prior research specifically aimed at answering this question. As well as summarising a number of comprehensive literature reviews on the subject, this paper provides observations and documentary evidence from a case study from the UK.

LEAD Wales provides a laboratory for research into extant entrepreneur development

The research summarised here has been undertaken as part of a wider programme which aims to determine the impact of the LEAD Wales model of leadership development intervention by examining three linked but separate 'entities': the individual, their organisation and the local economy. Previous research on this and its

¹ The need for leadership development in particular adds a further layer of complication because of the many diverse, and sometimes divergent, definitions of this subject, let alone the increasing understanding that leadership traits, skills or behaviours are unique to the individual and or the situation.

predecessor program at Lancaster University (LEAD) has been undertaken since 2002 (Kempster & Watts, 2002; Kempster, 2009; Kempster and Cope, 2010; Henley and Norbury, 2011; Jones *et al*, 2012) but until recently has focussed primarily on the characteristics of the extant entrepreneurs and the impacts of the LEAD Wales model of extant entrepreneur development upon them (Henley and Norbury, 2011; Jones *et al*, 2012). The LEAD Wales programme has been funded to run at no cost to the participants in the south and north west counties of Wales known as the Convergence region. The target market for the programme is owner-managers or primary decision makers from micro and small companies in any business sector except agriculture or fisheries². The participants in the LEAD Wales programme are often considered to be 'self selecting' as a survey sample because these individuals have already identified and accepted a development need (Jones *et al*, 2012). With regard to this research, the LEAD Wales participants all fit within the term 'extant entrepreneur'. This term will be used going forward and is defined as '*an individual who organizes and operates an enterprise or enterprises, taking on personal financial or other risk to do so*'. This wider than usual definition allows inclusion of any individual who heads an organisation involved in economic activity whether for profit or other social value and who adopts a personal financial or other risk as a result. It does not automatically assume that the 'entrepreneur' is 'entrepreneurial' in their mindset (Rae, 1999; Kuratko, 2009).

The programme lends itself particularly well to the question of the validity of emotion in extant entrepreneur development because it utilises a mix of the non-traditional pedagogies and learning environments that have been used by others to incorporate emotive or emotional elements; peer-to-peer, experiential, situated, observed and formal learning (Peters, 2010). Further, the participants are exposed to the intentions and processes of the research, as well as the researcher, from the outset of the course which is assumed to enhance credible participant-observation as well as honest and open replies to questioning.

Emotion, leadership and entrepreneurship have established links, but how do they interface with extant entrepreneur development?

The role of emotion in learning and teaching has become increasingly popular in the literature since the early 1980s when the contemporary theories on 'emotional intelligence' were published by authors such as Gardner (1983), Denzin (1984), Payne (1985) and Weiner (1985) in an effort to build on theories from psychology and neuroscience that non-intellectual aspects, such as emotion, have an impact on 'intelligence' or cognitive performance. This was in turn based on research into cognitive neuroscience that link emotion to cognitive capacity and in particular recognition memory (Mandler & Mandler, 1964; Spence & Spence, 1967).

The role of emotion in improving teaching for entrepreneurship and the take up of learning outcomes didn't become popular in the literature until the early to mid 1980s. Kolb's (1984) theories relating to experiential learning are seen by some as the starting point for this work, closely followed by the highly influential Gibb (1984) who wrote specifically on the efficacy of peer to peer learning in educating entrepreneurs. Since that time there has been a steady increase in the amount of research published which attempts to identify firstly whether emotion has an impact on learning and secondly if the emotional impact on learning can be guided in order to improve that learning. So much has been published that there is now a general acknowledgement in the published literature that emotion has a role in effective learning, both at pre- and post-19 education. In 2004 Shepherd published on the subject of the role of teaching about emotion, and particularly grief, in enhancing future resilience in the case of business failure. Since then the paper has been cited numerous times by authors trying to examine the role of emotion in understanding the process of coping with 'entrepreneurial failure' as well as more general business and entrepreneurship education. This work has been continuously developed and is now posited as a key element in the portfolio of innovative practices needed for teaching entrepreneurship (Cope (2011), Pittaway & Rose (2006), Thorpe *et al* (2009) and others).

To understand the theories behind the design and delivery of an extant entrepreneur development programme such as LEAD Wales, the author undertook a preliminary review of literature from the fields of leadership, entrepreneurship, education and cognitive neuroscience. It was not the intention of the author to include a comprehensive review of the literature on all subjects here, however there have been significant contributions made to the literature in the following relevant areas that are of relevance. In particular these are at the intersection between subjects: entrepreneurship and leadership, emotions and entrepreneurial education and emotions in leadership development.

This paper contributes to the body of existing literature by pointing out firstly the clear divide and necessary requirement for research into entrepreneurship education that treats the experienced enterprise leader differently to the potential, student or nascent entrepreneur. Secondly the paper adds further evidence to the

² Financial funding and support for businesses in these fields comes through additional sources such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the European Fisheries Fund soon to become the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

role of emotion in leadership learning and teaching of this specific and under-described, though not necessarily under researched, group.

The interface of entrepreneurship and leadership

Multiple definitions of 'entrepreneurship' exist and this has been a subject of some discussion for over 25 years, with authors such as Hebert and Link (1989) striving to create a single definition, none of which have been unconditionally adopted. A survey of literature on the subject of entrepreneurship does show common themes in definition: the recognition of opportunity, the exploitation of opportunity, the addition of value and assumption of risk and that it implies a role in a team or organisation (Wennekers and Thurik; Stevenson and Gumpert, 1985; Venkataraman, 1997 in Shane, 2003; and Roomi and Harrison, 2011). When definitions try to add greater levels of specificity they appear to exclude key sectors of enterprise such as non-profit making organisations or stages of entrepreneurship such as inheriting or growing existing businesses. For the purposes of research, the research team has adopted the definition, based on that used by Georgia Southern University that entrepreneurship is the 'ability to recognise compelling opportunities, assume risk and seize the resources to transform opportunities into value for others'.

The role of the entrepreneur in an organisational structure, either as a founder or owner in the traditional model or as an entrepreneurial and visionary member of a team in a larger organisation, suggests a link between entrepreneurship and leadership. Contemporary definitions of leadership using an 'organisational behaviour approach' (Northouse, 2012) all suggest the mobilisation (Burns, 1978), initialisation (Rost, 1991) or influence (Kotter, 1990) of a team or group in the pursuit of a common goal³. It is not surprising then that the term 'Entrepreneurial Leadership' has increasingly been adopted into common usage in the academic literature. As recently as 2011 Roomi and Harrison published a study on the understanding of entrepreneurial leadership with a focus on how the subject should be taught. The definition adopted in that paper was "having and communicating the vision to engage teams to identify, develop and take advantage of opportunity in order to gain competitive advantage". Whilst this captures the basic tenets of identifying and exploiting opportunity for a purpose (vision) from the definition of entrepreneurship and the role of the leader in influencing others, it seems to again have over-specified. By couching the entrepreneurial leader as an influencer of 'teams' (plural) the authors exclude the solo nascent entrepreneur, distributed leaders in an organisation or the small company owner with only one small team. Stating competitive advantage as the output of entrepreneurship excludes those for whom collaboration, rather than competition, is of key interest as described by Quince (2001). The single basic premise in the multiplicity of approaches stated appears to be that leadership is an important prerequisite for successful entrepreneurship, whether it is treated as a trait, ability or tool. However, the same cannot be said of the reverse – entrepreneurial mindset has not been found in the literature reviewed to be considered a necessary requirement for leadership, although it has been advocated by some that entrepreneurs share the same characteristics and even genetic disposition as 'natural' leaders (Shane 2010).

Roomi and Harrison's work summarised the literature on entrepreneurship education and leadership education well. Since the publication of their work in 2011, and despite a strong recommendation for further research by the authors, very few papers have added new findings or conclusions to the general understanding of entrepreneurial leadership or how it could or should be taught. Instead research has focussed on specific sectors, fields or cases. What is of particular relevance to this paper is that much of the research for entrepreneurial leadership and entrepreneurial education still focuses on potential and early-stage 'entrepreneurs' and while there is some research to imply that improving leadership skills can improve the performance of the experienced micro or small sized business owner (Bolden, 2001; Kempster and Watts, 2002; Walker *et al*, 2007) there is a dearth of available academic publication outside of the LEAD Wales programme or similar on suitable methods for teaching experienced entrepreneurs leadership skills. In particular, the impact of emotion in education on extant entrepreneurs has barely been covered, with even the most highly cited papers in the field such as Shepherd (2003) focussing on the student or nascent entrepreneur. It is possible that, as for other similar subjects that could provide a competitive edge, this research forms the basis of proprietary commercial knowledge and has not been widely published or that there are inadequate opportunities or willing research subjects to research. Both of these possibilities support the need for further study of the publically funded LEAD Wales programme while the opportunity is available.

³ While these may appear all encompassing, it is worth noting that, similar to entrepreneurship, in the 21st century the one common theme on the definition of leadership in the literature is apparently that there is no common definition for leadership (Northouse, 2012).

Emotions and entrepreneurial education

In 2012, Martin Lackeus published a literature review of emotions in entrepreneurial education. This recent document provides a thorough systematic literature review of previous research on emotions in entrepreneurial education as well as in other domains of research. It is sufficient for purposes of this paper to consider Lackeus's work as an up to date and comprehensive review of the literature on this subject. Lackeus's review identified that there was little overlap between the publications with the research on emotion in education or psychology and those on entrepreneurship education with emotional intelligence being the only significant overlapping factor. The review confirms this author's view that the study of emotion in entrepreneurship education is in its infancy but surprisingly while it cites the work of Kolb (1984), the extensive body of work by Gibb, and the much cited Pittaway and Cope (2007), the emphasis remains on formal teaching as opposed to the peer to peer learning or experiential learning advocated by those authors papers.

Emotions in leadership development.

While extensive literature reviews had already been undertaken at the other interfaces, no review exists which looks at the use of emotion to teach leadership. The incidences of peer reviewed research into this area are also low with the subject only being covered in depth in the popular literature. It is possible that the research has not been pursued in the academic realm because the audience for the outcomes, the potential leader, is likely to have a pragmatic rather than academic interest in the outcomes of the research and so is more likely to require a popular and easy to read book or 'self help manual' than a wealth of academic peer reviewed publications to sort through and critically analyse.

A search of the available literature turns up relatively few relevant papers specific to the subject of using emotion in teaching or influencing the leadership development of experienced entrepreneurs. Instead the literature looks at which of the emotional intelligence characteristics could be improved or taught, but not how to teach them. This is the same issue that was faced by Roomi and Harrison in their review of entrepreneurship education, the literature was still agreeing and developing the characteristics of the entrepreneur but had not contributed in great depth or with certainty on the best practice for teaching entrepreneurship. A narrative review of the same literature by the author found that emotive stimuli that might be suitable for use in teaching are not mentioned in any systematic way in the literature on leadership development. It is not clear whether this is because it has not yet been established, because there is no demand for it, or if instead the most relevant research forms the basis of proprietary training courses for which the content will be considered a trade secret. Whatever the underlying cause is there is a resultant lack of available published research about 'how' to teach leadership development and an inevitable lack of findings about the outcomes of using emotion when teaching it.

The available and relevant literature suggests that entrepreneurship and leadership are strongly linked, which has raised the possibility of using conclusions from entrepreneurship education research to inform the teaching of leadership development. However the literature relating to entrepreneurship education was found to be heavily focussed on developing the nascent entrepreneur and few theories were discovered which could usefully inform research to answer the research question: *is the relatively new trend for including emotive and emotional elements in learning still valid or useful for extant entrepreneurs for whom real emotion and stressful situations are daily experiences?*

How can LEAD Wales participants provide insight into teaching leadership to extant entrepreneurs?

As a result of this narrative review, it was deemed appropriate to undertake initial primary research to inform future research into the role of emotion in learning. This research would be undertaken with two groups of LEAD Wales participants, as examples of extant entrepreneurs specifically in the area of leadership development.

In order to inform the initial research, a programme of participant observation of two 'cohorts' of twenty two and twenty four participants was undertaken during the initial three days of their leadership development. In parallel, analysis of documentary evidence taken from feedback and focus groups was undertaken to look for incidences of 'emotional' words. This approach assumes an idealistic approach in which the perceptions of participants and the observer as a participant in the programme are considered valid in providing insight into the complex processes that occur during social and human events. In line with Stake (1995) LEAD Wales is considered an appropriate subject for either an intrinsic or instrumental case study, however as the findings are intended to be used to inform further investigation of a more general nature, it is described as an instrumental case study.

Finding evidence of the role of emotion in leadership education for extant entrepreneurs

An initial narrative literature review was undertaken to identify common themes or strands relating to the role of emotion in entrepreneurship or leadership education for experienced leaders of micro and small businesses. Searches for key words included 'emotion' and 'education' and 'emotion' and 'entrepreneu*' and 'education' or 'emotion' and 'leadership' and 'education'. Popular citations from particularly relevant papers were also sought and examined.

Participant-Observation was undertaken with two cohorts at their induction/icebreaker event and the two-day 'overnight experiential' session. Observations of the initial three days learning were included from these two cohorts as a result of the timetabling of the various curriculum elements. This participant-observation was used to inform grounded theory development relating to the role of emotion in this type of leadership development intervention with a group of experienced leaders in micro or small business enterprises.

Further documentary information for these cohorts and 15 other was available for analysis for all sessions including action learning sets, learning and reflection and masterclasses, all standard elements of the LEAD Wales programme. This documentary evidence has been analysed for bibliometric terms that can be considered indicators of emotional elements in the teaching, learning or practice of leadership during the programme.

The other available data sources of which there are full sets available for 16 cohorts, (271 participants) comprise feedback questionnaires collected during each of the sessions being studied, information provided in questionnaires completed at the induction and final session and case study information provided by individuals as well as focus group data provided by groups. This same data collection method and resulting data set has been used successfully by Henley, Sambrook, Jones and Norbury (Henley & Norbury, 2011; Jones *et al*, 2012; Jones *et al*, in progress) since the programme commenced in January 2010.

Participant-observation took place between March and April 2013. The findings were further refined during further analysis of observation between May and June of the same year. Initial triangulation of findings from the observation was undertaken using narrative literature review, information gleaned from case study vignettes and documentary analysis of feedback.

While specific quotes are available from the documentary evidence and focus groups or case studies, no quotes were taken from the participant observation to preserve the aspect of a credible confidential environment where all participants could share their concerns or issues.

The results were analysed and conclusions made about the incidence and impact of emotive stimuli or emotion on the participants in order to inform future research. This non-experimental design for observation is suitable for initial development of research (Cook & Campbell 1979) however the methodology used here would need to more adequately assess threats to internal validity, and require comparison with other theories and other sample groups in order to form a robust framework for more detailed examination of extant entrepreneurship development.

LEAD Wales experiential learning includes high incidences of emotive stimuli

Participation observation identified that during the 22 hours of induction and overnight experiential sessions, which contain more concentrated aspects of enacted and quasi-situated learning opportunities, an overall change was seen in the behaviour and attitude of the participants. Behaviours and body language moved away from what may be described as cautious, protective, shy or defensive to behaviours and attitudes that suggested trust, openness, generosity or sharing.

Specific examples included the change in behaviour observed in the morning of induction and first day of experiential from the first two exercises in sharing information about themselves. In initial sessions the participants were hesitant to come forward, however at the of induction day and again at the end of the two day 'overnight experiential' participants were on their feet and queuing to share their thoughts.

This simple change in behaviour had been observed anecdotally by facilitators in the 12 prior similar sessions that they had participated in, but there were no observed factors that would suggest that this particular change in motivation to participate in sharing was as a result of the facilitators doing anything different to what occurred in the initial stage.

Observations from the Overnight Experiential provided notes extremely rich in incidences of emotion. In initial activities, while describing their companies, or their relationship to their companies, the majority of participants used expressive words that were both emotive and suggested an emotional rather than rational link to their businesses and their personal development. Commonly used examples include: family, security, passion, fun, freedom, frustration, love, care, excited, nervous, apprehensive, anxious, let go, relax and hope. These suggest that the participants were both familiar and comfortable dealing with their personal entrepreneurship in these terms but importantly that they were comfortable using this emotional vocabulary and sharing their feelings with others.

The Overnight experiential itself included various sessions and role plays that resembled typical team building or developmental games or exercises. However the underlying aim of these sessions was to not to encourage team working or collaboration but to promote individuals to exhibit extreme traits of poor leadership and/or poor management. While more detail about the activities themselves is not stated here for commercial confidentiality reasons, it is suffice to say that the activities have been designed and refined since 2004 to encourage extremes of behaviour (described by some authors as 'overextended' behaviours) in participants that would normally only be seen when the participant was under stress as may be seen in their role as leader. These sessions are interspersed with discussions and plenary sessions led by facilitators as well as opportunities for private reflection or discussion with peers that provide opportunity to reflect on the learning. These not only encourage the participants to consider leadership qualities, skills and opportunities by observing others but provide a nearly unique opportunity for the participants to stand outside of themselves and reflect upon their default or extended behaviours under stress in a 'safe' and 'supported' environment.

On reflection, many participants in their feedback described these intermediary sessions as 'cathartic' 'group therapy' or simply 'I'm not alone any more'. These are words that might more usually be associated with coaching (which plays a role later in the programme), mentoring or self development therapy sessions than business or entrepreneurship development. The willingness of the participants to take part in such an apparently deep emotional or even psychological activity with a group of near strangers points to a further avenue for research in this area: *research is required in to the assumption that extant entrepreneurs can feel isolated as a result of their role, their responsibilities and risks that they take. In this case study, the feelings of isolation are relieved through an appropriate outlet whose characteristics appear from initial observation to be as simple as being a diverse group of extant entrepreneurs and having a level of trust and a structure of confidentiality established through the common goal of self improvement.*

The above suggests that the activities in the programme can be described as 'emotive stimuli' and will be treated as such for the remainder of this paper. It is clear from the observations all of the activities resulted in some level of emotional change for some, and frequently all, participants. While some changes would be expected of any enacted or activity based learning, i.e. the changes from trepidation, anxiety or anticipation to relief, buoyancy, boredom, disgruntlement or happiness as a result of completing the activity, other changes were specific to, and intended as a result of, the emotive stimuli – these were occasionally positive such as excitement, passion, anticipation, trust, or optimism, however many included: anger, sadness, frustration, disbelief or denial, shock, introspection, worry, shame, depression or anxiety. It is probably not a coincidence that the observed emotions included many from the Kübler-Ross stages of grief. This is the second area for future research: *given the potential complexity of the actors and outcomes dedicated specialist research is recommended from a psychological as well as cognitive point of view of the emotions raised as a result of the emotive stimuli.* This will require open and honest contribution of a number of individual participants as well as a multi-disciplinary approach by a team of researchers in order to do the findings justice.

The second day of the experiential activity contains two of the most emotive and potentially frustrating activities that the participants are exposed to at the two day event. On both occasions observed, a number of participants stated that they were 'drained' or complained of headaches. At a focus group undertaken with an earlier, but unobserved, group 22 months after their experiential the same activities and the associated emotions were still vividly remembered. During the observations none of the participants complained or made negative comments specifically about the content, however participants in both observed cohorts left to be by themselves, stated feeling upset or still shaken up as a result of the activities. Interestingly it was observed that some participants exhibited these feelings even though they had not been directly targeted by the activities to act in an overextended way. In some cases observing the turmoil that affected their peers, appeared to be emotive in its own right. It was apparent that by this point the *participants had accepted that they were being manipulated into these emotive situations and activities in order to learn something and their continued willingness to participate in the plenary and discussion sessions after these apparently difficult or frustrating activities suggests that at the very least they were curious about the outcomes but at the best they trusted the facilitators to guide them towards useful outcomes.*

Further opportunities to test the observations will be available through pre-and post-questionnaires, however at the time of writing both cohorts of learners are still active in the process and results of the questionnaires are awaited.

Both positive and negative emotive stimuli in a supported environment lead to positive experiences

Left in isolation, the negative emotions raised during the overnight experiential are not considered by authors (Vail, 1994) to be conducive to effective learning in a classroom environment. However, there appears to be a place for them in the protected environment of the leadership development for extant entrepreneurs. When created intentionally, these difficult feelings are raised, discussed and bad behaviours or actions are forgiven by peers, all of whom are likely to have either acted or been close to acting in such a way in the normal lives. The process of being stimulated in this way does resemble at a basic level the 2 systems of thinking proposed by Daniel Kahneman (2012) where the stimulation results in new cognitive pathways and leaps of intuition being possible and as a result allows more openness to new ideas. This stimulation combined with reflective periods where the emotional output has been planned for and can be dealt with is an opportunity for the extant entrepreneur to become aware of and start to accept the negative emotions and the overextended behaviours that accompany them. Whilst this is no doubt a draining experience, the learning methods used not only 'open' the participants' minds to considering new ideas, concepts or philosophies, but also appear to initiate a process of emotional transformation. This emotional approach to leadership training appears to be aligned with the way that the extant entrepreneur encounters their leadership; as a deep seated emotional experience. From the primary and secondary research summarised here it can be concluded that including emotive and emotional elements in learning is valid and useful with extant entrepreneurs for whom real emotion and stressful situations are daily experiences, however it is worth noting again that this was successfully used in a learning environment that was perceived by the participants to be safe, confidential and supportive.

Leadership education for Extant Entrepreneurs requires dedicated development

This initial review of relevant literature and initial observations have identified a positive conclusion to the initial research question, namely that emotive and emotional elements in learning are valid and useful with extant entrepreneurs for whom real emotion and stressful situations are daily experiences

A number of other conclusions have been reached in the process of undertaking the research. These include:

- A new definition for the Extant Entrepreneur and for Extant Entrepreneur Development.
- An identified lack of pedagogies, case studies or other relevant educational research specific to this newly defined group, specifically in the areas of emotion or leadership.
- An approach that, in the absence of more specific research, entrepreneurship education research can be used to inform the teaching of leadership development.
- A finding that feelings of isolation previously identified in research into entrepreneurs are relieved through an appropriate outlet whose characteristics appear from initial observation to be as simple as being a diverse group of extant entrepreneurs and having a level of trust and a structure of confidentiality established through the common goal of self improvement.

These somewhat diverse conclusions also open up a number of future research avenues, all of which could inform the use of emotion, or other suitable methods for teaching leadership and other entrepreneurship skills to extant entrepreneurs.

Not least amongst the possible questions is 'why do experiential pedagogies create convincing emotive stimuli in a group (extant entrepreneurs) that regularly experience real emotional disturbance in their social reality? Before a determination can be made as to whether the methods used in LEAD Wales are effective or potentially transferable to other situations, it is important to seek clarity on the factors that mediate the emotion and as a result the learning. It is entirely possible given the limited number of cohorts with identical facilitators that it is the intangible actions and behaviours of the facilitators, rather than the learning material and methods, which are mediating the openness and take-up of these leadership principles. It is also possible that the self selecting group of extant entrepreneurs signed up for the programme because they were already open to new ideas and so any learning methods would have been equally as appropriate. Given the potential complexity of the actors and outcomes at a minimum dedicated specialist research is recommended from a psychological as well as cognitive point of view to examine the importance of the emotions raised as a result of the emotive stimuli.

Further and more robust qualitative research is also required to identify the true impact of the programme on leadership development. Prior research on the programme by Henley and Norbury (2011), Jones *et al* (2012) and Jones *et al* (in progress) has investigated the overall impact of training on the delegate and to some extent their business. However this and other research which examine incidences of emotion, amongst other factors, in mediating learning and behavioural or leadership change in extant entrepreneurs is novel to the group. It will be important in the future to both examine the changes in emotional as well as functional factors of leadership as a result of attending the course and also to compare this group of learners from Wales with groups from other areas in the UK and further afield.

New policies are required for educating extant entrepreneurs

Although this initial research has identified some areas of ambiguity and more questions than answers, two areas are clearly in need of incorporation into future policy, both by regional educators and entrepreneurship policy leaders:

The first is the recognition and treatment of extant entrepreneurs as a wholly divergent group of learners in the field of entrepreneurship, and in particular, leadership. The link between effective leadership and SME growth is well established, as is the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth, however if policy makers wish to take advantage of the SME sector to improve the economy, the focus needs to move away from encouraging start up to encompass the improvement of the established small company and the extant entrepreneur.

The second key area is recognition of the role of emotive and emotional learning practices as being of particular relevance to this key group of learners who typically learn outside of classroom environments. Where policy makers in either business support or adult education are planning training or development interventions for extant entrepreneurs, effective tools and methods utilising emotion need to be identified and adopted which will take advantage of the peculiar emotional resilience and capabilities of this unique group.

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