Embedding Entrepreneurship in a Regional Milieu through Youth Enterprise Programs

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of youth enterprise programs for embedding entrepreneurship in a regional milieu. Enterprise and entrepreneurship education seem to make an important contribution to shaping the entrepreneurial behaviours and motivations of youth. However, the theory on how youth enterprise programs embed entrepreneurship for regional development appears relatively unexplored. The paper makes explicit the social dynamics of youth enterprise programs and assists to strengthen the theoretical base of enterprise programs for regional development and demonstrates the effect of youth enterprise programs on the social structure and agency for regional development.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of youth enterprise programs for embedding entrepreneurship in a regional milieu. Enterprise programs seem to make an important contribution to shaping the entrepreneurial behaviours and motivations of youth (Peterman & Kennedy 2003). Hytti and O'Gorman (2004) suggest that enterprise programs may need adaptation to embed them in the regional context. However, the theory on how youth enterprise programs may embed entrepreneurship for regional development appears relatively unexplored.

Downing (2005) argued that entrepreneurship was a collaborative social achievement and an interpreted social construction. Downing's perception of entrepreneurship as a social construction may also apply to those who experience entrepreneurship education. It is contended that the interactions between students and the providers of education transforms the nature of entrepreneurship for the students. For instance, Johansson (2004) in the abstract to his paper argues that "a teacher's words reflect the theory and methods he uses. Words reveal theoretical structures, the problems identified as relevant, and how those problems should be analysed". If this is the case, students are learning or at least interpreting the words of a teacher and later they may become the agents of entrepreneurship shaped by this understanding. Therefore how the notion of entrepreneurship is conveyed in education is important and may also contribute to the embeddedness of entrepreneurs in a regional milieu.

Nhapiet and Ghoshal (1998) argued that social capital facilitates the creation and exchange of resources and McFadyen and Cannella (2004) found that the development of new knowledge in a community of scientists was dependent upon the number and strength of direct relationships. From the perspectives of youth and community, Mulraney and Turner (2001) set out the case for integration of youth education with small enterprise work experience claiming that without this relationship community resource is under utilised. Further they claimed that community engagement had the potential to influence community development. Taylor and Plummer (2003) elaborated the benefit of developing local and community coalitions with respect to developing the process of opportunity recognition for new business and potentially new

industry. It would seem that communities and regional development could benefit from embedded relationships that foster enterprise and perhaps youth enterprise programs are an important first step in creating and stimulating local enterprise that has global ambitions and an international entrepreneurship focus.

Embeddedness as a function of Youth Enterprise Programs

The importance of enterprise, from the perspective of youth particularly, is raised in the context of alleviating youth unemployment. This issue is highlighted by an OECD (2001) report "Putting the Young in Business" which emphasises the role of enterprise development in reducing unemployment rates in the youth sector. The report further concludes that all governments should have articulated policies that favour and boost youth entrepreneurship for not only the employment benefit but also for "economic growth, job creation [generally], local and regional development and economic dynamism" (p. 93).

Enterprise and entrepreneurship are two closely related concepts (Cromie, 2000). However, Atherton (2004) portrays a useful distinction when he claims that "enterprise incorporates entrepreneurship as a state (being an entrepreneur) and a behavior (being entrepreneurial) *as well as the wider enabling and disabling conditions and structures*" (p. 127, emphasis added). This implies that enterprise programs have broad responsibilities that include not only encouraging individuals to be entrepreneurs, in the sense of owning a business, but also developing a set of dynamic 'entrepreneurial' behaviors. In addition it suggests that an enterprise program should be integrated with the wider set of environmental conditions and structures. This view is further supported by O'Connor and Ramos (*in press*).

The Australian federal government has placed an emphasis on enterprise education in primary and secondary schools, (*Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs*, 1999). This shift is noted in other economic dominions as can be seen in the European Commission's report on "Education for Entrepreneurship" (*Enterprise Directorate-General of the European Commission* 2004). Much of this focus is perhaps driven by evidence that suggests a relatively poor entrepreneurial culture, for instance in Australia, (Hindle & O'Connor 2005) and

many European societies, (Acs, Arenius, Hay & Minniti, 2005). Other authors also claim that generally parents and teachers consider entrepreneurship 'risky' and not practical for the long term and instead encourage young people to 'get a job', (Chigunta, 2002, p. 29).

Under these circumstances enterprise education has apparently become an important culture change mechanism for governments. Gibb (1996) claims that re-structuring of education to adopt this viewpoint has been progressing since the 1980's. Interestingly, an Australian study found that education, in the general sense, seemed to have no significant influence on the attitudes of 15-24 year olds toward starting a business and that teachers were least considered as providing a positive influence, (*Department of Industry, Science and Resources* 2001). This perhaps highlights the need for external community engagement in any enterprise education activity.

Entrepreneurship education has also been reported to have a positive influence on entrepreneurial tendency, (Henderson & Robertson 1999; Lüthje & Franke 2002; Sexton & Bowman 1983). Peterman and Kennedy (2003) drew attention to the wide variety of entrepreneurship programs on offer in the market place and suggested that while positive results may be found from a study of one program it could not be assumed that all programs would have similar results due to variations in content, pedagogy and learning styles. This observation is consistent with Falkäng and Alberti (2000) who claimed that there was little uniformity in content and approach among courses, and entrepreneurship education research needed further development. This view has also been echoed by Greene, Katz and Johannisson (2004) and Harrison and Leitch (2005).

White (1999) identified the gaps in enterprise promotion to include business linkages, joint ventures, business expansion programs, technology transfer, networks and associations and boosting private sector business development services. When enterprise education is viewed as a vehicle for young people to be self-employed then adequate support and embedding measures need to be implemented. This is particularly so, if youth enterprise is considered as a means through which new and better jobs can be created and more affordable and useful

products and services are provided resulting in a more competitive and diversified economy (White 1999, p. 14). The extant literature review reveals acknowledgment of the need for structural embedding of youth enterprise into the regional milieu, but little substantive investigation is apparent into its process or veracity. Overall, few studies seem to concentrate on the nascent entrepreneur and the process of embedding young and up-coming entrepreneurial people into the fabric of a community.

Entrepreneurship and Embeddedness in Regional Milieus

Globalisation is causing economic development strategies to become even more local and regional (OECD, 2001) while enterprise and entrepreneurship in the sense of new venturing are also considered to be localised and individually driven phenomena. According to Cécore (2000) in a given region it is individuals that offer the most promise for stimulating innovative and entrepreneurial activity. Therefore a regions economic potential may be predicated upon the quantity and quality of its enterprising individuals and the infrastructure offered by the region to strengthen, support and nurture them.

Social studies of entrepreneurship seem to place an emphasis on the entrepreneur as business owner and study the social process of the emergence of the entrepreneur and the business they create. Downing (2005) and Jack and Anderson (2002) are excellent examples of this. Particularly, Jack and Anderson adopted structuration theory to consider the embeddedness of a variety of business owners that were labeled as entrepreneurs. The embeddedness construct was concerned with the establishment and growth of the businesses.

Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulos and Skuras (2004) sought to develop a framework for entrepreneurship research in rural European milieus and reviewed different theoretical approaches to address the operation and effects of entrepreneurship. They acknowledged that mainstream neoclassical economic theory prohibited economists from providing plausible theoretical frameworks and the means for an integrated study of entrepreneurship. They identified three contemporary approaches that investigated the entrepreneur and the wider economic, social and institutional contexts within which the entrepreneurial process took place.

These were; 'Actors Network Theory', 'Cultural Economy' and 'Structuration Theory'. The roots of each of these theories can be located in sociology (see Turner 2003) and they emphasize different elements of the interaction between individuals and social structure.

Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulos and Skuras (2004) claimed that the third theory, 'structuration', provided a theoretical framework to explore and develop the concept of entrepreneurship as an embedded socio-economic process. The notion of structure in this theory is given a 'duality' (Giddens 1982) in that its characterising feature is that it looks at both structures and agents giving neither one *a priori* primacy (Stones 2005). Structures influence people's practices while simultaneously people's practices shape structure or reinforce structures (Sewell 1992). Structure in this theory is considered to contain two primary elements; rules and resources (Turner 2003). These elements are embedding mechanisms that researchers can explore to link structure and agency as a dynamic relationship (Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulos & Skuras 2004).

Developing the Theoretical Framework

Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulos and Skuras (2004) summarised the three different social theories as approaches that: adopt a more holistic view of the entrepreneurial process; break the rigid assumptions of neo-classical economics, and; facilitates the study of a wide range of entrepreneurial activities and aims that escape economic rationality and profit maximization. Of particular interest in this study is 'structuration'.

The process of structuration contains three distinct elements (Turner 2003, p. 477):

- A conceptualisation of the nature of the structure
- A determination of the agents who use the structure, and
- An investigation of the mutual implications of one on the other.

Considering the first element, the nature of structure is abstract of space and time; that is, structure is not a material object but is better conceived as a set of 'structuring properties', comprising the rules and resources, which only exist in actual social practice (Tucker 1998). For the purposes of this research, entrepreneurship is such a structure that is patterned by people's

minds and evidenced in social interaction. Entrepreneurship as a practice—in the sense of a singular event—only becomes concrete through human actions (or in situated practice) and this characteristic is the type of structure to which structuration refers (Tucker 1998, p. 84). In essence entrepreneurship exhibits the characteristic of being produced and reproduced across time and space through recurrent social practices (Giddens 1982) by the entrepreneur as principal agent and other agents who support and interact with the entrepreneur.

The second element in the process of structuration raises the question of who uses the structure. It is argued that entrepreneurship is an interpretive project and the agents who use the structure of entrepreneurship are those who are involved in the creation of a business or enterprise. The agents are not only the entrepreneur but also others such as; venture team members, financiers, suppliers, lead customers, advisors and other supporters. The duality of structuring in structuration theory suggests the practice produces the structure but simultaneously the structure produces practice and each agent is a co-participant in creating and practicing entrepreneurship.

In terms of our research design we consider the third element of the structuration process and investigate the mutual implications between structure and agents. Gorton (2000) pointed out the inadequacy of focussing on human behaviour without account of structural influences and suggested that there was a need to overcome the structure–agency divide in small business research. Schnell and Sofer (2003) presented a conceptual review of embeddedness in their conduct of an analysis of Arab entrepreneurs in Israel. Within this review they offered a model that gave the structure-agency dynamic four dimensions of embeddedness; direct business network, relational networks, business culture and, power relations. Each of these dimensions reflected an idea that “the essence of the embeddedness approach is the structure and quality of exchange ties (factors that shape expectations and opportunities), which identify the manner in which enterprises’ relationships are incorporated into a network” (Schnell & Sofer 2003, p. 302).

Our interest, in this research, is on how rules and resources are encountered by the students and we associate these with the relational dimensions proposed by Schnell and Sofer (2003). We contend that the extent of student embeddedness in the regional milieu will be represented by their encounters with the breadth of relationships. We suggest that the four dimensions of embeddedness operationally give rise to three indicative levels of relationships; primary, secondary and tertiary. Moving outward from the primary level, each level represents a crossing of a 'virtual' boundary to create relationships and networks that are progressively more deeply embedded into the fabric of the regions business milieu. Figure 1 illustrates the concentric nature of these levels starting with the close operation of an enterprise program at the core moving increasingly outward to engage more fully with the regional business milieu.

Insert Figure 1

At a primary embedded level the students will learn from encounters with the rules and resources operating within the program, and experience these through exchanges as business culture and power relations between their peers, teachers, customers and program facilitators. This level exhibits restricted or contained relationships necessary for operating the program and affects the skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable students to embed into a business culture and environment. Exposure to relationships at this level will benefit the student's appreciation of entrepreneurship as an organisational phenomenon (Jelinek & Litterer 1995; Katz 1993).

At the secondary level of embeddedness, relational network exchanges are those that influence an agent's horizon of awareness and their perceptions of opportunity and risk through encounters with business and political elites and organisations. Support for this notion can be found with Echols and Tsai (2004) who claimed a relationship existed between high network embeddedness, the extent to which a firm offered distinctive products and processes and a firm's performance. Furthermore Brüderl and Preisendörfer (1998) found that the probability of survival and growth of new firms is increased with network support. Therefore students embedded at this level perhaps are more likely to discover new opportunities to establish new firms and find the support they might need to increase their chance of survival.

At the tertiary embedded level reciprocal network relationships are established within the regional business milieu that exhibit non-symmetrical exchanges or disparity and an unevenness in the exchange relationship. This relationship however is marked by a restoration of balance over extended periods of time as would be typical of everyday trading businesses within a supply chain. Peredo (2003) argued that community-based enterprises exhibit a kind of kinship which allows for pooling of resources to meet market opportunities and the reciprocity in this environment plays a central role in reinforcing operations and maintaining the continuity of an enterprise.

In addition to the rules and resources we also explore the intended and unintended consequences. We engage with interview texts to identify the explicitly intended outcomes versus those that were unexpected or in some way surprising to the key stakeholders.

Methodology

Social theories for entrepreneurship tend to focus on the process of emergence of individuals as entrepreneurs and centres upon human and social engagement. The qualitative research field, with its array of documented techniques, is particularly suited to research where social meaning and individual understanding is sought from social experience, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Creswell (1998) claims that “social science theories provide an explanation, a prediction, and a generalisation about how the world works” (p. 84).

Yin (1994) makes the point that case studies can be used to generalise to theory but should not be mistakenly used to generalise to other cases. Yin further notes that cases can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building when it tests what is considered to be well-formulated theory.

The interview texts resulting from four recent case studies of enterprise programs were analysed using the theoretical framework developed above. Our selection of cases provided two samples of programs that contained significantly different embeddedness profiles and

objectives. Our proposition was that the different embeddedness levels would be distinguished using the developed theoretical framework.

The interview questions had been originally designed to determine the structure, process, outcomes, benefits and challenges of each of the participating programs. In accordance with the university's ethics procedures, written consents were obtained before all interviews. Taped interviews were then conducted with a key stakeholder responsible for each program, and subsequently transcribed. The interview transcript was sent to the interviewee who had an opportunity to provide feedback to the Project Officer. In addition, two school Principals invited the Project Officer to speak with students who had participated in enterprise projects at their school. Two unstructured interviews of 30 minutes duration with three students from each group were held at the students' school during normal school hours. These interviews were also recorded and transcribed. The data collected throughout the project has been cleared for on-going research through the university ethics process and with the research participants.

As is typical in qualitative research, analysis entails coding (Strauss & Corbin 1998) of the interview texts. The coding was first conducted on the key stakeholder interview text whereby phrases and passages reflecting structuration principles were allocated a code in accordance with a coding scheme of 'rules', 'resources', 'intended consequences' and 'unintended consequences'. The coded passages were then split between the two types of programs (curriculum independent and curriculum linked) and then coded to a second level against the regional milieu embedded levels derived from Schnell and Sofer (2003). The result was a matrix with the structuration principles represented in the column and the regional milieu indicators in the rows for each type of enterprise program. The coding was conducted by one researcher and then checked for integrity by a second to ensure a degree of reliability in the procedure.

The student interview text was treated in the same manner after analysis of the key stakeholder text as a confirmatory process. Unfortunately the student data was only available for the curriculum independent enterprise programs; however it does provide an indication of the reliability of the first round of coding.

The Regional Enterprise Program Case Studies

This paper utilises an analysis of four case studies sourced from an earlier project funded by Swinburne University of Technology and the Department of Education and Training in 2005. The project was designed to research student's knowledge of education and career options, their educational and career aspirations and their intentions to live and work in a specific region. The region was characterised by: a significant population which tended to be homogenous, exhibiting negligible growth, ageing and exhibiting pockets of socio-economic disadvantage; a dominance of small and micro business rather than large industry; unemployment rates averaging 5%, but 56% of the unemployed were long term unemployed, and; stagnant labour force participation rates with youth participation rates at approximately 69%; and; identified skill shortages in the areas of manufacturing, ICT, building and construction, hospitality, automotive, health and community service industries.

The original research involved a review of literature, case study interviews, a regional audit of enterprise programs and the administration and analysis of a survey. For this current paper the data collected for the case studies has been subjected to further analysis and the cases have been disguised in accordance with the ethics protocol agreed before commencement of the project.

To source the case studies, schools in the region were invited to nominate examples of innovative enterprise programs and four programs were selected as cases based upon the following criteria:

1. The program involved enterprise education
2. The program engaged the community
3. The program was innovative
4. There were measures for success

The four case studies formed a purposive sample of different forms of enterprise programs that exhibited contrasting intentions with respect to embeddedness. Two cases, referred to as 'curriculum independent', contained no formal link to classroom learning content or assessment.

These programs are designed to deliver enterprise experience to the participants but not necessarily embeddedness. The alternate two programs, termed 'curriculum linked', involved assessment tasks to facilitate school curriculum learning. On the surface these appeared to incorporate higher levels of intended embeddedness. Between the four cases, three different enterprise education implementation strategies involving school and community engagement are exhibited. Notably, program D was a distinctive hybrid school/community project.

The two curriculum independent programs (A and B) were delivered within the school context and relied heavily upon the support of an external organisation to assist students to establish and then liquidate an enterprise project. The support of business mentors and a training program were important elements to these programs. Both programs were sponsored by the local shire council. The programs were run for the duration of one year with the businesses created and dissolved within that period.

The third enterprise program (C) also delivered in schools, had a more flexible approach, whereby students and teachers worked together to develop enterprise ventures drawing upon each schools' parents and its local community or businesses for support. In this case, a reference team of teachers was interested in tracking and measuring student outcomes, not only in terms of gains in numeracy, literacy and ICT skills, but also against a set of key qualities describing an enterprising learner.

In contrast, the fourth case study (program D) was the result of collaborative networking between three local governments and a youth employment network. Young people were invited to apply for financial assistance to establish a venture and the ventures were expected to be viable ongoing projects with some providing a source of future financial security for participants. Overall 15 ventures were established across the region involving a total of 59 young people matched with 26 mentors. Although the start-up capital of between $1,500 and $6,000 provided was important, it was the ongoing support and mentorship that was often most valued by the young entrepreneurs. Table 1 provides a brief overview and summary of the four programs.

Insert Table 1

Findings

Tables 2 and 3 exhibit the matrix and the frequency of items coded for the two types of programs in the intersecting cells. Table 4 reveals the matrix and coded item frequencies for the student interviews. We note that the frequency analysis of comments should not mistakenly be considered a 'truth' in quantitative, objective terms but rather it merely suggests a pattern.

Insert Tables 2, 3 and 4 consecutively

The frequency analysis supported our proposition that the theoretical framework would reveal a marked difference in the approaches between the curriculum independent and curriculum linked programs. The curriculum linked program was by design aimed at community engagement. On the other hand the curriculum independent program showed an absence of key stakeholder references to either intended or unintended consequences at either the secondary or tertiary levels of community embeddedness. This suggests that the theoretical framework is capable of making the distinctions we anticipated.

Analysis of the framework coded items also revealed differences between the two types of programs in the enterprising attributes of the staff and their skills, abilities and access to resources (when considered as time, money and training). For instance the curriculum linked programs were both driven by champions with a focus on community engagement *and* enterprise learning. Furthermore both of these champions exhibited industry experience. The curriculum independent programs differed as adoption of the enterprise program was opportunistic and transpired through the activities of the local shire council. On the experience side one key stakeholder from a curriculum independent program remarked "I would like to seek some more entrepreneurial skills myself" suggesting a lower experience base with enterprise.

The two types of programs can also be distinguished through the expectations of the key stakeholders in student outcome. The curriculum independent programs presented little in the way of intended consequences; although through conduct of the program more 'value' was discovered in the program then was expected. This suggests the introduction of these types of programs may act as a lever for enterprise education into the school and raise awareness of enterprise education's potency as a learning and development tool. For example one key stakeholder's comment that "the wider staff group I think has seen that kids can come on board and take on challenging roles and run it themselves without a huge amount of coordination" suggests a discovery of student self-directedness in learning that these types of program can impart.

Care should be taken not to misjudge the curriculum independent program for the value it offers students. In these programs there is a heavy emphasis on enterprise learning at the individual level which is captured in the response code 'Other'. Here are noted the attributes that are developed in the individual such as self-confidence, leadership and personal resilience. Further, the high number of comments reflected in the 'Rules' and 'Resources' codes — but particularly the 'Rules' — displays a concentration on development of awareness and management abilities directed at the issues of working in a business culture and negotiating power relationships. This type of program achieves particular outcomes for the students that are highly valued individual attributes in the workplace.

Interestingly, when the student interviews are taken into consideration we find overall a similar pattern to that of the reports of the key stakeholders; that is a heavy emphasis on the 'Rules' at the primary level. We note however that the students themselves offered relatively more commentary describing the secondary and tertiary levels of community engagement and this was characterised by the selling and production activities at the tertiary level and attendance and participation in special events and awards at the secondary level. This suggests that the curriculum independent programs harbour potential to make a larger impact at these two embeddedness levels or they achieve more than is being revealed in our interview data.

Discussion and Implications

The creation of new enterprise has increasingly been recognised as important to the global economy, growth and development (Audretsch 1999; Begley & Tan 2001; Bates & Dunham 1993; van Praag 1999) and national competitive advantage seems to be ever more reliant upon the skills base of the work-force and the abilities of individuals to engage in innovative and new economic activity, (Hytti & O'Gorman 2004). Indeed Atherton (2004) claims with respect to enterprise and entrepreneurship that "[F]ew policy makers now do not see these notions as important dimensions of socioeconomic activity," (p.123). Certainly in our sample of enterprise programs the local shire councils played a key role in promoting enterprise amongst youth.

From this study, it would seem that local policy-makers should consider options beyond just investing in and promoting youth enterprise programs and focus more directly on the factors of facilitation and development of different types of social networks that can engage with these programs. Program D would appear to be an excellent example that managed to create networks at all three levels and therefore enhancing the prospect of gaining a good degree of embeddedness. Interestingly, throughout the coding process the authors noted that while program C portrayed strong primary and tertiary levels of network activity it appeared that the secondary level was less prominent. Perhaps regional and local governments are well placed to support programs with this middle level of network activity that might be less than obvious to program organisers. The secondary level of network seems to be an important element in youth enterprise programs that encourages both opportunity and risk assessment functions. If enterprise programs are to play a role in developing regions this mid level would seem vital in achieving long term benefits; however from an operational perspective it may be overlooked in favour of the experiential benefit of stimulating enterprising skills and attitudes. Programs A and B displayed very little capacity for embeddedness and from the perspective of regional development and community engagement appear restrictive in providing opportunities for participants.

Consistent with other studies, the enterprise programs were observed to exert an overall positive influence on entrepreneurial tendency. However notably, it also revealed that some

participants were not inspired to pursue business start-up or management as a career or work option. It would seem that partly the value of enterprise programs to youth is to provide career guidance. Through the experiences encountered in these types of programs the students become more familiar with the 'real' world of business and work. The affect was to either: reinforce the work and career choice they had prior to engaging with a program; open business and enterprise as an alternate career choice previously not considered, or; add the possibility of leading their own business at a time later in life. To increase embeddedness from these outcomes as Atherton (2004) has noted the wider environment's enabling and disabling conditions and structures need particular attention and this requires close collaboration with local and regional government.

Johansson (2004) and Downing (2005) were cited earlier in the context of social interaction and its affect on influencing the structural dimensions entrepreneurship. Through this study the enterprising attributes, experience and knowledge of teaching staff was highlighted as a potential inhibiter for achieving embeddedness. In affect, the variation of embeddedness between the curriculum linked and independent programs found here may have more to do with variation in enterprise skills and experience of staff than the type of program. Policy-makers within higher levels of government involved in education policy may also consider the professional development of teachers and educators of enterprise education. Enhancing the capacity of teaching staff to engage with enterprise in communities may have a lasting affect on any programs sustainability and influence on the embeddedness of youth in the regional milieu.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has been a first attempt to understand the relationship between the conduct of youth enterprise programs and the regional embeddedness gained through this type of activity. Our aim was to engage with the thought process for initial theory building and therefore the limitations in the study must be considered with respect to a future research agenda. For instance, the enterprise programs sampled were not representative of the wide variety of programs available across the region and therefore not fully representative of the opportunities young people have to participate in enterprise programs. To make a full assessment of the

ability of enterprise programs to embed young entrepreneurs into a community a much wider net needs to be cast across the range of activities and research that explores the relatedness and integrity of the programs for embeddedness would be valuable.

The four case studies indicated the benefits and challenges of enterprise programs as reported by key teaching staff or coordinators. This level of engagement in the enterprise program by key staff varied and therefore their understanding and appreciation of the challenges and benefits of their particular program was limited or expanded. For instance, two interviewees had little direct input into student learning or program outcome. Rather, they were a point of contact between the community, mentors or sponsoring organisation. Therefore, their responses, as would be expected, are reflective of their experience and level of involvement. To gain a more insightful account of each case study future research needs to engage with multiple interviews not only with different members of staff, but also with the students or young people involved and the external businesses or mentors.

Two of the four case studies analysed were the same program, although obviously with different students, schools and resulting program dynamics. Examples of other enterprise programs that focus on developing leadership skills or the attributes of an entrepreneur may have provided more diversity to the analysis. For instance, a program such as *Students in Free Enterprise* is structured differently, and offered to an older cohort of participants. Exploring this type of diversity would strengthen our understanding of the factors involved in embeddedness and assist in developing rigorous conceptual frameworks to ground theory testing research.

Enterprise programs have been criticised by some as ineffectual and providing little evidence of increased participation rates of young people in self-employment (Greene 2002; Meager, Bates & Cowling 2003). These criticisms are found in research that considers factors such as new business start-up rates, employment and wealth creation over extended periods of time and within bounded regions or population samples. Studies, such as these, needs to also consider the variety of programs and begin to differentiate between what works and what does not. To argue against enterprise programs based upon aggregated data may miss the fact that some

programs contribute substantially to regional development while others do not and, perhaps one off-sets the other or worse the poor programs vastly out-number the good. Future research that extends the work conducted here to consider the temporal and regional dimensions in addition to the type and nature of programs may reveal substantially more about enterprise programs and the contexts within which they operate.

Conclusion

We set out to explore a narrow set of data on enterprise programs to begin the process of building a theory on embedding young entrepreneurs into a regional milieu. We considered two types of programs through the lens of structuration theory. This initial work has suggested that the theoretical framework can distinguish different levels of embeddedness and that these levels serve different purposes. The secondary and tertiary levels of network engagement may be particularly important in engaging youth with communities. The primary level on the other hand serves an important function of developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes of youth to prepare them for engaging with a business culture and environment.

We found that the two types of programs, either curriculum independent or linked, also portrayed different characteristics. The curriculum independent program seemed to be characterised by teaching staff less knowledgeable and skilled in enterprise but the benefit of the program was to introduce enterprise education into the school as an alternate way of teaching and increase the teaching staff's exposure to enterprise. The curriculum linked programs seemed to driven by 'champions' who were more experienced in enterprise and this seemed to be responsible for greater embeddedness as the champions actively sought a diversity of social network interactions for the students. We note however that it is staff that determines the program to be offered and not the program that determines the skills of staff.

The next step for this work is to seek a greater diversity of the enterprise programs to further the study and strengthen the integrity of the elements of the theory we have thus far developed. However our initial findings suggest that local and regional governments may have an important role to play in creating network interactions for students that extend their capacity

to recognise and assess opportunities. Furthermore government policy-makers in education departments may want to consider encouraging professional development programs for teachers in order to enhance their abilities to communicate and engage with the enterprise sector. Both these government initiatives would assist to establish the first step for young entrepreneurs to build local businesses with the potential to transition into global enterprise.

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Table 1 Case Study Summary

Program Label	Participants	Curriculum status	Description	Linkages to community/industry
A	12 students from Year 11	Voluntary participation, external to curriculum and school hours	Students met once a week over a term to plan, develop and run an enterprise venture. After determining roles and responsibilities students designed and produced calico wine bags. Strong focus on building enterprise skills and attributes.	Local government, local businesses, external program mentors
B	8 students from Years 10 and 11	Voluntary participation, external to curriculum and school hours	Students met once a week over a term to plan, develop and run an enterprise venture. After determining roles and responsibilities students designed and produced drink coasters from recycled timber. Strong focus on building enterprise skills and attributes.	Shire council, local businesses, external program mentors
C	Approximately 400 students from Grade 3 to Year 11	Linked to the school curriculum and delivered during school hours - but students sometimes participate after hours.	Secondary school students oversee, coordinate and distribute funds to each Primary school classroom venture. Strong focus on building enterprise skills and attributes.	Schools are members of an established cluster, local businesses and industries.
D	59 students or school leavers aged 14 to 19 years. 25 business mentors. 15 projects	Voluntary participation for school leavers. Linked to the school curriculum and delivered during school hours – but students sometimes participated after hours. In addition, the program was taken up by young entrepreneurs not enrolled in school.	Funding provided to three Shires who formed a Committee including young people. After applying, youth were funded to establish an enterprise venture or project for example – sound studio, recycling, bulb nursery, mowing service, catering, hairdressing, youth group	A youth employment network, three shire councils

Table 2: Key Stakeholder Interview Analysis Summary One

Curriculum Independent Programs A & B (Disassociated with classroom content and assessment)				
	Embeddedness Levels			
	Primary	***Secondary***	***Tertiary***	***Other***
Rules	27	2	1	10
Resources	9	3	0	4
Intended Consequences	1	0	0	3
Unintended Consequences	7	0	0	4
Total	***44***	***5***	***1***	***21***

Table 3: Key Stakeholder Interview Analysis Summary Two

Curriculum Linked Programs C & D (Linked to classroom learning content and assessment)				
	Embeddedness Levels			
	Primary	***Secondary***	***Tertiary***	***Other***
Rules	19	11	7	12
Resources	13	9	7	4
Intended Consequences	3	4	1	8
Unintended Consequences	3	3	2	7
Total	***38***	***27***	***17***	***31***

Table 4: Student Interview Analysis Summary

Curriculum Independent Programs A & B (Disassociated with classroom content and assessment)				
	Embeddedness Levels			
	Primary	***Secondary***	***Tertiary***	***Other***
Rules	26	4	6	1
Resources	3	1	0	3
Intended Consequences	2	0	0	6
Unintended Consequences	4	2	0	3
Total	***35***	***7***	***6***	***13***

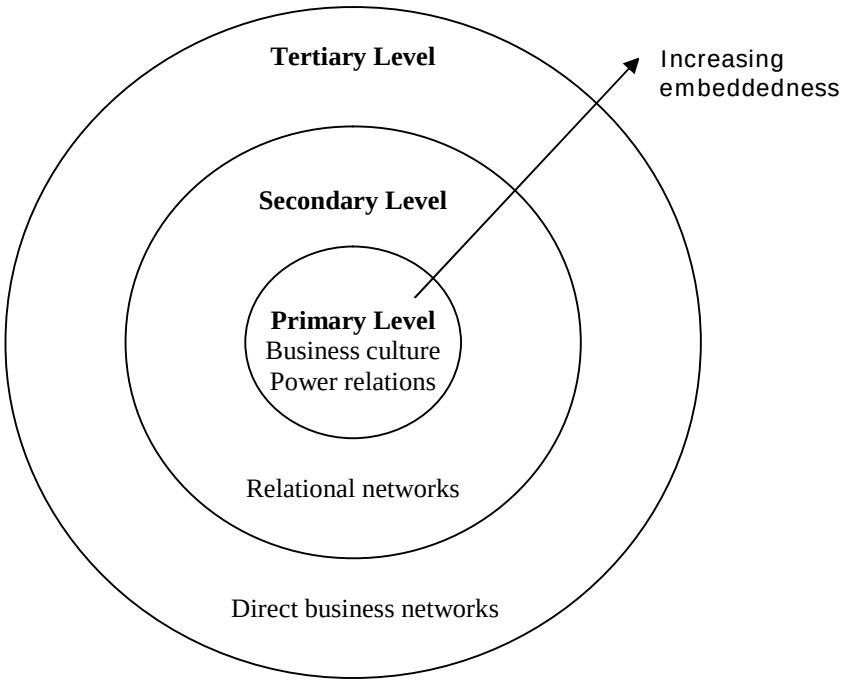

Figure 1: Levels of Embeddedness (Source: Authors)