Entrepreneurship Education and its Outcomes

A study investigating students' attitudes and motivations after completing an entrepreneurial program

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Acknowledgements

We would like firstly to thank our supervisor Karl Bonnedahl for all his invaluable insights throughout the course of this work.

We would also like to thank the eight respondents for giving us some of their time to enable us to conduct this research. Without their participation we would not have been able to complete this research.

Finally we would like to thank our friends, colleagues and employers for their support and also patience with us as we worked on this research.

Kind Regards

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SUMMARY

At the core of entrepreneurship is the debate surrounding whether an entrepreneur is born or can be created. The literature to date argues for and against both sides but acknowledges that entrepreneurial education plays a key role in assisting the development of entrepreneurs. While many aspects of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education are discussed in the literature, there is little discussion about the relationship the two have on the attitudes and motivations of the students taking entrepreneurial programs.

The importance of entrepreneurship is shown by its economic importance and the fact that governments are actively trying to increase the level of entrepreneurship within their countries.

By examining the existing literature we identify that there are four key characteristics of an entrepreneur. These are: motivation, opportunity identification, risk and uncertainty and the ability to network. From there we also analyse the role of education and in particular the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurship. We identify how entrepreneurial education can be used to develop entrepreneurship both individually and within a region.

This allows us to assess the effects on the attitudes of students undergoing entrepreneurial education by looking at their attitudes towards the characteristics of an entrepreneur, before and after the entrepreneurial program is complete.

The research takes a qualitative approach with eight students of an entrepreneurial program at the Umeå University being interviewed and their responses being analysed. The program has been running from 2003, and respondents were chosen between 2003 and 2010. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on the entrepreneurial characteristics outlined above however there was also scope to enable the respondent to speak freely about the entrepreneurial education they received to assess if other factors affected their attitudes and motivations.

After conducting interviews and analysing the empirical data we find that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on students’ attitude and motivation, especially on areas such as opportunity identification and networking. The findings also show that there are aspects that the education fails to provide, which in effect have a negative impact on students attitude and motivation.
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1. Introduction

This chapter contains an introduction, problem identification and the purpose of this study. At the end, the structure of the thesis is outlined.

There is an on-going debate as to whether an entrepreneur is born or can be created through entrepreneurial education (Henry, Hill and Leitch, 2005: 98). Vivarelli and Santarelli (2007: 456) state that the entrepreneurial personality can be described as follows: "innovative, flexible, dynamic, risk-taking, creative and growth-oriented". Drucker (1985: 67) on the other hand argues that the viewpoint that one is either born with or without an entrepreneurial personality is false. Instead he concludes that all successful entrepreneurs had made a “commitment to the systematic practice of innovation” (Drucker, 1985: 67). The belief that the entrepreneur can be created is furthered with the idea that this systemic approach can be fostered through entrepreneurial education.

Policy makers in Europe have indentified education as an instrumental factor in developing entrepreneurship. The European Commission in 2006 published the "Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe" to ensure that EU members were focused towards increasing entrepreneurial education. According to the European Commission (2008: 10), "Entrepreneurial programmes and modules offer students the tools to think creatively, be an effective problem solver, analyse a business idea objectively, and communicate, network, lead, and evaluate any given project." By encouraging entrepreneurship in this manner, there is an underlying assumption that policy makers believe that entrepreneurial skills can be taught.

Government backed entrepreneurial programs are also increasing, which demonstrates that there is a belief at an administrative level that this type of education has positive social and economic results. As Edelman, Manolova and Brush (2008: 56) discuss, entrepreneurship is a “major public policy concern because of [its] impact on economic growth, particularly job creation.” The society and the business world require and demands entrepreneurial competencies, which place more stress on the individual’s attitudes and skills than before (Taatila, 2010: 56) and that it is of interest to study how entrepreneurial education affects the attitudes and motivations of those undertaking this types of programs. It is now widely recognized in education that it is important to promote entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour. Moreover that Europe must stimulate the entrepreneurial mindset and encourage innovative business and new start-ups (European Commission, 2009). Attitude and motivation have an important role as they have been reported as the most critical factors for success in learning (Ushida, 2005: 49). There is also widespread perception that motivation is the most important factor in educational success in general (Dörnyei, 2001 cited in Ushida, 2005: 50).

Entrepreneurial development is a key focus on any government’s agenda due to the fact that it has been shown to provide solutions for a country’s social and economic problems. Empirical data shows that the development of enterprise within a country can create wealth for the country by lowering unemployment levels, reducing the dependence on welfare and generate tax revenue for the country (Carter and Wilton, 2006: 65). Governments can take direct policies to promote entrepreneurship within their country ranging from financial initiatives to educational training (Dana, 2000: 86). Carter and Wilton (2006: 67) discuss the importance of entrepreneurial education in
government policy citing the example that “just making finance available without the training on its proper management is inadequate”. It can therefore be seen that there is a growing desire not only for entrepreneurship within a region but also entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurial education is continually increasing in developed countries with the level of courses provided at higher educational institutes greater than ever (Matlay, 2008: 382). According to Chell and Allman (2003: 118), "over the last two decades there has been an increase in the number of courses and programmes aimed at entrepreneurship and enterprise.” There has also been an increase of entrepreneurial education in developing nations with focus on using entrepreneurship as a method of economic development in these regions (van der Sluis, van Praag, and Vijverberg, 2005: 225). As Falkäng, Kyro and Ulijn (2000: 101) state ‘The past twenty years have witnessed an enormous growth in the number of entrepreneurship courses at different educational levels.’ There are many forms of entrepreneurial education ranging from pre-university entrepreneurial education at both a primary and secondary level and also both publically funded and privately funded entrepreneurial programs at both a local and national level (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003: 129-130).

This paper focuses on entrepreneurial education in a university environment as there is existing literature in this field from which we aim to add to this knowledge. In addition one of the main objectives of university based entrepreneurial programs is to increase the desirability of students to initiate their own enterprise. From Gorman, Hanlon & King’s (1997: 71) 10 year review of university based entrepreneurial programs, they concluded that “there is preliminary evidence that entrepreneurial attributes can be positively influenced by educational programs and that many entrepreneurship programs and courses are able to build awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option and to encourage favourable attitudes toward entrepreneurship”. However the literature has not moved forward from this preliminary evidence in the following thirteen years. The European Commission have acknowledged that there is a consensus that entrepreneurship education has a major role to play in the development of entrepreneurial attitudes (Li, Zhang and Matlay, 2003: 495), but this is on a broader level rather than just a university level.

Therefore this paper attempts to build on this preliminary evidence by examining a university based entrepreneurial program at Umeå University in North Sweden to see if this in fact is the case.

1.1 Problem Identification

While the practical importance of entrepreneurship and its relation to entrepreneurial education is evident, there is clearly a knowledge gap when it comes to the theoretical perspective on this. The literature to date focuses mainly on what characteristics an entrepreneur needs to be successful. It also discusses the importance of entrepreneurship for the society and its need for economic growth. Entrepreneurial education is being used as a tool to increase the level of entrepreneurship but at present little literature exists showing how the attitudes and motivations of the students taking the program are affected when it comes to assessing their desirability of starting their own company.
1.2 Purpose

The aim of this study is to see how university entrepreneurial education has affected student’s attitudes and motivations towards entrepreneurship and their desirability to start their own company by examining the key characteristics/attributes of an entrepreneur, as outlined by the literature, and the affect the education had on their attitude to these characteristics/attributes.

1.3 Structure of Thesis

The thesis continues with the second chapter outlining key entrepreneurial theory. The different ways of defining an entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are discussed. The importance of entrepreneurship is examined and the characteristics to be entrepreneurial are discussed. Finally, the theory section concludes with how entrepreneurial education relates to entrepreneurship as a whole.

The third chapter outlines our research methodology. The aim of our study is presented along with our research structure and design. Our reasoning for choosing qualitative approach is argued for, the choice of theory and respondents is discussed and the limitations of our research are also clearly outlined. The trustworthiness of our research is also examined.

The fourth chapter shows the empirical findings of our interviews. It contains the responses from the eight respondents that were interviewed as part of this qualitative study. Each respondents section is sub-divided based on the key findings that we noted from our literature review in chapter two.

In the fifth chapter we analyse our own findings and observations in relation to the existing literature. What effect entrepreneurial education had on the attitudes and motivations of the respondents is examined in this chapter by using the key aspects outlining in the literature review in chapter two and presented in the empirical section in chapter four.

Chapter six discusses the conclusions that we arrived after conducting our analysis. It also identifies area for future research.
2. Literature Review:

This chapter provides a review of important elements to this study. We define entrepreneurship as well as its importance to society. We then move on to define personal entrepreneurial characteristics. The most important characteristics will emerge from the literature review in which this study will build on. After defining this, we then move on and review education and entrepreneurship. The role of education in general will also be discussed in order to understand the rationale of taking any education. Then we move on and review entrepreneurial education. And lastly, we will assess the importance of attitudes and motivation of individuals due to its critical role in educational success. The chapter provides a brief summary at the end.

The first theory we examine is about the general definition of an entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. Different definitions exist of what an entrepreneur is, ranging from, the classical view of Schumpeter (1942) of somebody who makes an idea commercially viable by creating a new venture to Kirzner’s (2009) view that the entrepreneur is somebody who looks for arbitrage opportunities but does not confine entrepreneurship to new venture creation. It is important to mention the theories around these different definitions to show the reader that there are several ways of defining the entrepreneur, but for the scope of our paper we focus on the narrow definition of an entrepreneur – one who aims to create new ventures.

The next theory we discuss is about the importance of entrepreneurship. We believe that a review of the literature regarding the importance of entrepreneurship was necessary for the reader, as to understand this, is to understand why entrepreneurship exists in itself. Without knowledge of this we believe it would be difficult for the reader to connect to why an individual would then be motivated to be an entrepreneur if they didn’t first have an understanding of why entrepreneurship exists.

Authors such as Hamilton and Harper (1994), Thompson (2004) and Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006) argue for the economic benefits of entrepreneurship. In addition the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor discusses the benefit of entrepreneurship in a broader global sense. Particular interest is paid to the efforts of the European Union in stimulating entrepreneurship and the importance they place on it for growth within the region.

Using the previous two theories to give an outline of our subject area, we then examine the theory at the core of our research, this being the theory regarding the characteristics that are inherent to an entrepreneur. The personality approach to entrepreneurship has been present since the 1960s and it is at the core of the argument to whether the entrepreneur is born or can be created (Baum, Frese and Baron, 2007: 41). By examining the literature we indentify motivation, opportunity identification, experience, risk and uncertainty and networking as the key characteristics of an entrepreneur. It was important for us to outline these characteristics as knowledge of these is essential to understand how entrepreneurial education affects the attitude towards them, which is part of our purpose.
The last theory we discuss is about education and entrepreneurship. The first part of this section discusses education in general. An overview of this is necessary in order to give the reader information about the role of education over all. From this point we then discuss theory about entrepreneurial education directly. Literature was reviewed in relation to this as it is core to our purpose. A review of this literature gives us a perspective when we are approaching our interviews; it also assists us in the type and structure of the questions that we ask.

2.1 Defining Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneur

Read and Sarasvathy (2005: 9) define entrepreneurship as “the creation of new ventures, new products and new markets”. New ventures are defined as an effort by an entrepreneur or team of entrepreneurs to create a new independent organisation (Shane and Delmar, 2004: 768). While the creation of a new independent organisation is the form of entrepreneurship we will focus on in this paper, it is also important to note that other forms of entrepreneurship exist. Mainly, corporate entrepreneurship, which is also sometimes known as intrapreneurship. Corporate entrepreneurship can be viewed as entrepreneurship within an existing organisation. It allows for innovation and discovery of opportunities within the structure of the established company (Sebora, Titikorn and Sang, 2010: 454-455).

An entrepreneur can be described as someone that continuously looks for arbitrage opportunities and grasping changes that have already occurred before others (Kirzner, 2009). Bolton and Thompson (2000) cited in Thompson (2004: 244) define an entrepreneur as “a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities” where habitually refers to serial behavioural of enterprising.

As shown there is some debate in regards to how to classify an entrepreneur. Schumpeter (1942) cited in Kirzner (2009: 146) discussed the difference between the inventor and the entrepreneur. Whereby the inventor is the person who comes up with an idea but the entrepreneur is the person who makes the idea commercially viable. This classification is important as the two can sometimes be interchanged. The characteristics required to be an inventor are extremely different to those that are required to be an entrepreneur and thus distinguishing the difference between the two is important when looking at the role education plays in developing the entrepreneur.

The literature therefore shows different ways of defining both entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. For the scope of this paper, the narrower definition of an entrepreneur is used. This is that an entrepreneur refers to an individual who aims to realise opportunities into new ventures. This is important when looking at the focus of the paper, as the attitudes and motivations of the students taking entrepreneurial programs can be altered depending on how you view both an entrepreneur and entrepreneurship. By taking the narrow view of the entrepreneur, our study focuses on how the entrepreneurial program affected their motivation to actually start their own company rather than simply be more entrepreneurial overall.
2.2. The Importance of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a topic of interest to academics, business people and governments worldwide (McDougall and Oviatt, 2000: 902). It is the notion that businesses all round the world seek competitive advantage through entrepreneurial innovation (McDougall and Oviatt, 2000: 902). Furthermore, that government seeks improved living standards through detection of new technologies, acquisition of new technologies or even replication of entrepreneurial clusters such as Silicon Valley (McDougall and Oviatt 2000: 902).

The field of entrepreneurship is recognized as being of fundamental importance for the economy (Bruyat and Julien, 2000: 165). Kirzner (2009: 147) believes that successful entrepreneurship has a significant role in economic development and growth to achieve a prosperous economy. Kirzner (2009: 147) argues further that the qualities that make entrepreneurs successful and the economic conditions to promote successful entrepreneurship must be identified. It is essential as it affects the society as a whole in terms of new ideas, new venture creation and jobs which nurtures the economy (Hisrich and O’Cinneide, 1985 cited in Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006: 80). Hamilton and Harper (1994: 15) state that “we should stress the importance of the supply of entrepreneurs to economic development. The key is to have enough of them together in the same place at the same time”. A profound example of this is particular minority groups which have made vital economic contributions to France, Brazil and contemporary Japan (Hamilton and Harper, 1994: 16). If entrepreneurial education can affect the desirability of an individual to become an entrepreneur then it shows its importance in correlation to the overall importance of entrepreneurship.

Due to globalization, reduction of trade barriers, advancements in technology and telecommunications, there are now more opportunities to enterprise than ever before. (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006: 80-81). According to Heinonen and Poikkijoki, (2006: 81) the impact on the societal level is dominance of the market paradigm in terms of privatization, deregulation, and the creation of markets in public services which means that there is a culture with strong focus on self-help. Firms are increasingly downsizing, restructuring, forming strategic partnerships and supply chains which add to more uncertainties and growing complexity (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006: 81).

Therefore the need for entrepreneurship has never been greater and the opportunities to enterprise never as plentiful (Henry et al, 2005: 98). Heinonen and Poikkijoki (2006: 81) support this by stating that “entrepreneurial behaviour has become more and more common, calling for better entrepreneurial skills and abilities for dealing with current changes and an uncertain future”. There is also a clearly defined need for innovative approaches in problem solving, readiness for change and creativity which are characteristics of entrepreneurship (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006: 81). Thompson (2004: 243) has similar inputs regarding the world; “in today’s world of change and uncertainty, we need the talents of entrepreneurs more than ever. We need them to start new businesses; we need them to champion the change agenda in established companies and the public sector… those people we should ensure we support”.

Furthermore, the environment for established organizations is increasingly dynamic, turbulent and uncertain and therefore needs injections of entrepreneurship in order to be reactive and proactive (Thompson, 2004: 243). It is clear that entrepreneurs are not only
important to new business start up, but also in making existing corporations more competitive and allowing them to cope with the changing business environment. Therefore, entrepreneurship will become increasingly necessary for future competitiveness.

To further highlight the importance of entrepreneurship; “lack of entrepreneurship is a bottleneck for innovation driven economies in achieving growth potential (GEM, 2008: 9). A prevailing concern for the European Union is to promote and build high-growth global companies from scratch. This is because the European Union is less dynamic compared to China and the US and lack of people that form innovative and competitive new ventures (GEM, 2008). Taatila (2010: 48) states that “national and regional economies need a constant flux of new entrepreneurs” Without individuals who innovate new products and services which constantly renew business processes and strategies, it is difficult to see how economic regions can compete (Taatila, 2010: 48). Furthermore developing new entrepreneurs is a major strategic mission in the EU (European Union, 2003)

Entrepreneurship is also essential for growth in a region. Taatila, (2010: 48) goes on to say that “without an entrepreneurial attitude societies can stagnate, which can hinder the long-term growth and prosperity of a region”. This clearly indicates the importance of entrepreneurship to society, but also the nation’s global competitiveness and economic development. The bottom-line is however to recognise and support all forms of entrepreneurship as the sums of its parts contributes to economic growth.
2.3 The Entrepreneurial Characteristics

2.3.1 Born or Made

Since the beginning of entrepreneurial research, there has been considerable debate as to what personal attributes are required for a person to become an entrepreneur. (Fayolle et al, 2005: 9) discuss that entrepreneurship research has always been concerned with the “innate character of the entrepreneur”. Again assessing the idea of whether an entrepreneur is born or created, Bygrave and Zacharakis (2008: 52) categorically state that “there is no set of behavioural attributes that allow us to separate entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs.” Their argument is based on that fact that anybody who wishes to be successful needs to achieve, and these achievement elements are found in all successful people, not just entrepreneurs. Carter, Gartner, Shaver & Gatewood (2003: 17) add to this arguing that the only real differential between the entrepreneur and the non-entrepreneur is the entrepreneur’s desire to be in control of their own destiny suggesting that they have a “higher internal locus of control.” These arguments are challenged by Burns (2005: 19) who believes that “entrepreneurs are both born and made. They have certain personal character traits that they may have been born with, but they are also shaped by their history and experience of life – their background – as well as the culture of the society they are brought up in”.

Gnyawali and Fogel, (1994: 53) report that out of studies conducted in various countries, the outcome showed ten various behavioural characteristics of successful entrepreneurs and they are as follows; Opportunity seeking and initiative, persistence, demand of quality and efficiency, risk taking, goal setting, commitment to work, information seeking, monitoring and systematic planning, networking and persuasion and finally self-confidence and independence.

If the perspective that entrepreneurs are “born” with skills and abilities is abandoned one must ask how the skills are gained. One explanation is that entrepreneurs “learn as you go” with entrepreneurs being more successful and effective in their second and third start-up (Gartner, 1989: 63). Gartner (1989: 63) offers a plausible reason to this as the learnt skill can be to identify and evaluate problems. This is further supported by Lamont (1972: 37) as successful entrepreneurs develop expertise in judging what problems need immediate attention.

The above discussion talked about the internal aspects of the individual in entrepreneurship. There are also external aspects that affect entrepreneurship which are a combination of the overall economic, socio-economic and political factors that entrepreneurs must deal with (Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994: 44). When starting a new venture there are many aspects to take into consideration such as patents and the protection of intellectual property laws, access to venture capital, the tax system, business plans, and barriers to entering into a market (Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994: 41). The social context that entrepreneurship takes place is also of significance. Jack and Anderson (2002: 467) discuss the effects of embeddedness on the entrepreneurial process whereby they refer to embedding as “the mechanism whereby an entrepreneur becomes part of the local structure.” They discuss that if the entrepreneur has greater
access to resources such as education, it ultimately creates the opportunity for individuals to enterpris

2.3.2 Motivation

An inherent characteristic of any entrepreneur is motivation. There is “an intrinsic motivation of self-fulfilment” in an entrepreneur according to Berthold and Neumann (2008: 238). In addition, the entrepreneur must be seen to be engaged in the growth of his/her enterprise, if the motivation to grow is not present, then the entrepreneur is no longer as such and simply becomes an administrator (Berthold and Neumann, 2008: 238).

This motivation to achieve has been labelled by McClelland and Burnham (1976) as the single most important factor for an entrepreneur to be successful. The achievement motive goes as far back to Murray (1938) who first discussed the aspects of human motivation. He defined the achievement motive as:

"The desire or tendency to do things rapidly and/or as well as possible. [It also includes the desire] to accomplish something difficult. To master, manipulate and organise physical objects, human beings or ideas. To do this as rapidly and independently as possible. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others. To increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent"


Johnson (1990) discusses that there had been 23 studies of achievement motivation in entrepreneurs at his time of writing, and out of these 23 studies, 20 found that there was some form of entrepreneurial behaviour discovered. Johnson (1990: 47) concludes “that a positive relationship exists between the motive under study and entrepreneurship.” According to McCleveland and Winter (1969) those aiming to be an entrepreneur consistently have an urge for excellence and that it is the motivation to achieve this that is the driving force behind them wanting to become an entrepreneur.

Reynolds, Camp, Bygrave, Autio and Hay (2002) as part of their Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report state that, there are two main motivations for an entrepreneur to create a venture; these are opportunity and necessity. Opportunity entrepreneurship is whereby an entrepreneur identifies an opportunity, such as a gap in the market or an innovative product, and creates a firm to take advantage of this opportunity (Block and Wanger, 2010). On the other hand necessity based entrepreneurship is when an individual creates a firm so they can sustain economic viability as no other employment opportunities exist (Block and Wanger, 2010).

2.3.3 Opportunity Identification

Kirzner (2009) talks about the need for entrepreneurs to be “alert” to opportunities, but states that there is fierce discussion in the academic arena as to how one gets this “alertness”. Romanelli and Schoonhoven (2001: 66) discuss how the geographical location of the entrepreneur can give the entrepreneur access to information for
opportunity identification. They discuss how “local conditions and processes” can be a source for new ideas, citing the example of how so many innovative technology companies have come out of the relatively small area known as “Silicon Valley” in the United States of America (Romanelli and Schoonhoven, 2001: 67).

De Carolis and Saparito (2006: 42) discuss how “social capital” can be used to identify opportunities, whereby a potential entrepreneur can use their existing networks and connections to assist them in establishing a new venture. Burt (1992: 57) adds to this by stating that social capital gives an advantage to the entrepreneur in “the way which social structure renders competition imperfect by creating entrepreneurial opportunities for certain players and not for others”. This social capital therefore creates an alertness that is simply not available to those without the existing connections. This could be intrinsically linked to Romanelli and Schoonhoven (2001: 67) viewpoint about the geographical location of the entrepreneur, as it is natural to assume that greater connections would be created in a local area as opposed to a wider geographical remit.

Hills and Shrader (1988) discuss how being alert to opportunities is related to how the entrepreneur actually searches for opportunities, also known as opportunity recognition. According to Hills and Shrader (1988) the entrepreneur can use several sources to help search for opportunities with “the more important sources being customers, employees, suppliers, and professional acquaintances.” Caglio and Katz (2001) go on to say that the most distinctive behaviour that separates wage-workers from entrepreneurs is opportunity identification. Kirzner (2009) also supports entrepreneurial alertness as a skill for opportunity recognition.

Experience is also linked to opportunity identification. According to Block and Wagner (2010: 158) “it provides the would-be entrepreneur with prior information about, for example, which market to enter, how to use a new technology to serve this market, or how to create a product or service to exploit this new technology”.

2.3.4 Risk and Uncertainty

Another entrepreneurial characteristic is high tolerance for ambiguity and changes in the environment and ability to handle uncertainties (Taatila 2010: 51). A key attribute associated with entrepreneurialism is change (Taatila, 2010: 51). According to Lambing and Kuehl (2000) an entrepreneur needs passion for business, trust, determination, risk management, ability to tolerate obstacles, propensity to change, perseverance, a desire for achievements, understanding of timeframes, creativity, motivation and have a understanding of the bigger picture. According to Taatila (2010: 51) there are basic requirements that differentiate an entrepreneur from other people. That is the commonalities of looking beyond the daily life and its tasks and simultaneously pursues an active work orientation e.g., “roll-up one’s sleeves” approach. It is the notion that successful entrepreneurs not only dream about new things but are willing to work hard to achieve them. The entrepreneur needs to be both creator and implementer (Taatila 2010: 51).

These beliefs have similarity with the first part of the discussion where the ability of the entrepreneur to execute is crucial. There is also a discussion about whether an individual is “born” with a higher aversion to risk (Lambing and Kuehl, 2000). There has been
studies on this and according to White, Thornhill and Hampson (2006: 31) that show that the testosterone level of individuals can have an effect on entrepreneurial behaviour. This is because testosterone has a positive correlation with risk-taking (Fannin and Dabbs, 2003) and individuals with higher levels of testosterone are more likely to act entrepreneurial than others. Also it relates to how one seeks dominance and status (Mazur and Booth, 1998). All of which are important in entrepreneurial behaviour according to White et al (2006: 21). Taatila (2010: 52) identifies that this is indeed one biological factor but acknowledges that there may be other ones too.

In addition, many authors mention a positive risk attitude in relation to opportunity identification. According to Schumpeter (1942) cited in Kirzner (2009), successful entrepreneurs are innovative, creative and risk-takers. Wickham (2006) supports this view as entrepreneurs are creative, bear risks and seek new niches and new innovations. “It may be that willingness and a capability to take risks is related to the identification of entrepreneurial opportunity, i.e. entrepreneurs see opportunities where others people see risks” (Taatila, 2010: 50). “Entrepreneurs are also willing to take calculated risks and can make decisions with a limited amount of information…” (Taatila, 2010: 50). Furthermore students that are entrepreneurial oriented have a propensity to take higher risks, higher need for achievement and higher innovativeness than other students with no interests to be entrepreneurs (Gurol and Atsan, 2005).

2.3.5 Networking

According to Dunham and Venkataraman (2002) the impact of the entrepreneur’s personal network and new firm growth is significant and show that networking and personal relationships are an important tool for business development and the creation of new ventures.

Studies have shown that high performing entrepreneurs are oriented externally in order to access a richer and broader but more complex pool of relationships showing that successful entrepreneurs are more active in social relationships than unsuccessful entrepreneurs (Ostgaard and Birley 1996: 38). This relates to studies by Duchesneau and Gartner (1988: 374) which showed that successful entrepreneurs spend more time communicating with partners, customer, suppliers etc than unsuccessful entrepreneurs.

Not only do networks play an important role in new venture creation, but also in market expansion. Johansson and Vahlne (2009) discuss why entrepreneurs need to be able to network if they wish to grow their firm internationally. There is focus on the liability of “outsidership” which implies that firms that do not have access to relevant networks will be at a disadvantage when they attempt to internationalise (Johansson and Vahlne, 2009: 1).

This highlights furthers the importance of networking as a tool in both business development but also for continuous firm growth. This is in line with Aldrich et al (1987) cited in Ostgaard and Birley (1996) that developing contacts is not only important for business formation but also business development.
2.4 Education and Entrepreneurship

"There is an expectation that more as well as better entrepreneurship education would result in a proportionate increase in both the number and the quality of entrepreneurs entering an economy"

Matlay (2008: 382)

2.4.1 The Role of Education

Education has both private and social returns. What education can do for the individual is important to assess, as the common belief is that education has many benefits. Investments in human capital have a private pay-off as the difference in average earning remains substantial in most countries as workers with a higher level of education tend to earn more than those without (Moretti, 2006: 3). “Those who attend university will eventually earn, on average, more income than they would have earned if they had not gone to university” (Bevia and Iturbe-Ormaetxe, 2002; 323). Education provides an individual with many benefits as new knowledge is obtained as well as preparing for the professional work life. Furthermore “Education does not only serve the labour market. It also underpins the functions of citizenship and everyday life… active participation in the social and political structure… and recreational activity in the broadest sense” (Bunner, 1998: 5).

Governments in most countries subsidise entrepreneurial education with general tax revenues (GEM, 2008). These kinds of investments with public funds must make it worthwhile as education provides such personal return. There are social returns and it is the notion that the rewards are not only at an individual level. Education creates a variety of benefits that can be shared by the society at large (Moretti, 2006: 5). A frequent notion is that education creates a positive spill over effect for the rest of the economy (Bevia and Iturbe-Ormaetxe, 2002: 232). Furthermore that education can increase the productive skills of the educated human capital but it can also have a “complementarities” effect in the production process (Bevia and Iturbe-Ormaetxe, 2002) as this effect benefits the uneducated human capital.

Moretti (2006: 5) also writes about the spill over effect as human capital is an important factor in explaining the economic growth of cities, regions and even countries. The educated workforce may generate a positive learning spill over effect to the low skill workers, hence it will become a situation where the highly skilled human capital may transfer some learned and better skills to the low skilled workforce, The notion is therefore that productivity will be benefitted (Moretti, 2006).

2.4.2 Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurship education has caught much interest and provides a body of knowledge to aspiring entrepreneurs particularly in schools of business management (Read and Sarasvathy, 2005). “Studying entrepreneurship as a form of expertise promises to shed light not only to how new businesses and markets are created, but also on how to make existing large enterprises more entrepreneurial as well” (Read and Sarasvathy, 2005: 4).

Why entrepreneurship should be taught is defined by the European Commission (2009: 10) as following; entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into
action and cover creativity, innovation and risk-taking. It helps in the every-day life of individuals and making employees better able to seize opportunities. Entrepreneurship education provides a foundation. Furthermore according to the European Commission, the objective of such studies is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment European Commission (2009: 10)

In addition according to the European Union (2009), entrepreneurial programs are to foster and developing creative thinking, innovation, problem solving, business idea assessment/ evaluation and networking. Entrepreneurial education is a means to provide individuals with the ability to recognise commercial opportunities and the skills to act upon them (Jones and English, 2004: 416). It is the notion that coaching and instruction can boost deliberate practice (Read and Sarasvathy, 2005: 4). Adcroft, Willis and Dhaliwal (2004: 528) argues that management education can clearly contribute to entrepreneurial education, if the aim is to increase a level of activity through the provision of technical skills. After all, having the characteristics previously identified, one must have the necessary skills to take advantage of opportunities presented or created (Adcroft et al, 2004: 528).

Furthermore the study of entrepreneurship is a form of expertise i.e., a set of skills, models and processes that can be acquired with time and deliberate practice (Read and Sarasvathy, 2005: 2). Entrepreneurship education refers to activities aimed at developing enterprises or entrepreneurial people and increasing their knowledge and understanding of enterprising and entrepreneurship (Heinonen and Poikkijoki, 2006: 80). They further write that the learning objectives in the entrepreneurial directed approach to entrepreneurship are focused on increasing understanding and knowledge of entrepreneurship amongst students to infuse their entrepreneurial skills and behaviour as a precondition for entrepreneurial process.

According to Pajarinen, Rouvinen and Ylä-Anttila (2006) cited in Taatila (2010: 49), entrepreneurs with a higher level of academic background are often more innovative, modern in their business models and usage of new technology in new ventures. With academic education, students can see the latest developments within their field which provide the student a clearer view that allows him or her to implement it in a future business (Taatila, 2010: 49). Important to note is that the business field is of a lesser importance, as academic entrepreneurs may be successful in both research-based and imitative businesses. Furthermore, it is the high-level skills in new business start-ups and nurturing the businesses to grow, that is important (Minniti and Le’vesque, 2008). Therefore, “from the point of view of a national economy it is hoped that a large portion of academically educated people would pursue an entrepreneurial career” (Taatila, 2010: 49). According to the European Commission, (2008) it is a major challenge to produce more academically educated entrepreneurs. In addition, according to studies by Garavan and O’Cinneide (1994: 19) the main motivation of taking entrepreneurship programs was the students’ motivation of starting their own business.

It is argued that successful entrepreneurs can be developed through educational short-term training programs (McCleveland and Winter, 1969). Not only this, according to studies of various states in the US, for every 1% increase in college educated people led to a 1.2% increase in jobs that small business firms created (Phillips, 1993).
Some authors are less positive to formal entrepreneurial training as it is argued that it is unlikely to have strong and direct impact on entrepreneurial knowledge development (Politis, 2008: 65). Rather that formal education should have a creativity development focus, critical thinking and reflecting approach as Politis (2008) argues that in developing entrepreneurial knowledge, that approach can provide an insightful influence on the students ability and motivation. Furthermore that entrepreneurial education has practical limits (Timmons, Muzyka, Stevenson and Bygrave, 1987). This is that the entrepreneurial education can only touch on some practical elements but not all.

The European Commission (2008:11) in promoting entrepreneurship education in Europe has argued that "students feel more confident about setting up their own business as they can now test their own business ideas in an educational, supportive environment". This provides the argument that entrepreneurial programmes can be used not only as a source of education for aspiring entrepreneurs but can also be used as a test ground for new business ideas. The student can test their idea against theories and potentially can be more comfortable about creating the venture knowing that it has withstood academic scrutiny.

Interesting, Sluis et al (2005) has found that in developing countries those that with a higher level of education usually enter wage employment rather than starting their own enterprise. This perhaps is related to the fact that needs based entrepreneurship is extremely present in these regions as opposed to opportunity based entrepreneurship. The resulting factor being that those who have received a high level of education are more inclined to choose the guaranteed income of wage employment rather than the risk associated with entrepreneurship.

There are successful cases of entrepreneurial programs in higher education which have focused on the development of entrepreneurial competencies (Taatila, 2010: 48). Some authors are less positive to formal entrepreneurial training as it is argued that it is unlikely to have a strong and direct impact on entrepreneurial knowledge development (Politis, 2008: 65). Rather that formal education should have a creativity development focus, critical thinking and reflecting approach as Politis (2008) argues that in developing entrepreneurial knowledge, that approach can provide an insightful influence on the students ability and motivation. Furthermore that entrepreneurial education has practical limits (Timmons et al, 1987).

Taatila (2010: 53) have collected information and presented some interesting cases of successful formal training of entrepreneurship in higher education. The first case is post-graduate diploma course called Technoentrepreneurship and Innovation program. Over a four year timeline, 174 students had taken part in the program. 64 of those students had established a company and 44 of those businesses was still in operation after two years of being established. Furthermore many students had been employed by multinationals or state bodies. (Taatila, 2010: 53). The second case of successful entrepreneurship education is the Entrepreneurship program at University of Tasmania. The focus here was to educate the students in recognizing new business opportunities as well as developing their physiological skills. The education was student-centered in order to develop empowering skills and resource allocation under risky conditions (Taatila, 2010: 53). The third example is the International Entrepreneurial camps at Laurea University where the students write business plan in real life settings in order to
realize them. In 2007, out of 13 plans, five were realized and three more were under development in 2008 (Taatila, 2010: 54).

According to Taatila (2010: 54), the key to success in entrepreneurial education is learning in the real life business environment. “Thus, we can conclude that, despite the fact that there are psychological favourable conditions for entrepreneurial behavioural, entrepreneurial competencies can also be learnt and enhanced” (Taatila, 2010: 55).

While the intent of entrepreneurial education at a university level is predominately concerned with increasing the entrepreneurial abilities of its attendees, it is also important to note the other possibilities of why students may enrol in an entrepreneurial programme. Block and Stumpf (1992) discuss that not all individuals who take a course in entrepreneurship may wish to be entrepreneurs: some may wish to explore entrepreneurship on an intellectual level; others may recognise the need for entrepreneurship in society, and attend a programme so as to better understand this discipline. This is also something to investigate via our research to see if this was the case for any of our respondents.

2.4.3 Attitude and Motivation

The role of attitude and motivation is important to consider, especially when looking at the outcome of this research when investigating the students who take an entrepreneurial program. “An individual's motivation and perception contribute to the formation of one's attitudes” (Chon, 1989). Stevensson, Bruner and Kumar (2000) says that the attitude is especially useful for understanding and explaining a behaviour and attitude can be defined as the individual’s belief that a concept, service or product is a good idea (Vijayasarathy, 2004).

Attitude and motivation have an important role as they have been reported as the most critical factors for success in learning (Brandl, 2002). In addition, there is a widespread perception by classroom teachers that motivation is the most important factor in educational success in general (Dörnyei, 2001). Studies by Gardner and Lambert (1959) show that attitude and motivation are the two factors that are strongly correlated with the learner’s achievements.

The relationship between the students own background often influences their attitude towards their motivation to learn in general (Obeidat, 2005). Lambert (1990) proposes two types of bilingualism, additive and subtractive which refer to the students’ attitude and motivation, which can also be useful in the discussion for this research. In the additive the learners feels that they are adding new insight to their skills and experience, which means building and developing their existing knowledge. The latter, subtractive, learning is according to the students threatening to what they already know, hence a threat. The bottom-line is that successful learning is when the students have an additive approach and that subtractive learning hampers successful learning (Obeidat, 2005).

In addition, teachers, curricula, instructional aid has an effect on how the students react to the learning experience (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993).
The requirement of entrepreneurial competencies demanded by the society and the business environment places even more stress on an individual’s entrepreneurial attitude and skills than before (Taatila, 2010: 56). In addition, the author proposes that it is of interest to study the motivation in entrepreneurial education (Taatila, 2010: 57), especially when motivation and attitude constitute a significant element in success as defined above.

As Peterman and Kennedy (2003: 129) state “despite the recognition that education and prior entrepreneurial experiences influence people's attitudes towards starting their own business, the impact of entrepreneurship or enterprise education, as distinct from general education, on attitudes or perceptions of entrepreneurship has remained relatively untested”. Young (1997) suggested that there are two sets of reasons why students may want to study entrepreneurship. First, the student may plan to start up their own business; second, they may wish to acquire knowledge which will be helpful in their careers in larger organisations. The current field of knowledge stops short of showing the outcomes of entrepreneurial education on the attitudes of the students who enrol in these courses.

This will be tested in the empirical section of this paper to attempt to add to this field of knowledge.

2.5 Summary

We have seen that both entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur can be defined in different ways. No definition is more exact than the other as it depends on what perspective you are focusing on. As this study focuses on the desirability of a single individual (a student of entrepreneurship), then it is natural for us to use the narrow definition of an entrepreneur when we are discussing who the entrepreneur is. This narrow definition is where by the individual is concerned with establishing their own venture. This is in comparison to an individual who is entrepreneurial, which can mean they show entrepreneurial characteristics, but do not necessarily act upon them.

Entrepreneurship has been shown not only to be beneficial for the individual who engages in it, but also in the wide economic sense. The importance of entrepreneurship is shown throughout the literature and there are few if any arguments that are against entrepreneurship. Also in a practical sense, the importance of entrepreneurship is being seen by the emphasis governments and organisational bodies are placing on entrepreneurship.

The literature has presented us with numerous different characteristics/attributes of an entrepreneur. As there are so many, we have chosen to refine these characteristics/attributes down to four key ones to assist us in our analysis, these are:

- Motivation
- Opportunity Identification
- Risk and Uncertainty
- Ability to Network

These four have been mentioned numerous times throughout the literature that we have reviewed and therefore show the key characteristics at the core of an entrepreneur.
From there we also examine the relationship of entrepreneurial education and examined the key aspects in the literature relating to this.

The literature has shown the role education can play in society and specifically entrepreneurial education. The theory behind the purpose of entrepreneurial education, and specifically university based entrepreneurial education, is to encourage more people to create their own ventures. While some theory shows that this may not be the sole purpose, as some students may just wish to learn about the field of entrepreneurship rather than take an active role in this field. Overall though, the body of evidence indicates that those taking these types of programs do wish to become entrepreneurs and this is something that we can analysis through our empirical data.

As we have outlined key characteristics/attributes of the entrepreneur, and we have also seen then role of education and specifically university based entrepreneurship education, now we can examine the effect that this education has the students. Figure 2.1 shows how we aim to examine this by looking at how entrepreneurship education has affected the attitudes of the students towards the key characteristics of an entrepreneur as identified by the literature. By doing so we can see the outcome, which results in the students having either a positive, negative or no change in their attitude to the entrepreneurial characteristics. If the entrepreneurial education has a positive effect, that it can be argued that, the student’s desirability to start their own company would have been increased. Similarly the opposite would occur if they had a negative reaction. If there was no change in their attitudes then the existence of these courses would have to be examined as well.
Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurial Characteristics

Motivation
Opportunity Identification
Risk and Uncertainty
Ability to Network

Outcome

Change in attitudes towards the entrepreneurial characteristics

Figure 2.1 Summary of Theoretical Section
3. Methodology

This chapter describes how we conducted our study. It includes why we chose this subject, our ontological and epistemological assumptions, how we as researchers view the world, our scientific approach, research strategy and choice of theory. We do also include a criticism of sources. Then we move on to describe our research design and technique used and respondent selection. At the end we propose limitations to our study, transferability of the study which includes information of the Entrepreneurial programme studied and lastly, trustworthiness of our study.

3.1 Choice of Subject

Both authors of this research are students of entrepreneurship and have a keen interest in the motivations behind why an individual chooses to enterprise. We have been confronted with the debate of whether an entrepreneur is born or made from the very beginning of our entrepreneurial studies. We feel that this question will always exist, as shown in the literature review, and as such we decided to focus beyond this.

By choosing education ourselves to improve our own entrepreneurial knowledge, we discussed how the education itself actually affects the attitudes and motivations of the students. The literature provides several key characteristics to be found in an entrepreneur and discusses the environment in which an entrepreneur needs to be successful. This created interest for us as to how the education we received in fact affected our attitude towards these characteristics, and ultimately our motivation to enterprise. If studying an entrepreneurial program creates a more positive attitude for the student towards these characteristics then it can be assumed that the student is ultimately more likely to become an entrepreneur which has overall positive impacts for the society at large as outlined in our literature review.

3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

At the core of our purpose is the causality between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurship. For our research we cannot view entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurship as objective entities as by doing so we would have to believe that they are external to social actors. This would mean that it would be impossible to seek causality between the two when investigating students’ attitude and motivation. This type of ontological approach is referred to as objectivism (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

For our research, we take the view that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education are not independent or separate from social actors, they are the very opposite, their meaning is derived from the social actors involved. We take the approach that it is our social perception of entrepreneurship which creates what it is. This can be seen by the different definitions of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur. In addition we perceive that one can only view attitudes and motivations in a subjective manner. By their very nature, attitudes and motivations are determined by the social actors at their core. A perception of a person’s attitude or motivation can only be made by the person
themselves or somebody else interpreting them. In our study we have to do both, by asking questions to respondents we see their subjective view of their own attitudes and motivations, and then we have to interpret their answers. Therefore in this sense we have an ontological assumption of constructivism, this being that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 23). Weinberg (2002: 18) expands on this referring to subjectivism as “the relative degree to which people are rationally entitled to believe in an idea given their own subjective exposure to a body of evidence. As students of entrepreneurial education it has to be stated that there are elements of subjectivism to our approach as we are negotiating this field of study based on our prior exposure to elements relating to entrepreneurial education. However in saying that, there are elements of our research where we have an objectivist view. For example the entrepreneurial program at Umeå University is set out according to a curriculum. It is measurable and observable and we as social actors do not affect the reality of whether this program exists or not. In this manner it is not possible to say we either have a definitive objectivist or constructivist/subjectivist view however a view leans towards a more constructivist/subjectivist view, particular when we are conducting our analysis.

Further to the way we as researchers view the world (ontological assumption) we also must examine how we believe knowledge is established (epistemological assumption). Bryman and Bell (2007) outline the two most common epistemological approaches: positivism and interpretivism. The positivist view is that knowledge is created through the outcome of the research and in line with the social structure (Weinberg, 2002: 15-16). In this view the researcher is separate from their outcome, however this is not the case in our research. The responses that our interview subjects give us in our empirical section does not create new knowledge as such for us, they are simply statements. What does create new knowledge for us is the analysis and interpretation of these statements. As such throughout our paper there is epistemological assumption of interpretivism. This is the view that we gain knowledge by understanding. This is that we can only understand the responses given to us in the context of the literature we have reviewed as this is the basis for us to interpret their statements.

### 3.3 Scientific Approach

To achieve our purpose we have taken the following steps. Firstly, we identified existing theory and literature relating to these theories to give us grounding in the area of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. Secondly we investigated, by the means of semi-structured interviews, the changes of attitudes and motivations of students of these entrepreneurial programs which gave us new observations and findings. Thirdly we analysed these findings and concluded with our theoretical observations, indicating areas for future research.

According to Nueman (1997: 46) there are two scientific approaches to connect our empirical observations and findings to theory. The first is the deductive approach whereby “you begin with an abstract, logical relationship among concepts, then move toward concrete empirical evidence”, testing the preconceptions that we might have against hard facts (Nueman, 1997: 46) This is not necessarily our ambition and therefore this is not the course of action we take. While we do identify existing theory, this was simply used to guide us and give us a theoretical background. However in
saying this, we do not necessarily take an inductive approach. This is the second approach that (Nueman, 1997: 46) outlines whereby “you begin with the detailed observations of the world and move toward more abstract generalisations and ideas” In our case, we examine the relationship between attitudes and motivations of a student towards entrepreneurship before and after taking an entrepreneurial program. As we use specific existing theory, that of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as the basis of our thesis, then we consider ourselves to be slightly more deductive in our approach rather than inductive.

3.4 Research Strategy

We have taken a qualitative approach to our research as this was the natural research strategy for us to take when looking at our ontological and epistemological orientation. As we have a leaning towards a constructivist/subjectivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology then we feel that a qualitative approach is the appropriate method to assist us in our purpose. This is in line with what Bryman and Bell (2007: 28) describes qualitative research as, “embodying a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of an individuals’ creation.” This for us is important as we our viewing an individual’s own attitude and motivation, therefore we must accept that they have the ability to change their perception of their attitude at any time. If we did not have the assumption that there was potential for change in these aspects, then there would have been no point in us conducting this research with the purpose that we have.

Hodges et al (2007: 361) also state that “qualitative research methods are valued in the development of knowledge”. By interviewing the respondents it allows us to develop our knowledge and thus contribute to existing knowledge in this area. It is this which makes a qualitative approach beneficial as we can develop upon existing theory by our own analysis of our qualitative interviews.

3.5 Critical Review

It was important for us to choose theory that not only gave a background to our subject area, but also expanded on this, giving us particular insights into the key aspects of our subject area such as motivation, entrepreneurial characteristics and entrepreneurial education. Dees (2000) citied in Saunders et al (2003: 47) states that the literature review should refer to work by recognised experts in the field which we are studying. Below we identify the following theories that we examined in the literature review.

Our background prior to this research is within the field of Business Studies. We both are considered to have a broad basis of background within the field of management, international business, marketing and finance. Moreover we both are postgraduate students studying entrepreneurship. Furthermore our experience is not only academic but consists of relevant working experience in sales, marketing, e-business, new product development and general management. After both completing bachelor’s degrees in Business Studies, we both have five years experience in analysing and critically evaluating sources which we have carried forward into this research.
The data that is used is considered to be relevant and with quality by us as researchers as it has been cited by, as well as supported by, other authors in many cases. This reassured the quality and trustworthiness of the sources as well as rigorous review of the literature. In addition, data has been retrieved at from trusted and acknowledged sources and databases such as Business Source Premier and Emerald Fulltext where articles have been selected on the basis that they have been peer reviewed to ensure their credibility.

The authors have used different key words when searching for articles in these databases. This included “Entrepreneurial” and “Education”, “Entrepreneur” and Education”, “Entrepreneurship” and “Education”, “Entrepreneur” and (“Personality, “Motivation”, “Characteristics”).

3.6 Research Design and Technique

As mentioned we chose a qualitative research strategy based on our ontological and epistemological assumptions. The next decision was which qualitative method we should take. Bryman and Bell (2007) outline two major types of qualitative interview, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. As we had reviewed existing literature in the areas of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education, we had indentified specific topics to assess the changes in attitudes and motivations towards these. In the summary of our theory we identified four key characteristics of an entrepreneur and thus we wanted to investigate how the entrepreneurial program affected the attitudes of our respondents towards these characteristics.

The best approach to do this is to conduct semi-structured interviews. Bryman and Bell (2007: 474) note that this method allows the respondent a “great deal of leeway” to answer questions on a range of topics rather than direct specific questions. We created an interview guide (Appendix I) which we used to structure the interview as this also enabled us to ask follow up questions rather than work through a specific list of questions.

The questions were constructed so that we could assess the respondents change in attitudes to entrepreneurship before and after taking the entrepreneurial program. Questions were asked that related to both their attitudes before the program and after the program. The questions were focused to how the program itself caused these changes which is directly linked to our purpose.

The first area we asked questions on was the respondent’s background. This was important for us as we believe the reader must have some knowledge of the respondent when reading our analysis of their answers. Also as we are looking at attitudes and motivations, it is important to show the background of the respondent as this may have an impact on their attitude and motivation.

The next set of questions focused on the characteristics of an entrepreneur and how the respondents felt their attitudes and motivations towards these characteristics changed as a result of the program. Questions on this were important for us as this is core to our purpose and makes it the central point of our analysis.
In the last set of questions we related to their overall attitudes towards entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial program they took. These questions were asked so that we could identify areas that affected their attitude beyond what we identified in the literature. As we asked open ended questions, we allowed the respondents to talk freely, even if their responses did not directly answer the question. The purpose of this was so that the respondent could freely talk about their attitudes and motivations. This allowed us to gather information beyond the specific topics we had initially identified, but still information that was relevant to our studies. This is noted as additional comments in our empirical section.

As interviewers we are aware that we must act and pose questions as natural as possible so that subjects do not answer what they deem to be the appropriate answer. Having this in mind, we believe that the data reflects the subject’s viewpoint, not our own. However one cannot rule out that our presence actually made the respondents feel pressured to answer the questions in a certain way despite our efforts not to influence them.

The time and location of the interviews was decided upon by the respondents. The face-to-face interviews were at either the University or the respondent’s respective offices. As the respondents decided the time and place, they were in a relaxed environment. We did not notice any nervous behaviour or hesitations in general. One particular respondent, Elin, appeared rushed towards the end of the interview which may have affected her final few answers. For all of the other respondents we did not feel that they were under any time constraint which is why we feel they did not rush or cut short any of their answers.

It is possible that there could have been a different outcome with a different research technique. We ruled out other techniques such as focus groups or group interviews because we want to avoid the subjects to inhale and adopt others viewpoints e.g. group thinking. Furthermore it was not possible to conduct the above techniques due to the widespread geographic difference, with subjects being in several different locations throughout Sweden. As this is a qualitative study focusing on a few respondents, a standardized questionnaire does not enable respondents to elaborate on their answers and therefore not suitable for this particular study.

3.7 Respondent Selection

We interviewed a total of eight respondents who had taken an entrepreneurial program at Umeå University between 2003 and 2010. The total number of enrolled students during years 2003 – 2009 was 80. Eight students were chosen to attempt to get close to a representative sample within the scope of our study. Jens completed the program in 2004, Elin and Per in 2005, Martin in 2006, Peter in 2007, Marcus in 2009 and Emma and Max in 2010. The reason why respondents were chosen over this period rather than from one particular year was to avoid the case where a specific class culture may have affected the respondents. For example if we took all the respondents from 2006, we could not be sure if their attitudes and motivations after the program towards entrepreneurship were affected by things that happened specifically within that program such as different guest lecturers that visited or specific articles that were suggested readings that year.
Also there was a problem of accessibility to students. As the majority of the students who took the program between these years were from outside Sweden, it was difficult to locate many and this is why we do not have a respondent for 2008.

As this study is a qualitative study, the respondents were chosen on the basis of several criteria. Firstly, that they were still in Sweden. This was so that we could have access to the respondent; ideally we would have liked to have face to face interviews with all our respondents; however this was not possible for all. Face-to-face interviews allowed us to develop our interviews further by asking open ended questions more naturally and reducing any potential stress on the respondent. We conducted face to face interviews with Martin, Peter, Marcus, Emma and Max. When a face-to-face interview was not possible, we conducted the interview over the telephone, by doing this from within Sweden, we ensured that we had a good connection and that both the respondent and the researchers could easily hear and understand each other. Telephone interviews were conducted with Jens, Elin and Per.

Each interview lasted for approximately 25-30 minutes. Respondents were informed prior to the interview that this was the expected timeframe of the interview. The interview guide ensured that we maintained this time structure whilst still allowing the respondents to add any additional information. Also time had been factored in to clarify any comments that the respondents had made. This was done at the end of each interview to ensure clarity in the respondents answers. The authors did not find it necessary to exceed this timeframe as in all case the respondents had answered with sufficient detail. In addition, due to the respondents agreeing to this timeframe, it would have been inappropriate to exceed the agreed time.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded via a digital recorded function on one of the author’s smartphones. The equipment was tested in advance to ensure clarity both for the face to face interviews and the telephone interviews and there was no issue in the quality during the actual interviews. All respondents were informed prior to the interview that the interview would be digital recorded and they all gave their consent to being recorded. Post interview, the recordings were transcribed by the authors and their answers placed into sections as seen in the empirical section of this paper. Once this was completed the authors then presented their answers in a more structured manner so the reader could see the discussions relating to each particular area that was discussed (Motivation, Born or Made, Opportunity Identification,, Risk and Uncertainty, Networking and Additional Comments).

More males than females enrolled at the program. This was kept in mind when we were selecting respondents and is reflected in the fact that only a quarter of our respondents are female. This is in line with the level of females enrolling in the program.

3.8 Research Analysis

Coffey & Atkinson (1996: 4) discuss that there are at least 26 analytical strategies which can be applied to qualitative data. Seeing that we have a more deductive approach, in analysing our empirical data we use an analytical procedure called pattern matching. Saunders et al (2003: 390) discuss that this is can be an effective way of analysing qualitative data. The purpose of pattern matching is to examine existing theory and see if the results of the empirical analysis are in line with patterns identified
from the theory. Through the literature review, key theoretical aspects are identified: Motivation, Born or Made, Opportunity Identification, Risk and Uncertainty and Networking. It is these aspects that are analysed in the analytical section whereby the pattern of the data collected is matched against this theory that has been identified.

Links are made between statements that the respondents have made and patterns that had been seen in the existing theory. It is also highlighted where no pattern has been seen. This is particularly evident in the “additional comments” section.

3.9 Limitations

This study cannot be generalised to represent the whole population of students taking entrepreneurial programs. Therefore we do not consider this as an issue of great significance as this work does not call for a generalisation to the whole population.

As this research attempts to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial education and the changes in attitudes and motivations of students taking these programs, the research is limited in the fact that we are unable to interview the students before they actually take the program. This is a constraint related to the timing of when this research was conducted. Under ideal circumstances, students would have been interviewed directly before taking the program, and subsequently, directly after taking the program. By doing so, we could more easily identify that the program itself was at the core of the changes the respondent’s state, rather than any external factors that may be unknowingly influencing the respondents answers which occurred after the program. However in saying this, the questions were posed to the respondents in a manner as to ensure that the entrepreneurial program was at the core of the questions, but there is no guarantee that external factors to the program may have influenced their decision.

As the respondents have been through entrepreneurial education, their answers may have reflected what the literature says as opposed to their own beliefs. This is an acknowledged limitation that we as researchers have been aware of from the start of our research. However we have attempted to reduce this by asking the respondent’s questions directed at their own personal attitudes and motivations to these topics rather than asking them what the literature discussed about the topics.

Only the entrepreneurial program at Umeå University was under investigation. It may be possible that the research would have shown a different outcome by examining other entrepreneurial programs.

Umeå University has changed the name of the course three times; it started in 2003 as Entrepreneurship, Business Context and Change. In 2008 it changed to Entrepreneurship, Dynamics and Business Venturing and once again to its current form in 2009, Business Development and Internationalization. The curriculum changed slightly during these years in combination with name changes but the core focus of the course remained the same on entrepreneurship, opportunity recognition, and innovation, preparing skills to initiate and launch businesses as well as leading existing businesses. The interview questions were designed not to examine the explicit courses in the program but the overall motivation and attitudes of studying an entrepreneurship
program. We accept that this may have had some impact on the respondents but we do not deem it significant enough to affect the overall purpose of the study.

Despite the identified limitations, we do not regard all of the above to have a significant impact as the respondents’ responses answered what we set out to investigate, and provided us with insights that enabled us to study our purpose. We are only humans and are fallible. Despite this, we think we have conducted a research that answers our purpose as best as we possibly could.

3.10 Transferability

For generalisation and transferability purposes the course aim and learning outcome will be investigated and the course curriculum is important to include. The information about the Entrepreneurial course at Umeå University is obtained from the previous course descriptions and syllabuses, retrieved from the course coordinator at Umeå University. The current course description and syllabus is also retrieved and studied. The entrepreneurship course at Umeå University has changed the course title three times and the course curriculum will be described accordingly. However it still remains as the entrepreneurial program at Umeå University. The course syllabuses from the former years have been retrieved from the Umeå University course coordinator. The former syllabuses and the current one have been studied in order to get a clearer understanding of the learning objectives during the program due to the name changes.

At the start, the course was called Entrepreneurship, Business Contexts and Change between the years 2003 – 2007. The core course consists of four modules that are compulsory, Perspective on Business Context, Dynamic Business Settings, Entrepreneurial Activity and Processes – Business strategy.

According to the course description and syllabus; the objectives and content were aimed to develop the students understanding of environmental change, initiating new ventures and focus on opportunity exploitation in large multinational firms as well as in small firms, projects and public authorities. There was also a focus on teaching how to exploit opportunities in developed and also emerging markets. In addition the students were given training in contemporary management in order to deal with the dynamics and get a perspective on innovation, change and flexibility which is incorporated into the strategic processes. There was also much focus on education on strategic actions in terms of innovation networks, cluster formation and regional production systems and the ability to create and manage strategic relationships. Students were also trained in developing their analytical skills and understanding of the environment to analyse current trends as well as their understanding of organising and coordinating different settings, competitive and co-operative relations.

The first module, Perspective on Business Context has specific learning outcomes such as identifying and explaining changes in the contemporary world economy and how these influence the business context. Other learning outcomes were to relate the current business context to the long-term development of relationships between the market and state-governed sectors of the economy. Students also were introduced to a theoretical discussion about the driving forces of the business dynamic and the relationship of the forces to practical entrepreneurship. The second module, Dynamic business settings had specific learning outcomes to teach the students about the inter-organizational context
for entrepreneurial activity. Students were required to learn about the general business environment and the role of national business systems and different types of dynamic entrepreneurial settings such as clusters. The third module, Entrepreneurial activity, had specific learning outcomes to recognize opportunities and stimulate entrepreneurial activities and roles of the entrepreneur in different corporate and cultural settings. The fourth module has specific learning objectives to provide students with an understanding of business strategy and its processes and improve their ability to analyze and integrate the business context, human resources and organizational capabilities in the strategic processes.

The second time the entrepreneurship course changed name into Entrepreneurship, Dynamics and Business Venturing was in the year 2008. The core modules were Innovation in Changing Business Environment, Dynamic Business Settings and Entrepreneurial Activity and Business Venturing (the latter was a 15.0 credit module, hence only three modules as core). According to the course description and syllabus; the teaching had much focus on the ability to develop and recognize opportunities and the general business environment in macro and micro entrepreneurship. In addition there was focus on the process of innovation and environmental settings such as clusters, networks and national business systems.

The learning outcomes in the first module Innovation in Changing Business Environment were that students should be able to describe and analyze the nature of the macro and micro environment of importance to entrepreneurial activity. In addition students should also be able to analyze the forces that drive the dynamism and changes in the contemporary business context in relation to entrepreneurship. Another important learning outcome is the process of opportunity evaluation and also reflecting upon the students own contributions in group dynamics and providing oral and written presentation at an advanced level. The second module, Dynamic Business Settings, had learning outcomes that students should identify the common characteristics of the Nordic business settings in relation to entrepreneurship. Students were also required to be able to describe and analyze different business settings in terms of industry districts, clusters, innovation systems and technological fields. In addition, they should be able to evaluate the support of entrepreneurial activities for such settings. Finally, students was also expected to critically reflect upon scientific knowledge from articles and able to apply theoretical knowledge to real life business situations.

The Entrepreneurship program changed its name again in 2009 to the current name Business Development and Internationalization. According to the course description and syllabus; the course objectives are to address students that are aiming to become entrepreneurs as well as managers or project leaders focusing on international business development. The course aims to prepare students with skills in launching and leading businesses, and in addition, to use those acquired skills to develop and run businesses or business units into a direction of innovation, international expansion and growth. The teaching will have a mixture of advanced theoretical knowledge in relation to start-up, growing established companies and internationalization of firms and also practical work with real business.

According to the programme description, upon completion of this programme, students can form leading entrepreneurial ventures but are also equipped to pursue a career in business development in forms of indentifying, initiating and developing business opportunities, supporting innovation or leading strategic change processes.
The core modules are Strategic Foresight and Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Business Growth, Managing Networks and Internationalization and Business Analysis. In the first module, Strategic Foresight and Innovation, the expected learning outcomes is to evaluate future trends and apply foresight methods for developing directions for innovation and business development. Students are also expected to be able to propose interventions that concerns challenges and complexities of innovation in real-life entrepreneurial companies.

The second module, Entrepreneurship and Business Growth has learning outcomes that students should apply theoretical knowledge to identify and evaluate challenges in entrepreneurial business growth. In addition students are required to learn to analyze driving forces and strategies to accomplish entrepreneurial growth. The learning outcome is also to train students to evaluate signals of emergent organizational growth problems and make decisions to overcome them. In addition the outcome is also to train students in identifying needs and decision-making in downsizing and size management. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to transfer dense theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship growth to applicable implications for business.

The third module, Managing Networks and Internationalization the expected learning outcome is that students should be able to identify strategic aspects of networking and internationalization processes. Students should also be able to explain the relationship between entrepreneurship, networking, internationalization and business development. The fourth module has learning outcomes focused on training students to select appropriate theoretical tools to evaluate business potentials or opportunities. The students should also be able to write a business plan upon completion. The learning outcome is also that students should be able to use networks and experts to gather and evaluate relevant information for strategic decision making and in addition pitch ideas and present business plans in front of panels.

The findings of this research have the potential to be transferred to those entrepreneurial programs that have a similar curriculum as the entrepreneurial program at Umeå University.

3.11 Trustworthiness

Bryman and Bell (2007: 43) discuss four aspects to assess the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The first is credibility; this asks the question of how believable our findings are. As we observed what we was the core of purpose then this study has credibility because our findings are drawn out as a result of our chosen research approach.

The second is transferability; this is whether the findings apply to other contexts. Directly our findings cannot apply to another context as they are related to entrepreneurial programs. However our findings could be generalised in some form and extended to the effects on attitudes to other types of education.

The third is dependability; this is whether the finds apply at other times. For our research we believe they do because as the respondents studied the program in the past, it has already had an effect on their attitude and motivation and the research focused on their opinions after the program.
The last is conformability; which asks have we as researchers allowed our values to affect the study. As outlined previously, both researchers have taken the program and we are aware that this may have affected our findings but we have done our upmost not to influence our respondents in anyway and as such we do not feel we have affected the overall trustworthiness of the study.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2003: 64-68) discusses that there are many ethical considerations that must be undertaken when collecting information in a qualitative study.

Creswell (2003: 66) states that “in qualitative research, inquirers use aliases or pseudonyms for individuals and places to protect identity”. In order to ensure that respondents felt that they could answer any questions freely, we ensured them anonymity. Respondents names have been changed in order to ensure that this ethical consideration is maintained. However the brief background to each respondent is factual. Respondents names were changed as many of the respondents still have close links to Umeå University and we wanted to ensure that they would discuss both positive and negative aspects of the program.

Providing an accurate account of the information gained during qualitative interviews and the interpretation of this information is also an important ethical consideration (Creswell, 2003: 66). The authors having taking every effort to ensure that the information gathered has been interpreted in a scientific manner. Although the authors have experience in this field as being students of entrepreneurship education, they tried not to allow this to influence their interpretation of that data by following the appropriate scientific approach to qualitative data analysis.
4. Empirical Section:

This chapter contains solely the response from the respondent interviews. Firstly a background is given by each of the respondents in order to obtain a better understanding of their responses. Then responses are presented in following order; motivation, born or made, opportunity identification, risk and uncertainty, networking and at the end additional comments that each of the respondents provided.

4.1 Jens

Jens is 32 years old from Skellefteå, in Northern Sweden. He completed the entrepreneurial program in 2004 and then continued on to do a Master’s program in Finance. He is currently living with his girlfriend in Skellefteå, North Sweden. Jens told us that he is currently working as a campaign manager for a political party. He has experience from a traineeship for six months at a Skellefteå based manufacturing company. During that time he worked alongside the management and was assisting the CEO. He also did a project for Studieförbundet whilst studying. Jens told us that he unfortunately has had health problems in the past, which means that he does not have that much work experience to date.

Motivation:

Jens says he has always had a motivation to be an entrepreneur. He stated that “I like to create my own future” and also said “Be able to form my own future” and “take my ideas to become something”. He said that the motivation for taking the entrepreneurship program was that he thought the education could give him the tool for doing what he stated. During his studies he formed a company in the services industry with two of his friends, but unfortunately it did not lead to any success. When asked why, Jens mentioned that they had some ideas but they lacked the focus to actually realise them into a venture. When asked if he intended to form a venture in the future he said “definitively yes”. Jens told us that he was more likely and able to form a new venture now than before taking the education. He then said that the people around him are inspiring him and he intends to start a new venture with some friends, they have an idea which they will try out.

Born or Made:

He talks about the fact that he believes education can shape you to be a better entrepreneur, but that it “cannot teach you determination” which is according to him the factor that you cannot get from education. Jens says that you must have this before entering entrepreneurship education. He continues by saying that this may be an inherited characteristic but cannot define whether you are born with it. He does go on to add that the program did make him more determined to be an entrepreneur by enabling him to envisage the creation of a new venture, but he believes that if he did not have this determined attitude prior to the program then it would not have helped.
Jens says that the entrepreneurship program gave him a broader picture over the business environment and opened up his business mind which he thinks is an important skill to have in order to succeed. He said that he was not previously able to visualise how to form a company but after the program he had a “better understanding of what it takes” and was able to analyse things in a better manner while being also able to “focus on developing business ideas”. So in this sense Jens thinks that entrepreneurship education can “make you”. Jens then also says that you need many skills and referring to practical skills such as know-how about what you are trying to do. But you also need a “good understanding of how to make money” according to Jens and this is something he thinks you can learn from education.

Opportunity Identification:

Jens felt that he had struggled to identify potential business opportunities prior to taking the entrepreneurial program. Jens state that “after the entrepreneurship education I got more business focused and the more experience I get, the more opportunities I see”. For him this was a characteristic that had definitely been enhanced by the entrepreneurship program. He discussed that he now had a better method of focusing his identification of opportunities. He also discussed that his ability to identify opportunities had also been affected by his experience. Jens stated that “before the education I didn’t know how to see an idea or visualise how I could take it to the market”. The program for him also has given him better tools to evaluate any opportunities that he identifies.

Risk and Uncertainty:

Jens discussed that risk and uncertainty have never been a problem for him “this is not a factor that has affected me; it’s more about timing and opportunity”. While the entrepreneurial education he received gave him a better approach to managing risk, he believes that it is a personality trait. He says that you are either averse to risk or not, for him risk has never been a factor but if it was he feels that the program would not have been able to change this for him.

Networking:

Jens discusses that he believes a person cannot have all the skills that is takes to create a successful venture, as you need so many. Jens continues by elaborating that someone else or a business partner can complement the skills that you do not have. So in that sense networking is important for Jens because he believes in finding the right people. Jens also says that his skills in networking have improved significantly after education and those skills are important to everything that one wants to do.

Additional Comments:

According to Jens, there is a need for more practical elements to the entrepreneurial education he received. The theoretical aspects while interesting to him, where not actually something that was going to help him create a new venture. He feels the institutional element of the university made it hard for these practical elements to be introduced. He then continued saying that he thinks that universities were perhaps not the best place to teach entrepreneurship due to the lack of practical elements. Jens felt
that workshops and increased involvement in companies in new business development would have improved his entrepreneurial competencies rather than the theoretical focus of the program. He would also have liked to meet more real life entrepreneurs for inspiration and to ask them about things that they experienced. Jens stated that “you need to be more involved, there are physiological parts too” and he continued saying “you cannot read everything, that’s the problem”.

We then asked Jens whether entrepreneurship education has provided him with knowledge in regards to practical elements in new business start-ups. He said that it have given him some guidance but not so much. There was no teaching in how to deal with practicalities such as investors. We asked if he was better able to write business plans to use when navigating in the entrepreneurial environment and then he responded that it depends on the business itself whether you need one. Jens did think he was better able to write a plan now than before taking the entrepreneurial education. Jens continued saying “I do not write the best plan, but I am much more confident now”.

We then asked whether in overall taking education in entrepreneurship was worthwhile and Jens responded yes, but should have involved more practical elements.

4.2 Elin

Elin is 37 years old and living in the south of Sweden. She completed the entrepreneurial program in 2005 after previously completing a bachelor degree in Restaurant Management. She started working as a high school teacher in business administration and entrepreneurship after finishing the program and is still working in that role to date.

Motivation:

Elin started her first venture during her restaurant management studies. The business organised wine and beer tasting events. According to Elin, it was only a small venture, but it was the motivation for her to take the entrepreneurial program. As she had a business of her own, she felt she would like more information on how to develop it further. She felt that the program on its own did not motivate her anymore than her own original desire to be an entrepreneur. She claimed this was due to the content of the program being too focused on corporate entrepreneurship rather than creating a venture. She discussed that they had studied several cases about municipalities and large organisations, but little about new start ups. She argues that there needs to be a focus on the “small woman or man who wants to start their own business”. When she started the job as a teacher in Business Administration and Entrepreneurship she stopped her venture.

We asked Elin whether she intends to enterprise again and she replied maybe in the future in about five years. Elin says that the time is simply not there due to family responsibilities. Elin says that she has two small children. In addition she says that she is happy at her work. We then ask whether the course has helped her in her current employment. Elin states “of course! It has helped a lot. You see, entrepreneurship will be a big part now of the curriculum, the government is integrating entrepreneurship at
schools earlier”. Then we asked if she was happy then that she took the entrepreneurship programs and she said “yes”. She continues by saying that the more information you get you develop as a person. This program has given her many opportunities and a new way of thinking and she states “I am very happy with this”.

**Born or made:**

Elin says that the motivation and drive to be an entrepreneur is something that you must have in your mind. She states that in her opinion, “everybody can be an entrepreneur, but to be successful you must have it in your body”. Elin also says that you can get information and become more entrepreneurial but that you must have the drive. Elin says that education cannot teach this to people. She also says that her analytical skills were significantly improved after taking the education which has been very useful for her in her current position.

**Opportunity Identification:**

Elin says that she identifies opportunities from her experience. She talks about how she identified the opportunity for her first venture. She was working at the System Bolaget (the Swedish Alcohol store) while studying restaurant management and she noticed that there was a demand for wine and beer tasting in the local area. It was through that work experience that she gained the information about the market. She discussed that this in combination with the entrepreneurial program had helped her better analyse markets and gave her more information. Elin also says that the entrepreneurship program has taught her how to identify opportunities stating that “it has given me a broader perspective and I can see a vision and how to work and interact”.

**Risks and Uncertainty:**

For Elin, risk and uncertainty are not major factors for her. She talks about timing in relation to risk, and that risk has been increased in the last few years as she now has a small family. However for her, she feels that this risk will diminish as the family matures and she has more time to invest in the creation of a venture. She states that the entrepreneurial program has given her a better understanding of the risks involved in starting a venture.

**Networking:**

Elin had an understanding of networking as she had been networking to get her first venture to start. She said that it was important that she networked with customers, people and associates in order for her to be successful. Elin also says that the education itself did not enhance those skills for her as she believed she has always had the ability to network.

**Additional Comments:**

Elin says that the program was too corporate focused and lacked particular practical elements. Elin feels that the program should have focused on showing the students how to start an actual business. What you should do and what you should not do. She adds
that the ability to develop a venture in practical parts, even if it was only in fiction, could be beneficial. She states “plan and action” would be helpful. We then ask Elin about her thoughts on Business Plans and she responds that they are really important and identify your goals so that you can come back to them.

4.3 Per

Per is 34 years old and living in Stockholm. He completed the entrepreneurial program in 2005. Prior to this he studied the restaurant and management program and a KY-program in strategic project management. Per’s previous work experience is mainly in the restaurant industry. He used to work as a business manager at two restaurants before his current position that he started two weeks ago. His new job is working as a sales agent for a food and beverages company that holds a portfolio of large brands and selling to the restaurant and hotel industry.

Motivation:

Per discusses that he has always had an interest in the topic of entrepreneurship but he has never really had a desire to be one. Prior to the entrepreneurial program he had not attempted to start any ventures and at present he does not have any real intention to start a venture in the future. He states that he chose to study the entrepreneurial program because several of his friends at the time were also taking it. Per added that he did not know so much about it.

Born or Made:

After completing the program he did not feel that he had any more motivation to become an entrepreneur. Per states that he believes you either have that drive to be an entrepreneur or not, and that entrepreneurial education is unable to motivate you in this way. Per says that drive is something that you should have before and that it cannot be made. We then ask if the entrepreneurial education has taught him something and Per responds that “it helped me raise the question on what you should think when staring a business”. Per also states that “it helped me to analyse the situation more”. But he concludes that the entrepreneurship education failed to teach him the whole picture of the situation.

Opportunities:

Per explains that he spent little time identifying potential business opportunities before studying the entrepreneurship program. He discusses that this did not really change after studying the program, the only real difference being that he believes he now has a better ability to analyse an opportunity but he still has difficulty identifying any.

Risks and Uncertainty:

Per describes himself as a “safe person” and admits that he does not like taking risks. He believes that your aversion to risk is dependent on your personality, and that entrepreneurial education can have little effect on this. Per states “I like to play safe and
I’m not keen on taking risks and this has impacted my choices of staring my own business”.

**Networking:**

Per says that it is crucial to have a good network around you to use in order to develop your business. Per states that “The entrepreneurial education has helped me realize the importance of having a good network” and he continues by saying that “working with groups of people is important”.

**Additional Comments:**

Before taking the program, Per had little expectations about the potential outcomes of the program. He was satisfied with the theoretical elements of the program and did not mind that there was little focus on practical elements. That is because he felt that he was not going to become an entrepreneur after all. Per says that it would however have been nice to be taught the basic practical things in business law and the tax system. Per said that would have been very practical to know regardless.

### 4.4 Martin

*Martin is 28 years old. He lives and works in Umeå, in the north of Sweden. He completed the Entrepreneurship program in 2006 after previously completing a Civil Ekonom examen. In addition he also studied 30 credits in Business Administration abroad before the entrepreneurship program. Martin tells us that he had taken the courses in his Civil Ekonom examen in different orders as he had a strategy not to stay too long in any field. His aspiration and aim with education was to get a solid knowledge and platform to start his own business in the end. Martin is today currently working as a Public Relations and Marketing Executive.*

**Motivation:**

Martin’s motivation for entering the education was to form a “platform” of knowledge which he then could expand with his own life experiences. Martin says that education is useful because it provides you with this platform. Martin says that the Entrepreneurship education was useful for this purpose. “Otherwise one would only have a blank page to start on”. He also says that he had not started a venture before the education but he has strong intentions of starting his own company in the near future.

**Born or Made:**

For Martin, both his mother and father owned their own businesses so he felt that he has never had any mental barriers to becoming an entrepreneur. It’s something that he felt was in his blood. Martin says that for many people there is a mental barrier but states “I grew up in this environment”. He says one cannot be entirely born as an entrepreneur but the family settings can influence you as in his case. We then asked how education has assisted him and Martin responds that the program provided the theoretical
framework and ability to identifying opportunities in the environment. Martin says that he got more confident in pursuing opportunists after education as his analytical skills are now much better after taking the entrepreneurship program.

Martin says that an important skill for an entrepreneur is having the motivation to pass obstacles in order do what you set out to do. Martin also says that entrepreneurship education cannot teach you this drive as it will be tough and difficulties will arise. Martin then concludes by saying that he has this drive.

**Opportunity Identification:**

Martin discusses that for him, it was only when he got into the business world that he started to identify potential opportunities. Martin states that “you have to do stuff in order to find opportunities”. For him “education makes you more open to opportunities”. He believes that the entrepreneurial program gave him an excellent method of evaluating the opportunities he had identified. Martin sates that “I got more confidence with more knowledge”. He also says that for people like him that are not so creative, education can be helpful in identifying methods to seek out potential opportunities.

After completing the entrepreneurship program, Martin started a venture providing consultancy services to companies in the motor industry after writing his thesis on achieving sustainable competitive advantages within that industry. He says that the program had given him a structure to be able to carry this venture forward. Martin further states that “the thesis was my foundation for this project”. Martin says that after that he also had a project in writing a business plan roadmap for a company and their strategic direction.

We then ask if he already has identified an opportunity, and if so, is he going to act upon it. Martin replies “definitively”. He continues by telling us about a project he has in China and that this idea is a great potential and will be an interesting field in the future.

**Risks and Uncertainty:**

In relation to being educated about risks, Martin feels that this in itself is a risk. He discusses that the more you are taught about risks, the scarier the entrepreneurial world may seem, but he discussed how the program was good at explaining how to overcome these risks.

**Networking:**

Networking is important, Martin discuss. At the moment he is continuously building up his connections to realise this opportunity in China. Martin further states that “you need solid people around you, you do not know everything yourself “and that is why networking is so important”.

[36]
Additional Comments:

Martin goes on to discusses how he felt that the program was more focused on getting him paid employment rather than starting his own venture. He talked about how the institutional nature of a university meant that the aim of the program was misdirected as they kept in line with the overreaching aim of the university – to get employment for their students. Martin thinks that there should have been more practical elements but says that the institutional structure did not support this.

4.5 Peter

Peter is 24 years old. He is not Swedish but has been living in Umeå for a couple of years and met his girlfriend here. Prior to completing the entrepreneurship program in 2007, Peter completed a Masters degree in Supply Chain Management. He had previous work experience before entering the entrepreneurship education. In his home-country he was working as an estate agent, freight and forwarding company and at a crisp company, the two latter in supply chain management. He is today the co-founder of a consultancy company and also the co-owner of another company.

Motivation:

Peter says that he had not formed a business before staring the entrepreneurship program but states “I always had the idea though”. Peter’s reasons for enrolling was motivation to do something on his own and states “I don’t like the multinationals, I do not like being under someone, I want to be in charge”. He believed this program would support him reaching this goal. He continues by discussing that he thought the entrepreneurial program would contribute and clarify his entrepreneurial vision and skills and then he states “I always had the idea to do something”. Peter then says that it failed to do this. What he did discuss which was of massive importance, was the fact that the entrepreneurship program allowed him to expand his network, by putting him in contact with some key organisations during the time of his study which enabled him to actually enterprise. We asked a follow-up question as to what was disappointing and he responded the little practical elements which he sought.

Born or Made:

Peter says that the skill he identifies as an important one for an entrepreneur is the ability to interact with people and this has improved as he went along in entrepreneurial education. Peter tells us that he was raised in an entrepreneurial environment. Both his mother and grandfather were serial entrepreneurs and he discusses that this motivated him to want to be an entrepreneur himself. Peter says that it’s a way of being and that it is experiences that make you. But in his case he is influenced by his family and his up-bringing which have contributed to his direction in life. After completing the entrepreneurial program, he started a consultancy company with a partner. Peter acknowledges that it is due to the program that he met those crucial people involved, such as his business partner. Peter states that it was the opportunity to network that is the most important outcome of this program. Peter did not think that the program
contributed much to how his skills have developed overall, rather it has been the experience he has taken from working on different projects and in different companies.

**Opportunity Identification:**

When asked how he identified potential opportunities, Peter replied with “open your eyes!” He related again to the environment he was raised in, and explained that from a young age he had watched his relatives constantly identifying opportunities from the world around them. Peter goes on to say that the entrepreneurial program did not help in identifying any more opportunities but it gave him a better structure of doing it. As he says, “before I did it in a messy way”. He goes on to say that it was his experience that lead him to the two companies that he is currently involved in, and states that it was not the theory of the entrepreneurial education he received that allowed him to indentify these opportunities, but the life experience he had and the network that the program had put him in touch with.

**Risks and Uncertainty:**

Peter discusses that risk and uncertainty are not major factors for him. “The younger I am, the less important it is to me, I have no family and no commitments.” When asked how he believed the entrepreneurial program affected his understanding of risk, he replied that there was “no correlation”. For Peter it was more in the work experience he had previously. He explained that his understanding of risk has come with the work experience and the companies he currently owns. He explained that when you meet a client for the first time, you have to be prepared; for him the program was not able to teach him how to deal with the uncertainty of these situations and concludes that “schools will not teach you experience”.

**Networking:**

Peter then states “it is not the program per se, but the opportunity to expand my network. Thanks to the program I managed to meet people, which is the perk of the program”. Peter also says that his networking skills have been enhanced during education and that he really set out to improve those whilst networking. I did think that he had some abilities in networking before education, but with education he got more business minded and focused to establish business connection.

**Additional Comments:**

Peter discussed how he would have liked to receive practical information on how to form a company in Sweden. Information about the law and taxes were something that he felt was missing from the education he received. We asked about his viewpoint on business plans and Peter responds that it depends on what you want to do. It is crucial when you are searching for venture capital he says. We then ask him about his skills of conducting a business plan, and Peter responds that his skills are better now than before education, but that it depends on the purpose of the business plan.
Peter then states that what the program provided was the ability to meet the right people.

### 4.6 Marcus

*Marcus is 24 years old and is not a native Swede. He completed the entrepreneurial program in 2009 and currently lives in Umeå. He previously completed a bachelor degree in Business Management in his home country. Currently, he is writing his Master Thesis but he is also planning to form his first company as he identified an opportunity whilst studying the entrepreneurship program.*

**Motivation:**

Marcus’s motivation for enrolling at the program was to create something. Marcus states that “I do not see myself working for a big company”. Marcus said that entrepreneurship is mixing many concepts and wanted to learn something different in the field of business and extend his knowledge. He explained that the course motivated him, giving him knowledge about the potential things he could do, and more importantly for him, how he could do them. We asked him if he was more likely now than before to start his own business and he states “of course!” and continues saying that he always had a desire and “the course has definitively helped me to extend my knowledge and has made me more likely to become an entrepreneur”. Marcus also says that he did not have any particular drive to own his company to make “a lot of money” but as he continued his studies he became more and more attracted to the idea of social entrepreneurship.

**Born or Made:**

Marcus thinks that it is hard to define definitive characteristics and whether you may be born as an entrepreneur. Marcus says that being driven and focused to overcome obstacles is important. He says that people should have their own drive to overcome obstacles because education cannot tell you how to do this. It depends on the situations. Most important is practical knowledge about the market, industry and now-how in general. Marcus says that one must have a broad approach to things and know the technicalities. He then states that the entrepreneurial course has helped him to extend his knowledge and refine his skills. The theoretical background provided a good platform to build further skills on.

**Opportunity Identification:**

Prior to studying the program, Marcus said he paid little attention to identifying potential business opportunities. He says that he had several social issues that he wished he could address but never really thought seriously about how he could do this. He took the idea that opportunities are built rather than found from the course and this is when he began thinking about his own project. Marcus identified an opportunity whilst studying the entrepreneurship program to provide assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs who need help with the practical elements of setting up a company in Sweden. This
sprung from the fact that he himself as an immigrant had problems in understanding how and where he could look for help. He thought that if he had problems, there must be others out there who struggle too. Marcus says that in this respect, the entrepreneurship education has given him good skills at identifying opportunities.

**Risks and Uncertainty:**

How one deals with risk is dependent on how you approach life according to Marcus. When you identify a risk, it is your attitude to tackling the risk that is important. For Marcus, he sees them as exciting and looks forward to the challenge of overcoming them. He discusses that the program helped him with the practical elements of risk. He feels that his approach to risk is much more measured now stating that, “either way, you just need to do it!”

**Networking:**

During the program he says that the ability to network through the program was of clear importance for him. The ability to network was also something he believed he had, but the program showed him how to direct this networking to make it more advantageous for him. Marcus also said that the network that he formed will be of an importance to him for realising his venture and that education facilitated this.

**Additional Comments:**

Marcus felt that there were key practical elements missing from the course. He discussed that he felt internships should be mandatory and that as part of the program, students should be made start an actual company, irrespective if it is successful or not. Marcus states “The course should be more hands-on for you to learn practical and important aspects”. Marcus said that the element of practical experience was not there. In addition to actually starting your company, there should be sessions to pitch your ideas and so on. He says that he managed to get an internship, but not everyone could. This experience gave him much new knowledge but he thinks it should be more as he did not have any working experience before entering into education. He also discussed that he felt that the duration of the program was too short to achieve these aims.

He did not think that there was much focus on practicalities that concerns new business start-ups but he states that education has trained him in writing business plans as he did not have sufficient skills before to do one. Marcus said “I did not know how to approach writing a business plan before”.

[40]
4.7 Emma

Emma is 26 years old and from Skellefteå. She completed the entrepreneurial program in 2010. She enrolled after completing a bachelor degree in International Business in Southern Sweden. Before her bachelor’s she also studied to become a musical artist for one year but dropped those ambitions due to new interests of studying to become an economist. Emma had prior experience working in the elderly care sector during the summers whilst studying. Otherwise she did not have that much relevant experience prior the start of her education. Emma’s relevant work experience started with the internship course that she took this last winter at a high-tech company. She is now currently working as a project coordinator at that company whilst continuing her studies.

Motivation:

Emma has always believed in her own personal abilities but had not previously had a focus on entrepreneurship. She states that she feels you need to believe strongly in what you are doing. She enrolled at the program because she thought the course sounded interesting and was close to home (Skellefteå). For her the entrepreneurial program showed her that running a company was not a bad thing. She discussed that she never really thought about starting her own company prior to taking the program but the connections she made during it and the knowledge she gained from it made her more confident. Emma says that she is very likely to form her own company in near future, and tells that she is currently in the process of starting her own consultancy company. Her first consultancy project is already established over the duration of the summer. Emma states that she will take on consultancy projects during her studies after the summer too and aim to establish herself by the time she graduates.

Born or Made:

She goes on to say that you cannot teach how to motivate a person, you can show them the importance and benefits of starting your own company but you can’t make the person do it. That is what Emma thinks that education cannot do. Emma feels that if she did not have the drive then she would not go in the direction she is currently going. Emma says that it is networking and motivation that are the skills she believes are the most important. Skills you need are motivation to do what you set out to do. For that you need confidence and a belief in what you set out to do. Emma states that “I do not believe in such thing as being born as an entrepreneur. One cannot just pop out as an entrepreneur” and then she continues with “but I do think that the environment you are born in, such as family values and so on can affect whether you decide to become one”. She then says that her family is very driven but her parents have not created a business. Emma says that “everybody can be entrepreneurial to an extent” and concludes that education has provided her with tools such as connections with the work life, which is according to her the most important thing when creating your own business.

Opportunity Identification:
Emma says that she met many creative people in the program and the ability to interact with them has increased her creativity and also her ability to identify opportunities. Also the program has given her a structure to evaluate the opportunities she has identified and stated “I had previously no evaluation skills of ideas or opportunities”. Emma says that the entrepreneurial education has provided her with tools in the evaluation process.

**Risks and Uncertainty:**

Emma says that before starting her education she considers risks to be blurry and not something she was thinking so much about. During her studies at the entrepreneurship program she has got more aware of risks but that does not scare her, Emma states “not a problem for me. There is help to get. From my education I establish a network with people that provide me with help”. Emma refers especially to her venture in process in which this network has helped her.

**Networking:**

She discussed that obviously the program has helped her in identifying this consultancy opportunity but more than anything it is the networks that she has made due to taking the course that have been the most beneficial. Emma reckons that she has the ability to network, but that the entrepreneurship program has enhanced this skill. For Emma the core reason she took the program was that she had hoped to form good contacts and she concludes that she has.

**Additional Comments:**

We asked Emma whether the entrepreneurship education has, so far, educated her in navigating in the entrepreneurial environment. She says that the program has guided her in thinking in terms of finding investors and where to look for help. She says that entrepreneurial education has taught her how to write business plans and why they are useful in the entrepreneurial environment. Emma says that the internship at the high-tech company was extremely helpful in understanding the different elements involved in being an entrepreneur.

Emma says that there is a supporting environment here in Umeå for entrepreneurship. We then ask what is the support you refer to? Emma responds by saying that the university put her into contact with Uminova, which is a business incubator and that it was very helpful for her.

Emma also said that the education does not meet the practicalities in a new business start-up. It was much theory but no simple courses in the education that dealt with for example administrative aspects. “There should be more practical work on how to actually start a company”. This kind of information you have to look and search for which is impractical when you do not have the basis of knowledge for it she says. Emma states “less aspects on theory, entrepreneurs are action based, therefore more practical elements are needed”.

We then asked about the overall contribution from the entrepreneurship program so far. Emma responded with that she is not yet graduated, but so far it really has helped her in
enhancing her communication and networking skills. The taught theory has also helped and all this combined has influenced her to start venturing.

### 4.8 Max

Max is 31 years old. He has been living in Sweden (Umeå) for nearly a year. He is currently enrolled at the Entrepreneurship program. His previous education is a bachelor in business administration in his home country. Max has previous work experience from this home country too. He used to be in the military, has worked for a car manufacturer in import and export and also worked within marketing and advertising for a magazine. He has also worked within the E-Business and consulted other companies on how to succeed in marketing and selling online in his home country. Max’s current position is owner of his company that he started during studies, selling sports material online but is also looking at getting paid employment to finance his company further. Max explains that he has many things on the go and does not yet know what he will do.

**Motivation:**

Max’s motivation for entering the entrepreneurship program was because he wanted to start his own business. Max states that “My previous work experience is in international business, and I thought that the program could enhance my skills and help me create my own thing” and he continues by saying “I had in mind to start a business with real challenges”. Max states further that “it is a dream is to have my own company”.

**Born or Made:**

Max says that his skills have evolved after taking education compared to before. We asked whether you can learn skills to be an entrepreneur and Max responds “yes”. He explains that it was his previous work experience and his current start-up that has taught him many things, especially by making mistakes. The main thing according to Max is determination to do your thing and networking. Max states that the network and help from the teachers have enabled him to overcome obstacles and start his own company. He stated “a really good network, that’s what you need!” But he also says that you need determination to succeed and for him that was there before he even know what he wanted to do.

**Opportunity Identification:**

Max thinks the program in entrepreneurship has helped him a lot. His hobby is sports and was thrilled when he could not find a good website to buy his equipment. Max said that he identified a gap in the market and a way to challenge the existing players and do things better. Max states “my business is my hobby!” And continues saying that without coming here to take the program and get inspiration, he would not have found this opportunity. We then ask if he is better now in the evaluation process and he responds “of course” and continues that he lived by one core book called Business Road Test and used it for the evaluation of his own business.
Risks and Uncertainties:

Max says that taking risks is not good but required. He says that the entrepreneurial education has made him more aware of the risks and helped him understand how to approach them. Max stated that he “had to take personal risks to start his company” as he could not find finance and had to use his own money. In Max’s point of view he considered this manageable as he believes in his business and was not going to let a lack of external funds be an obstacle.

Networking:

Max thinks that his networking skills have improved considerably whilst in entrepreneurial education as he met so many new people in school and outside of school. He stated that it’s because of the network that made my venturing possible. Max explains that without networking you cannot find the skills that you need and that you lack yourself. Max says that he needed a webmaster for the website and started to network in his hobby area and eventually he found one person that loved the sport and could help him with the website. They made arrangements that Max gives the webmaster discount on every order provided that he updates and maintains Max’s website. If it was not for the school and emphasis on making connection he would not have been thinking in those terms he says.

Additional Comments:

Max says that he got a very good understanding and teaching on how to write a business plan to use when navigating in the entrepreneurial environment. However what he does think is lacking is the more basic information on business law, rules and regulation as well as the tax system. He stated “more practicalities so you’re not so confused when you go out there and try to start a company” he further explains that some basics would have helped a lot. Max says that he experienced problems in accessing funds and finance and was disappointed that the program did not have more information and teaching about such things as it is one of the major obstacles he faced.

We asked what his entrepreneurial education contributed with then, when taking his vast experience into account. Max replies that it provided him with theory, a network and mind-set to look and evaluate new ideas. This was not something he was good at before. Max says that his previous working experience has taught him much but that the combination of experience and education has been very helpful to him. Max said that enabled him to get a broader picture over things and how they relate to each other.
5. Analysis

This chapter analyses the responses from the empirical section. We have grouped the responses by each theme: motivation, born or made, opportunity identification, risk and uncertainty and networking. We have also included practical observations that emerged during the study.

5.1 Motivation

Out of the eight respondents, only two did not have entrepreneurial motivations before taking the program, these being Emma and Per. While Emma’s motivation to become an entrepreneur greatly increased as a result of taking the program, Per’s did not. This can be related back to Per’s attitude towards risk as he described himself as a safe person. This aversion to risk meant that Per simply did not have the entrepreneurial drive that has been mentioned in the literature and was referred to by other respondents.

Block and Stumpf (1992) had discussed that not all students taking an entrepreneurial program had an interest in becoming an entrepreneur themselves. This is true for Per, who as Block and Stumpf (1992) had mentioned, took the course to find out more about the field of entrepreneurship rather than to become one himself. This has an effect on the overall focus of these types of programs and the type of learning outcomes to be expected. Per perhaps would have been more suited to a completely theoretical course about entrepreneurship whose learning outcomes did not concern the development of entrepreneurial attitudes but more about the development of knowledge of the field of entrepreneurship.

The other respondents all had clear entrepreneurial motivations before they took the program but were looking for different aspects from the program. Determination and drive were mentioned by these respondents as an important factor to be an entrepreneur, and they added that the program had further encouraged them to enterprise. This is in line with the theory Taatila (2010) had about how entrepreneurial education stimulates the motivation to become an entrepreneur. It is interesting to note that nearly all respondents noted that they had this motivational drive before entering the program, but in the case of one respondent, Emma, the program actually created the drive.

Another common factor was that the drive was aimed towards creating something on their own, hence an indication of desire for personal achievement. That the respondents mention determination, desire to create something on their own and understanding that fit into the theory of skills and characteristics by Lambing and Kuehl (2000). The desire of creating something of their own was one of the main motivations for enrolling into entrepreneurship education for the respondents and this can be seen in the theory by Carter et al (2003) as they want to be in charge themselves.

Berthold and Neumann (2008: 238) had discussed that there is “an intrinsic motivation of self-fulfilment” in every potential entrepreneur. While this motivation may have existed prior to taking the program, the respondents have noted that their attitude
towards their motivation to enterprising had been positively affected. This is seen from respondents such as Emma, where she had not previously thought about starting a company but is now in the process of starting one. Elin stated that it did not motivate her any more than her prior desire to start a company, but it gave her a new way of thinking, which could be interpreted as having a positive outcome towards her motivations. Martin also stated that he had strong intentions of starting his own company in the near future after taking the program. Bar one exception, all of the students showed positive attitudes towards their desirability to start a company after taking the program when looking directly at their motivation to do so.

This shows that the outcome of this university entrepreneurial education was that students in general positively increased their attitudes towards their motivation to start their own company relative to their attitudes prior to taking the program.

5.2 Born or Made

The literature review showed that there is no straightforward answer to the notion whether an entrepreneur is born or made. The questions that we posed our respondents were because it would be interesting to find out their viewpoint on the matter as they are supposedly being “made”. In general the respondents were thinking quite alike and singled out the most important characteristic factor they deemed the most valuable. However it is important to keep in mind that there are many competencies and the list may be never-ending (Taatila, 2010).

The respondents did not seem to believe that someone is just born as an entrepreneur and the general outcome of the interviews was that some skills you needed but some others can be taught. The main occurring response was determination, and that cannot be taught by education. Therefore it is plausible that determination is a personality trait that someone must possess prior to education in order to realise the effectiveness of entrepreneurial education. Hence it is something that cannot be made e.g. not being taught by entrepreneurship education.

Therefore it is plausible to believe that determination is important as well as other competencies. Bygrave and Zacharakis (2008: 52) state that “there is no set of behavioural attributes that allow us to separate entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs” and that the need for achievement is found in all successful people. This relates to the need for achievement for an individual to create something on their own and be in charge as well as the determination to actually do what he/she set out to do.

The responses from the empirical section also make it plausible that it may be the factor of the environment and upbringing that affects whether you are more likely to enterprise. From the study we believe that it may be plausible that people with a certain up-bringing as the theory suggests can be perceived to be “born” as an entrepreneur. Martin says he grew up in an entrepreneurial environment and therefore becoming one was so natural to him. Peter says his mother and grandfather are serial entrepreneurs and Emma considers her upbringing to be a major factor to become an entrepreneur in the end.
The findings from the empirical sections seem to be consistent with the line of arguments from Burns (2005) whether that an entrepreneur is either born or made.

“Entrepreneurs are both born and made. They have certain personal character traits that they may have been born with, but they are also shaped by their history and experience of life – their background – as well as the culture of the society they are brought up in”

Burns (2005: 19)

When comparing the theory to the findings it is reasonable to believe that experience can make an entrepreneur as you are not born with experiences. There are some elements that one may be born with for example, determination. Then it is also plausible that entrepreneurship education can contribute to the making of an entrepreneur as the empirical data shows that respondents said that there are aspects that education can contribute with. The attitude amongst the respondents is that opportunity, risk and uncertainties, can be taught or at least the way to deal with these aspects can be taught.

5.3 Opportunity Identification

The majority of the respondents feel positive about opportunity recognition in relation to entrepreneurial education. Jens said that he struggled to identify potential business opportunities before the program and that the outcome was a better focus in identifying opportunities and evaluating them. In addition, Elin also says that she is now better able to identify opportunities and Martin says that entrepreneurship education made him more open to opportunities and that the program provided “excellent” methods in evaluation. The main exception was Peter, who was raised in an entrepreneurial family, and was one of the respondents who felt that the program had not necessarily improved his ability to identify opportunities. However Peter did agree that the entrepreneurship education had made him more structured in this method of doing it. This could be related back to the social environment that the respondent was raised in.

In the case of Peter “It may be that willingness and a capability to take risks is related to the identification of entrepreneurial opportunity, i.e. entrepreneurs see opportunities where other people see risks” (Taatila, 2010: 50) may well apply to him as he stated “open your eyes!” meaning that he sees opportunities frequently in his environment.

Being alert to opportunities has been mentioned a lot in the entrepreneurship literature, and it is interesting to see how in this aspect the program has affected the respondents in a positive way. In addition, all respondents agreed that the program had given them better tools to evaluate business opportunities. Several of the respondents had discussed that they had no systematic approach to evaluating an opportunity and this was a key reason as to why they ultimately did not pursue that opportunity.

Some of the respondents also identified experience as a factor in opportunity identification. This is related to theory from Block and Wagner (2010) as real-life experience provides the would-be entrepreneur with prior knowledge and information about the market and how to serve the customers and to create a new product, service or technology and to exploit it. Therefore opportunities can be identified by experience too.
Out of the eight respondents, half of them either: started, or are about to start a consultancy company. This is an extremely interesting outcome of the research as it shows that there is a correlation between those who have studied entrepreneurship and those choosing to provide consultancy services. The respondents stated that they had identified this consultancy opportunities as a result of taking the program with three out of the four providing services to new ventures.

The majority of the respondents felt that after the entrepreneurial program they had a better approach to indentifying business opportunities and evaluating them than before taking the education.

5.4 Networking

Networking is something that the respondents identified as being important and that the entrepreneurship program was helpful in developing the networking skills and their own personal network. The respondents in general thought that the education had helped them to enhance their skills to network. In addition some of the respondents said that you cannot have all the skills required and therefore networking is important when finding people who possess skills you lack.

Umeå University has contact with Uminova Innovation which is a key organisation; the network that the students could tap into has helped them to actually start a new venture and make their ideas into reality. This is in the case of Peter and Max. Furthermore that the network connections that were built up during studies has actually lead Emma to starting her own company in the very near future. By expanding the personal network, the students could get in touch with key people who could help them to realise their opportunities or overcome obstacles.

This outcome of the research is in-line with theory, as according to Dunham and Venkataraman (2002) the impact of the entrepreneur’s personal network and new firm growth is significant. Furthermore the theory says that networking and building relationships is an important tool in emergence of new ventures (Dunham and Venkataraman, 2002).

Peter said that the most important aspect of the education was networking and that he was specifically focused on building connections. This is in-line with theory that Ostgaard and Birley (1996) proposed, that high performing entrepreneurs are oriented externally so that they can access a richer and broader pool of relationships. It is interesting to note that Peter has formed more ventures than the other respondents whilst still in education. In addition Max has also started a venture while still in education. Therefore it is plausible to believe that one factor to explain this is because of the focus on networking. Johannisson (1995) writes that the personal network is the starting point of the venture in the first place. This also is in line with theory as successful entrepreneurs are more active in social relationships than unsuccessful entrepreneurs (Ostgaard and Birley, 1996).
In this study the students have clearly identified the importance of networking and that the entrepreneurial education that they received have satisfied this need and improved their skills as opposed to before entering the entrepreneurial program.

5.5 Risk and Uncertainty

All the respondents apart from one had a positive view to risks and uncertainties and viewed it as something of lesser importance to them. The research clearly shows that the respondents accept the reality of risks and need to deal with uncertainties.

Taatila (2010: 50) state that “it may be that willingness and a capability to take risks is related to the identification of entrepreneurial opportunity, i.e. entrepreneurs see opportunities where others people see risks” This is related to Max who said that risks and uncertainties were required in new business start-up, he believes in his business that he even injected his own private funds. This can be correlated to the determination skill to overcome the obstacle of no access to external cash. Max clearly does what he set out to do and faces the risks associated with this. In addition Marcus states “either way you got to do it!”.

When comparing Per and his risk averseness and need to play safe to the rest of the respondents, it is plausible that the opportunity is not motivating enough for him to take the risks and uncertainties associated to that opportunity. The rest of the respondents fit in to the theory as the respondents view the opportunity as something that should still be focused on even if there are risks attached to it. As Jens stated “this is not a factor that has affected me; it’s more about timing and opportunity” in addition, Elin talks about timing in relation to risk. Peter said he had no objection to taking risks but Elin is less able to take risks due to her family situation. Therefore it is plausible that opportunity identification and timing, affects how motivated entrepreneurs are to risks and uncertainties according to our research.

Our research also supports the theory that students that are entrepreneurial oriented have a propensity to take higher risks, higher need for achievement and higher innovativeness than other students with no interests to be entrepreneurs (Gurol and Atsan, 2005). This is clear in the case of Peter, who is completely open to risks and Max, who deals with risks as it is a requirement. Max has oriented away from the consulting ventures as his first start-up during studies was in the sports sector. Peter started by setting up his consultancy company but is venturing into other fields.

The respondents said that after completing the entrepreneurship program they had a better understanding of risks and better ability to analyse and evaluate an opportunity. Apart from Peter, who said there was no correlation about his learning about risk to education. In Jens’s case, he felt that he was already open to risks and uncertainties but concludes that education has given him a better approach to managing risks than before. Martin says that the entrepreneurial education has improved his abilities to overcome risks as opposed to before taking the entrepreneurial education. Marcus said that the education made his approach to risks and uncertainties more measured. In Emma’s case she was not even thinking about risks prior to the education, but that risks and uncertainties do not scare her.
For the majority of respondents, risk and uncertainty were not major factors. This relates to what Taatila (2010) discusses that entrepreneurs have a higher tolerance for risk and uncertainty. This implies that the respondents already had the mindset regards taking risks, apart from Emma in the start of the education and Per who realised that he is completely risk averse. The attitude to risks and uncertainties to entrepreneurial education from this research shows that respondents were provided a better understanding and approach to manage them by the entrepreneurial education they received and as such have a more positive attitude towards them.

5.6 Practical Observations

That students’ attitude and motivations regards other aspects than the proposed topics in the interview guide were included too. The additional comments collected in the empirical section were the practical elements that they need in order to deal with the reality when staring their own businesses.

The respondents had the expectation that the entrepreneurship education would educate them in new business enterprising and how to actually start their own company. The general consensus was that they enrolled into the program thinking it would provide them with tools to do business.

The respondents were calling for a more practical approach to the entrepreneurial education that they received. This implies that the received education was mainly theoretical and did not entirely satisfy the needs of the students. Although the respondents agreed that the theory provided a good basis for building up on their own experiences, the prevailing concern was that all the respondents needed more teaching elements in regards to dealing with practicalities in the entrepreneurial environment.

The overall consensus is that there was a lack of practical experience like for example, actually making the students start their own business during the entrepreneurial education. Therefore the entrepreneurial education should provide more hands-on information about the procedure in staring one’s own company, which this program did not satisfy. For example there could have been information about patent issues and procedures, the taxing system and practical financial information about book-keeping. Furthermore the respondents identified the potential for workshops and internships at companies in order to give the students real life experience and skills. This is in line with theory as Gnyawali and Fogel (1994) argue that an individual is more likely to enterprise when he or she feels confident in pursuing an opportunity. Without having knowledge about the procedures, entrepreneurial business skills, access to finance and non-financial assistance; an individual may not be able to take the new venture through all stages and manage the on-going business for success according to them.

As the theory implies, an entrepreneur needs to be able to do the practicalities in new business venturing, not only visioning it. Capabilities that people needs to start a new venture and the ongoing management are technical abilities, and other business functional aspects such as business planning, marketing, personnel management, product development, management, finance and accounting and so on (Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994). This means that it is a requirement that the entrepreneur not only has an
understanding of what they want to do, but also the practical elements that are involved in enterprising. All the respondents have had prior education in other fields than entrepreneurship, but the theory also calls for more explicit practical training in relation to actually starting your own business.

“Entrepreneurship can flourish if potential entrepreneurs find opportunities...if environmental conditions enhance entrepreneurs’ ability to take advantage of these opportunities...”


Gnyawali and Fogel (1994) argue that potential entrepreneurs may lack knowledge to overcome specific obstacles and problems; therefore the ability to get access to resources to assist them with this is essential according to them. These can range from assistance with writing business plans, to help with appropriate ways to negotiate with potential suppliers and clients and finding investors.

The respondents were calling for practical experience in order to gain more skills when starting their own venture but practical experience will increase the competencies and attractiveness on the labour market too. By providing practical experience and teaching in the practical procedures in new business start-ups, it is plausible that students feel more confident in starting a venture after entrepreneurial education.

In regards to internships, English speaking students had to find a placement on their own which creates a barrier for attaining practical education. For example Emma got her placement from Uminova, which is a state-owned organisation for helping entrepreneurs, but only Swedish speaking students were admitted. For Emma, this turned out to be good for her experience.

Indeed it is plausible that the so called “born” entrepreneurs or students from an entrepreneurial family, would circumvent the obstacles in the entrepreneurial environment on their own, which is evident in Peter’s case and also commented on in theory. Gnyawali and Fogel, (1994: 53) do remark that “entrepreneurs have the leeway to influence their odds for success through their own actions”. Therefore although knowledge about where assistance can be found is important, it is ultimately the responsibility of the entrepreneur to actually go out and search for it.

As the empirical section shows, despite the lack of more practical elements, some students evidently formed new ventures anyway. Indeed one may think that entrepreneurship education may only need to be theoretical. However by providing education in those practical areas it would be less time consuming to find this out after the education which would allow the student to focus on actually creating new ventures. It is then plausible that with increased practical experience and confidence, there could be more new ventures in connection to entrepreneurship programs.
6. Conclusion

In this chapter the conclusions of this study are presented. At the end, suggestions for further research are proposed.

The purpose of this study was to see how entrepreneurial education has affected student’s attitudes and motivations towards entrepreneurship. After conducting interviews and analysing the empirical data we found that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on students’ attitude and motivation, especially in areas such as opportunity identification and networking. The findings also show that there are aspects that the education fails to provide, which in effect have a negative impact on students attitude and motivation.

The outcome of this research is that someone is not just born as an entrepreneur. The respondents identified that determination is one skill that an entrepreneur needs which cannot be taught by education. In addition the research shows that there was a desire for the individuals to create something on their own and to do this you need determination. A plausible explanation is that the entrepreneur’s upbringing and family environment can affect the entrepreneurial attitude and motivation in this regard beyond the affect of the entrepreneurial program.

The research also shows that entrepreneurship education has an impact on opportunity identification and evaluation. It shows that the students’ attitude to their abilities to identify and evaluate opportunities has been improved by education. The research shows that the students had a positive attitude to their understandings about risks and uncertainties. In general upon completion, the students had a better understanding and approach to risks and ability to analyse and evaluate an opportunity than before taking the entrepreneurship education.

The study shows that the entrepreneurship education has enhanced the students’ perception of their networking skills significantly. This factor had a positive effect on the new business venturing by the students as the University has a contact with a key organisation that the students get access to.

The research shows that the theoretical teaching of the entrepreneurship program has been beneficial, but there is a call for more practical oriented teaching. The attitude and motivation was that in this matter, entrepreneurship education fails to teach them how to deal with practicalities when starting a new business.

This means that students need training to deal with the external environment and that education does not do that. As stated before, individuals are more likely to start a new business when they feel confident in pursuing that opportunity. Therefore the attitudes are that education should be more oriented to hands-on activities to train the students how to navigate these obstacles in real life. The general attitude to the practical element of writing a business plan is that entrepreneurial education does enhance this skill and is more connected to evaluation of an idea but the students sought more practical experience.

This research also shows that the attitudes and motivation after conducting entrepreneurship education has a general positive effect on the investigated
characteristics. Therefore it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education can have a positive effect on the makings of new entrepreneurs as, out of the eight respondents, half of them either: started, or are about to start a company. The research also shows the negative attitude amongst the students as the practical element is missing and this calls for a revision of the entrepreneurial education to accommodate this.

Gorman et al (1997: 71) discussed that there was preliminary evidence that university based entrepreneurship programs “encouraged favourable attitudes toward entrepreneurship”. Our research adds to this preliminary evidence by showing that these programs do encourage favourable attitudes toward entrepreneurship. This is the contribution to the existing knowledge that we are making by showing that those students taking this types of programs will have a more favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship after taking the program, than they did before entering the program. As a result their desirability to create their own venture should also have increased.

The aim of this study is to see how university entrepreneurial education has affected student’s attitudes and motivations towards entrepreneurship and their desirability to start their own company by examining the key characteristics/attributes of an entrepreneur, as outlined by the literature, and the affect the education had on their attitude to these characteristics/attributes.

The aim of this study has thus been achieved as we have seen the effect that entrepreneurship education has had on our respondent’s attitudes towards the key characteristics/attributes of an entrepreneur. Our findings have also gone beyond this to show the effect the practical elements of the course can have the respondents and this could be valuable for future research.

This research adds to the existing discussion about the role on entrepreneurial education and is beneficial not only in the field of entrepreneurial education research, but also as a practical tool for universities that are giving this programs and to potential students how may take one of these programs.

6.1 Suggestions for Further Research

- As we have concluded that students overall have a more positive view to their attitudes and motivations about their entrepreneurial characteristics after completing an entrepreneurial program, however there are needs for practical elements too. It would be interesting to find out more in detail about what the entrepreneurial programs should contain. Therefore we suggest further research in this matter.

- It was noted in our empirical section that some of the respondents felt that universities may not be the appropriate places to teach entrepreneurial programs. Therefore we suggest a study should be undertaken to see whether there should be an entrepreneurial school or institutions that solely teach entrepreneurial education. This can be investigated to see if those kinds of schools could provide a better connection to the business environment and train the students in real-life cases. Then it is the question regarding the study curriculum and whether it
should be different from the traditional approach that foremost is based on theory.
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